# BOAC - TWO

The 2nd issue came out in 1995 and features Julian Lawrence's work on both the cover and back of a cartoon page. The cover is a pointillist reproduction of a photo of Chris provided by his brother David. Julian would use the same art style on my grade 12 graduation photo for the cover of Teenster.

The big deal musically with this one was David Bell, had granted me permission to release "Country Morn" on a flexi disc which came as a bonus. What a flippin' coup! The song had not yet been released. David himself handed me the dat tape in Memphis, and, this is so surreal, he, I and my pal Pam McGaha, went bombing along in David's big US car listening to the song at full blast late one warm Memphis evening. The song is "Watch The Sunrise" with completely different lyrics. The rest of the issue is no slouch either, and my layout skills had vastly improved.

Welcome to **BACK OF A CAR**...provocative title, hmmm? It's the name of a song by the Memphis band, Big Star, whose music has certainly brightened my life, so much in fact that, well, here's this magazine.

**If you're not familiar with Big Star here's the concise version of their story:** Remember the band the Box Tops? Their big hit was "The Letter" — at this point I usually hum the 'gimme a ticket for an aeroplane' line — well, Alex Chilton was the lead singer of the group and he was only 16 when that song came out. Alex tired of being part of a cookie-cutter pop band and split...walked right off stage in the middle of a gig legend has it. He wound up back in Memphis, joining old pals to form Big Star who put out two amazing records in the early 70's which, through bad luck, never got the recognition they deserved. Big Star were Alex Chilton, Chris Bell, Jody Stephens and Andy Hummel.

**The above words kicked off the first issue of BOAC...here's number two.**

Hey...I really enjoy being a magazine publisher! There's a certain "glamour" to it, and I've been in contact with many people who share the same interests I do. In May I visited St Louis and Memphis, my first visit to the South. I saw Alex play at Cicero's in St Louis on April 27th. I have ***never*** been in a more dungeonesque, cramped tiny club than Cicero's yet I managed to get a view (I "pardon me'd" myself all the way to the front) and enjoyed the set.

*Afterwards I got to speak to Alex:*

**Me:** I'd like to write you, I have questions about your music.

**Alex:** You can write (pause) as long as I don't have to answer.

**Me:** [not a word] Ulp!

I trust you'll enjoy this issue of BOAC. It contains "Country Morn" an unreleased Chris Bell track. I am touched by David Bell's generosity in letting BOAC present this stunning piece of music which was recorded in 1973. *[I suggest you record the flexi the first time you listen to it; while they do withstand repeated play this is best to avoid a skip developing]*

BOAC now has a Web page, which will include articles from past issues and preview the next print version. It will also allow me to review material which didn't make it to print. The Web page will include comics , music reviews and more. The paper version of BOAC will continue to come out - this is too much fun to stop. The Web page is <http://mindlink.net/beeman> and you can email me <beeman@mindlink.bc.ca>

I'm going to visit San Francisco and Los Angeles this coming October! BOAC and SCRAM magazine out of Hollywood, edited by Kim Cooper, are planning a joint celebration in each of these cities. Email for more information.

BACK OF A CAR thinks the world of: **Juliet O'Keefe** who again helped put this together, this time teaching me how Pagemaker works; **David Bell**: Cruising Memphis with Pam McGaha and David listening to Chris' music (loud!) was a pleasantly surreal experience; **John Fry** and **Jody Stephens** for the interest and support; **Bob Angst**...you rock!; **Pam McGaha** and **Jordan/Jackie Oakes** for the hospitality; **Rob McDonough** and **Yuji** for transcribing "Cosmos"; **Brian Oaksford** for his patience; **Dennis**, my fellow Canadian who sent me the keen Big Star cap [email <pudge@io.org> for info]...how thoughtful!; **all my contributers** (yer beautiful) and especially the SF Brigade; everyone who ever took the time to write me with their opinions on the magazine ; **Roberta Gregory,** who listens to my ideas with genuine interest, and all my other cartoonist pals who inspire me. I don't have a song quote to express my feelings this time, but I'm really happy that **Phil** and I found each other and man! does he ever support my interests. He is wonderful Thanks Phil.

**— JUDITH BEEMAN, AUGUST 95**

**Write BACK OF A CAR: #4636 MPO Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 4A1**

# BACK OF A CAR * NUMBER 2

## BIG STAR...MEMPHIS...POP CULTURE

# HAPPINESS IS A SAD SONG


CHRIS BELL by Rob Gieringer
"I AM THE COSMOS" words/music
CHRIS BELL FAMILY TREE by Jeff Rougvie.
PETE FRAME family tree
**"COUNTRY MORN" Chris Bell flexi-single!**
BIG STAR LIVE IN LA by Kim Cooper
BRIAN WILSON TRIBUTE IN LA by Todd Everett
BIG STAR LIVE IN MEMPHIS by Pam McGaha
VOX POP real cool Japanese Chilton zine
KOOL KINGS by Ross Weyman
THREE SQUIRT DOG book review by David Smay
IT CAME FROM MEMPHIS book review
RICK RIDGWAY interview
THEY COME FROM MEMPHIS by Beeman
JODY STEPHENS/ARDENT by Beeman
ALEX/BEN LEE LIVE IN NEW JERSEY by Dawn Eden
PANTHER BURNS by various
LOUD FAMILY by Dennis Sacks
TONIGHT SHOW HATES ME by Elizabeth Ivanovich
LOAFING THE DONKEY a Memphis zine
BIG STAR *THIRD* by Robot Hull
POSIES PRIMER by Thomas Durkin
BIG STARESQUE SOUNDS by Beeman
IT CAME FROM CANADA by Beeman
WILLIAM EGGLESTON by Beeman
FAT POSSUM by Alexander Varty
R. STEVIE MOORE by Beeman
MINUS FIVE by Allison Stewart
PSYCLONE RANGERS by Beeman
THE POP PAGE!
ALEX LIVE IN SF by Elizabeth Ivanovich
HIGH PRIEST press release
JOHN TIVEN by Beeman
LAST BUT NOT LEAST...

**Julian Lawrence** created both the cover art and the Back Of A Cartoon.


**HERE'S THE FINE PRINT:** All contents copyright of authors — feel free to use any short passages for glowing reviews. Any song lyrics belong to respective authors, so don't go sayin' you wrote'em. This is the second issue of BACK OF A CAR magazine which is published once yearly. In case you missed it, WE'RE ON THE WEB! <http://mindlink.net/beeman> also email <beeman@mindlink.bc.ca>



If you paid more than $5.00 US (before taxes) for this magazine anywhere in North America you were overcharged, ripped off, hornswaggled. If you paid more than $7.00 US anywhere else in the World, same applies to you. BOAC can be ordered direct from Judith Beeman #4636 MPO Vancouver BC V6B 4A. Remaining copies of the first issue are $4.00/ second issue $5.00 US funds (International orders please include 2 irc's) Want to help distribute BOAC? Discounts on multiple copies.


## CHRIS BELL WALKS WITH ANGELS

By ROB GIERINGER

**No Big Star collection is complete without co-founder Chris Bell's stunning solo album *I Am The Cosmos*.** Released by Rykodisc in 1992, but recorded in 1973 - 1974 at Ardent and Shoe Studios in Memphis, and at Chateau D'Heureville in France, the album both clarifies and greatly magnifies Bell's contribution to the original Big Star sound. The album is accompanied by extensive liner notes written by Chris' older brother David, who chronicles the younger Bell's musical journey from its pre Big Star days, through his dark and depressing post *#1 Record* era, and ultimately to his fateful and untimely death in 1978. The liner notes are written in a loving, brotherly tone, and at times seem as essential as the music itself.

For the uninitiated, the original Big Star line up consisted of Bell, bassist and college roommate Andy Hummel, drummer Jody Stephens, and guitarist/vocalist Alex Chilton. Bell, Hummel, and Stephens had formed their own group called Ice Water in Memphis when Chilton, upon return from a failed solo career in New York was persuaded to join the trio. The resulting group was renamed Big Star (after a popular supermarket chain in the south), and in 1971 set out to record on the newly formed Ardent record label. The result was the universally and critically acclaimed *#1 Record*. Bell and Chilton co-wrote and shared lead vocals on most of the tracks, with Bell's sweetness balancing Chilton's trademark gritty vocals that he had perfected performing with the Box Tops in the late 1960's. The Beatles/Byrds flavor of *#1 Record* was decidedly out of vogue in the early 1970's, and poor distribution of the album doomed it to obscurity.

Bell left the group in the fall of 1972, partly due to the lack of commercial success of *#1 Record* — he was distraught at putting so much effort into the album (adding production and engineering support in addition to performing), only to see it fail commercially. There were also musical differences between himself and Chilton; Chris preferred being a studio act while Chilton sought live performances and touring. Bell briefly returned to the Big Star fold in 1973 to contribute to three songs on Big Star's second studio album *Radio City*— 'O My Soul', 'Way Out West', and 'Back of a Car' (in my opinion one of the best pop songs *ever* written) — although the full extent of his contribution is not well known.

It was shortly after the release of *Radio City* that Bell, a very depressed man, wrote and recorded most of the tracks that would later be included on his solo album. The title track 'I am the Cosmos' is an achingly beautiful ballad — Big Star sung at half-speed (two versions are included on the album, slow and slower!). The Posies do a faithful cover of the song on the import cd *Definite Door*, and the track is also included on the Big Star live album *Columbia* recorded at Missouri University. The second track 'Better Save Yourself' is even better—a haunting drugified gem that reflects Bell's true life experiences with his depression as he sings "It's suicide, I know I tried it twice". 'Speed of Sound' continues in the same vein, and Bell's more spiritual/religious side is showcased by the lilting 'Look Up'.

Not all of the tracks are Prozac moments. The heavy Beatles/Byrds influence (important to the Big Star sound) is evident on most of the other songs on the album, and at times comes so close to the whole Big Star vibe it's frightening! 'I Don't Know' opens with a melodic Byrdsy riff, and then rips into an angry snarl a la Big Star's classic 'Don't Lie to Me' - simply wonderful. 'Get Away' and 'I Got Kinda Lost' are cut from the same cloth. 'Get Away' is a straight ahead rock-n-roll tune that crackles with electricity. Bell's vocals are especially strong, while the drum work sets a frenetic pace reminiscent of Jody Stephens' great work on all of Big Stars' studio albums. 'I Got Kinda Lost' is pure pop and borrows from the Beatles 'Paperback Writer' and 'Day Tripper'. Not too surprising, since the Beatles were an early influence on Bell and in fact it was his ambition to meet his musical idols (he later fulfilled 1/4 of this ambition when he met Paul McCartney at EMI studios in London). If you like the mid 60's Beatles you'll love these tracks (the whole album would feel right at home beside *Revolver* or *Rubber Soul*. Bell even takes a stab at country with the disjoined 'Fight at the Table' featuring an amusing barrelhouse piano sound.)

Bell is more than capably joined by longtime Memphis friend and Big Star contributor (3rd) Richard Rosebrough on drums, Ken Woodley on bass, Bill Cunningham, and producer Jim Dickinson on piano. Even Alex Chilton lends a hand as he sings background vocals on the sweet 'You and Your Sister' (of which a total of three versions are included on the album). [Note: 'You and Your Sister' and 'I am the Cosmos' were released as a single on the Car label in 1978—very rare]

The album suffers a bit from rough production efforts. This is understandable as the recordings were pieced together from various sessions during 1973-1974 and then re-engineered by John Hampton with David Bell in the mid 1980's (after Ardent had expressed interest in the solo recordings) — a minor nuisance. Also, Bell strains to reach the top of his vocal range on some of the songs, not unlike his vocals on *#1 Record*. This only tends to add to the charm of his solo recordings. Unlike many contemporary angst-ridden artists, Bell didn't take himself too seriously; he just wrote and played from the heart with a simple and refreshing sincerity. As an added bonus a photograph of Bell with a stunning view of the Alps in the background graces the album cover.

*I Am The Cosmos* is essentially a Big Star album (only lacking the name) — what might have been had the band remained together. Bell manages to pull off the impossible by blending his sweetness, with his own form of grittiness. This is the same combination that he and Chilton shaped into the original Big Star sound, and is found on *I am the Cosmos*, only no Chilton. Not only can Big Star fans finally listen to these long lost solo recordings, but they can hear for themselves the pivotal role that Bell played in the original Big Star sound.

**Sadly, *I am the Cosmos* represents the only solo effort that the music world will hear from Chris Bell — as such, listening to the album is both a joyous and bittersweet experience. On December 27, 1978, while driving home in his TR-6 from a late-night rehearsal with his new band, Bell was instantly killed when he struck a telephone pole. The music world lost a great songwriter, but with the release of *I am the Cosmos*, Chris' true talents can finally be known.**

# I Am The Cosmos — Christopher Bell

**D D/C# Em**

1 Every night I tell myself I am the cosmos

**G A Asus A Em G A Asus A**

I am the wind But that don't get you back again

**D D/C# Em**

Just when I was starting to feel okay

**G A Asus A Em G A Asus A**

You're on the phone I never want to be alone

**D Bm B2 Bm Am D7**

2 Never want to be alone I'd hate to have to take you home

**G 7 C G/B**

Wanted too much to say no, no

**A Em7 A Em7 A Em7 A**

Yeah yeah yea-ah yeah yeah yeah

*(guitar lead over chords to section one then repeat section two)*

**D D/C# Em**

3 My feelings always have been something I couldn't hide

**G A Asus A Em G A Asus A**

I can confide Don't know what's going on inside

**D D/C# Em**

So every night I tell myself that I am the cosmos

**G A Asus A Em G A Asus A**

I am the wind But that don't get you back again

**D Bm B2 Bm Em G A Asus A**

4 I'd really like to see you again really like to see you again

**D Bm B2 Bm Em G A Asus A**

Really like to see you again really want to see you again

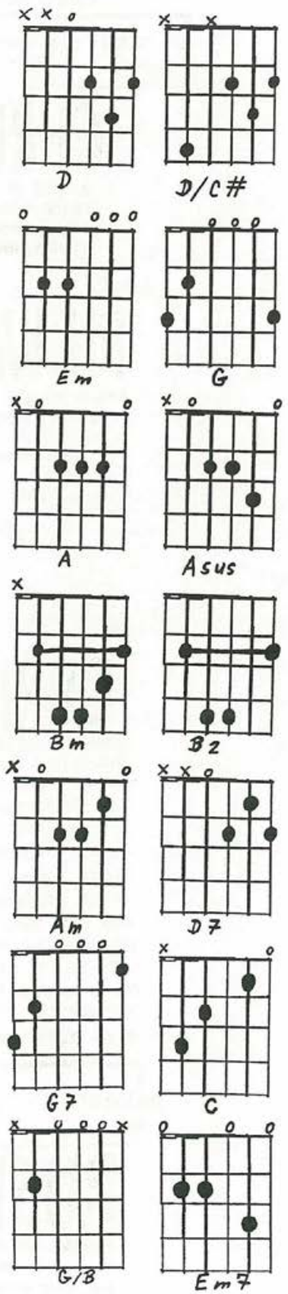
**D Bm B2 Bm Em G A Asus A**

Really like to see you again really want to see you again

**D Bm B2 Bm Em G A Asus A**

Never want to see you again really want to see you again

*(Guitar lead over chords to section four)*




## JYNX 1964 TO 1967

CHRIS BELL'S EARLY GROUPS WERE INSPIRED BY THE BEATLES ON ED SULLIVAN (SOUND FAMILIAR?). HE PICKED UP THE GUITAR AT AGE 14, AND WAS PLAYING AT HIGH SCHOOL DANCES + PARTIES SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THE PRE-BIG STAR BANDS WERE VERY TRANSIENT, WITH MANY FOLKS PASSING THROUGH. THIS CHART IS NOT COMPLETE!

CHRIS BELL'S FIRST GROUP, A LOOSE CONGLOMERATE OF MEMPHIANS THROUGH WHICH FLOWED FUTURE BOXTOPS + BIGSTARS. CHILTON SANG LEAD BRIEFLY.

ALEX CHILTON — vocals
BILL CUNNINGHAM — bass
CHRIS BELL — lead guitar
TERRY MANNING? — guitar (FLOWED ARDENT)
RICHARD ROSEBROUGH? — drums
PROBABLY OTHERS

## CHRISTMAS FUTURE LATE 1967 TO 1969

ANOTHER OF CHRIS EARLY BANDS, THIS GROUP SHOWED MORE HENDRIX THAN BRITISH INVASION INFLUENCES. DETAILS OF THE MEMBERS ARE SKETHY AT BEST.

VANCE ALEXANDER — vocals (died)
CHRIS BELL — lead guitar
ANDY HUMMEL — bass
STEVE RAY? — drums

## ICEWATER/ROCK CITY LATE 69 TO 1971

BACK TO BRIT-POP, AND WITH THE ADDITION OF JODY STEPHENS ON DRUMS (NOTE STEVE RAY SWITCHES TO GUITAR) THREE FOURTHS OF BIG STAR ARE IN PLACE. CHILTON SAW THEM RECORDING AT ARDENT AND "BLAMMO" HISTORY IS MADE. ALSO PLAYED AS "TOMMY TUTWEILER + THE TWISTERS"!

CHRIS BELL — vocals/guitar
ANDY HUMMEL — bass
JODY STEPHENS — drums
TIM EUBANKS — guitar ?
STEVE RAY — guitar → BECAME A PUBLICIST AT ARDENT

JODY STEPHENS WAS IN THE MEMPHIS CAST OF HAIR - ACCORDING TO SOME, THIS IS WHERE CHRIS SPOTTED HIM!

## CHRIS BELL DIES DECEMBER 27, 1978

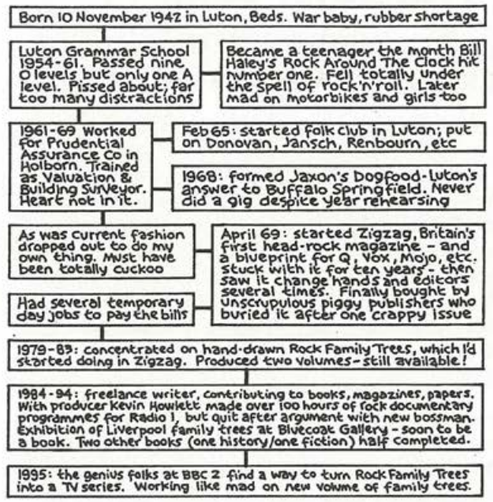
DESPONDENT AND STRUGGLING WITH DRINK + DRUGS, CHRIS BROTHER DAVID ENTERED THE SCENE AND ATTEMPTED TO GET CHRIS' MIND ONTO MORE POSITIVE THINGS. THE TWO TRAVELED EUROPE RECORDING AND PLAYING LIVE, TO LITTLE SUCESS. CHRIS' FRAME OF MIND WAS GREATLY IMPROVED, AND DESPITE BEING UNABLE TO SECURE A DEAL, CHRIS STAMEY'S CAR RECORDS ISSUED ONE SINGLE "I AM THE COSMOS" b/w "YOU AND YOUR SISTER". CHRIS WAS MANAGING A RESTAURANT AND PLAYING / PRODUCING ON THE SIDE WHEN HIS CAR HIT A TELEPHONE POLE ON POPLAR AVE IN MEMPHIS. HIS FUNERAL WAS ON CHILTON'S 28th BIRTHDAY. "I AM THE COSMOS" IS THE SUM OF HIS RECORDED OUTPUT.

KEN WOODLEY — bass
CHRIS BELL — guitar/vocals
RICHARD ROSEBROUGH — drums

## RUSHA MAY 1974 ONLY ONE SHOW!

PROBABLY THE ONLY FULL BAND THAT PLAYED THE "I AM THE COSMOS" MATERIAL LIVE, THIS IS THE GIG THAT EVERYONE IN MEMPHIS IS GOING TO SWEAR THEY SAW FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS!

ANDY HUMMEL — bass → WENT TO STUDY ENGINEERING
CHRIS BELL — vocals/guitar
RICHARD ROSEBROUGH — drums → STILL PLAYING, CURRENTLY IN THE AGITATORS




In 1992 **Jeff Rougvie**, who works with Rykodisc, produced THE BIG STAR STORY, a huge, wonderfully detailed Family Tree history of Big Star and groups influenced by their music. Jeff gave BOAC permission to reprint the Chris Bell section of the Big Star story, yet wanted me to be sure to mention that **Pete Frame** was the originator of the Rock Family Tree. No problem! Frame came up with his unique art in the early 70s when...well, let's have Pete show you here with his hand illustrated history. As you can see, he's still going strong.

## "Country Morn"

**Chris Bell - lyrics/vocals**
**Bell/Chilton - music**

Ever wonder what's going on around you?
Ever stop and think that you've got to run or lose?

I know we have friends who will always tell you lies

Don't you array what you've done wrong,
just remember it won't last long

Do you ask yourself "What good am I?"
Ever wonder who cares if you live or die?

I know there are men who will hit you from behind

Don't you array what you've done wrong,
just remember it won't last long

Ever ask yourself what's the use in being 'round?
Ever ask yourself what's the reason why you're so down?

You know you control how you feel at times like this

Don't you array what you've done wrong,
just remember it won't last long

# BIG STAR LIVE

## *HOUSE OF BLUES* LA

### 1/11/94

by KIM COOPER

Such a crass environment to host this inevitable pop revelation. (Well, why not? Alex Chilton seems to have finally reached the spiritual plane which allows him to sell out as a power-pop legend, after years of cynically leading Box Tops nostalgia tours.)

House of Blues, for those of you who've managed to avoid the media coverage, is a rusty corrugated "blues" "shack" smack in the middle of the Sunset Strip. Speedily erected without benefit of an environmental impact report (West Hollywood's a very young town, the civic equivalent of a round-heels), the club's caused the most volatile angry-neighbor situation since the last days of the Starwood. HoB's interior features imagery highjacked from most major religions, gruesome frosted glass portraits of blues-men, hydraulic moving viewing platforms, and a painting of John Belushi as a winged cupid behind the stage. (Belushi, of course, took his last shot at the Chateau Marmont just up the street; his less-funny sidekick Dan Ackroyd now hosts Jake Blues nights at this tarted up dive.) Everywhere you look you see the in-house slogan, "Unity in Diversity" ™ — don't forget that ™! — but aside from the old black guy playing weak organ versions of Motown hits when we came in, the only diversity to be seen was that some of the geeky white kids in attendance were boys and some weren't.

But so fucking what? Big Star was great. Chilton and drummer Jody Stephens — who is super-cute, incredibly young looking, and plays like a demon — represented the original band, with the parts of Andy Hummel and the ghost of Chris Bell being played by Jon and Ken Posie respectively. Jon particularly shone, eerily recreating the voice of Bell, who in retrospect seems to have been almost entirely responsible for the Big Star sound (a fact which, if more widely known, would have saved a lot of folks disappointment of buying Chilton records and concert tickets).

The set was nearly identical to shows in SF and Chicago last spring, with the band admitting they hadn't bothered to learn any new material. In addition to a generous sampling of Big Star favorites, we heard "All Day and All of the Night" (Kinks, smashing), "Slut" (Todd Rundgren, ecstatic) and "I Am the Cosmos" (Chris Bell, touching). The only thing that could have made this better would have been if they hadn't sold enough tickets for the midnight show and told us we could all stay for the second set...which actually happened! I don't think I've ever seen so many smiles in one place, and one of them was Alex Chilton's.

***Kim Cooper edits the fabulous SCRAM magazine, in which the above review was first printed. For a sample copy send $3.00 to Box #461626 Hollywood, CA 90046-1626***

# THE DAILY VARIETY

by TODD EVERETT

## TRIBUTE TO BRIAN WILSON

Los Angeles, Morgan-Wixson Theater

200 seats, $10. top

Promoted by Wild Honey Prods. Featured performers: Brian Wilson, the Apples, Andrew, Baby Lemonade, Alex Chilton, Daisychain, Cameron Dye, Gary Eaton Band, Marvin Etzione, Fun, The Haves, Elliott Kendall, Rob Laufer, Carla Olson, Seven Deadly Five, Victoria Williams, Wondermints with Probyn Gregory. Reviewed Nov. 3, 1994 *Reported Daily Variety 14/11/94*

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The highlight of the 4 and a half-hour tribute to Brian Wilson was, of course, a not totally unexpected five-song set by the Beach Boys' guiding force. But the definitive moment may have come later, when former Box Tops/Big Star leader Alex Chilton forgot the words to "This Car of Mine," an early Beach Boys song that none but the most knowledgeable fans have even heard of. Signaling his distress, Chilton was immediately assisted by several members of the capacity audience who did remember the words. It was that kind of night.

Paul Rock, a local promoter who put on a similar tribute to the Byrds earlier this year, gathered numerous, mostly local luminaries to pay homage to Wilson in a concert at Santa Monica legit house Morgan-Wixson Theater benefiting musicians' charity Sweet Relief.

Most performed Wilson's compositions, with former Lone Justice bassist Marvin Etzione and drummer Don Heffington kicking in with the Ronettes' "Be My Baby" — reputedly one of Wilson's favorites — and Cameron Dye contributing a wistful reading of Dennis Wilson's "Little Bird."

Wilson, seemingly in good shape, sat at the grand piano and started with a whimsical run-through of the traditional "I'm a Little Teapot" (which he introduced as his next single).

Accompanied by two string players, a saxophonist, a percussionist, guitars and drums, Wilson and the band performed strong versions of "409," "God Only Knows," "Do It Again" and "California Girls."

Most of the performers stuck to lesser-known Wilson compositions. Who would have thought of "Heroes and Villains" as material for a near-thrash version, as Denver-based Apples did? And when Rob Laufer said he'd been waiting to perform "Johnny Carson" all his life, the hard-driving version showed he wasn't kidding.

Promoters wheeled a movie screen onstage for vintage clips of Wilson interviews and Beach Boys in performance — with audible booing when lead singer Mike Love, currently suing Wilson over song copyrights, appeared onscreen.

## BIG STAR SHINES IN MEMPHIS

by PAM McGAHA

I was stoked about seeing Alex play for the first time in years, stoked about seeing Big Star for the first time ever, stoked about turning fans on to BACK OF A CAR . . . eager to see old friends, and wondering about the cool people that I knew I was bound to meet. I was one ready gurl on Saturday night, October the 29th, and the Omni/New Daisy in Memphis was electric with vibes.

I had made arrangements beforehand with Mike Glen at the Omni to sell copies of Ms. Beeman's most awesome fanzine the night of the show, and they provided me with this cool little counter right inside the front door.

The magic began almost instantaneously. It truly IS a small world, and it was amazing how so many people from so many places can be so connected and FIND each other. Of course, BACK OF A CAR offered instant access to the throng. I met people from Atlanta and from Athens. I met contributors to BOAC. Talked to Darian Stribling of the band Two Minutes Hate from Little Rock, whose band's t-shirt Jody Stephens was sporting two days later on Jay Leno's show. There were people from Nashville, and Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and New York, and Jackson. I met Jordan Oakes, that sweet and handsome thing who lives in St Louis and publishes the way cool Yellow Pills 'zine that I have always meant to subscribe to. I talked with a girl from Australia, who had rerouted her US tour to bring her to Memphis. I met a man who had played guitar with Yuji Oniki. I ran into tons of old friends.

I was having a killer time just vending in the lobby, but the music sounded great, so I popped in to see the first opening act, **The Royal Pendletons**, who looked to me like Liverpool mid 60's and felt like, as my friend described, punk rockabilly for the '90's. Very nice, and very good, but it's back to the 'zine scene for me.

Out front again: Alex has arrived, and the crowd is thick. Jody Stephens pops up with a box of t-shirts, and asks me to sell them. How cool...everybody had been waiting for those Big Star shirts, and now I was Queen for a Day. I can't say how many t-shirts and fanzines were sold in those next few minutes, except: every one. I will tell you that I didn't get to hear one second of **Drivin' and Cryin'**...ah, well some other time...this night belongs to Big Star.

And the time came for them to shine! I stood with Robert Gordon, master chronicler of the amazing music scene in Memphis, and together we awaited this momentous show.

The boys came out on stage, and the dancing began. We danced through "I am the Cosmos" and "Daisy Glaze" and "The Ballad of El Goodo". Never stopped during "September Gurls", or when Jody dedicated "For You" to his parents, Jim and Rose, who were in the audience. My favorite song of the night was "The Girl From Impanema" which they treated us to at encore. Ken Stringfellow, in his Tour Diary in the #1 Issue of BACK OF A CAR, tells of working up that song during soundcheck before the Osaka show last May, and it was great...very funky. Alex, for the first time that I noticed, was being really campy and cheesy, twirling the microphone with that old gleam in his eye.

I TOTALLY missed the moment that Larry Nager reported about in the Commercial Appeal, when, during "Thank You Friends", Alex addressed us all as "every last one of you (expletive) creeps". To me, Alex seemed quite cordial the entire evening, but why not? We were in a great, intimate venue smack dab on Beale Street, in the heart of the Delta, surrounded by old friends, and family, and fellow fans from the world over, and the night was ripe with emotion. It was a night of anticipation, and excitement...it was only the beginning of a tour that would include massive television exposure. But it also was a night of reflection and, in my own mind regrets...this was, after all, their farewell tour.

It was also a night for celebration: 12:00 and now Ken Stringfellow's 26th birthday, so off we caroused a few doors down to the VIP room at BB King's, where we listened (interminably!) to the blues, and duly recorded details of the event on the ceiling, close by the signatures of Jagger and Pop.

A resounding time was had by all, and this gurl was left a far better person for the experience, but that's what a good inspired jolt of music will do for ya!

And the question echoes: Will they (can they!) really call it quits?

Stay tuned . . .

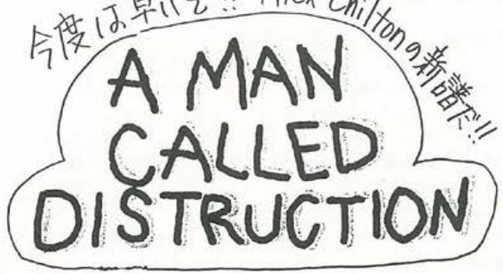
***Pam McGaha was born and bred in Memphis. She has been an invaluable friend to BOAC and knew Alex back in their High School days.***

### IT POURS IN VANCOUVER

**Grant McDonagh** owns Zulu records (a store and label): I recall walking into Zulu and seeing an entire wall display unit (approx. 5' by 5') racked entirely with the Cowboy Junkies debut *Whites Off The Earth Now* — that's dedication to Canadian music. In 1991 Zulu put out the remarkable double cd *LAST CALL Vancouver Independent Music 1977-1988* with 48 bands each contributing one track. This year Grant and Gord Badanic (his band was Go Four 3) have compiled three cd retrospectives of **POINTED STICKS, YOUNG CANADIANS** and **MODERNETTES** the pop/punk axis of Vancouver in the late 70s. Each disc includes extensive liner notes and photos, original songs plus live and unreleased material.

The **Pointed Sticks** are the "poppiest" of the three and includes almost everything the band released, from their singles ("Real Thing", "Somebody's Mom") to *Perfect Youth* album tracks and unreleased songs cut in the UK for an aborted Stiff records release. Liner notes are written by Phil Smith of Corsage, whose "Shame I Feel" is an alltime fave absolute smash Vancouver song (Zulu *must* do a retrospective on those guys). Much more dangerous and snarly were the **Young Canadians**, Art Bergmann's early band. Originally known as the K-Tels until a lawsuit loomed, the Young Canadians produced two beloved punk songs "Hawaii" and "I Hate Music" but fret not, "Son of Spam" is here too. Bergmann, married with a teenage stepdaughter, continues to bounce from (major) label to (major) label pushing out non-conforming rock in his truly distinctive way and still scaring the Suits after all these years. Liner notes are written by Buck Cherry, who aside from having a great rock nom de plume led **The Modernettes**, a Lou Reed-ish, cock-rocking (except for Mary-Jo on bass) pop band. *Teen City* was their first ep ("Barbra" was the 'hit'). Their retro includes a cover of "Femme Fatale" and some live tv recordings with amusing intros by the host. Liner notes are written by Les Wiseman who wrote extensively and eloquently on the scene for Vancouver magazine.

The fold-out cd booklets and covers for this Zulu series were designed by Ralph Alphonso whose **RALPH** mini-zine features Coffee, Jazz and Poetry. RALPH can be rushed to your door for $10.00 a year which, get this, includes a free copy of the Nettwerk records Donovan tribute cd. Each month RALPH delves into a new subject: Chet Baker, Bongo Drums...you get the drift. Write Ralph @ 505 - 1288 Broughton Street Vancouver, BC V6G 2B5.




**VOX POP** is subtitled **Fan Magazine Of Alex Chilton** and this comes from Japan where **Tomohiro Tandai** is the editor. I've seen three issues which have included indepth stories on Alex, Lou Reed, Matthew Sweet and '72 era Stones. The text is all in Japanese, but as with the above review of MCD we can still get the idea of what's being said (glad to see I'm not the only one that caught the "Love Is Strong" comparison...). VOX POP gave BOAC it's first international review! I haven't quite pinpointed Tomo on how much the zine costs. Try sending $5.00 US to 2-20-24 Dai, Kamakurashi, Kanagawaken, Japan.

**Check this comic out!** Drawn by **Eiji Inoue**, it originally appeared in VOX POP. Featuring a rather Chilton-esque lead character, I believe it's the story of a pop star telling a talkshow host about his escapades.

## Kool Kings: Shocked & Amazed

reviewed by ROSS WEYMAN

**It's not often that I get to review an album nearly five years after its release. However, the Kool Kings *Shocked & Amazed* is one of those treasures that has eluded not only the masses, but hardcore Alex Chilton/Big Star fans as well.**

I was fortunate enough to pick up a copy of the Kool Kings release back in the spring of 1991, at the original Rough Trade record store (just off Portobello Road in London). The disc was leaning against the register with a bright sticker crediting production to Alex Chilton. I bought it on a whim. After closer investigation of the sleeve, I was pleased to discover that Alex not only produced the album, but played bass and keyboards on it as well. In addition, long time bandmates Ron Easley and Doug Garrison were credited with the guitar and drums, respectively. Kristhof Hahn (guitar, vocals) and James Llamar Spake (horns) completed the Kool Kings line-up.

It was three months before I was able to listen to the disc, due to the fact that my stay in England was sans a CD player. The wait was justified. *Shocked & Amazed* offers a well polished, tuneful rendering of the same masterful gloom and darkness which shaped Big Star's *Sister Lovers* into one of the best albums of all time.

Opening with a bellowing sax, the album's atmosphere is immediately defined in the first few notes of "Cry Your Name". Desperation aches as Hahn declares, "I cry your name to the stars at night, as loud as I can and I pray that you might, answer me". The ensuing track, "Colorado Trail", is another decree of lost love boasting Ron Easley on the bullfiddle and Alex Chilton on drums. The song is highlighted by a masterfully simple drum pounding which elicits memories of the wooden spoons and tupperware containers in Mom's kitchen.

"Les Lettres" is one of two non-English tracks on the album. The french lyrics add a mysterious atmosphere to the distant pounding, twining guitars. My translation begins and concludes at "The Letters", but the emotions present in this song are still strongly prevalent. The proceeding track, "So Many Tears", is reminiscent of the disc's opener, rivaling the first tracks's masterful harmonic misery. Selection 5, "Sad And Lonesome", exhibits a country-tinged, mellow, attitudinal rant, very characteristic of the distraught Big Black Car/Holocaust type production. It is the only track on the album recorded live (at the Metropol, Berlin 1990) and showcases a different Kool Kings line-up: Sven Kuster (drums) and Steve Almaas (guitars in place of the Memphis members).

A Middle-Eastern guitar jangle opens up "Autobahn". Boasting a stomping drum beat and a catchy guitar lick, I often find myself singing along, "Fahren, fahren, fahren down the Autobahn". "Little GTO" revisited.

"Torment" is another moody, desperate melodiously silent number. This tale of broken, wasted love is summed up in the songs refrain, "sweet torment". The album's title song, "Shocked And Amazed" is a short, upbeat instrumental which highlights a lot of strumming and incorporates some neat background effects. "Waiting For The Man", the classic Velvet Underground track follows in suit. The Kool Kings add a marching beat and a whole lot of rockabilly flavor to the tune. Imagine the Cramps doing a mellowed version of the song.

The next cut, "Partygirls Aqui", is the ultimate in disparity and gloom. No comparisons are worthy. Disorderly horns accompany the clap cymbal with a total lounge flavor. The mood could not be more strongly defined. A wailing Hahn declares, "my main problem is you think I've had too much to drink, but my real problem is I can't drink enough". Vocals are lapped over each other: "I'm pretty hung over today", "I'm sitting in the bar trying to get drunk in the proper way", "If I'd been drunk when I was born...". We hear a total drunk murmur, five-fold, which is then momentarily cleared with the announcement, "I might as well play a guitar solo". Then the horns blare, the drums pound and the guitars scream. As the confusion sets back in, Hahn declares "I guess I'll play another guitar solo now and c-sharp would not be a bad note to start with". The energy peaks once again with a manic strum that as all guitar players know, always chases one's problems away. All the confusion, problems and drunkeness eventually fade away with the drifting chords.

The album ends with "Je T'Aime", an instrumental number in the Chuck Mangione vein. Very melodic, very horn oriented. It is the order, beauty and solitude Hahn was begging for in "Partygirls Aqui".

*Shocked & Amazed* was recorded at Easley Studios in Memphis during the summer of 1990. My best guess at the record label is Marat, from Germany. This low key almost non-existence adds to the sincere brilliance of the material on this album. Comparisons can be made to the similarly characterized Big Star albums of the early seventies, and these would be justified. *Shocked & Amazed* would shine brightly, even amidst the legendary company of the Big Star catalogue.

Since I discovered this album, I've had the chance to see Alex and/or Big Star a half dozen times. On each occasion I've given the old schoolboy attempt, shouting a Kool King's request. Only to be promptly ignored (I did instigate a stomping version of "Goldfinger" at one show though). A recent Alex quote reads, "I say let'em scream for whatever they want. If I can stomach what they're asking for, then I'll do it. But there are many times I can't". I do not believe this to be the case with Kool King material, but I sure hope I don't have to wait 20 years to hear some Kool Kings songs live.

***Ross Weyman began his written correspondence with me by merely signing his notes "Ross" — fair enough, the act of tape trading has an air of mystery to it. He can be reached at PO Box 14449, Chicago IL 60614-0449 and is interested in both comments on his article and musical gems being sent to his address. I'm sure he'll return the favour.***

## THREE SQUIRT DOG (St Martin's Press)

by Rick Ridgway

reviewed/interviewed by DAVID SMAY

Bud, the proto-slacker protagonist in Rick Ridgway's novel, *Three Squirt Dog*, commits a literary first: **"I went to my bedroom at midnight and listened to Big Star's *Third* through my headphones. It was my favorite record, and even the darkest songs were benedictions that night. It was always best to listen to Alex Chilton's voice in the darkness, all raw desire and confusion and pain and immense pleasure and transcendence."** Historically, fiction writers have loved Rock and Roll very little and understood it even less. To actually find a novel with the singular good taste to favor Big Star's *Third* (aka *Sister Lovers*) over all the other records is cause for happy yelps of joy, and the creation of new, oddly modest little dances around the living room. But modest dances only — fans of rock and roll fiction will have to wait some time more to find a book that not only knows Big Star's *Third*, but also achieves some of its harrowing emotional depth.

Which is not to say that *Three Squirt Dog* wastes your time or the paper its printed on. Ridgway's playful dialogue snaps, crackles and pops off; his women characters are strong, smart-assed and sexy; his men fumble through their pop cultural and sexual obsessions with a minimum of moping and you would probably enjoy their company. To belabor the musical comparison just a bit more, *Three Squirt Dog* shares the charm of a Replacements throw-away like "Gary's Got a Boner." Studded with some good lines, half-developed hooks, a tendency to degenerate into poop jokes and insults, we forgive it these failings. The 'Mats earned our indulgence with their readiness to wear wounded hearts on flannel sleeves, their exuberant massacre of cover songs, and their unwavering devotion to the verities of rock and roll (Big Star especially). Ridgway gets away with the complete absence of a plot and a farting contest at the sagging center of his book because his jokes and quips have real tang, his sex scenes smell like clean sheets and sweat and he too shows an unwavering devotion to the verities of rock and roll (Big Star especially). The jacket blurb suggests comparison to Rabelais, but a more accurate comparison would be Peter Bagge's comic *Hate*.

Full Disclosure requires that I make the following confession: This is basically a novel about my record collection, and (more or less) my immediate post-college experience. Anyone who graduated in the mid-Reagan era would recognize these characters in their IRS t-shirts. The novel is set in the summer of '83, when the Heartland had absorbed Punk's initial onslaught and was burping up a great band every week: X, REM, Los Lobos with the Replacements, Husker Du, Meat Puppets and Minutemen all on the horizon. Bud, just graduated, bums around Cleveland, works at his Uncle's used record store, boffs his sweet-but-sharp-tongued girlfriend Jane, watches movies, gets drunk, reads books, listens to a *lot* of music and that's about it. Still, when you've got sex, jokes and music an actual Narrative may be redundant.

While I was reading *Three Squirt Dog*, Vinny came into my life telling me about his musician pals **The September Boys**. "Well, this is perfect," I smugly thought to myself "What a nice little sidebar to the book review." But guess what?! The band decided to change their name to **The Meanwhiles**. Harumph! Anyhow, their debut cd *Minimum Wage Poets* has just been released on their own Balloon Guy Records and it's great. The band describes it's sound as in the Jellyfish/Posies vein, yet this disc has a distinctive style of it's own. From the tearjerker "Motts Cove South" to the opus "All In My Mind" (8 minutes!) The Meanwhiles debut is quite creative — we even witness a playful jab at MTV with "Kurt Loder". For a copy of *Minimum Wage Poets* send $13.00 to the band: PO Box 357, New Hyde Park, NY 11040. — Beeman

## IT CAME FROM MEMPHIS

**ROBERT GORDON** the Memphis music writer, has written a wonderful **musical *and* social history** of Memphis. A history book with a twist, *It Came From Memphis* (Faber) virtually ignores the super popular legends and downright embraces the "underdog". A book which studies the area's rich music background from **Furry Lewis** to **Mud Boy and the Neutrons**. A book which barely mentions **"The King"** yet devotes a chapter to **Dewey Phillips** the dj whose "Red, Hot and Blue" nightly radio show shook up Memphis starting in 1949 (in 1954 Dewey was first to play Elvis' debut single "That's All Right"). A book which spends exciting time documenting quirky outsiders such as wrestling legend **Sputnik Monroe** "220 pounds of twisted steel and sex appeal" (hilarity reigns when Sputnik trains the willing twelve year old Jerry Phillips, son of Sun Records Sam Phillips, to be a "midget" wrestler) and the celebrated bouncer/hoodlum **Campbell Kensinger** (whose chilling gunshot slaying is documented). A complete history of the **Box Tops** [see the back cover of this issue for a cartoon document! Please forgive us, John Evans wherever you are] and the **Big Star** gang is here as are the roots of **Moloch**, a pioneer blues-rock band who put out a sole lp on the Stax label and whose membership included Lee Baker (Lee and others, including Richard Rosebrough continue to play around Memphis as The Agitators). This book was a pleasure to read with *loads* of eyebrow-raising facts about Memphis and its community. I only hope that when someone writes this sort of look at Vancouver (and what city doesn't deserve a document like this?) it will be remotely as entertaining and truthful as this.

## A Conversation With Rick Ridgway

**BOAC: Did you see Big Star on *The Tonight Show*?**

Rick: No. I didn't even know they were on. I heard they had a reunion a few years ago, but I don't really see the point. Alex Chilton opened for Counting Crows up here recently, and the local reviewer - she's strictly mainstream and doesn't have a clue - gave him the typical two-line review of the opening act. She said he was, "a pleasant but unremarkable guy. He used to be the lead singer of the Box Tops." *[laughs]* That's like saying, "William Faulkner - he used to write movies."

**BOAC: How's the book selling?**

Rick: Oh, its not selling at all. It was launched with zero fanfare and lumped in with all that Slacker/Gen X shit which I loathe. Its selling in Germany though. There are something like 20 Germans buying it for every copy we're selling in the States. They're probably reading it as some sociological tract of suburban life in the 80s.

**BOAC: Do you read any zines or alternative comics?**

Rick: No, I never got into the underground or alternative comics. The whole fanzine phenomenon has been strange to me. Isn't there a zine devoted just to bashing the Lemonheads?

**BOAC: *Die Evan Dando Die*.**

Rick: That's great.

**BOAC: Do you share your characters taste in music?**

Rick: My musical tastes are pretty broad and varied. They intersect with Bud's at certain points. The novel is not remotely autobiographical. It's based on people I know in College Radio. Some of Bud's comments on music are almost nonsensical. At one point he refers to the Flamin' Groovies as "scruffy", which they're not, but its the kind of thing he would say.

**BOAC: But you are a Big Star fan?**

Rick: Oh yeah. Big Star's *Third* - I don't know if anybody's ever made a better album.

**BOAC: Have you heard the reissue on Rykodisc?**

Rick: No, I don't have a CD player. It would be hard to hear those songs with different sequencing. "Thank You Friends" is such an ambiguous song [when it's the last song on the album]. "Thank you friends for this complete mental and emotional breakdown." Alex Chilton was living it.

**BOAC: When I saw Big Star at the Fillmore this summer, the song seemed more like a heartfelt thank you to his fans. Then again, Alex seemed a bit jaded at the show.**

Rick: I think Alex Chilton had his heart broken a long time ago. I don't really see the point of a reunion. Alex is so far from the Big Star stuff now. Who's going to regroup next, Thirteenth Floor Elevators?

**BOAC: Actually, that Roky Erikson tribute record had some good cuts on it, like "Three Headed Dog."**

Rick: Yeah, I liked that - by Sister Double Happiness. God, I love discount bins.

**BOAC: What other music do you listen to?**

Rick: I liked the Victoria Williams tribute album. That song by Pearl Jam was surprisingly good. Lou Reed was good on that record. Soul Asylum. Who else...I like Tori Amos' album *Under The Pink*. The Goo Goo Dolls. Cracker.

**BOAC: I would have figured you for a Camper Van Beethoven fan.**

Rick: They were wonderful. *Key Lime Pie* is a great album, one of my favorites. Nirvana showed there were some signs of life in rock and roll. Green Day - they threw me when I first heard them because they sing with that affected British accent. Do you remember that German group Trio - I can see that album cover in my mind.

**BOAC: "Da da da da..."**

Rick: That's it. Let's see if they turn up on Leno. That would be a sign of the Apocalypse.

***David Smay <dlsmay@aol.com> lives in San Francisco, is a pop music wunderkind and a gentleman (he insisted on paying the long distance charges on the call to Rick).***

**The Faber Book of POP** is **HUGE!** A whopping 862 pages in total this is a collection of essays and thoughts writers and celebrities share about the actions that shaped the music and surroundings of their time. Editors Hanif Kureishi and Jon Savage have combed books and publications looking for musical stories of interest, then gained permission to use excerpts for this POP extravaganza.

The writings date back as far as 1942 with Malcolm X reminiscing with Alex Haley (in the 70s) about dancing the Lindy Hop. The book concludes with an essay on the dangers of Ecstasy within the Rave scene. We get Lester Bangs on the "Kraut rock" of Kraftwerk/Iggy Pop on how he dodged the draft/Wolf Mankowitz profiles a Bongo playing sensation/a UK concert by *the Killer* shortly after he married his cousin is reviewed: The audience was not kind/Gina Arnold on Nirvana (Pixies *times* Soul Asylum was her analogy of what sound the group was after) and much more.

**Sections of the book are labeled as thus**

*1942-1956* groovy frantic scenes
*1956-1958* a mass fit of screaming hysteria
*1959-1963* red humming neon
*1962-1966* shadows of boredom
*1966-1971* blows the mind
*1972-1976* the star ideal was reborn
*1975-1980* my confusion, my faith
*1980-1985* baroque proportions
*1985-1989* a last cold cut
*1988-1994* the end of the century

## THEY COME FROM MEMPHIS

**TOMMY HOEHN's** *Losing You To Sleep* (London) is simply stunning. Long out of print, this Memphis native's 1978 masterpiece is something to be sought after and cherished. *Losing* includes the gorgeous "She Might Look My Way" (written with Alex Chilton) and eight other increasingly strange (vaguely obsessive) love songs with abstract lyrics. "Mean Nancy" was written with Lisa Aldridge, whom one would imagine was the muse for this album. The band, which includes Gene Nunez, Keith Young and Ardent producer John Hampton, is top notch, the recording perfect. Tommy's 1981 album *I Do Love The Light* includes "Get Away" and "Cuba" which was cowritten with Chris Bell, whom Tommy has been mistaken for [many people, myself included, have thought "Love You All Day Long" was sung by Chris, see tape list below]. Tommy also played with Jon Tiven in Prix which released the ep *Girl* and a single on Miracle records (possibly not the same label as Toronto's Miracle records whose amusing slogan was *"If it's a hit it's a Miracle"*). In recent years Tommy has recorded demos which have yet to be shopped around/released to BOAC's knowledge. Go Tommy Go!

Another Memphis performer with a Big Star connection is **VAN DUREN** who at one point found himself auditioning for a spot with the post-*Radio City* group. It's clear that Van Duren is a champion of romanticism and his 1977 album *Are You Serious?* (Big Sound) included "The Love That I Love" a sweet song cowritten with Jody Stephens. Unfortunatly, Van's second solo album *Idiot Optimism*, which included a cover of Chris Bell's "Make a Scene" was recorded yet never released. Van plays with his band GOOD QUESTION along the Memphis nightclub circuit where BOAC caught him at Neils on Madison (the set includes a few Big Star covers). Big Sound are checking their warehouse to see if they have a few copies of *Are You Serious* still in stock —write them c/o PO Box 57 Wallingford, CT 06492.

***My friend Henry made me a tape consisting of out of print material any fan of Memphis related POP would enjoy. If you would like a copy, send me a 90 minute compilation of your favorite tunes and a few bucks for postage.***

**66 relatives and disciples of Big Star (volume 1)**

**PRIX** *Girl* ep (Ork '77) girl/everytime I close my eyes/zero

**PRIX** (Miracle '78) everytime I close my eyes/love you tonite

**VAN DUREN** (from *Are You Serious* lp '77) the love that I love (cowritten w/**Jody Stephens**)/grow yerself up/new year's eve/oh babe/positive

**SAUCERS** ('80) certain kinda shy (This and Dumptruck both Seth Tiven's band. Jon's bro)

**DUMPTRUCK** (from *d is for Dumptruck* lp '83) the haunt/repetition

**CHRIS STAMEY** (Ork '77) summer sun

**CHRIS STAMEY** (Ork '77) where the fun is

**THE SCRUFFS** (from *Wanna Meet the Scruffs?* lp Powerplay '77) break the ice/my mind/yr no fun/tragedy/she say yeah

**PAUL COLLINS** (79) why are you walkin' out on love

**TOMMY KEENE** (from *Strange Alliance* lp '82) landscape/all the way around

**HACKAMORE BRICK** (from *One Kiss Leads To Another* lp '70) oh those sweet bananas/I forgot...

**TOMMY HOEHN** (Powerplay '77 single) blow yrself up/love you (all day long)

**TOMMY HOEHN** (from *I Do Love The Light* '81) Get Away/Cuba (cowritten w/**Chris Bell**)

**NERVES** ('76) workintoohard

**Memphis (in the meantime)** (Gravelsauce Records)

***a benefit for Habitat For Humanity***

This compilation of 17 homespun bands has proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity, a group which builds homes for the needy. The disc is a good introduction to the various groups in M-town, many of whom are causing a big fuss: Impala, Son Of Slam, DDT, Big Ass Truck and Rob Jungklas are here and all performed during my stay in Memphis. There's one ballad, a few skronky jazz-tinged cuts, some Beastie style beats, one track with female vocals (hello to The Marilyns!) and, for my tastes, a tad too much guitar based rawk sung by deep voiced fellows. However, for a mere ten dollars *Memphis (in the meantime)* is a great deal which helps out a deserving cause. Write Habitat For Humanity 555 Perkins Ext Ste 414 Memphis, TN 38117 for more information.

**Tav Falco's Panther Burns**
***Deep In The Shadows*** (Marilyn)

This collection is the place to jump in and check out all the fuss about Tav and his friends. Festivities blast off with two rockers "Tina The Go Go Queen" (Shake her fanny like a washing machine) and "Cuban Rebel Girl" (I wanna join her Party cos man she is stacked). In short order we're into Tango territory, "Drop Your Mask" and crying-on-your-sleeve Country "Poor Man". The familiar "She's A Bad Motorcycle" (pow pow/motorcycle) is a perfect foil for Tav's growly-lisp. Six more cuts follow and each is perfect, in loopy Panther Burns style.

*In Greenville, Mississippi, around the end of the 19th Century, there was a large, tough cat that was fond of attacking workers on one of the region's plantations. For quite a while this panther, a bloodthirsty loner, avoided every attempt the locals made to either capture or kill it. Finally, one night, deep in the summer, a circle of gun-wielding planters trapped the renegade cat in a cane break which they immediately set to the torch. The death shrieks of the flaming panther cut through the dark heavy air for miles in every direction. People in the region were so shaken by the sound that the plantation became known as Panther Burns, and you can still find it there, down off Route 1, not far from the banks of the Mississippi River itself.*

— from the liner notes of *Deep In The Shadows*

## JODY STEPHENS

Jody has been with Ardent for close to a decade, hired first to promote the studio, he later became an Artist and Repertoire scout for the dusted off and relaunched record label. Jody has lent his drumming skills to more than a few acts who have recorded at Ardent. He can currently be heard singing lead on the hidden track of the new cd by Truck Stop Love, who recorded in Memphis.

During my trip to Memphis I couldn't believe what I found in the BIG STAR section at Shangri-la records. The 1982 release of Let's Go Get *Wild!* by Memphis band **SUSPICIONS** (Wild Hits Records) which consisted of brothers Michael (gtr/vox) and Jimmie Enright (keys/bass)with **Jody on drums and backup vox!** Jody has fond memories of Suspicions and insists they were packing'em into the Madison clubs, yet I must say listening to Suspicions recorded output that their 80s pop sound hasn't held up. Song titles such as "Groove Out!!", "Ghetto Cowboy" and "I've Had It With Love" should send out warning signals to anyone who lived through this stuff the first time around. In "What Can I Do" Michael Enright fess'es up, *I've got designer jeans/I'm a dance machine/A smooth talkin' wild man of means*. Oh my aching head. I'm really happy to have this momento from Jody's career but my suspicions were confirmed that this band wasn't meant to last forever.

Jody has kindly offered people a chance to purchase the tshirts that are sold at Big Star shows: They are black with the familiar neon star logo, large sizes only. For a mere $15.00 US (in North America) you'll get the shirt postpaid. Perhaps drop off your band's demo at the same time? Send cash or money order to Jody Stephens c/o 2000 Madison Avenue, Memphis TN 38104-2794

## AN ARDENT ADMIRER

Ardent Records has been putting out lots of music recently, including SPOT (alt-rock), TECHNO-SQUID EATS PARLIAMENT (ugh! what a name. Nice youthful pop) and soon, a second album from Little Rock's **2 MINUTES HATE**. Without a doubt, 2 Minutes Hate's *Worm* has been a favorite of mine from the past year. It would appear the group takes its name from the two minutes of daily hate routine found in George Orwell's novel 1984. Led by Barry Poynter who wrote and recorded *Worm* at his home studio, these guys are simply not to be missed. Much of their abstract lyrics focus on oppression ("In Amerika", "I Can't See For Miles") and relationships ("Mother Son"). This melodic, hard driving rock may not suit every Big Star fan, yet I'm in awe.

If you want to hear 2 Minutes Hate or the dolce tones of Alex Chilton check out the **Ardent Web page** (see address below)which has lots of label information, and sound bites from various groups. Ardent has also released two **AudioVision compact discs** which play in a regular cd player *and* cd rom. The information installs onto your hard drive and is readable on Mac's only (too bad). The titles are 2 MINUTES HATE's *Worm* and TECHNO-SQUID EATS PARLIAMENT's self titled debut. The minimum requirements to run these are 5 MB Ram 040 processor and, well a cd-rom drive which left me and my good ol' Mac Plus in the dark. To check out the program I visited the Future Shop, a huge computer store here in Vancouver where they gladly let me install the program (couple of minutes) and watch to my hearts content —about a half hour standing!—the staff were rather curious as this sort of product is still a rarity. I didn't have time to check out Techno-Squid, but 2 Minutes Hate was a blast: 4 videos, lyrics to every song, a tour through leader Barry Poynter's home studio and slightly cheezy interviews with fans (which included a member of Son Of Slam). It's nice to see Ardent on the cutting edge of an innovation that may (should!) become industry standard in the next few years.

**Ardent in cyberspace:** <http://www.wspice.com/ardent/ardent/html>

## ALEX CHILTON/BEN LEE
### Maxwell's, Hoboken, New Jersey
by DAWN EDEN

The crowd at Maxwell's has always been a mix of world-weary punk veterans, trendy collegiates and alternative-rock celebs pretending to be proles. Not surprisingly, tonight's pairing of youthful Aussie heartthrob Ben Lee and unsinkable elder statesman Alex Chilton fills the club's shoebox-shaped band room to capacity.

Ben Lee is 16 and looks 12. Cradle-snatched by the Beastie Boys and signed to their Grand Royal imprint, Lee has the fresh, shiny look of one who has not yet begun to shave. Picture Adrian Mole with a low-slung Fender. He's backed by a band every bit as perky as he (they turned down Liz Phair's current tour to fulfil their obligation to Lee). Although Lee is known for singing about how he wishes he were the Lemonheads' Evan Dando, his narrow-eyed concentration and hard-edged innocence is more reminiscent of a young Pete Townshend, or at least Speedy Keen.

As I stand in front of the stage, I'm keenly aware of a stringy-haired youth on my left whose manic dancing cuts a wide swathe through the crowd. In a flagrant violation of New Jersey fire law, he's also smoking. When Lee finishes his set, this hyped-up kid leans up and says something in his ear. Then he climbs onstage for the encore, as Lee says, "in the pages of Rolling Stone, I can see it now." They do a tender duet of Gram Parson's Thousand Dollar Wedding. Only then do I realise that the offending puffer *is* Evan Dando.

By the time Alex Chilton's band takes the stage, the place is packed. Backed by bass and drums, Chilton starts with an impromptu take on Why Should I Care?, the tune Laurence Olivier sang in The Entertainer. It's a perfect choice since Chilton's at a similar point in his career to John Osborne's hero, a legend tired of performing the same old song and dance. When he finishes, one wag shouts, "The return of Archie Rice!" Chilton grins.*

Then the band swings into Te-Ni-Nee-Ni-Nu, a Slim Harpo tune Chilton covered on the 1986 LP Feudalist Tarts, the comeback album he made after working as a New Orleans dishwasher. The rest of the set consists solely of songs from Chilton's comeback period, particularly his two most recent albums, the all-covers Clichés and the mostly-covers A Man Called Destruction. Both discs are on the Memphis label Ardent, signifying Chilton's return to the label that fostered the legendary Big Star, but there the similarity ends. Ever since Chilton returned to recording and performing in the '80's, he has preferred blues tunes and standards to originals, but the message hasn't through to all his fans. In between each song are hopeful shouts for pre-'80s originals; "In The Street! Free Again!" someone even shouts for an obscurity from Chilton's first group, The Box Tops; "Sweet Cream Ladies, Forward March!" A fan holds up an index finger and says, "I want *one* Big Star song. Just *one*!" But Chilton long ago gave up on giving people what they want. When the audience pleads for his '78 double entendre Bangkok, he sighs, "It's been a while..." and goes into Clarence 'Frogman' Henry's But I Do.

While the material is far removed from Chilton's Big Star classics, he looks and sounds better than he has in years. The hair is back to its Box Tops length, and his boyish face looks like that of the 16-year-old kid who sang The Letter. His voice is surprisingly flexible, and he's regained the sweet upper range that he all but lost in the '80s. He's regained some of his lost charisma too. When the crowd calls him back for a second encore, he approaches the mike to say he's too tired, then realises there *is* one more thing he can do. Smiling, he bends down. "OK, anybody want to kiss my bald spot?"

***The above review originally appeared in issue #20 of MOJO (July 95)which is the best UK music magazine on the market. The mag lends focus to all things British (natch) plus all things from...Memphis! Issue #20 featured Isaac Hayes discussing his back catalogue (his new album is titled Pointblank)and past articles have included a history of the Mississippi. Because it's an import MOJO usually sells for about eight bucks but I dare say it's worth it.***

* Editor's note: If you're wondering **"Who the hell is Archie Rice?"**, allow me to assist. I looked in my trusty *Leonard Maltin's TV movies and video guide* (paperback 1989 edition) under The Entertainer and it appears Archie Rice was the character played by Laurence Olivier. The movie (1960-British, 3 stars) is described as "Seedy vaudevillian ruins everyone's life and won't catch on. Film captures flavor of chintzy seaside resort, complementing Olivier's brilliance as egotistical song-and-dance man."

The **BEE GEES** were never a big fave of mine: way too young to know their early work I was one of the anti-Disco brigade when *that* film hit the screen in 1977. And while I probably won't run out and grab a Bee Gees collection anytime soon, Eggbert records release of Bee Gees covers titled ***Melody Fair*** has me rethinking the Bee Gees place in music history. This is downright splendid...Maurice, Barry and Robin...who'da thunk!? Lush, melodious timeless tunes from the groups early days are abundant here. The Fastbacks, Baby Lemonade, Jigsaw Seen, Kristian Hoffman (from the Mumps), Material Issue, Beri Rhoades (a niece of the Gibbs!) and the Young Fresh Fellows are just a few of the 21 groups found on *Melody Fair*.

Considering how Eggbert has turned me on to the Bee Gees I can't wait to hear their forthcoming ***Sing Hollies In Reverse*** with covers of the group whose "Long Cool Woman In A Black Dress" rocked my pre-teen world in as opposite a way the Bee Gees had. Bands include The Posies "King Midas In Reverse"; Mitch Easter "Pay You Back With Interest"; Tommy Keene and Gin Blossoms "Carrie Anne" and Vancouver's Cub with "You Know He Did". Beautiful! Perhaps Eggbert will consider a Big Star tribute? (Eggbert Records 2755 Via Hacienda PO Box 10022 Fullerton, CA 92635)

*The following Panther Burns nugget originally appeared in the May 1995 issue of* ***BlueSpeak*** *the Memphis freebie which watches the Blues/Rock scene. Editor Norm Shaw gave permission to reprint.*

## Tav Falco's Panther Burns

### *Shadow Dancer* (Upstart Records)

You already know if you like this record. Sure, it's not being released until May 16 , but you really do already know if you like it.

It all comes down to this: If you like Tav's stuff with the Panther Burns, you'll like this record. If you don't, *Shadow Dancer* won't change your mind. So let's look at it from both sides now.

**For Tav Fans:** What's not to like. Tav is back and he's brought everything you love with him: ballads, tangos, rock 'n' roll and more than a little quirkiness and humor. He covers everyone from Dean Martin to Bobby "Blue" Bland to Dion.

Shadow Dancer made one longtime Tav fan laugh out loud on more than one occasion, particularly "Music Maestro Please." The song opens with Tav having an exchange with Henry the maitre d' and goes on to be a classic piano-bar ballad.

Musically, the Panther Burns sound as accomplished as ever. Alex Chilton lends a hand, as does Jim Dickenson. The join a current lineup of drummer Jim Sclavunos and keyboardist/producer Perry Michael Allen.

When Tav wails into "Quando Vedrai La Mia Raggazza" you will smile, and it is a smile that will stay with you throughout *Shadow Dancer*.

**For Tav Haters**: The word pretentious comes to mind when listening to the Panther Burns' eighth release. So does stop. As in hit the stop button on your tape or CD player.

Most of the songs are overdone and poorly performed. Let's face it, Tav doesn't have the best voice in the world, and it adds nothing to the overwrought arrangements. The best thing that can be said about Shadow Dancer is that it isn't overly long.

**For the Tav Neutral**: So should you buy this record? The bottom line is that there is more right with this than wrong. Tav is a Memphis institution and deserves our support. Shadow Dancer does get better with each listen, plus many of these songs will translate well to the stage. A tour is planned, so pick up a copy before the concert. If nothing else, it will probably make you laugh — for good or bad.

## Busted Flush

### *Between Time* (Nod)

George Reinecke has played guitar with both Panther Burns and Alex Chilton, and now lives in Toronto where he leads Busted Flush. *Between Time* consists of ten cuts in total. This is the most depressing material I've heard in eons. A sample of lyrics include: "Everytime I turn on my tv Satans face is laughing at me", "And if you never die I'll always love you", "In my mind I've killed you all a 1000 times", "Nobody wants you around", "Fate was unkind". The album wraps up with "The Little Engine That Couldn't" — why couldn't the Little Engine, you ask? Simple... "Cos he didn't care!". Gor George, lighten up! Dreadfully sad yes, yet interesting nonetheless and besides we *like* that sad stuff.

Hey troublemaker! Want some skinny on the Panther Burns/Tav Falco experience from someone who was there from the beginning? Then you should check out A CONFESSIONAL!!! by Ross Johnson, the original Panther Burns drummer. This digest size "tell all" includes the origins of the band (in 1978 Ross played with Alex in the three piece Yard Dogs); lots of cool gig posters; and the Ross Johnson Discography (he drummed on three cuts for *Like Flies on Sherbert*). Mr Johnson seems somewhat bitter about his musical past (he's now a librarian) yet cheerfully admits his booze-laden antics were none too helpful to his music career. A CONFESSIONAL!!! is a very funny read: "In a band full of drama queens I was usually the most hysterical..." Ross continues to make noise, most recently on local Memphis label Sugar Ditch Records who produced the vanity 7" It Never Happened b/w I Forgot to Remember to. ***To order A CONFESSIONAL!!! send $3.00 to Shangri-la 1916 Madison Ave. Memphis, TN 38104. Also write to Andria c/o Shangri-la to see what's up with Sugar Ditch.***

*Dennis Sacks runs the Loud List, an email discussion group focused on* ***Scott Miller*** *and his music. Miller's band is* ***The Loud Family*** *and they have recorded that Big Star chestnut "Back Of A Car". Dennis asked Scott a few questions pertaining to Big Star's ongoing appeal. To join the Loud List email <loud-fans-request@primenet.com>.*

**BOAC: What is it about Big Star that has influenced so many people?**

**Scott Miller:** Probably that it's the most gorgeous stuff on the planet and it would be awfully nice if they, too, could do that. I guess Chilton kind of dismisses those records, but that literally means nothing. What makes that material so great is the effortless use of a vast musical vocabulary—the guy clearly had an amazing gut-level understanding of jazz, soul, British invasion and country, and that's so much accumulated clout that he really didn't need any grander design than wanting to tell the world how he'd been fucked over in love.

One underappreciated factor is Jody Stephens's drumming. That fills-that-go-on-forever style really creates a mysterious poetic reinforcement of the restlessness and confusion in the lyrics. Jody is one the best ever in my opinion.

**BOAC: How do you think they changed the direction of popular music (or did they?)**

**Scott Miller**: They certainly did, and probably more because of BIG STAR THIRD than the other records, although I personally consider RADIO CITY a marginally better record, all things considered. In the mid seventies that particular sort of cracked persona was entirely unheard of, and at the time hardly anyone who listened to that session really got it. There were some rough approximations around, like maybe Syd Barrett or Lou Reed, but for the most part any time you had artists trying to translate that dissolute outcast vibe onto vinyl, it ended up being really stagy, either a crazy-man schtick which could be anyone from Screamin' Jay Hawkins to Alice Cooper to Nine Inch Nails, or the outlaw rocker image which we all know was mighty old even then.

THIRD is one of only two records I've ever heard which were just plain shocking, by which I mean gave me a physical case of the creeps (the other was HORSES by Patti Smith). At least at the time, it seemed like a bottomless pit of negative subject matter, yet from an artist who wasn't trying to play wacko for the kiddies—his lyrics were conversational yet weird and compelling, and the arrangements were ambitious but at the same time completely uningratiating.

Once you get the hang of the record, it presents a surprisingly catchy worldview—sort of a gauzy detachment amid deep troubles—and today it's possible to make a reasonable living with this kind of sound. The worthiest practitioners are probably Pavement.

***Oasis were interviewed in MOJO, that swell British music mag which lends focus to all sorts of music, not just flavor-of-the-month. Mark Ellen conducted an interview with Noel Gallagher from the group. Here's a segment which may interest/infuriate Big Star fans.***

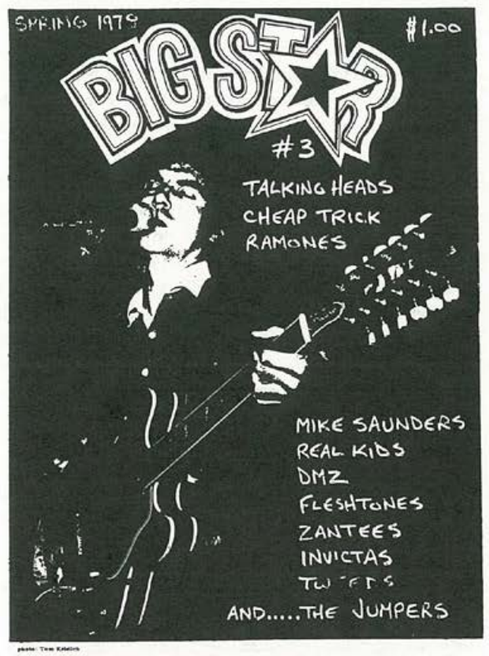
[Ellen questioning Noel on musical influences]

**Dwight Twilley? Big Star?**

I'm not having Big Star at all. I got force-fed Big Star by Alan McGee when we signed the deal. We're the only band on Creation who don't like them. Fact.

**So It's written into the Creation contract then? "We, the undersigned, promise to worship Big Star."**

You have to like Big Star and The Beach Boys. And we lied at the interview. We said we fuckin' love 'em! Got the deal then said they're shit. One night I was round at Alan's and he's got the biggest record collection I've ever seen, thousands upon thousands of albums, and it was one Big Star track after another. He's that hyper he plays you the first two bars then takes it off and plays you another one, like 30 records a minute. You think, play me the tune, man, so I can hear it! And he's going "Lussunnathat snare drum d'ya like it?" I didn't hear it! "You *must* fucking like it!" He always says, "Come round my house and we'll play records". Should be written on his gravestone: COME ROUND MY GRAVE AND WE'LL PLAY RECORDS. But you never get to hear them as he talks all the way through.



## THE TONIGHT SHOW HATES ME

by ELIZABETH IVANOVICH

**31st October 1994**

**11:29 pm:** It's been a long evening. I've been trying to study for an evil statistics quiz, and it hasn't been easy. I gaze at my watch. My heart swells—Big Star will be on the Tonight Show within minutes! I run downstairs—the dorm TV seems to get everything but NBC. This isn't a good sign. I run to my best friend's dorm and peep into the lounge; unfortunately, someone's watching "Annie Hall". Finally I sprint to my frosh-year dorm. TV not in use—yeah! I plop myself down into an ugly green armchair and pop a blank tape into the VCR...

**11:40 pm:** Leno's giving the longest monologue ever. He occasionally switches to a live satellite link in Reno, where correspondent Bill Maher promises LIVE FOOTAGE of Tiny Tim's third wedding. I writhe in agony.

**11:55 pm:** Tons of commercials (henceforth referred to as TOC).

**November 1st**

**12 am:** Matthew Broderick is the first guest. He seems vaguely bemused as Leno forces him to talk about enemas and his childhood Lanacane commercial. This is turning a bit surreal. It's 12:15 by the time the interview is over. I panic.

**12:16 am:** TOC part two, followed by Tiny Tim's third wedding (as promised). There's no need to go into the details—I've lived the horror for you. TOC part three.

**12:21 am:** Jennifer Tilly. My God, what a bimbo! She drones on endlessly about her cat. I scream at the TV set, frightening various dorm residents. It seems like she will never quit. Then, miraculously, I hear a blip. "We have to cut her off?" Leno asks. "I didn't even get to finish my story," Tilly pouts. No one in the audience seems to mind. I smile wickedly, thanking God for ruthless stage managers.

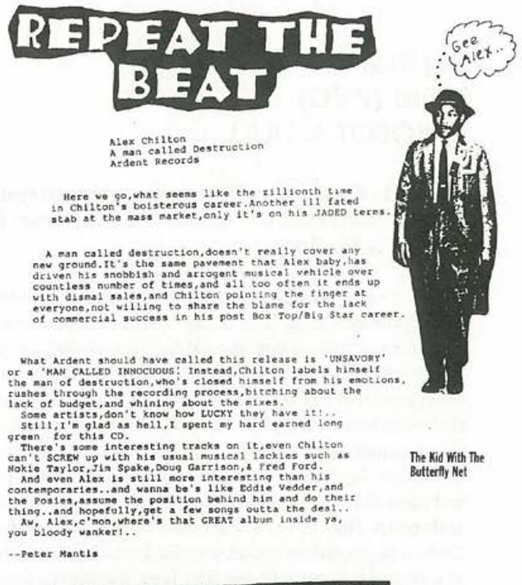
**12:23 am:** TOC part three. I am officially freaking out.

**12:27 am:** At last! I whoop with glee. Leno introduces Big Star by saying, "Rolling Stone called this band the missing link between the Beatles and the Replacements"—this amuses me to no end. Cut to the stage as "In The Street" gears up. The guys seem a bit nervous, but they cover it up with tons of poise (especially Ken and Jon, who look rather elegant in their suits). I hope for the extra-high, Beach Boys-esque harmonies that the band employed for the song at their Fillmore show, but no dice. It doesn't matter, though—the band is a welcome beacon of grace and class on an otherwise abysmal show. I sit transfixed with joy.

**12:30 am:** The song ends. Leno walks over to shake their hands as he mumbles a few compliments. Alex looks world-weary as usual, and Ken bears a look of gentle defeat on his face. Jody and Jon seem a bit shell-shocked. "Good night!" Leno cries. "What? It's OVER?!" I wail. I feel a fierce maternal protectiveness washing over me. "Network TV jerks!" I bellow. "Come play KZSU, boys—we'll give you a full hour! More, if I can help it!"

**12:33 am:** I trudge back to the dorm, and write irate e-mail messages to a few sympathetic friends.

**1:00 am:** I fall asleep at last, secure in the knowledge that Big Star will not go down so easily—even if my statistics grade can.




Every town has a rawk guy who is gonna tell it like it is, damn the torpedoes etc. Enter **Peter Mantis** whose **LOAFING THE DONKEY** zine is a scream. LTD comes out whenever Peter feels like it (usually quarterly) and is cut and paste punkiness throughout. Issue #45 was 88 pages, and included this review of MCD and the "Big Star is dead" graphic—them's fighting words Mantis!—an indepth history of the HELLCATS by one of the members, a look at the OBLIVIANS, a notorious naughty boy trio, plus a review of IT CAME FROM MEMPHIS...and that's *just* the Memfiss stuff.

*Send 3 bucks cash to Peter @123 Stonewall #1 Memphis, TN 38104-2455 for the latest issue.*

THE THE *Hanky Panky* (Sony)

The The's Matt Johnson was *born* to cover the gloriously sad music of Hank Williams Sr and while some might think it slightly audacious to release an *entire* album of Williams music...why quibble? This works and works menacingly well. Matt's music has always been depressing yet not without a glimmer of hope. In the liner notes to *Hanky Panky* Johnson writes "There are few songwriters this century who have expressed the deep ache of loneliness & the longing for love as darkly & sweetly as Hank Williams". These words could also be said of Johnson's work in The The; anguish sweeps through his own tunes and is also captured on this tribute record. Word has it the next The The album is titled *Gun Sluts* and that further planned tributes include Robert Johnson and (yikes!) possibly the Beatles.

## Big Star
## Third (PVC)

by ROBOT A. HULL

**As read in Creem circa '79 (nestled between reviews of Peter Tosh's *Bush Doctor* and The Boomtown Rats *A Tonic For The Troops*)**

Growing up in Memphis back in '67, I used to get tired of hearing the Box Top's "The Letter" (#1 hit in the world that year) on the radio every second because djs felt obligated to redundantly remind listeners that here, at last, was a home town band that had hit the Big Time. (in the eyes of Nehru-clad visionaries, Memphis' Sun rockabilly and Stax soul—the untamed past — were irrelevant to the expectations for a bright Sgt. Pepper future.) Fame's a brief candle though, and soon the Box Tops were mere inserts in the annals of anthropop. That is, until '72 when their ex-vocalist Alex Chilton began making racket with Big Star, a name not meant as a cynical reference to the Box Tops' instant stardom but simply referring to Memphis' Big Star supermarket chain, where as a teen I used to buy *Hit Parader* (which printed the lyrics to all the Box Tops' hits).

Too much has been written about Big Star's lack of success. True, *#1 Record* and *Radio City* (now reissued) are infectious pop LPs, but they're also rather uneven, their best moments on singles (ie. "When My Baby's Beside Me," "September Girls"). As for Alex Chilton, his cultism is worth examining, not only because his recent works, the *Singer Not The Song* EP and "Bangkok" 45, are well-crafted gems, but also because he's still out there fighting for fresh sounds (despite a disbanded Big Star, whose influence is heard in the music of Sneakers/Chris Stamey and Memphis' Scruffs). And it is Chilton that, after Big Star LPs became bulk items in cut-out bins, went back into the studio, undoubtedly depressed as hell, to record a third album, one that he often has called "strange". "I don't know how to connect it with the other two," Chilton has remarked of the album, which was cut a few years ago and has only recently seen the official light of day. "It's a totally weird thing."

Personal albums can be a real pain (eg. John Lennon screaming for his mom on *Plastic Ono Band* or Pete Townshend accepting one note on *Who Came First*), but Chilton doesn't expose himself so openly; instead he chooses to hide behind every quirk — untuned guitars and spastic cadences — letting each sound conceal his troubled psyche. Sometimes, as Chilton's persona takes over, Big Star's *3rd* sounds like the record is actually warped — the needle, as it dips, eating into a groove and then, as it bounces up, skipping into space. The album even seems to begin at the wrong speed with "Stroke It Noel," a sagging melody that suddenly bursts into the flowery ebullience of the Left Banke. Fortunately by the second cut ("For You"), the speed accommodates warm sentiment smothered in baroque orchestration.

Surprisingly, *3rd* never becomes bogged down with Chilton's own bitterness. Each gray moment, like "Take Care" (about the anguish of partings) that ends side one, is always followed by a colorful frolic like "Jesus Christ," the glorious Epiphany that begins side two. Most of the songs convey the serenity of solitude (esp. "Big Black Car"), evoking the lonesome moodiness of Alexander Spence's *Oar* (perhaps the quietest, but quirkiest, personal LP of all time). But what causes Chilton's work to finally congeal is not introspection but exploration — a musical outside himself that will contain all emotional flux. If that seems like a contrived analysis, then listen to "Holocaust" on which an eerie synthesizer and a cello struggle to dissonant death and a pianist, as silently as possible diminishes a chord in the background while in the middle Chilton sings, "Your mother's dead...you're on your own...she's in bed." Next, play "Kanga Roo" with its random drum swats, feedback, distortion, guitars strummed with clubs and fists, and listen to everything jump into place when Chilton grunts, "Doin' the ..uh..*cool jerk*." Concluding this twisted LP is "Thank You Friends," a humble bow to those dedicated few who have shared an experience beyond the common rabble of techno-babble.

Since the LP's songs were in the compositional stage when finally recorded, Big Star's *3rd* (or Alex Chilton's *1st*) is a sloppy surprise quite difficult to approach. Chilton's genius was in allowing the songs to remain untouched, a decision that intentionally reflected his confused state. Because they tend to reveal little more than the artist's mushrooming ego, personal albums usually make me sick. But this one just happens to be a haphazard masterpiece.

***In trying to track down "Robot" for permission to reprint the above, BOAC pieced together that his real name is Robert (dur!) and that he possibly lives in either LA or Washington and continues to write, most likely for television.***

**BACON RAY** (self titled cassette)

***Sizzling facts about Bacon Ray:***

* Merlin Mann, Mike Coleman and Chris Gleasman will rock you to the moon.

* Their debut tape with 9 songs is a steal at four bucks.

* Merlin and Mike take turns on lead vox, two for the price of one.

* Catch the sly occasional homage to 70's rawk riff. "Detroit Rock City" is one.

* If you enjoy the Presidents of the United States, Ween (who they've opened for ooh!), Peru Ubu and other such cats you really should investigate.

* If you don't get a lump in your throat during the ballad "Chimpanzees & Tang" (Every girl I've ever loved has joined the Space Program now) you are not human.

* Don't worry...there's only the one ballad.

*The inside cover of the tape has the band disguised as Charlies Angels, although only drumer Mike's face is visible (he's cute!).

* Merlin has a home page <http://freenet3.scri.fsu.edu:81/users/merlin/index.html>

***I beseech you to consider popping $4.00 into an envelope and sending it to Merlin @ 1433 South Grape St #A Tallahasee, FL 32303-5635. In turn you may be the first on your block to know the magic that is Bacon Ray!***

## PICKING POSIES WITH TOM

by Thomas Durkin

We, the Big Star faithful, all know about one fortuitous afternoon in Columbia, Missouri when Alex and Jody allowed all of us to make a wish on a Big Star once again. We also know that they were short a bassist and perhaps a second guitarist. A genuine reunion is impossible, as Chris Bell died tragically, and is perhaps playing guitar for John Lennon's latest project, and Andy Hummel was not interested in any projects not involving rocketships. In their places were Jonathan Auer and Ken Stringfellow, who form the core of The Posies.

The Posies are a Seattle band formed in 1987 by Jon and Ken, two friends who shared a passion for power pop (and had known each other since elementary school). For their first album *Failure* not only did Jon and Ken write all the songs, they played every instrument, recorded the album in their living room (on used tape!) and released the album themselves. *Failure*, while shining with fresh-faced innocence, shows a firm grasp of the tenets of pop songcraft without blatantly pilfering what has gone before.

So why did they call themselves "The Posies"? Ken explains, "We just thought it was a stupid name in a way. It had a kind of annoying charm to it." And besides, "We had to commit to something to put on the tape covers, so we said, 'All right, let's commit to that. That'll do...'" In order to bring the show on the road, the Posies gained a bass player and drummer.

In 1990, the Posies signed to Geffen Records, and along with Sonic Youth and John Doe (of X) became one of the first acts on the brand new DGC imprint. Their major label debut *Dear 23*, featuring such radio staples as "Golden Blunders" and "Suddenly Mary", was released in September of 1990. It showed a pop sound maturing: developing in different directions yet remaining true to the melodies.

The band then released *Frosting On The Beater* in April of 1993. It heralded a harder-edged sound that, coincidentally, fit in easily with the current Seattle alternative scene without sacrificing any of their pop smarts. However, Ken claims that the sound of *Frosting* was NOT a conscious effort to fit into the current sound, but a natural band progression. "We could have done something more ridiculous if we were trying to do grunge. In some ways we're so oblivious to what's going on....I don't know if I react to what's popular." The band did more touring to support *Frosting*, which was finding radio success on the strength of "Dream All Day" and "Solar Sister".

At this point came the Big Star reunion show. Needless to say, the Posies were truly able to passionately replicate the reverent Big Star sound, as proven by their single of Big Star's "Feel", backed by a heartfelt version of Chris Bell's "I Am The Cosmos". But how did they get the job? "We just hassled and lobbied," Ken says. "We knew Jody, and he liked our stuff, and he knew what big fans we were. And then, it just kinda worked out that nobody else did it. They (the people putting on the show) wanted some popular guys, 'berg (Paul Westerberg), Matthew Sweet, and all that other shit, but those guys couldn't or wouldn't do it. Alex was indifferent, and Jody had recommended us. When the smoke cleared, we were there and willing to do it. At one point, they had no choice. We didn't need to 'talk about it'. and we wouldn't take no for an answer." As far as how the two Posies played, they received a high compliment from Jody Stephens, who said, "Their record of "Feel" and "I Am The Cosmos" gets *so* close to the whole Chris Bell vibe. I was really proud of having chosen them; their performance was just incredible."

So Ken, what's it like to work with Alex Chilton?

"He's, um, actually pretty professional, usually, especially towards us. He was pretty nonplussed about the whole thing, he didn't see the need to rehearse or anything. His commitment factor was that he could just take it or leave it, so that means he wasn't as bent out of shape by things that someone else might. His attitude was ,'Let's just go out and do these shows and make some money.'"

Currently the Posies are completing a new album with Nick Launay producing; his credits include Midnight Oil, Talking Heads, Public Image Ltd, and perhaps most impressively to the Posies, work on XTC's *Black Sea* as engineer. When Launay told the group that he had since modeled his sound after that album, Jon and Ken said, "What a coincidence..."

***Thomas Durkin originally wrote BOAC an insightful history of the Posies which although a tad too big to appear here, will be on the BOAC web page. He agreed to 'chop' his piece to the above synopsis of the band. Tom lives in Chicago where he caught Big Star's show at the Metro on June 8/94.***

Someone else also caught the Chicago gig on tape and has released the Italian bootleg ***Big Star: pick some posies & let's play***. A friend sent me a copy [a lovely gesture] yet otherwise I doubt I'd have picked it up. What ticks me off about live concert boots is the extreme expense and often, as in this case, dubious sound quality. This audience tape sounds "okay" yet frankly nowhere as good as my tape from the San Francisco gig (which another good Samaritan sent me).

That said, if you want a souvenir from the Big Star shows of 94 you can fork out $30 for the Italian boot at your local record shop or send me a blank 90 min tape, plus postage $1.25 to US *and* an additional 90 min tape filled with your fave tunes (my payment) I'll pass on the San Francisco show from June 5, 94.

In July 95 I received an unsigned letter (how mysterious!) from someone announcing the upcoming bootleg titled ***Beale St. Green.*** There will be older studio outtakes plus live material from primarily Chilton/with some Big Star, 22 tracks in total. While I believe purchasing a live concert is a ripoff, a collection of rarities as this is somewhat exciting. *Beale St. Green* promises to include an instrumental outtake "Another Time, Another Place, and You" from the *#1 Record* sessions.

## BIG STARESQUE SOUNDS

Four years ago Rough Trade records released ***Medium Cool*** a collection of jazz classics made famous by Chet Baker and performed by Adele Bertei, James White (anyone recall the Contortions?), Angel Torsen and **Alex Chilton**. Cuts include "Let's Get Lost" and the liner notes are written by poet John Giorno. Alex performs "That Old Feeling", "Like Someone In Love" and "Look For The Silver Lining". The feel is very similar to *Clichés*, Alex's acoustic covers release.

Rob Koenig, leader of Mineola, NY pop group **THE KEYS** sent BOAC a package containing some of their work. The Big Star connection clearly comes across when they cover "O My Soul" on their tape ***Changes***. Oddly, the cassette notes bear no mention that Big Star is covered — oops. This six song ep is available through the Key's PO Box #1672 Mineola, NY 11501

A representative of EMI emailed me shortly after the first BOAC came out. Would I like to hear **SUPERSTAR** and their self titled debut? With **Alex Chilton** playing guitar on a cut, I was intrigued. Well, the poor rep was quite disappointed when, some weeks later, I truthfully told him via email that Superstar weren't up my alley. Imagine George Michael leading the houseband on a Cruise ship travelling the English Channel. Schmaltzy overwrought luv pop to the N-th degree. Haven't heard from the rep since, but he did give me a bunch of Superstar stickers...write me if you want a few.

Jac Calabro and I had an interesting mail discussion concerning **THE PHOIDS** (NG records) debut release which he sent me after checking out BOAC. Jac sings lead with this NYC band whose ***mushyheadedgoogoomouth*** simply rocks! I'd describe the sound as a more melodic Dinosaur Jr with certain Nirvanaesque touches here and there, especially in song structure. They do one cover song — Big Star's "Feel" — you want to hear this version! The one thing I didn't like about *mushy* was what led to our snailmail conversation: the inner cd sleeve has four pages, giving the band a chance to print lyrics, band bio's and all that important stuff. What did The Phoids do? Put pictures of two terribly grotesque children in this space. They also put four similar little pics next to each band member's name/credit information. I'm sorry, but deformities just aren't humorous and I let Jac know how I felt. He replied, acknowledging my thoughts in a calm, collected manner, while giving his views on these photos (they aren't going away). This drama aside, I must say the Phoids sound fine and their well produced cd is worth checking out. NG records 622 Broadway, Room 4B New York, NY 10012 or call (212) 505-5414.

**EPIC SOUNDTRACKS** was a founding member of Englands **SWELL MAPS** and has long been a Big Star fan. Epic interviewed Alex Chilton in the mid 80's for What a Nice Way to Turn 17, a British zine. The recent release ***Sleeping Star*** (Bar None) has Epic sharing an affinity with Chilton via the Brill Street sound of NYC. Piano and vox comprise many of the cuts on this very quiet album. "Emily May" sounds like a 60s pop gem, "Hear The Whistle Blow" fades in and out so quietly I had to check the disc was still running. Very nice.

The **ACTION FIGURES** are from Washington, DC and ***Little Citizens*** (Eggbert) is their second album. Eggbert, who are putting out nothin' but the best pop sounds around has a press release which states "Imagine Alex Chilton fronting Smashing Pumpkins after ingesting the entire Neil Young catalog and you might have an idea." While not quite as heavy musically as this image conjures, the Action Figures are indeed somewhat Chiltonesque and very fresh sounding. No Big Star covers but the Stones "Dandelion" is given a once over.

At Shangri-la in Memphis I came across a used double vinyl collection titled ***Love Is My Only Crime*** (Veracity) from Germany. This love-struck lp contains many Memphis acts including the Country Rockers, **Alex Chilton**, Tav Falco and Sid Selvidge (whose Peabody label originally released *Like Flies On Sherbert* and may very well be re-releasing it in the coming year w/bonus tracks). At 25 bucks I passed on the lp [why yes I *am* kicking myself...] yet I took the time to jot down these romantic thoughts the liner notes had to say of AC: "Alex Chilton is one of the last heroes, an august knight in shining armor, who patches up broken, embittered and even hopelessly hardened hearts."

My friend Dennis from Toronto has introduced me to much important music this past year including **RAINY DAY**, **BILL LLOYD** and **TOMMY KEENE**. Rainy Day's self titled release (Enigma, 1988) was a one-shot collection of cover songs compiled by members of Rain Parade and friends. Artists covered include Pete Townshend, Dylan, Lou Reed, Hendrix, Neil Young and Alex Chilton (**"Holocaust"**). Dennis introduced me to Bill Lloyd's hard to find *Feeling The Elephant* (dB records) and I later befriended Bill online and we swapped his new release *Set To Pop* (ESD)for ~ copy of BOAC. The Big Star vibe is recognized in Lloyd's material as are the influences of many pop greats, including Marshall Crenshaw who appears on *STP* – however, Bill stamps each tune with his own twists and turns (and he's funny! Catch the AC/DC homage on one track) A few people aside from from Dennis have tried to turn me onto Tommy Keene whose *Places That Are Gone* includes a cover of Alex's **"Hey! Little Child"**. Listening to Keene I hear a mild, well meaning pop singer whose songs all sound the same; obviously this isn't what other's are hearing, so who knows? Alias records released a 'best of' Keene compilation last year.

In 1989 **DANGTRIPPERS** released their sole album *Days Between Stations* on REM manager Jefferson Holt's Dog Gone label. The album's lovely homme-fille obsessed pop didn't find it's audience — keep an eye out for it. In 1995 the (long gone) group's guitarist/singer **DEVIN HILL** released *Stars* (Big Deal). While the title may get Big Star fans hopes up, let me say *Stars* isn't Big Staresque in sound at all...yet lyrically this gentle country-tinged album easily recalls emotions found on Big Star releases (minus much of the angst).

I picked up a copy of **TODD RUNDGREN'S *Something/ Anything*** primarily to check out "Slut", which Big Star cover on *Columbia*. While I appreciate Big Stars harder edged take, the rest of this record is amazing. No wonder Todd has such a cult following. Pop that's sweet yet never (too) wimpy; this came out in 1972.

It's a given that the British Invasion influenced Big Star and in concert they've performed **THE KINKS** "Till The End Of The Day" (also on the latest *3rd*). Then there's **THE WHO**: savage, brilliant rock originals in their prime. Two recent discs capture this spirit ***Who Covers Who*** (Cargo) is a treat and for those not familiar with the Who's legacy I'd be tempted to say pick this up instead of a Who collection. **Alex Chilton** shows up for "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" Highlights are the Hinnies on "Baba O'Riley", Blur living up to their name with a souped up "Substitute", and the two versions of "The Good's Gone", an oft overlooked Who track. Older Who fans rejoiced with the reissue of ***Live At Leeds*** (MCA) which includes a bunch of cuts not on the original and is totally remixed. The new tracks include music from Tommy and the coolest version of "Fortune Teller" imaginable. I'll admit to not spinning my vinyl version of Leeds for some years now and yikes is that version of "My Generation" really almost 15 minutes!? Wank wank wank...sounds good if yer in the mood, though. *Live At Leeds* was recorded on Valentines Day 1970 at Leeds University.

## OH CANADUH!

The collection of Canadian punk rock covers ***OH CANADUH!*** (Lance Rock) is pretty spiffy. It includes Vancouver's Smugglers (a Pointed Sticks song which, when performed live, the singer introduces as "I was in grade 3 when this came out!", making even me feel old and I was only in grade 8) as well as Bum (Viletones), Seattle's Young Fresh Fellows (DOA's "Disco Sucks" Yeeeeaaah!) and Fastbacks (Modernettes "Won't Have To Worry"). Japan's Supersnazz do the Dishrags and let's not forget the Dry Heaves "I Can't Puke" (actually I missed that one first time around) covered by The Evaporators. The only complaint about this rekkid is my vinyl version came with not one iota of information on either the groups covering or being covered. That's not punk...that's dumb. Lance Rock records 1223 College Drive Nanaimo BC V9R 5Z5.

The Nettwerk record label has many great bands on its roster and most of them can be found on their specially priced various artist collection ***Slowbrew/Percolator*** which boasts a mellow roast side (my words) and a perkier side (groan...me again). The mellow tunes include **GINGER, SARAH MCLACHLAN** and a **TASTE OF JOY**. The perkier cuts include mesmerizing **BRAINBOX**, **GRASSY KNOLL** and **DELERIUM**. Nettwerk are online! <http://www.wimsey.com/nettwerk/>

**SISTER LOVERS** and **PLUTO** were reviewed in the first BOAC and each now have full length recordings: **Sister Lover's** *Friendless* cd is incredible ("Radiator Girl" is thee pick to click) and Julian Lawrence, cover artist for this very magazine, also worked on *Friendless* (write Sister Lovers @ Horrifying Circus Music Box 78069, 2606 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC Canada V5N 5W1). **Pluto** honed their Ramones meet High School pop/rock into *Cool Way To Feel* (Mint) and word has it they are to be signed to a major label. Such excitement! Both Sister Lovers and Pluto played the BOAC launch party extravaganza last October.

Geoff Berner sings lead and writes the songs for **THE TERROR OF TINY TOWN** who are truly a unique outfit. Their songs have a dizzying range of styles, from seriously dramatic quasi-operatic to downright funky. I didn't much know *what* to think about the group until I saw their video for "Public Relations" which was one of the best I've ever seen, a mile a minute poke at Spin Doctors who "Make it sound sexy, safe and fun/Be it cigarettes, pesticides or guns". These guys are not yer typical rock group. Hey!: The Terror Of Tiny Town will play at this year's COMIX-A-GO-GO, the 3rd annual music/comic art extravaganza I organize, which should be sometime in November. Write TOTT @ 1928 Grant Street Vancouver, BC Canada V5L 2Y9.

What do you think of the band name **WRETCHED ETHYL**? I had convinced myself they simply must be a bunch of headbangers so ignored their existence for the longest while, until I met Charmaine, their vocalist, who assured me they weren't metal. In fact they are a pop-punk band with the emphasis on punk. Their 12 song cd *Ethyl Through The Window* consists of their *Free Radical* ep (oh yeah, it's political punk) and six live in studio tracks. Tight n' Fast stuff. Write Ethyl @ #3 - 1727 Grant Street Vancouver BC, Canada V5L 2V6.

**Vancouver is home to the International 3-DAY NOVEL CONTEST which began in 1978 as a barroom challenge and is now into its 18th year. The rules are concise: A novel is written during the Labour Day Weekend, September 2 to 4th, 1995. An outline of the book may be written previous yet ALL writing takes place during this one weekend. The contest attracts over 500 writers annually and the editorial board of Anvil Press and staff from sub-Terrain Magazine are the judges. The winning novel is published! There is an entry fee of $15 dollars. For a copy of the rules send a sase or irc if in the States to Brian Kaufman @ #204-A 175 East Broadway Vancouver, BC V5T 1W2**

**WILLIAM EGGLESTON** is a renowned photographer born and raised in Memphis who has held a silent connection with Big Star for years.

Eggleston's work, The Red Ceiling, was photographed at Greenwood, Mississippi in 1973 and appeared on the front cover of the Ardent release of *Radio City* in subsequent reissues the cover shot is replaced with Jody, Andy and Alex mugging for the camera during "rock and roll night" at Fridays, the Memphis restaurant on Madison (by the way, the guy with the "mutton chop" sideburns in the background is Gabe, the dj). Eggleston also took the photograph of Alex on the cover of his *Singer Not The Song* ep. More recently William supplied the cover photo for *Columbia* the live recording of Big Star's show at Missouri University (4/24/93): the image a ceiling light/fan unit, in stark white-on-white.

In *Ancient and Modern*, (Random House) one of many collections of Eggleston's work, he discusses **The Red Ceiling**:

*The Red Ceiling is so powerful, that, in fact, I've never seen it reproduced on the page to my satisfaction. When you look at a dye-transfer it's like it's red blood that is wet on the wall. The photograph was like a Bach exercise for me because I knew that red was the most difficult to work with. A little red is usually enough, but to work with an entire red surface was a challenge. It was hard to do. I don't know of any totally red pictures, except in advertising. The photograph is still powerful, it shocks you every time.*

*A highlight of my trip to Memphis was discovering the music of **Jr Kimbrough**. I planned on writing a rave about him for this edition of BOAC. Imagine my surprise upon arriving back home to find **ALEXANDER VARTY** had written the following opus on the Fat Possum label for the **Georgia Straight**, Vancouver's free entertainment weekly. Read on!*

Somehow it seems telling that the **Fat Possum** record label's logo shows a plump, sleepy-eyed marsupial salivating over a garbage can full of liquor bottles, sardine tins, and banana peels: the Oxford, Mississippi-based company specializes in unearthing gems where most other showbiz concerns would find only trash. Even by the standards set by such other blues labels as Alligator, Black Top, and Hightone, its records are crude and hard-edged— but that's just fine. Fat Possum specializes in the rough, rocking sounds of Mississippi's juke joints and roadhouses, and there would be no sense in presenting them any other way.

Label founder Robert Palmer has recorded his artists in a number of settings, but half of the Fat Possum offerings I've heard were cut at a Holly Springs, Mississippi, joint known only as Junior's Place, and they're exceptionally good documents of a blues tradition some had written off as dead only a few short years ago.

**Junior Kimbrough** owns Junior's Place and has two Fat Possum releases to his credit. He's 58, and he's been running his ramshackle bar for more than 30 years, but his music is ageless. Although hints of Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf can occasionally be heard in his compositions, Kimbrough makes those relatively rustic performers sound like city slickers; his springy, unpredictable rhythms contain an African echo of slavery days, and his raw, strained voice makes no attempt to carry a tune. All the same, his effect is hypnotic, and the kind of stumbling, shamanic grind the Rolling Stones had to work so hard for on *Exile on Main Street* seems to spring naturally from his fingers.

Kimbrough's first Fat Possum release, the somewhat misleadingly titled *All Night Long*, was recorded on a rainy afternoon, and it's a fittingly atmospheric record, full of brooding sentiments and sprawling monologues. It's notable primarily for "Meet Me in the City", which might have been an unremarkable Jimmy Reed-style shuffle were it not for Kimbrough's inability to conform to the 12-bar routines of ordinary blues. The tune's origins are revealed when bass, drums, and Kimbrough's guitar convene in brief boogie segments, but for much of its length *Meet Me in the City* is unrecognizable as blues, or, indeed, as anything other than pure Kimbrough, so mutated and stretched are its contours.

An anonymous second guitarist joins Kimbrough, bassist Garry Burnside, and drummer Kenny Malone (Kimbrough's common-law son) for *Sad Days, Lonely Nights*, a far meatier and more raucous effort than the relatively pensive All Night Long. There's also an odd—and, I'm sure, entirely unintentional—psychedelic touch to some of these songs, especially the 10-minute "Lord, Have Mercy on Me". This seems to be built upon a half-digested Albert King riff, as were several songs by Cream, and one almost expects Eric Clapton to make a guest appearance but of course ol' Slowhand could never produce anything as sloppily perfect as the buzzing slide guitar that materializes halfway through.

Kimbrough's performances are amateurish, monotonous, and marred by frequent miscues and fumbles. They're also steeped in the kind of authenticity most rock bands can only hint at, and in their dark intensity they're eclipsed only by slide guitarist **R.L. Burnside's** corrosive *Too Bad Jim*. Palmer calls Burnside "a connoisseur of chaos", tells a story of him mumbling "The Devil: that's who I've been serving" when he thought he wasn't being overheard, and cites a string of near-poltergeist accidents that accompanied the recording of this record, Burnside's second for Fat Possum.

Burnside learned his art at the feet of the late Mississippi Fred McDowell, and several of the songs found here were staples of the older bluesman repertoire. But McDowell sounds like an amiable old uncle next to his protege's slashing attacks. Burnside sounds as if he strings his Stratocaster with barbed wire and slides with the barrel of a .45 pistol. Driven by the rhythmic intensity of Burnside's right hand, *Too Bad Jim* grooves furiously, and its best songs—"Shake 'Em On Down" and "Old Black Mattie", in particular—have the power of an incantation. No wonder spooky things occurred during these sessions.

**CeDell Davis** is another veteran slide player, but on *The Best Of CeDell Davis* (which, by the way, isn't a compilation album) he's less spooky than strange. I can't conclusively tell whether Davis is the eccentric visionary some claim him to be, or simply incompetent. I'm inclined toward the latter opinion, however; the atonal racket he produces sounds more like someone reaching for (but failing to grasp) the cliches of the blues than someone determined to break away from them.

There's no question about the much younger **Dave Thompson's** prowess, however: on *Little Dave and Big Love*, he proves himself an adept contemporary blues guitarist, singer and songwriter, although his album comes as a smooth shock after the rough-hewn barrelhouse of most Fat Possum releases. Robert Cray fans might even enjoy it, although for sheer accessibility the best Fat Possum might be **David Malone's** *I Got The Dog in Me*.

Malone is another one of Junior Kimbrough's musical children, and on his CD debut he's joined by his brother Kenny Malone on drums, Thompson on lead guitar, and bassist Dwayne Burnside, who, like Kimbrough's bassist, Garry Burnside, Is R.L. Burnsides son (and a fine guitarist in his own right). The Burnside legacy of slashing slide guitar doesn't appear on *I Got the Dog in Me*, but the record goes offer a captivating and party-ready blend of romping single-chord vamps, sizzling rock-influenced leads, and good-humoured harmony vocals—and at the time it was released, Malone was expecting a child with girlfriend Pam Burnside (yes, R.L.'s daughter), so it's almost guaranteed that this particular family tradition will continue.

## STEVIE WONDER

So, have you checked out **Guided By Voices** yet? During this past year I became a fan and find them just splendid — Robert Pollard (an ex-third grade teacher!) and his mates are the most popular "lo-fi" practitioners around. The lo-fi label fits those home tapers who eschew fancy-schmancy recording techniques for a more gritty, economical studio setting with four track recording as the norm.

Although GBV have been at it for almost a decade they are beat in the longevity department by **R. Stevie Moore** who has been home taping since 1968 and selling his recordings through his Cassette Club. With over 200 tapes to his credit and more constantly in progress 43 year old Stevie has turned his hobby into a unique cottage industry supplemented by running a record store.

R. Stevie's voice is pleasant, at times speedy as hell, other times monotone: his 'songs' are utterly and completely unpredictable. Cover versions include Slade's "Mama Weer All Crazee Now", "Chantilly Lace" and Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun". His originals sometimes contain spoken word (pretty awful poetry) or spooky, tormented babbling. Musically we're reminded of Todd Rundgren, the Bonzo Dog Band, am radio rock, Cheap Trick, and acknowledged fave, Brian Wilson. Lyrically, as with most pop, the subject matter is primarily love won, lost and forgotten...in Stevie style that is.

For proof of Moore's notoriety look no further than Ira. A. Robbins *Trouser Press Record Guide* (Robbins being the most respected rock reviewer around sez BOAC) which positively gushes over the man and winds up by stating "The American record industry's failure to recognize and promote the unique gifts of this giant talent is a case of criminal neglect." And hey, not just any Joe gets his home studio reviewed in *Musician* magazine (6/83).

Write R. Stevie for his free 6 page catalogue of tapes available, or just do what BOAC did and send him some money and ask for his latest tape or a collection. With some 200 titles he's sure to have something for you. [No Alex or Big Star covers, I checked]. I happily wound up with *Phonography*, *Unpopular Singer* (both volumes) and *Teenage Spectacular* among other gems. Perhaps *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About R. Stevie Moore but Were Afraid to Ask*, would be a good place to begin. C90 tapes are $8, C60 are $6 and, if you buy two you get one free (way to go Stevie). There are also a couple of cd collections which are a whopping $18; it seems to me in this situation buying the cd would somehow defeat the purpose, but no matter, whatever the format I'd urge any music lover to experience the twisted beauty of Mr. Moore's tunes.

**R. Stevie Moore Cassette Club**
**429 Valley Road**
**Upper Montclair, New Jersey 07043**

## MINUS FIVE Old Liquidator (ESD)

by Allison Stewart

A more-interesting-than-usual side group composed of Peter Buck, Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow from the Posies, and beloved entertainer Scott McCaughey, the Minus Give seem to be taking this gig pretty seriously. Not only have they been unusually prolific (they released an EP through John Flansburgh's Hello CD Club), but their full-length debut doesn't have the blowsy, recorded-between-beer-runs feel of most side products (remember the Hindu Love Gods? Didn't think so). It's full of wise and well-crafted acoustic pop tunes, several of which would do an R.E.M. record proud. As usually happens with side projects, though, everyone on this has sounded better somewhere else. R.E.M. touring member McCaughey (who once titled a record *My Chartreuse Opinion*, as if you needed another reason to love him) leads the transcendent, unjustly ignored Young Fresh Fellows, R.E.M. used to be really good, and the Posies have had their moments. The Minus Five sound like a particularly adept bar band, which is good enough for *Old Liquidator*'s low-key folk tunes and its scattered party rave-ups. They aren't afraid to leave on all the onetakes, mistakes and outtakes either, plowing through the record's copious wrong notes with admirable dignity and aplomb.

**FILE UNDER:** Quirky but inspired rock 'n' roll.

**R.I.Y.L:** Young Fresh Fellows, late Replacements, NRBQ.

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If you're online, why not join **"Dear23" the Posies list** <dear23-request@seanet.com> for daily discussion about the band and their music delivered right to your email box, Ken Stringfellowsometimes contributes, too!

*Last spring* ***The Flaming Lips*** *musical combo surprised the world by making their network television debut on* ***Beverly Hills 90210****. The band played themselves, rocking out with their fairly successful "She Don't Use Jelly" ditty, as the 90210 crew looked on. This career move raised a few eyebrows and the following is the best analysis of the situation that I read online in the days following. It's certainly the only one that mentions the lads from Memphis!*

I'd like to express my disappointment, chagrin, nay, my sadness that the Flaming Lips would disgrace themselves by appearing on running dog Aaron Spelling's "sitcom," 90210. **Did Big Star pimp themselves by becoming house band on the Love Boat?** Did the Swell Maps play a perky number of two for the Jack Benny show? I don't think so! There are other ways to pay the bills, guys! Rock— 4th-network TV: two separate realms, like church and state or Models Inc. and Melrose Place, or Friends and E.R. Well, those two cute E.R. doctors did go a double date with the Friends roommates...But that doesn't invalidate my point.

## In the THIS RULES! department...

The folks behind the **World Domination** record company seem fairly easy going, given their no nonsense name. They have certainly been generous with BOAC, sending review material for many of their acts including LATIMER (well, the guys at work really enjoyed it!), LOW POP SUICIDE (now here's a band that's been through the wringer) and SKY CRIES MARY (Atmospheric Seattle group with revolving membership which has included Jon and Ken of the Posies). To be soul-bearingly honest, World Domination had sent so much music my way that I was beginning to feel a touch sad that they had nothing I could grab and truthfully shout out "This works for me! Incredible music!" until the day ***The Devil May Care*** by **THE PSYCLONE RANGERS** hit my mailbox.

How to describe the Psyclone Rangers? On *Devil* the first four tracks kick off in a pop-punk frenzy (whoo! those lyrics to "Tilt-A-Whirl" are rough) and, just when you think you've got'em pegged, the lads slip into the accusing dirge "Boyo" (What was in your head/what was in your head/what was in your head/last night), the scruffy blues-rawk of "Why The Hell Did I Die" (featuring some top notch bellows from vocalist Jonathan Valania) and an enthusiastic cover of Jon Richman's "I'm Straight."

A quietly menacing tone prevails through many of these cuts: the anti-right wing rant "Nazi Mother" includes the hilarious one-liner "God told me to kill you/And the Devil agreed!" *Devil May Care* is an exhilarating mix of rawk and country blues — be still my heart, it's a good old fashioned rock album. The band is from Allentown, PA and this, their second full length release, was recorded at Ardent with English producer Ian Caple (Jesus & Mary Chain) during October of 94. They are also the band one of the Deal sisters went gaga over and put on her top ten list of 93 for Rolling Stone (causing an early 15 minutes of fame for the group). Songs they cover include Beat Happening's "Bad Seeds", the Gun Club's "For The Love Of Ivy" and the just retired from their set "Honey Comb" cereal jingle (Honey Comb's big/yeah yeah yeah).

One day, Scot Dantzer, the group's guitarist, emailed me in reply to a musical question I had posted online about Creem magazine. He knew I produced BOAC and agreed to answer a few questions about the PR's music [a full interview with Scot will appear on my upcoming Web page <http://mindlink.net/beeman>]

**BOAC: Any Ardent Studio experiences?**
**SCOT:** We got to use Booker T's Hammond organ from "Green Onions", an old mellotron used on *Sister Lovers*, got to jam with Jody (the kid still has it!) and Big Star did a reunion show in Memphis while we were there—kind of like going to the Louvre and Picasso is standing there touching up a few masterpieces.

**BOAC: With reference to the Psyclone Rangers hailing from Allentown, PA the city Billy Joel wrote a top-10 ode about in the mid 80's, I asked Scot to fill in the blank. Billy Joel is a _____.**
**SCOT:** Billy Joel is a hack. Need I go on? Didn't think so.

**BOAC: My ears heard many religious references in the music. I asked Scot about this.**
**SCOT:** We were raised in fairly liberal Protestant Christian backgrounds, and that was never really rammed down our throats, so we don't harbor deep resentments about it like so many we know. Many paths to Enlightenment, if you will. The intolerance, ignorance, bigotry and hypocrisy that pervades the Religious Right in this country reached a critical mass when we were writing the songs for *The Devil May Care*.

I don't know how much of it makes it onto the news in your country, but things are getting pretty wacky in America...I saw some graffiti in a bathroom on tour that read "Jesus Save Me From Your Followers". Amen.

Also, the classic struggles of sin and redemption that informed the lives and music of cats like Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee and Elvis are touchstones of American music—yet another thematic thread of the record. Sorry to get "deep" on ya, but you asked.

**Everybody Go Psyclone, a Discography**

**The Devil May Care** World Domination, 95
"Don't Burn Your Glove"/"Teenage Head" 7" Brutal Records, 94
**Swing, Baby Swing!** 7" Sympathy For The Record Industry, 94
**Christie Indecision** ep, World Domination UK, 94
**Feel Nice** debut lp, World Domination, 93

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Aren't these three just the cutest!? It's **THE VANDALIAS** from Minneapolis. The three brothers JimJim, Alan and Bobby (augmented by their drummer Tommy 'Finn Boy' Etelamaki) have not only put out a swell record ***Mach V*** (Big Deal) they star in their own three issue comic book [which is really quite humorous, the lads are drawn in Manga style]. *Mach V* includes a cover version of "Sky High".

# THE "POP" PAGE

In the **Raw Power is sure to come a'running to you!** department: last issue I professed my love for Alice Cooper, this issue it's Iggy. Two others who admire Iggy are **Kent Myers** whose Detroit Murder City Comix featured Mr Pop on a cover and **Greg Shaw** of the Bomp record label which has been reissuing Iggy and the Stooges music during the past few years.

In 92 Bomp launched **The Iguana Chronicles** with the cd release of *Kill City* the live 77 Pop/Williamson extravaganza. In January of 95 Bomp released *Rough Power* early mixes of *Raw Power* before the Thin White Duke (Bowie) stepped in to do the final mix. Apparently Ig and the boys always preferred the original cuts. For more info on the Iguana Chronicles series or joining the Bomp e-mail list write <Orbit23@aol.com>

Greg wrote BOAC a brief history of his involvement with Iggy and the *Kill City* sessions, which will appear on the BOAC web page <http://mindlink.net/beeman>. In the meantime here's a non-musical excerpt:

*Iggy had been living in Hollywood since the Stooges broke up there a couple years earlier, and I had run into him on occasion at parties or whatnot. In particular, I used to see him at the home of a friend of mine, Sabel Starr, who had split up with Johnny Thunders by then and was living with her parents at the beach. She had an equally wild sister named Coral, whom Iggy was dating, and indeed was said to be on the verge of marrying. It was amusing to see him with her in the girls' parents house. They were characters worthy of a John Waters movie, rabid Nazis, with fascist memorabilia on the walls and everything. His "serious conversations" with the father were, as I recall, quite amusing.*

Kent Myers is from Detroit so he knows a thing or two about cars, cops and rawk. The sixth issue of his tres black humored comic had Iggy on the cover. The seventh issue had an endorsement from Iggy himself! You can order any issue of DMCC, which is published by Slave Labor, from Kent for $3.00 @ 1684 Fulton San Francisco, CA 94117 [Ask about the riot kit, cap or DMCC used work shirt...tuff stuff!]

## SPEAKING OF POP...

Bruce Brodeen's **Not Lame** record label started up in the summer of 95 and the first few releases have been generous: *A double dose of pop!* features album length music from **TWENTY CENT CRUSH** (California) and **THE ROOKS** (NYC). Another Not Lame release is *SymPOPhony #1*, five bands each doing 4 songs: **MARTIN LUTHER LENNON, ROCKERFELLERS, CHERRY TWISTER, THE FINNS** and **THE SHAMBLES**. Not Lame also offers a newsletter featuring contacts and band info, send two 32 cent stamps to cover postage. Write Bruce <notlame@aol.com> or Box #9828 Aspen, CO 81612.

**PAUL COLLINS' BEAT** are back, sorta, with re-releases of *The Kids Are The Same* and *The Beat* (Sony/Wagonwheel) their early 80s rock antidotes to new wave. Radio-boy Howard Stern wrote the liner notes for **ENUFF Z'NUFF's** *1985* (Big Deal) which includes a fine version of "Tears of a Clown" and lotsa stuff about girls and cars.

**COCKEYED GHOST** the LA area trio who specialize in happy-go-lucky, spittle flying from the mouth pop are offering you their 5 song demo *Karaoke* for one dollar(!) Adam and Rob from the band took part in the Brian Wilson Tribute last year as two-thirds of 'The Dumb Angel Choir' and their a cappella version of "Our Prayer" won a standing ovation. Send that buck to Adam 6402 Enfield Avenue Reseda CA 91335.

Seattle native Rich Horton runs the **Optional Art** label in Seattle (I like how they call it a rock'n'roll microbrewery). One of his most popular artists is his alter-ego, **RICH ARITHMETIC** whose *Sleep In A Wigwam* cd is Beatlesesque, punchy and warm. A great deal at $12 ppd to Box 22691 Seattle, WA 98122-0691.

Anton himself from **ANTON BARBEAU and the JOYBOYs** sent BOAC a review copy of their cd *The Horse's Tongue* (Idiot Records). Scott Miller of the Loud Family produced/played on "All I Need Is Everything" and the music is poised in the Game Theory/LF direction—lush harmony vocals, samples/tape loops and lots n' lots of guitar. While there are no songs about cars there is the "Pudenda Song"...life's a trade off isn't it? Idiot Records Box 163857 Sacramento, CA 95816 (916) 446-7447.

Stephen Fievet publishes a mix of comix and reviews known as *baby sue*. I don't 'get' *baby sue* — check an issue of *the zine of zines Factsheet 5* and they'll likely be scratching their heads as well. Stephen also records music as the one man pop sensation **LMNOP** and his music is quite something (lyrically way less crass than *baby sue*) *Camera-Sized Life* is the cd of his I have. Hometaping since 1982, Stephen's short songs are perky, well played and certainly peculiar. For a sampler tape send $2 /$3 for a copy of *baby sue* to Box 1111 Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

**SHAKE the Record Label** is a Canadian company distributing some fine music. The best way to introduce yourself to the label would be by ordering their compilation 17 song cd which features many SHAKE acts including Australia's **DROP CITY** and **SMUDGE**; the wonderful **ED KUEPPER**, a founding member of THE SAINTS, whose *Character Assassination* double cd on SHAKE features beautiful folk-pop; **NECTARINE #9** and **LLAMASAURUS**, a young US group whose cd isn't earthshaking yet features hilarious cover art involving a deceased squirrel, a cigarette and a Christmas present bow. The SHAKE sampler is a mere two dollars to 598 Victoria C.P. 36587 Saint-Lambert, Que J4P 3S8.

# ALEX CHILTON LIVE...AMEN!

## San Francisco 11/5/94

by ELIZABETH IVANOVICH

Our story begins at the Noe Valley Ministry, a small but lovely church in San Francisco's Mission District. Chuck Prophet (a Tom Petty lookalike who sounded like a cross between Dylan and Tom Waits) and Stephanie Finch (a Juliana Hatfield lookalike who sounded like Maria Doyle of the Black Velvet Band) opened the show with a good-natured set. I found them enjoyable, even if some of the songs tended to sound alike at times. The highlight of their set was Finch's rendition of the ever-appropriate "Son of A Preacher Man". I was unhappy that they refused to identify the man who played slide guitar and mandolin—he was the most impressive musician of the three.

Then, at 9:40 Alex emerged onto the stage. He was in a shockingly good mood—surprisingly humble and (dare I say it?) kind of sweet. "I'm gonna play some jazz stuff—is that okay?" he asked winsomely. He opened with an ace rendition of the Cliches album's "My Baby Just Cares For Me", and continued in that vein for some time.

I was secretly craving a taste of the famed Chiltonian weirdness, and I was soon to get it. He played various odd covers throughout the evening, starting with a bittersweet tune from the '50's Olivier flick The Entertainer called "Why Should I Care?" Also included was the great Brian Wilson song "Solar System", which led to this honest-to-God brush with greatness:

**ALEX:** (midway through his tale of attending a Brian Wilson tribute in LA that week, at which Wilson actually played) I know, I know, I can't help it. I love that stuff—love the Beach Boys...

**ME:** (much, much louder than I'd intended) Don't apologize!!

**ALEX:** (smiling and vaguely pointing in my general direction) Yeah, you're right—don't apologize. Don't apologize. Sign of weakness, as Brian Wilson would say...

**ME:** (GASP!!!)

He followed that with "What's Your Sign"—always fun. But the true highlight of the evening—well, Alex's knowledge of obscure music will put us all to shame. He touted this particular gem as "one of the most horrible and the most haunting songs I know...a song with everything except a beat." He seemed ready to explode with laughter as he explained "I Found My Love In Memphis'" origin, found on a vanity recording from one George Clapp. The song's obviously heartfelt but truly laughable lyrics ("It has more churches than filling stations/The greatest town in all the nation" is one of its better couplets) combined with Alex's over-the-top phrasing made for an entertaining performance. The crowd applauded the tune like mad, and I for one think that BACK OF A CAR should track down this Clapp fellow and revive the poor guy's career.

The chemistry between Alex and the audience was great—he seemed truly touched that we were wiling to listen to him play acoustic jazz all evening, and he was even cajoled into playing two encores (really!—although he did threaten to play something awful in order to "teach us a lesson", as he put it). By then, people were starting to lose control and request Big Star songs. Alas, the closest he came was his closing rendition of Loudon Wainwright III's "Motel Blues", as featured on Rykodisc's "Big Star Live" CD... But I'll forgive him. He's my weirdo, and I love him.

***To paraphrase Elizabeth, she's my cub reporter and BOAC loves her! Young Ms. Ivanovich attends Stanford University, has worked at the campus radio station and has impecible taste in rock and roll. Her contributions to BOAC have been witty to the max and right on target.***

Jordan Oakes of **Yellow Pills** magazine has continued to put out his fine collections of American Pop (Big Deal label). Since the BOAC profile of *Yellow Pills* in issue one, two other collections have appeared - the most recent includes Greenberry Woods, Material Issue, Wonderboy (featuring Robbie Rist who played a cousin on the Brady Bunch) and sadly does not include Alex Chilton's cover of the Kink's "Lola" as hoped for. Alex must be saving it for his upcoming all covers British invasion album (just joking! I wish...) Send $4.00 and a few stamps for the most current issue of Jordan's magazine to 4933 Odell #1E St Louis, MO 63139 or email <yellowpilz@aol.com>

The newest music magazine on the block is **Audities** *The Journal Of Insanely Great Pop* and editor Gary Littleton is certainly giving the pop genre the boost it needs, in terms of recognition. Watching *Audities* grow since it's January 95 start has been a pleasure; every second month they review new releases, plug projects of interest, profile Independent labels and are downright "good guys" to the music community. *Audities* is a reasonable $3.00 in the US and a slightly steeper $3.75 for the rest of us (when it's a few pages thicker they'll surely gain more subscribers). Email <audities@aol.com> or write Box #1555 Stafford, TX 77497.

Shangri-la in Memphis is a remarkable record store/label which is very much behind the Memphis music scene and young bands such as the Grifters. They also publish ***Kreature Comforts*** which is the ***Lowlife Guide To Memphis*** an absoloute must have for folks visiting M-town or who just want to soak up some southern culture. *Kreature Comforts* point out cheap hotels, good food (and where to avoid!) and, of course, nightlife. There's a two page Big Star spread with yearbook photos of Andy and Chris, a shot of Jody (wearing a bow tie!) and a hep Box Tops promo shot of LX. Send $2.50 to Shangri-la 1916 Madison Ave Memphis, TN 38104 for a copy of *Kreature Comforts*.

***In 1987 our man Alex released his High Priest album. The record label (Polygram in Canada) talked Chilton into saying a few words about each tune for inclusion in the press release, which somewhat overwhelmingly begins by shouting in capital letters ROCK ICONOCLAST ALEX CHILTON RETURNS TO ANNOINT HIMSELF "HIGH PRIEST". I kid you not! Somehow I don't think anybody checked that bit of copywriting with Alex himself...anyhow, it calms down and without further ado...here's Alex:***

"A lot of the record is recorded live; I didn't do much overdubbing. The album features a lot of jazz-oriented players. Most are from Memphis. Ardent is the best southern studio that's not in Nashville, where I won't record. I have sort of a phobia about Nashville. Ardent is just about as good as anywhere else there is."

**Take It Off** (Eve Darby) "This was some kind of crazy record produced by Don Covay. A friend of mine in New York played it for me when I was visiting. The artist was called Ground Hog and I don't know anything else about him."

**Let Me Get Close To You** (Goffin/King) "Skeeter Davis originally recorded this Carole King song around 1964. I first heard it on the radio."

**Dalai Lama** (Alex Chilton) "I wrote this while camping in the mountains. I hear the Dalai Lama camps in the mountains himself."

**Volaré** (F. Migliacci/D. Modugno) "I started doing this in Italy last year, but I've always dug the song. "Volaré" was a big hit there by Domenico Modugno, and my version is sung in Italian and copied after his original."

**Thing For You** (Alex Chilton) "I'm proud of this song. The chord changes come from a gospel tune that I dimly perceived on a radio once and worked out on guitar. I came up with some new lyrics and a tune that I really dig."

**Forbidden Love** (Alex Chilton) "This one's inspired by a Junior Walker and the All-Stars song called "Cleo's Mood". I changed the melody around and added lyrics."

**Make A Little Love** (Holiday Akopoff) "This was a record by Lowell Fulsom that I came upon in a junk store in San Francisco. It's the follow-up to his hit "Tramp". The beat is really compelling and I identify with the words. What more do you need for a good song."

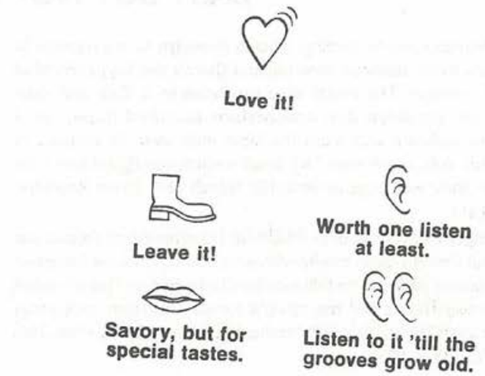
**Trouble Don't Last** (E. Jones) "I got interested in guitar Slim by reading about him. I'd heard his big hit of 1953 called "Things I used to Do" with Ray Charles on the session. I identified with him. I recorded "Trouble Don't Last" because the horn players could fall right in without a chart, so we did it."

**Don't Be A Drag** (Alex Chilton) "This song's based on a Jimmy Reed tune. I pretty faithfully reproduced the Jimmy Reed method."

**Nobody's Fool** (Dan Penn/Bobby Emmons) "This song's by Dan Penn, producer of the Box Tops. He wrote it in about 1970 for his solo album and I think it's a good tune."

**Come By Here** (Alvis Armstrong) "Something by the Reverend Thomas L. Walker and the Ebenezer Baptist Church Mass Choir from Rocky Mountain, North Carolina that I found on a record shelf; it looked like a good gospel record, so I bought it. The song has really nice chord changes."

**Raunchy** (Justis/Manker) "The original version of this song was written and played by Sid Manker, the only guitar player I ever took a lesson from. He used to jam with my dad. Sid used to play a lot of sessions at Sun with Bill Justis. They were trying to write the worst song they possibly could and it turned out to




## Tiven's Pick of the Month

**Big Star — Radio City (Ardent Records) Rating: one heart, two mouths**

Raspberries and Blue Ash better be ready to be brilliant quick or drop by the wayside, because Big Star are the greatest thing to happen to American rock since The Buffalo Springfield. Alex Chilton is *the* American rock 'n' roll singer incarnate, and not only that, he can write superbly, play guitar like Jimmy Page did in 1966, and has charming poise onstage. The rest of the band doesn't slouch for one minute, and on their second album they've surpassed their roots, kicking imitation out the door. Big Star are *the* innovative American band of the Seventies. So rejoice and *don't worry about not liking The Dolls.* Buy Big Star and keep ahead of your neighbors!

The name **John Tiven** will ring bells with Alex fans (make that *hardcore* Alex enthusiasts) as the producer of the *Singer Not The Song* ep, which originally came out as a 7" single on the Ork label in the late 70's. Recorded in 1975 this ep [later expanded to "album" proportions for Line Records in Germany] is something to be avoided. We get Alex at his most gonzo, with an affected Noo-Yawk-cum-Brit accent which is truly awful. [Now that's not to say Alex wasn't perhaps having FUN at the time, or maybe he was MISERABLE, the album just doesn't quite work]. And people say *Flies On Sherbert* is disturbing!

In 1974, Tiven had introduced the primarily teen audience of ***Circus*** magazine to Big Star, with a glowing review of *Radio City*. By 1978 the rock writer had his own band **The Yankees** and their sole album *High N' Inside* featured a baseball motif. The songs included a completely different take on "Take Me Home And Make Me Like It" and featured, among many guest performers, Ivan Julian from The Voidoids. Although not a chart-topper *High N' Inside* got a positive review in the Trouser Press Record Guide and apparently "Robert Cristgau considers this an excellent album", at least according to what was scrawled on the shrinkwrap of my copy. Another album to keep an eye out for at your local thrift store.

# LAST BUT NOT LEAST....

The **Wordsound** Recordings label in Brooklyn have a mission: To produce music financed, directed and (here's the key) controlled by it's creators. The music they specialize in is Dub and their collection **crooklyn dub consortium certified dope, vol. 1** features different acts from the label with over 70 minutes of futuristic dub...move over LKJ. Email <wordsound@aol.com> for info on their web page or write 129 North 11th Street Brooklyn, NY 11211.

The singer from New York's **PLEASE** (Mother West) sounds just like Paul Simon. I mean totally, without a doubt...it's errie. However there are no jingle-jangle folk numbers to be had on Please's debut cd *Noreally Thanks* and the straight forward modern rock songs sound fresh. Write Please @ Mother West records 132 West 26th St NYC, NY 10001.

The **Loverly** record label in Memphis is just wonderful. They have scads of 45 releases by locals such as photographer **TREY HARRISON, THE GOOSEBUMPS** and **GREG HISKY** (and his variously named ensembles) all formidable rockin' stuff. Loverly also released **james eddie campbell's** self titled disc. Campbell is devoted to both Django Reinhardt and surf-bop! Write Loverly @ PO Box 382514 Memphis, TN 38183

Jeff Glave runs **Slant Six Tapes** out of Tucson. Each tape is a mere $3.00 and are lo-fi or noisy to the max. I sent Jeff money for two tapes, requesting **LUNCHBOX** who he promised were "pop" and had him surprise me with the other, which wound up being **THE KIND GROUT**. Life is just too short to pass up cool stuff such as this. Write for the catalogue @ Box 1641 Tucson. Arizona 85702.

**Behemoth** Rcords run out of swinging Las Vegas and Darran has released lots of stuff. Of great interest is ***Free Aspirin and Tender Sympathy*** by 15 local Vegas bands including **CRIES AND WHISPERS, PABLO DIABLO and the LITTLE RED DEVILS, SCRUBS** and erm, **PAPERED SKIN.** Way less 'punk rock' than I expected, *Free Aspirin* is a musically catchy look at a lesser noticed side of Vegas town. Another Behemoth release will have fans of *Exile* era Rolling Stones enjoying **MARC JEFFREY'S *Playtime***; subdued, guitar based rock not unlike Johnny Thunder's at his most reflective moments. Marc also used to lead NYC's BAND OF OUTSIDERS. Write Behemoth @ PO Box 27801 Las Vegas, NV 89102.

***The Post Bros. are two funloving but extremely twisted bad boys hailing from the wrong side of Bugtown. They are very greedy, pathologically trigger-happy, completely corruptible, endlessly irritating, psychooticaly solipsistic, and-unfortunately for all-possessed of the ability to instantly shift between all possible reality levels. The universe is their oyster, and they like it raw.***

Yeah, the Post Brothers are into some wild capers and you oughta see their creator, Matt Howarth. Matt is the only comix guy whose notes at the end of his work detail his love for heavy duty Industrial music. He's quite the aficianado and often reviews music from around the Globe (Hawkwind, Haujobb, FLA were recently mentioned). This black humored comic is worth a peek if you're a music fan with similar interests or just like a bit of the old ultraviolence.

How's this for a small world? BOAC received both **NOEL THE COWARD'S** cassette and a cd by **NOEL COWARD'S GHOST *Peyote Marching Songs vol. 1*** (Shzoid) Each includes cool cartoon cover art. I'd have to say Noel Coward's Ghost, led by ex-Wind member Lane Steinberg, is the one I'd take on a desert Island cos it's really great Beach Boysesque twisted pop which sounded great. Write Shzoid for info 109-33 71st Rd #10 Forest Hills NY 11375. Noel The Coward is working on getting over his shyness. His tape was sent in by his pal Chris Plummer who has started his own record label. Write Chris @ 531 Forestview Rd Linthicum, MD 21090.

Now I don't know if Lane from Noel Coward's Ghost is seeing anyone, or if **CINDY LEE BERRYHILL** is likewise attached but I honestly think these two would make a fabulous couple. Cindy lives in California and my friend Brian sent me her ***Garage Orchestra*** (Earth/Cargo) cd and the songs share the same sense of wimsy and wonderment as found on Lane's ***Peyote Marching Songs***. Perhaps a collaboration could be arranged? It would rule. Garage Orchestra contains "Song For Brian" (yep, Wilson) and "Every Someone Tonight" co-written by Paul "Crawdaddy" Williams. Write Cindy @ 7101 San Diego, CA 92167.

NOEL COWARD'S GHOST

*Peyote Marching Songs, Vol. 1*

Christopher Earl is a man with a divided soul. Oh the one hand he's a member of **THE SALAMANDERS** a rock band from Rochester who have no suprises on their two Rocket Racket singles. However, Christopher also appears to be the only member of **THE SQUIRES OF THE SUBTERRAIN** whose *Super-plexi Automatic* pays homage to Harry Nilsson ("Harry") and those Beach Boys songs that include sleigh-bells and always sound like they're about to fall apart. Gimme the Squires! Write for info on the 6 song tape @ 144 South Main Street Pittsford, NY 14534.

**LIZ PHAIR's *Exile In Guyville*** is a masterpiece, an album which I've no doubt has affected many a 20-something the same way *Radio City* made a mark on me. *Exile* was innovative, rocked and stayed on my headphones at work for months. That said, boy I felt let down by *Whip-smart* which had nary the same punch as Exile — someday I'll have to give it another chance. There's a new release of Phair material, the eight song ***Juvenilia*** (Matador) which includes five songs from her first ever release, the tape only *Girly Sounds*. The best being "South Dakota" homemade lyrics to the tune of Iggy's "Funtime", and even at their silliest (a dialogue between cows?) an emerging talent shows. *Juvenalia* also includes "Jealousy" from *Whip Smart*, the new "Animal Girl" recorded live in Holland and The Vapors "Turning Japanese" (about a prisoner who masturbates in his cell and hence his face 'turns Japanese' as it contorts at climax) which I've always perceived as thinly veiled racism, so I'm not too excited (no pun intended) about its appearance here.

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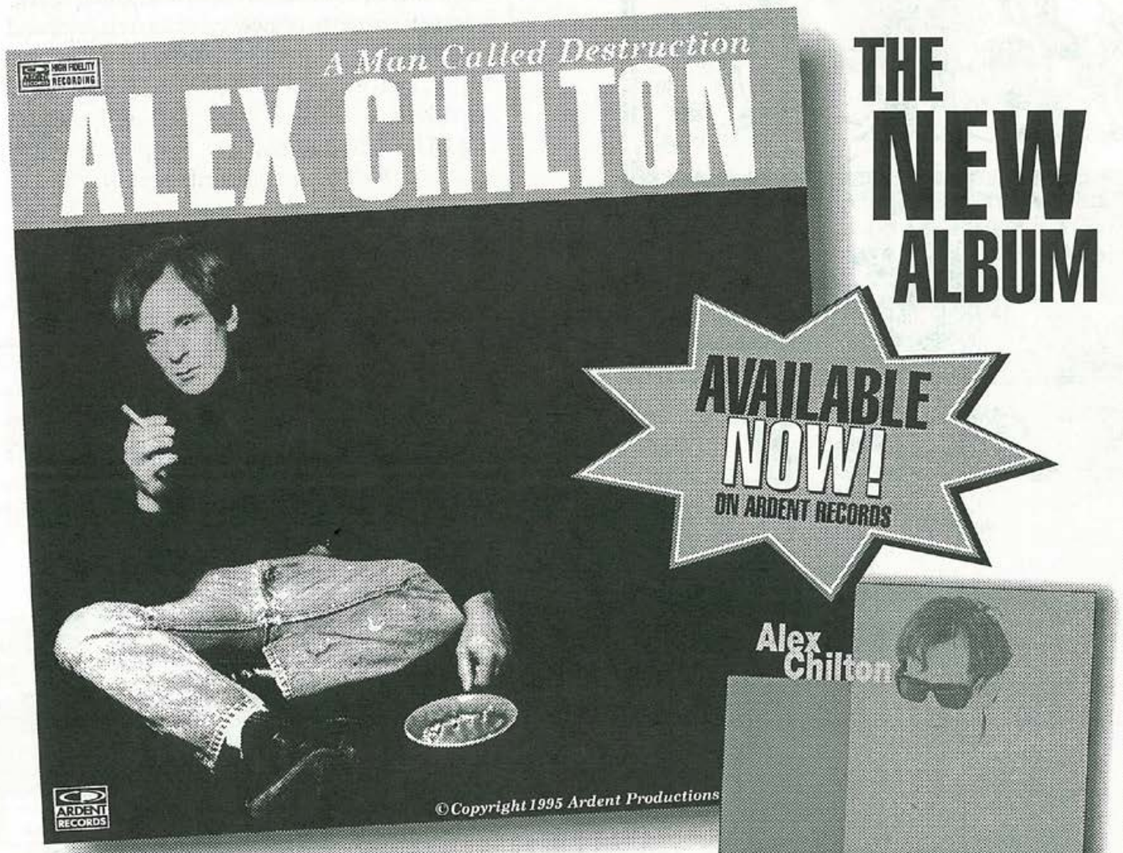


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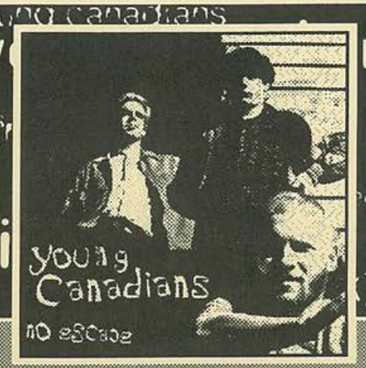


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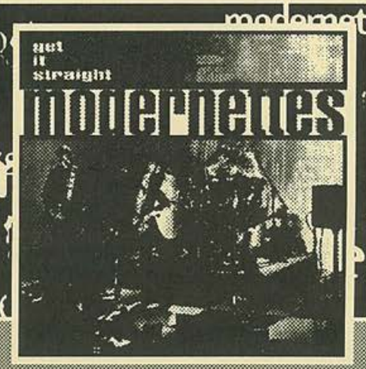


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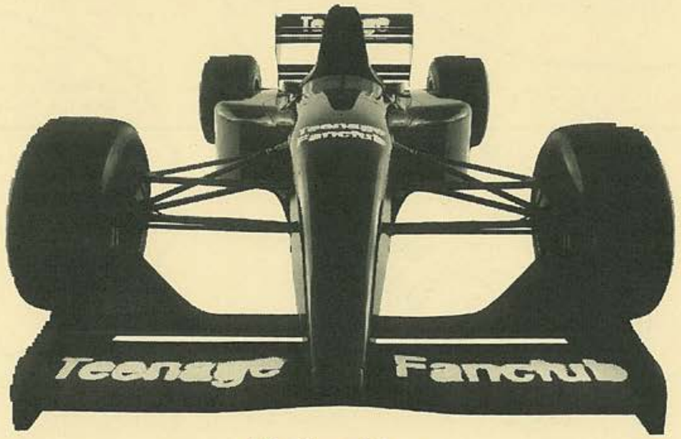
# Teenage Fanclub
# GRAND PRIX




Produced by David Bianco
and Teenage Fanclub
Engineered and Mixed
by David Bianco

**The New Album**

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## Back of a Cartoon

# IT CAME FROM MEMPHIS

JANUARY, 1966: A BAND OF RECENTLY GRADUATED CENTRAL HIGH STUDENTS WAS GOING THROUGH A PERSONNEL CHANGE AND ENLISTED **JOHN EVANS**, WHO COULD DOUBLE ON GUITAR AND ORGAN AND WHO OWNED HIS OWN EQUIPMENT. EVANS RECALLS IN 1994---

THEY ASKED ME IF I KNEW ANYBODY WHO COULD QUOTE UNQUOTE SING LIKE A NIGGER. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION AT THE TIME, THAT WAS THE WORD THAT WAS USED. I WAS TALKING TO ANOTHER FRIEND AND HE TOLD ME THAT AT THE CENTRAL HIGH TALENT SHOW, THERE WAS A KID WHO SANG 'SUNNY' BY BOBBY HEBB, AND ALL THE GIRLS REALLY LOVED HIM.

ALEX SHOWED UP AT OUR PRACTICE AND HE WAS—(*Evans pauses, groping for the right word*)—DIFFERENT. FOR ONE, HE WAS A GOOD BIT YOUNGER THAN US. WE WERE ALL ABOUT NINETEEN YEARS OLD, ALEX HAD JUST TURNED SIXTEEN. HE HAD COME FROM A DIFFERENT BACKGROUND. HE WAS WEARING - AND WE WOULD NEVER HAVE WORN THIS, YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND - BLUE JEANS WITH HOLES IN THE KNEES. WE'D HAVE THROWN THEM AWAY IF THEY HAD HOLES IN THE KNEES.

HE WAS WEARING A BLACK T-SHIRT. I'D NEVER SEEN A BLACK T-SHIRT, I THOUGHT THEY ONLY CAME IN WHITE. HE WAS WEARING A WOOLEN DRESS SCARF LIKE YOU WEAR WITH AN OVERCOAT, WRAPPED AROUND HIS NECK LIKE BOB DYLAN, AND A BLUE JEAN JACKET. TO ALL OF US, SITTING THERE IN OUR MACGREGOR AND GANT SHIRTS AND PERMANENT PRESS CUFF TROUSERS WITH PENNY LOAFERS, ALEX WAS UNUSUAL LOOKING. BUT HE COULD SING, AND SING SOULFULLY.

**end**