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LETTER FROM THE LEDGE

We here at Rude International wanted to devote this issue to the ‘gals’ in the industry — those seen and those behind the scenes. However, it was a tougher task than we thought. We didn’t want to get all Oprah on your ass and “celebrate” what it is to be a woman in the male dominated world of rock n’ roll, because, quite honestly we all know it’s not “a man’s world” anymore. Take a look around. For the last 20 years women have claimed their stake in the ever-changing and tremendously fickle music industry.

From the late, great punk queen Wendy O. Williams storming the scene with her band the Plasmatics, to Patti Smith’s unforgettable live performances, and Blondie’s dark root’s n’ all Debby Harry meshing punk rock to pop icon status.

Those behind the scenes include booking/management goddess Stormy Shepard to everyone’s favorite gal behind the camera BJ Pappas, who’s shot practically every major player in the punk and hardcore scenes. These are not just women, they are badass, take no shit role models who happen to be women. Women who not only get the job done, but look pretty damn good while doing it.

As a woman, I would feel like a jackass asking anyone of them “what is it like being a woman in a male-dominated scene,” because I don’t look at it as being a “woman,” it’s doing your job. Whether it’s writing or performing a song, taking a killer magazine cover shot, or managing the hottest band in America, that’s what you do, so you might as well do it the best you can, no matter what sex you are.

However, in this issue you will find features on everyone’s favorite punk gals The Donnas talking about what it’s like being a young, all-female act on the road and the colorful and crazy Lunachicks laying out their experiences on last year’s Warped Tour.

Hopefully, this little reminder will drive home the point we all should have been taught in kindergarten: people shouldn’t be judged by their sex, but by their contributions and accomplishments. Hope you enjoy!

Robyn Hale
The Spirit Of Ska

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Bunny Wailer

IN A RECENT INTERVIEW IN THE BOSTON Globe newspaper, reggae pioneer Bunny Wailer (ne. Neville Livingston) decried the current culture of violence while acknowledging his responsibility to provide direction to a new generation of reggae fans. “Conscience is what rules and I don’t want to have a cloudy one. I want to have a clear one,” remarked Wailer while on a rare concert tour in the US “I come with a variety of messages — for people to behave themselves and love each other, to live in peace and happiness, and to stop the spread of guns. There are too many guns today, and too much promotion of guns.” Bunny Wailer is well associated with the violence that guns can bring. In 1987, fellow original Wailer Peter Tosh was murdered in his Kingston residence, and Bunny was present at the 1976 shooting at the house of Bob Marley, where Marley, his wife Rita, and Marley’s manager Don Taylor were all critically wounded. Many believe the spray of gunfire was delivered by a hit squad affiliated with a local political party bent on stopping a freedom concert at which Marley was scheduled to (and ultimately did) appear. Last June, another original Wailer Junior Braithwaite and a friend were shot and killed at his friend’s house.

Wailer, who was not just the musical partner of Marley, but also his half brother, recently joined the Marley family in their lawsuit against Chris Blackwell, the former head of Island Records. A settlement was reached in favor of the family in which Blackwell “resigned from anything to do with the Wailers.” Most importantly, this means that the family has regained control of the Tuff Gong record label, which Wailer hopes to bring back to prominence and already has released several new albums.

WORD OUT OF SACRAMENTO, CA is that local heroes Filibuster have thrown in the towel. The ska influenced band covered nine years and 28 members. The break-up was a shock to many who have seen the Filibuster star rising in recent years. Their most recent album Deadly Hi-Fi (Skunk Records) was produced by Steve Albini (Nirvana, Shellac, Slapshot) and they had just toured the US and Europe with The Skatalites.

ERIC MELVIN ACCOMPANIES A KARAOKEIST ON A Rousing rendition of “Bodies”

WANT TO GET DRUNK AND SING YOUR favorite classic punk tracks in public, but the Japanese restaurant on the corner only has Vince Gill and The Scorpions on their Karaoke machine? Don’t fret, Punk Rock Karaoke is coming to a town near you. Featuring real live musicians like Greg Hetson of Bad Religion and Mike Watt, Punk Rock Karaoke brings out such old school hits as “I’m so Bored with the U.S.A.,” “Blitzkrieg Bop” and “Holiday in Cambodia,” and puts the mic in your hands. “Punk rock was about people who had an idea,” says Karaoke spokesman Eric Melvin of NOFX. “They wanted to play but they weren’t always that good. We wanted to pay homage to all of the great old school bands who influenced us and our fans.”

AFTER ALMOST TWO YEARS, FORMER Dropkick Murphys frontman Mike McCollgan made his way back to the stage, albeit for less than five minutes. McCollgan joined the Mighty Mighty Bosstones on stage during their annual Hometown Throwdown to help sing “A Little Bit Ugly.” McCollgan and his former bandmates are also the topic of a forthcoming documentary being produced by Boston’s Journeyman Pictures.

IT SEEMS THAT THE ADVERTISING industry has come to the realization that hokey rap jingles don’t sell soda pop like they used too, and have been turning to the sounds of punk and ska for help. Recently, GT Interactive Game Company used the Stiff Little Fingers track “Gotta Get Away” to hype a video game, while The Buzzcocks have been receiving royalty checks from Toyota who used their classic tune “What Do I Get” in a spot aimed at dissatisfied young urbanites. Also plugging away for a car company are The Pilfers, who’s song “What’s New (Here We Go Again)” is being used by the Atlanta Area Saturn Dealers. What’s next, The Damned’s “New Rose” being used to pimp FTD Florists?

STEVE SHAFER, THE FORMER DIRECTOR of Promotions for Moon Records, has set up a new independent label called 7 Wonders of the World Music. Shafer says the label plans to release ska, reg-
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gae and dub music via the Internet. 7 Wonders will send music directly to customers on the net who can then download the music in an Mp3 file. You net surfers can check the label out at www.7wow.com.

Maroon Town

ONE OF ENGLAND'S FINEST SKA exports, Maroon Town, recently traveled to Jamaica and Barbados for a short tour. Band members report that highlights included a jam session inside Kingston Prison and a workshop at the legendary Alpha Boys School, where the school band even played them a Don Drummond song. Maroon Town are set to continue their globe trotting exploits with visits to Sri Lanka, Brunei, Indonesia and Bali this spring.

The Porkers

AUSTRALIA'S SOUND SYSTEM RECORDS is set to release what might be the album event of the year, a Specials tribute album called Spare Shells. According to label honcho Pete Cooper, the album will feature an international cast of characters including Goldfinger and Voodoo Glow Skulls from Southern California, England's Citizen Fish, Boston's The Allstonians, Germany's The Busters, and Nipponese skankstars Rude Bones. Representing the land down under will be legends The Allniters, one of Australia's first ska influenced bands, as well as Cooper's own band (and legends in the making), The Porkers.

THE SKINHEAD SKA ENSEMBLE

Inspector 7 have just grown by two members with the recent addition of former Skoidats Justin Dillavou and Mark Hutchinson. According to Inspector 7 vocalist T. Dogg, Justin will play rhythm guitar as well as fill the gap left by the recent departure of second vocalist Guiuseppe. The two bands are not strangers, as they collaborated on the Radical Records 7-inch Boots and Suits a while back. The former Skoidats were looking for gigs after the break-up of their band only weeks after they finished recording their second album for Moon Records.

IN OTHER MOON NEWS, AFTER THE recent departures of two longtime staffers, Noah Wildman and Steve Shafer, new kid on planet Moon, Ray Manuud, reports that the label is reorganizing it efforts with a goal of focusing more on music that represents the roots of ska. Leading the way will be two releases each by longtime trad-ska purveyors The Adjusters and The Blue Beats. While each band will be releasing an entire album's worth of new material, The Adjusters second effort will be dub mixes of their own songs while The Blue Beats will offer an album of rocksteady covers.

City's Clowns for Progress with whom he has been writing songs for the last few months. The Clowns, who are reportedly contemplating a name change, hope to bolster their already formidable three pronged attack by adding Max, a seasoned punk guitarist and founding member of San Francisco's own Swingin' Utters. The Utters have been on a limited, though necessary hiatus after two members, lead singer Johnny Bonnel and guitarist Darius Koski, both had children last year. The Utters, however, are reportedly ready to kick things back into gear and are also gearing up to record a new album. Hey Max, can you say frequent flyer miles?

The Teen Idols trying to stay out of jail

POLICE BLOTTER: SOMETIMES appearances can be deceiving. Take Tennessee's Teen Idols for instance. They appear to be a nice bunch of punk rockers, but deep down they are nothing but a bunch of hardened criminals. Not only did several members recently land in a North Carolina jail after a "misunderstanding" at a Winston-Salem nightclub, but the Idols were recently sued by Davey Jones of the Monkees who insisted the band stole their name from his traveling tour of washed up ex-pop stars.
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announced. Performers include punk stalwarts Green Day, NOFX, The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Anti-Flag, Avail, The Suicide Machines and the Long Beach Dub All-Stars. At press time most of the dates were pretty tentative, but Warped will surely be coming to a parking lot, amphitheater, pier, fairground or horse track infield near you.

**NEW YORKERS THE TEMPLARS HAVE**
been keeping busy with numerous gigs planned throughout the summer in Europe and the states. Word on the street is that they are set to release a rock video that looks great, and although the ladies love these mugs, I wouldn’t expect to see it on MTV anytime soon.

**THE BOSTON PUNK SCENE WAS DEALT**
a heavy blow recently as local faves The Ducky Boys have gone on what a band spokesperson calls “an indefinite hiatus.” After years of touring and countless appearances at the now defunct Rat nightclub (dive) the street punk foursome shelved the band after dropping off a tour with New York’s Blank 77. This doesn’t mean the music has stopped. Ducky front man/bassist Mark Lind, along with his brother Rob of Blood for Blood fame have joined with Gibby of the late mod rock band The Trouble to form a new group.

**IN MEMORIAM**
Long time Social Distortion guitarist Dennis Danell died on February 29 of an apparent brain aneurysm while helping his family move. He was only 38 years old. Danell had known Social D frontman Mike Ness since elementary school and joined the band over 20 years ago as rhythm guitarist. Ness expressed his sadness in a statement on Social D’s official website: “I am saddened beyond any possible form of expression. Dennis and I have been friends since boyhood, starting Social Distortion while we were in high school. My deepest regrets to his family.”

Danell is survived by his wife, a 3-year-old son and a 6-month-old daughter.
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How to not be a Sucker

A century ago P.T. Barnum remarked that a sucker is born every minute. However, with the current state of the population explosion, the U.S. Census department is now reporting that a sucker is being born every 9.3 seconds. This could account for the fact that legalized gambling is the fastest growing industry in the country. And everyone from Hard Rock International to the Disney Corporation to your local congressman wants a piece of the action. Follow the advice below to keep them from taking a piece out of you.

Slot Machines and Video Poker

Like a pathetic masher too frightened to talk to an actual woman, who instead stuffs bills into a strippers g-string or pumps quarters into the coin slot at a peep show, millions of “players” enter casinos every year, only to stare at video gaming machines. Remarkably, but not surprisingly, this interactive screen is programmed to lighten said player’s wallet up to 10 times faster than the table games located only yards away.

Slot machines, video poker and other electronic games are the bread and butter money makers of any casino. Why? Because they give the house an advantage of up to 14 percent. For the bettor, these are some of the worst odds in a casino. That is exactly why they are so prominently placed throughout the joints.

These types of machines are also popping up more and more in places like dog and horse racing tracks. Again, this is because of the huge profits they generate. Many state and local governments have been held hostage by track owners who threaten to pull the plug on their racing operations, eliminating hundreds of jobs and millions in tax revenue, if the state doesn’t allow them to stick electronic machines on their concourses. Everyone involved knows these are just rip-off machines, but the dollars just come too easy to be passed up. As a matter of fairness, I should point out that some video poker games actually have odds that are quite beneficial to knowledgeable players, and there is certainly nothing wrong with slipping a couple of coins into the slots of one of these games for fun, but in general they don’t offer very good odds and you can play video games at home.

State Lotteries

The 14 percent cut operators take on slot machines is nothing compared to these state run rip-offs. Daily Numbers, Scratch Cards, Mega-Bucks, Multi-State-Big-Money-Whatever...
They-Call-It; the states take, or to the player, the house advantage, in these games is up to 50 percent! And if you are buying a ticket in one of the games with the astronomical pay-offs, your chances of winning are in the multi-million, sometimes billion to one range. Forget about it!

How do they get away with it? State governments sell this bill of goods by making the very broad claim that people are going to gamble regardless of whether it is legal. Accordingly, then, the government might as well run some type of small money gambling so that house profits and tax revenue on winnings at least go toward good causes like public schools. Baloney! For starters, if you believe lottery revenues go into a special fund earmarked for community youth centers and Meals-On-Wheels programs and not into the general treasury, then I would like to invite you to a friendly little poker game my associates and I hold every Wednesday. And if lotteries are aimed only at those folks that are going to spend X amount of their disposable dough on gambling anyway, why are we constantly being bombarded with newspaper, billboard and television advertisements promoting these lotteries — advertisements that play on people's dreams and weaknesses. What really happened is, politicians saw all the money changing hands in neighborhood numbers games, usually run out of liquor stores and barbershops, and decided that they were going to take control of the racket.

And what happens when you do hit that 100 million dollar jackpot? For starters, that sum is broken up into payments to be made over 20 years. And now that you are in the highest tax bracket, half of the money goes right back to the house. Your 100 million rapidly turns into something like $2.5 million a year. Nothing to sneeze at, but far from 100 million, especially considering that any bank will give you well over twice that in interest on 100 million. Prudent investment, conservatively, will return you three times that. Which is exactly what the state does. It holds your theoretical lottery winnings and collects interest on it, then gives you a fraction.

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**Poker in a Casino**

You might think you’re a pretty good player because you always come out on top at poker night at your buddy’s house. Believe me, casino poker is nothing like the Saturday night blood bath that takes place between you and your friends. Casino poker rooms are habituated by professionals that make a living removing guys like you from your kid’s college money. Even if you do get lucky, find a table full of legitimate amateurs and end up holding your own, the house cut, usually five percent of the pot, in most cases is just enough to keep you from ever realizing any profit. Besides, if you play with your buddies at home for fun, why not take advantage of the games in a casino where you are playing against the house.

**Dog Racing**

If you have ever watched with excitement as a muscle bound and muzzled race dog, an animal you just bet your hard earned money on, is placed into a starting gate, then felt a sinking feeling in your gut as the pack of yelping canines runs around the first turn like they are playing in someone’s backyard, then you know the thrill of greyhound racing. It is a sport where winners get a warm bowl of steroid laced dog chow while losers are walked to the kennel area and shot. It is also an industry notoriously racked by corruption and cheating. For the bettor, the whole affair seems to lack some of the predictable variables that gamblers in other sports rely on. Maybe there is a way to win money off dog racing that isn’t just dumb luck. I don’t know. To be honest with you, I’d rather mug old ladies.

**Football Parlays**

Do not chase bad bets. This is a rule every gambler must learn and live by if he doesn’t want to end up lying face down in a dark alley with a couple of ice picks sticking out of his balls. One way lots of average American weekend football bettors chase bets is by playing parlays, i.e. bundling bets in weird combinations of outcomes and point spreads. Usually, said weekend shmuck, plays a parlay to try to recoup an earlier loss, typically on a Saturday college game or an early Sunday game. I don’t know the specific odds these types of bets offer, but they never seem to work out. The best evidence I can offer that they are not good bets is that professional sports bettors don’t play them. They stick to straight forward bets and a thorough analysis of each match-up. 

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When aliens come down to earth and wipe humanity off the map, while sorting through the rubble of the punk scene, chances are they'll come across a piece of Joe Escalante's handiwork. From his beginnings as the drummer (and now bassist) for the seminal Orange County punk act The Vandals in 1983, Joe has ventured into several different punk rock projects. From starting his own record label, to directing an online television show, to practicing entertainment law, to publishing a magazine, Joe's mission in life is to promote punk rock in as many mediums as possible. By the looks of things, he'll never run out of places to execute his madcap schemes.

After years of people asking The Vandals to take bands on tour and produce their albums, Joe decided to help out the bands he liked the most. In 1996, he started Kung Fu Records. Beginning with the young ska/punk three piece Assorted Jellybeans, Joe went on to sign nearly a dozen bands to his Seal Beach, California based label.

"It's a really great feeling to take a good band who are nice people and who deserve some help and be able to give it to them," he said. "We enjoy taking Kung Fu bands on tour and seeing them succeed." He is perhaps most impressed with recent Kung Fu sign ons The Ataris. "It's incredible what has happened to them in the last couple of months," he says emphatically. "They're selling out big shows, selling loads of merchandise and their sales keep going up. I definitely get a good feeling from their success."

From 1992 until he left to start up Kung Fu Records in 1996, Joe had been doing the 9 to 5 at CBS Television as a lawyer. After a short hiatus from television, his love for that industry lured him back, and in late 1996 Joe started Kung Fu Films — a pioneering company with a punk rock twist. Unlike many punk auteurs aspiring to be spiky-haired Steven Spielbergs, Joe has much more humble goals. One dimension of the company deals exclusively with on-line television programming. "Most of the programming you see on television is so watered down because you have to appeal to so many people," Joe states. "I'm kind of in a niche business with punk rock where you don't care about the whole world, you just care about your niche — punk fans."

When some Internet television producers approached Joe with a chance to air his programming, he jumped at the chance and "Fear of a Punk Planet" was born. The story revolves around a group of people who run a punk club. Joe demanded that his characters be believable as punks. "On the show you have your hardcore guy, your ska/punk-type chick, your crusty chick and one guy we call Epitaph Man because he's into anything on Epitaph. They all argue about who should be booked at the club."

The show focuses on the trials and tribulations of the foursome, as well as on The Vandals themselves, who also appear in the program. "I didn't want to make anything totally innovative story or format wise," Joe admits. "No one had ever created a traditional television show aimed at punk rockers. We don't need a whole new format."

Despite pressure on Joe from creative advisers to turn the scenarios into wacky adventures that highlight the differences between punks and average people, Joe is reluctant to do so. "The people at the network are always trying to get me to do something wildly innovative with the story lines, but to me, there's no reason punk rockers shouldn't have a regular show made for them. Let's make "Saved By The Bell" but let's make it for them."
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The other half of Kung Fu Films is set up to produce feature films that have a punk flavor. Currently, Joe is working on a film tentatively called “That Darn Punk.” The goal of Kung Fu Films is to release their movies straight to video, with an accompanying soundtrack, and to distribute them through the label. “Every once in a while someone will make a film with punk rock as the subject matter and they always want to put a great soundtrack together,” he says. “But what happens is, the soundtrack hits stores but the movie never comes out. The directors, usually driven by ego, want to get their films into big festivals and they want big distribution deals so their Hollywood dream can come true.” Joe’s goal is to produce films on a low budget and distribute them directly to a core audience, without worrying about making an expensive 35mm print for the silver screen. “It’s just another area where fans of this music have been neglected or exploited or used for someone’s career. They have never received a decent product.”

Even if “That Darn Punk” rakes in huge sales, a Joe Escalante film will probably never make it to your local cinema. “It’s definitely not the business we want to be in,” Joe says with a laugh. “I think that if it is being played in a theater, it is already appealing to too broad an audience and it’s not going to be very good. We’re not trying to build into something bigger — the same for our Internet show. Do I want that show on MTV? Absolutely not, because it will get canceled and disappear. At least now it’s there and it gives the kids exactly what they want. And it’s not trying to launch anyone’s television career.”

Joe has another passion; print media. Being a West Coast band in the heart of skateboard and surfing culture, The Vandals are constantly being asked how much of an impact these sports have on their lives. Joe remembers telling interviewers from various sports magazines that they don’t take part in any extreme sports because they are “too damn old.” He did say that he was a huge golf fan. Ironically, so were many of the skate mag interviewers. “They were all like ‘Yeah! Everyone here plays golf.’ So I told them, why don’t you call me back when you start up a golf magazine, you’ll get a more interesting interview.”

Joe pondered the idea of a golf magazine for punks and realized it was not as bizarre as it sounded. “I called Adrian Young, the drummer from No Doubt — because he’s got all the money and he’s the best golfer I know — and we were going to do a low profile magazine out of the Kung Fu office.” With a little guidance from his brother, who started Juxtapose Magazine, he approached High Speed Publications, who put out the skateboard bible Thrasher Magazine. They loved the idea and Schwing magazine teed off. “I don’t know what it is when you get older but people start listening to the great ideas you’ve come up with all your life,” he said. “As punks get older, they realize they can’t skateboard forever. It’s just perfect for the whole irony of being punk — you get the punk rocker on the golf course and it’s punk just by definition.”

Earning a degree in law from Loyola University in 1992 Joe opened a private practice mostly to pay the expenses of his upstart rock label. He represents a bunch of bands on both coasts including The Bouncing Souls and Pennywise, as well as several indie record labels like Fearless and Skunk Records. Joe also handled the estate of Sublime lead singer Bradley Nowell after his untimely death in 1996. “Punk is a culture that is unique and I kinda have a grasp on what people really need and what not to waste their money on,” he says. “The legal thing is a mystery to bands and punk rock is a mystery to most lawyers. Lawyers will spend thousands of dollars on an issue that will never come up in the world of punk rock. I know what punk bands need and, more importantly, I know what they don’t need and when a lawyer is doing things you don’t need, he’s just racking up hours to bill you for.”

Joe believes young bands do not need to get the best lawyer in the world. He says they need one who understands their needs and how to assist them with problems that arise most frequently. “Anyone can get the best lawyer in the world,” he states. “One thing that bands fall for is when someone says ‘I can get you Michael Jackson’s lawyer’ Michael Jackson’s lawyer will work for anybody as long as you have the money.” Joe and The Vandals learned this firsthand as they were swindled by a lawyer in their early days.

Always looking to broaden his horizons, Joe’s latest project doesn’t involve playing bass, cutting film or swinging a golf club. His most recent hang out is the California Academy of Tauro-maquia where he is learning the art of bullfighting. Half Mexican in origin, Joe attended bullfights as a child and wanted to see if animal rights activists had pushed the last vestiges of the art out of the world. While surfing the Web, he located the school’s address and traveled to San Diego to check out the scene. “At first I went down to the school as a joke thinking how wacky and different I am,” Joe admits with a laugh. “But then I just got hooked into it. When you meet the people who have fought bulls and have been matadors, you realize how risky and artistic it is.” So far, Joe has fought three bulls and is preparing for his big show in April at the Mexicali Bull Ring where he will actually kill a bull. “To some people, bullfighting is horrible, but if they knew what I know, they’d be jumping for joy,” he says emphatically.

“Fear Of A Punk Planet” can be viewed at http://www.den.net and information on Kung Fu Films can be found on The Vandals official site — http://www.vandals.com.
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First Wavers

The Godfather: Laurel Aitken

By Martin Smeenge

If there is one thing we here at RUDE have learned from talking to artists and bands, old and new, is that there is a continuum connecting ska/reggae from yesterday's originators to today's innovators. The music has never stopped. Many of the music's earliest practitioners have never hung up their recording, producing or performing hats. First wave, second wave, third wave and on and on: what does it all mean?

In our continuing effort to get at the roots of the ska sound, we are instituting a new column where we will feature the living legends who invented the music we all love.

No one, and I mean no one, was and is more responsible for coming up with and popularizing ska music than Laurel Aitken. His song, "Boogie in my Bones," released in 1959 is considered by many to be the first ska song ever released. Aitken's career as a recording artist spans six decades. It is a career in which he has never taken a long break from performing. He travels the world continuously, never playing a gig larger than a dance hall or an outdoor festival. In his '70s, he still tours incessantly, playing the music he loves.

Laurel Aitken was born in 1927 in Cuba and moved with his family to West Kingston, Jamaica in 1938. Though never receiving any formal training, he started singing professionally in the 1940s performing jazz standards for tourists in hotels around Kingston. When he performed in nightclubs like the legendary Glass Bucket Club and at parties surrounding the many roving sound systems he was able to cut loose a little more, performing more rhythm & blues, calypso, mento and his personal favorite, American style boogie.

In a conversation with Aitken last summer as he was about to set out on a six week U.S. tour (in a van!) he told me about his early days as Jamaica's first pop star.

"In my days in Jamaica, before all this ska and this reggae thing came, we had this thing called 'jazz.' If you couldn't sing jazz you couldn't eat. Everybody used to sing jazz. They used to imitate the American singers like Amos Milburn, Louis Jordan, Rosco Gordon, Smilly Lewis. I also used to play calypsos for the tourist boats, welcoming them off the boat wearing a big, broad hat and a pretty shirt, singing 'Welcome to Jamaica.'"

Aitken cut several singles in the mid '50s, but his big break came in 1959 with the release of "Little Sheila"/"Boogie in My Bones," the first single ever released on the upstart Island Records. "Little Sheila" spent 11 weeks at #1 on the Jamaican charts.

Throughout the '50s waves of Jamaican citizens emigrated to a flourishing post war England in search of opportunity. With Jamaican immigrants came a demand for Jamaican culture in the U.K. and Aitken believed he could make it big overseas.

He moved to the Jamaican community of Brixton in London in 1960 in a move that would change ska music forever. Not only was he welcomed by those in Brixton, but his music struck a chord with the working class youths of England. Mods and skinheads picked up on the sound creating a demand so strong that several labels started bootlegging Jamaican records. An understandably upset Aitken approached one of these labels, Melodisc, and after some stern words, the two parties agreed to start a new label, Blue Beat, to cater to the Jamaican market.

In the ensuing years Aitken recorded for a number of labels, cutting such classic tracks as "Fire in Mi Wire," "Bartender," "Landlord and Tenants" and "Pussy Price Gone Up." Aitken was the only Jamaican star who regularly toured the U.K. where he was always greeted by enthusiastic audiences.

"Most people in Europe know who I am, especially in Germany. Those people know their history," Aitken stated. "Once, a man was telling me certain things about myself that I didn't even know. And it was all true, but it was stuff that happened in 1953 in Jamaica."

Considered by many to be among a handful of people that invented ska, I asked him straight out, how did he come up with it?

He laughed and answered, "Most people wouldn't admit to what I'm going to say now, but it is the truth, the God's truth. In the '50s we used to listen to New Orleans music ... American music, and that's what we used to dance too."

"Coxone Dodd would tell you the same thing. He used to come to the States and buy American records and take them all back home. A lot of that
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American blues/boogie stuff. That music, it's got a guitar shuffle in it. We mixed up the boogie guitar shuffle with Jamaican calypso and other Jamaican influences ... and called it 'ska.' Ska was not 'Made in Jamaica.' Some people say, 'We made this,' and 'We made that.' With ska, the influences are American rhythm & blues. If you listen to the early rhythm & blues stuff Coxone would play, the early ska, it's really just rhythm & blues.

"Along came The Skatalites onto the scene and they said they made ska. Do not tell me that. They weren't even called The Skatalites, they were just session musicians earning a living. Don Drummond made the first album for Coxone Dodd. That was called ska and it was pure rhythm & blues. The Skatalites are good at it. They used to play jazz as well ... before, before, before ska. I got famous before them, for this music, but I am only one man in a room that has two saxes and five trumpets and all that. I just got famous before them. They are good musicians and I like to play with them whenever I can."

But what about the sudden burst of energy that seemed to occur in early '60s Jamaica, when young rude boys in the streets of Kingston infused momentum and meaning into the music. 

"It had no great meaning," states Aitken modestly. "It was just a way of life in Jamaica. Ska is a happy sound. I think so anyhow."

Throughout the '60s and '70s Aitken brought all styles of Jamaican music, including rock steady and reggae, to the rudies of Europe. When ska exploded on the heals of late '70s punk, it was the groundwork laid by Aitken and others like Prince Buster that became the basis of 2-Tone music. During this period Aitken played with The English Beat and toured with the mod band Secret Affair and was backed by the punk/reggae outfit The Ruts. He also had another hit when I Spy/Arista Records re-released his song "Rudi Got Married." After the demise of 2-Tone, Laurel kept his faith in ska music and recorded several albums with the English ska band Potato 5. He continued to perform and record throughout the '80s and '90s with a bunch of bands including The Busters (Germany) and The Toasters (U.S.)

What about being called "The Godfather of Ska?"

"I'll tell you how I got that name," answers Aitken. "I was playing a show at 'Gaz Mayall's Rock 'n' Blues.' I had a band called The Pressure Tenants. When I was ready to go on, Gaz said, 'And now I bring you The Godfather of Ska and The Pressure Tenants.' Everybody laughed. The next day, somebody brought in the Melody Maker, and it called me 'The Godfather of Ska.' I started laughing. The name just stuck. I'm supposed to be the oldest man still doing this and still enjoying it, so I just accept it, but some people feel that I called myself 'The Godfather of Ska.' I would never, never do that.

And why do you still perform after all these years.

"This is my life and I enjoy doing it," he explains. "My age is getting very harassing, but when I get on the stage it's like there is nothing holding me back. I love to do that. The music keeps me going and people keep me going. I've heard quite a lot of American bands playing numbers that have that same boogie groove. And they call it ska ... still," Aitken says while laughing like a proud, well ... godfather.
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Future: Jimmy Eat World "Singles" cd, Jejune "RIP" cd, Lazycain / No Knife 7", The Ivory Coast "Rush Ot" cd
Hey... all you rudies out there. Did you know that every time you throw on a skinny black tie or a sharkskin suit, that you are continuing a legacy that reaches back to the early 1960's. From Smokey Robinson to Steve McQueen, from Bing Crosby to Sean Connery's James Bond, a bunch of street toughs in Kingston Jamaica adopted the style of these high flung, high living entertainers as their own. And nobody embodied this look more than a loosely assembled group of nightclub showmen, cantata crooners, gag writers and former teen idols that took over the city of Las Vegas at its swinging height. Sammy, Dino, Joey, Pete and the Chairman, Frankie, lit it up like none before them. They had the world on a string. And now... they're all gone.

All that is except Joey Bishop.

So, what's the story on this guy anyway? He was a bona fide member of the coolest of cool entertainment fraternities that ever existed, The Rat Pack. He was the one that nobody knew about until this group of libertine playboys chose Las Vegas as their liquor-filled, chock full o' broads funhouse. Unlike the other members of The Rat Pack, who all had succeeded in practically every entertainment medium under the sun, singing, acting, dancing, Joey Bishop was about as much of a household name as Chowie Karwatowitz.

He was born Joseph Abraham Gottlieb in the Bronx on February 3, 1918. Shortly after his arrival, his family packed their bags and moved to the City of Brotherly Love, that capital of vaudeville, vice and police corruption also known as Philadelphia. He dropped out of high school, not because of disinterest, but because his family needed him to get a job and kick in his fair share. After working a string of odd jobs, he and his buddies Mel Farber and "Rummy" Spector, decided to form a comedy act. They called themselves The Bishop Brothers in homage to their friend Glen Bishop, who drove them to gigs along Pennsylvania's "Borscht Belt" circuit of music houses and to the two bit nightclubs along the Jersey Shore. One by one his partners quit, and in 1940 Joey was a solo act playing a long engagement at a club named El Dumpo in Cleveland. After patriotically serving his country from '42 - '45, he returned to life as a solo comedy act, taking seven years to reach the top markets such as New York's famous Latin Quarter.

At the age of 44, after years of toiling on the cabaret circuit, Bishop's gold-plated ship finally came sailing into a platinum harbor. At a ceremony honoring Frank Sinatra, Old Blue Eyes caught Joey's act and dug his sharp, ad-lib style. He befriended Bishop and initiated him into his elite clique of hepcat playmates.

Now we all pretty much know what happened after that. The Rat Pack phenomena began during the making of the movie Ocean's Eleven, when after each days shooting the films stars, Sinatra, Bishop, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Peter Lawford would...
take to the stage of the swank Copa Room at the Sands Hotel for an evening of booze addled song and dance routines the seasoned showmen could swing through in their sleep. In his infinite wisdom, Sinatra had anticipated the need for a quick whited master of ceremonies type who knew his way around the stage and could fit in with his group of sometimes over the top showmen. Bishop fit the bill perfectly, deftly keeping an invisible lid on the always in danger of getting ridiculous, (if not pathetic), antics of the singing/swinging group of entertainment cronies. The informal, ad-libbed shows immediately became the hottest ticket on the face of the planet.

Although he played an important role in the Rat Pack scheme of things, it would be easy to consider that Bishop seemed a bit out of place in this configuration of fun-loving jetsetters. Never much of an up-all-night, two-fisted drinkin’ and broad seducin’ type of guy, he, like the rest of the gang had to take his fair share of public ribbing. Subbing for him at a made for TV Rat Pack reunion show broadcast live from St. Louis, MC Johnny Carson joked that Bishop was unable to appear because he had, “Sprained his neck backing out of Frank’s presence.” Bishop himself has humbly stated that whatever success he’s had in comedy came from the fact that “I don’t look like I’m gonna say something clever.” Even though Joey wasn’t always living the ring-a-ling lifestyle of his freewheeling associates, Sinatra respected Bishop’s sense of comedic knowledge, once threatening to fire the hapless Lawford if he didn’t deliver a line exactly as Bishop had told him.

In September of ‘61 The Joey Bishop Show hit the television airwaves. It only lasted a couple of seasons, overcoming obstacles and setbacks amid the finger pointing of nervous executives. Bishops also expressed misgivings about the show, often publicly. He bristled at the programs phoniness stating, “My strategy is, don’t kid an audience. You can never be a star until you can take an audience by the hand. An audience must trust you implicitly.” Though still getting movie offers, some for films that reunited him with former Rat Packers, Bishop was haunted by the failure of his television show. He needed to find something new to sink his teeth into, something that would re-establish him as an independent entertainment entity. When the offer to produce and host a late night TV talk show came, he snatched the opportunity like a thirsty swinger grabbing a dry martini. In a way, he was sort of a pioneer in the fact that his show actually held it’s own against the mighty giant of late-nite talk, Johnny Carson’s "Tonight Show," something no other show had been able to do. The show, with host Bishop joined by a young Regis Philbin as second banana, ran for two years in the late sixties until the bland Merv Griffin stepped into the late night arena and gummed up the works by splitting the nocturnal audience three ways.

And that’s pretty much the ultra condensed version of “This is Your Life, Joey Bishop.” He has been in retirement for years and resides in Southern California. He claims to be working on a biography called “I Was a Mouse in the Rat Pack,” but nothing has materialized yet. When asked recently if he was born with his sharp talent for ad-lib he responded, “I remember always having an answer when I was a kid. For example, if I was going to fight with a guy - if it came to a fist fight - if I could get myself out of it with humor, I did. If there was no question that this guy could knock my brains out, I would say, ‘I just want to warn you, if I hit you, I’m gonna go down.’” Well, he may be thought of by some as the squaresville member of the Rat Pack, but there’s something to be said about the last man standing.
The Social Chaos Tour

or,

How a bunch of geezers taught the kids a thing or two about punk.

Clockwise from top: Social Chaos spills onto the streets, Vice Squad's Beckie Bond stomps on the side stage, The Business jam out as only they can, Joe Shithead of D.O.A. Center; Mark Noah of the Anti Heroes.
Show in and show out, the Social Chaos tour brought North American cities one thing - punk veterans kickin' ass. They may be a bit long in the tooth, but certainly not past their prime. - Clockwise from top: The Business take a short break during their on stage hooliganism, Anti Heroes lead guitarist tears out the chords, Micky Fitz of The Business and Jimmy G of Murphys Law, Micky in his natural habitat, The Business' Steve Whale jumps a drunk.
The Pilfers
Boston and New York go together like baked beans and Caesar Salad dressing. Bring the two cities together for any reason and you will be sure to get a maddening array of opinions, theories and answers to all of life's little problems. The cities' baseball teams are the biggest rivals in all of sports, and minor wars have broken out over clam chowder recipes. Tell me that two individuals, one from Boston and one from New York, both highly regarded in their respective ska scenes, are forming a band? Fageddahboudit!

By Paul VanDorpe
Well, it’s true. The Pilfers were formed in 1997 by refugees from two of the best, longest running bands in the world of ska. “There was definitely some apprehension about starting a new band after leaving Bim Skala Bim,” explained Vinny Nobile as he relaxed prior to a sold out show in Maryland. I assumed that his coming together with New Yorker Coolie Ranx, former Toasters front man, to form a band was not a casual get together. “I was starting to feel boxed in by the musical limitations of my situation and had long since stopped enjoying myself as a performer,” added Vinny about his last days as trombonist for Bim.

Both Vinny and Coolie were instrumental in helping to define the ska scene in their respective cities. I was hoping the story of how they came together was one of luck and fate. Maybe a chance encounter on the subway, or a meeting at a random show. That was definitely not the case. Vinny and Coolie’s coming together began with a mutual respect for each other and a love of each other’s music. “I was more than ready when Coolie asked if I wanted to start something new with him,” said Vinny. We had known each other through the scene and from being friends with The Pietasters, Stubborn All Stars and The Kottonmouth Kings.

The two quickly recruited their friends and former Skinnerbox rhythm section Anna Millat (bass) and James Blanck (drums). When the former guitar player for the Erratics, Nick Bacon, joined The Pilfers were officially born. Having been ensconced for years in a pivotal role in Bim Skala Bim, I was totally impressed with Vinny’s pas-
sion for creating music with his fellow Pilfers. He smiled when he described the band coming together to try out a new sound. “Once we figured out what kind of sound the band was going to have it all sort of fell into place. It didn’t happen right away, but we’re all together right now creatively.

New York meets Boston, and the results will truly surprise you. Their latest CD, *Chawalaleng*, out now on Mojo Records, is somewhat like New York, BIG, and somewhat like Boston, refined and somewhat serious. Predominantly a ska/dub/rock band, The Pilfers are never slaves to a style, and never settle on one formula or sound. In today’s ridiculously oversaturated, boring, alternative music scene, most bands seem to rely way too much on equations rather than being original. Example: Tattoos + ski hats + bad rapping and sophomoric lyrics + heavy guitars = platinum record. There are no equations or formulas when it comes to The Pilfers. Their sound comes straight from their hearts. *Chawalaleng* is tight; smooth sounding when it wants to be and rocking when it needs to be.

The Pilfers are all veteran musicians with a truckload of talent, but how did they come up with such killer songs? According to Vinny, the band has no set rules for writing and recording music. “Sometimes I’ll start with a melody and Nick will come in with a riff, and Anna, James and Coolie will have a rhythm going. It’s just all of us coming together creatively.”

As we continue talking I find out something surprising, to me anyway. Vinny is himself originally from New York. And being a New Yorker, I assume that he cut his teeth in the old CBGB’s Lower East Side punk scene. I couldn’t have been farther from the truth. “I was more into jazz and classical music growing up,” he confides. “After high school (ahem...Juliard Prep) I went to the Conservatory in Boston.” So, you weren’t sneaking into punk rock shows as a youngster? “No. I was hanging out in the Village, but at jazz bars listening to Dexter Gordon and Bill Evans.” Well what turned you onto ska? “Jazz is more of a session thing. I wanted to be part of a band, on the road, performing in front of people. I consider ska to be an alternative to jazz. It lets me be creative in different ways.”

And in The Pilfers, Vinny and the rest of the band really cut loose. In Bim Skala Bim, Vinny, though always a focalpoint of the show, was a horn player first and a vocalist second, singing in support of legendary frontman Dan Vitale. In The Pilfers he takes on a roll more in the fore, often trading vocal lines with top ranker Coolie, sometimes taking the lead vocal reigns entirely.

And what does the future hold for the band? “Making more music and being on the road performing” says Vinny. The band have been touring a lot, showing up all over the place both as headliners and in a supporting roll. So catch one of the most exciting bands in the scene today.
HILLARY OF THE GADJITS

Though short on years, The Gadjits are long on experience. Despite the fact that the band members are still largely in their teens they already have four albums under their belts. Hillary Allen, their keyboardist, is the lone female in a band otherwise comprised of the three Phillips brothers - Brandon, Zack, and Adam.

Although Hillary says her own family was not as musical as the Phillips', as a child she was encouraged to learn several instruments, beginning with the violin at the tender age of 6 and starting on piano a year later. She also plays saxophone and flute.

Since most women in ska are singers, I asked Hillary whether she felt that playing an instrument gave her a different perspective. "It is kind of a different place to be in, but I don't think I get treated any differently. I guess in some ways I've noticed a different perspective on things, but I've never been just a singer so I don't really know what that's like."

Like many other women her age, Hillary is hesitant to call herself a feminist. "Well, I'm not really crazy about feminism - I guess because I never really felt like I had to be a feminist. I mean, I've never really felt repressed as a female. But I definitely think everybody should be treated equally and be able to do what they want with their lives."
THE DONNAS ON LIFE ON THE ROAD

It's 1:00 a.m... do you know where your daughters are? If they happen to be members of the rock 'n' roll juggernaut The Donnas, most likely they're heading off stage after another balls to the wall performance. Taking punk in new directions, these ladies mix the east coast sound of The Ramones with the L.A. attitude of Motley Crue.

Forming in junior high as Raggedy Anne (later changed to The Electrocutes), the teenage foursome began performing in a lunchtime concert series at their high school. "We started a band because we were just really bored," admits bassist Donna F. "We looked at the guys who were performing and said 'How come they get to be in a band? We want to do that too.' Nobody liked us for the longest time, but we just continued to play because there was nothing better to do."

After releasing a record under The Electrocutes moniker, the band shifted gears from kitschy speed metal to pop punk, and recorded several 7-inches for the Super*Teem label, one of which was recorded after hours at a Mailboxes Etc. store. The Donnas self-titled debut, also on Super*Teem, was an underground success and Lookout Records, the band's current home, re-released it with some other lost goodies, in 1998.

As juniors in high school, the group decided to tour Japan - without the support of a major label, and even before signing with Lookout. "Everyone was excited to see us," recalls Donna F. "The weirdest thing was that everybody knew our songs. They received us very well and we had never had crowds like that before."

Unfortunately, the road is not always so kind. During a trip to Europe in the summer of 1999, The Donnas called it quits early and flew home disappointed. "We had to cancel the tour because we were having such a bad time and we were losing tons of money," Donna F. says. "There were just things we couldn't deal with. At one place, a toilet exploded on me and then again on our drummer. We were like, 'We can't handle this shit' and we went home." A return trip to Europe a few months later to perform at the Reading Festival proved to be much more fun. Vocalist Donna A. describes that trip as "a total blast."

When it comes to touring, The Donnas like to be as comfortable as possible. There's no sleeping in the van for these teenage superstars. "We've always been a hotel band," admits Donna F. "Maybe it's because we like to shower and stuff." After rolling into town and checking into a hotel, The Donnas usually seek out the city's hotspots. "If there's something cool to do in town, we do it," she says. "If we know where the arcades are, we'll hang out and play video games or head to the mall."

For a band that sings a lot about partying, The Donnas keep their nightlife in check, both on and off the road. After grabbing some water and hanging out with their fans, they usually whisk off to their hotel to watch some TV. "We don't go to a lot of parties," Donna F admits. "When we're on the road, guys come up to us and say, 'Hey, wanna come back to our house for some drinks?' and we usually say 'Not really' and walk away."

Exploding toilets aside, not all road trips are harrowing experiences. Each new city leaves a lasting impression on The Donnas. "We just have a lot of fun when all of us are together," Donna F. says. "We enjoy going out to eat and drink. When we were in Vancouver last tour, we went to this great Japanese restaurant and drank sake and just had fun. That's what it's all about."
In the world of female ska musicians, there is no one more deserving of the title of young veteran than Elyse Rogers. Since joining Dance Hall Crashers in 1989, Elyse has helped pilot the band through four albums, an EP, and several national and international tours.

Although they have a diverse fan base, Elyse says they probably attract more girls and women than the average ska band. "I'm sure they probably feel they can relate a little better to us. But in LA, at least, the gender ratio seems pretty evenly divided, certainly more so now than in the '80s. I think that the ska scene used to be a bit rougher — there were a lot of people coming from the punk and hardcore scenes then, and it was a rougher time in general which probably kept some of the women from coming to shows. But now when I look around at say, a Hepcat show, there seems to be a pretty even mix."

In addition to being one of the bands lead singers, Elyse also manages her own band, as well as Hepcat and No Use For a Name. One might expect that in the rough and tumble world of the music industry a woman manager would face special challenges, but Elyse says this is not the case. "I really haven't had any problems. I mean, there have been a few isolated things, but really, I had a lot more to overcome when I started out due to my age rather than my gender. In general, people have been really supportive."

Her experiences in the music business have mirrored her broader experiences. She says she doesn't consider herself a feminist, in part because, "I just didn't experience much sexism — certainly not in the workplace — so I definitely never felt like men were out to get me or keep me down. I don't consider myself a feminist, but a lot of people probably consider me one. A lot depends on how you define it."
A relative newcomer to the ska scene, Lisa was recruited by some high school friends who were looking for a female singer to front their band about three years ago. She is no stranger to music however, as she has been singing gospel and other types of music for about 14 years.

RUDE: Do you find any similarities between the styles of music you were singing before you joined The Radiation Kings and what you are singing in the band?
Lisa: I love Gospel and Motown and The Radiation Kings put a lot of soul into the music and that's what I try to do with my voice. I'm trained in a lot of different things, but in The Radiation Kings I don't do any singing in a "head voice," which is a softer, more folksy sound. It's a lot more fun to sing in a "belt," which is basically just belting out a song. You get much more feedback when you are louder and your singing is more in your face.

RUDE: How is your performance different now that you're in a ska band?
Lisa: I get very nervous and I'm actually more boisterous on stage than I am in real life. People have an image of how you're supposed to act on stage and I don't want to be stereotyped as some type of crazy girl. That's why I don't say much between songs.

RUDE: Do you think audiences expect anything different from female performers than they do from male performers?
Lisa: The whole ska scene is geared more towards men. When a girl comes on with a band they are usually either great or horrible. At the same time, women will get jumped on a lot quicker for supposedly being a bitch. You're expected to be sweet and pretty. Guys can spit and stuff and are accepted if they do crazy things. Ska audiences can be very judgmental. A lot of it depends on what city you're in. New York is very accepting, but down south I've gotten a lot of rude and sexist comments.

RUDE: It can't be all bad.
Lisa: Not at all. I love the ska scene. People are so great. People come up to talk to you after shows and they are so sincere. Of course, you can run into assholes anywhere. More girls in the scene would make it more fun. When we get to a club and I see a band warming up and there are girls in the band, especially girls playing instruments, it's so much more fun for me; knowing that there are going to be other girls there.

The Cover Ups have been together for almost two years, playing what they call "2-Tone Traditional" ska. They have been in the studio recently with producer Brian Dixon, also of the Rhythm Doctors.

RUDE: What about being girls in the scene?
Christina: Every show we have played has been extremely positive. We never get any sexist comments. People actually have more respect for us because we have all been involved in the scene for a long time, (Christina has been working for Steady Beat Recordings for five years, Nina was in the Shanties and other members have played in Mohtown.) and because we are actually good musicians. We write 95 percent of our own music, with a little help from Efren Santana of Hepcat.
Rude: What excited and inspired you the most while making your latest album Viewers Like You?

Cinder: "Die of Shame" came off pretty hard-hitting. It's about this young girl singing about bleeding to death because she's given herself an unsuccessful coat hanger abortion. She didn't want to tell her parents because of the parental consent law in her state. I had to put myself in the place of a 17-year-old girl. Her voice is more plaintive and more melodic, but the music is aggressive because what's happening to her is a terrible thing. There's some anger behind it... why do women continually have to jump through these hoops of fire for somebody else's idea of morality?

Rude: One of the album's most powerful songs is "War Room," which seems to allude to IV drug use and Hepatitis C. I know that you don't have Hepatitis, so why does this seem to come across as an autobiographical song?

Cinder: I was putting myself in the place of many people close to me. There's no reason why given my lifestyle of 10-20 years ago that I shouldn't have [Hepatitis C]. There's no reason except for the grace of God that I don't have AIDS. But regardless of that, I'm still concerned about it because of the place it has in the music scene because a lot of us have been 'addicts at one time in the past. People that have it don't want to talk about it, and I don't blame them because there's this stigma. A lot of people don't understand that you can't get it from hugging or from sharing food.

I do have some experience with the subject because of the excesses of my past lifestyle. Johnny Cash said it best when he talks about how he "feels like a soldier getting over the war." Being kind of battle-weary. That's how it's felt sometimes, because I've put myself through hell.

Rude: As a punk singer, you're a bit older than a lot of the people involved in the scene. How are you, and other punk singers and musicians in their 30s and 40s, changing what it means to be a grown-up?

Cinder: I can only speak for myself, but I'm always going to be an eternal kid. I think it's hard work staying a kid because there are so many soul-crushing, soul-numbing elements in our society. They squeeze the kid right out of you. But the older I get the more I become a responsible member of society. I thought I'd always be a malcontent on the outskirts of everything. But I've got this business now (Cinder Block merchandise) and we've got 20 employees, and so I'm starting to see how people might look up to me. Before I'd think, "Don't look up to me as an example because I'm a fucking mess." Now, I'm starting to take responsibility in my life and take care of myself, and be healthy and responsible as far as the business goes. But that doesn't have to make you grow up. That doesn't have to steal your sense of adventure. That's a challenge, though, growing up and not getting hardened and not losing your idealism.

When I quit [music] for awhile, my soul just started dying. I think that doing what you love keeps you young. Sometimes it's hard to keep doing that if you meet with dead-ends and failures. Don't let go of your dreams! The easiest way to get hardened is to let go of your dreams and do what other people define as 'adult.'
THEO OF THE LUNACHICKS

RUDE: How long have the Lunachicks been together?
Theo: Eleven Years
RUDE: Being a female in a punk band, do you ever run into any hassles?
Theo: We get ‘show us your tits’ screamed at us time and again when there’s a really jocky crowd. It’s both helpful and also a hindrance in some ways. We tried to get on the Warped Tour for four years and they never let us before last year.
RUDE: Were you ever given a reason?
Theo: There are a million reasons — “oh, they’re men” or “they’re drag queens,” or “oh we’ve never heard of them,” or “Oh, blah, blah blah.” It’s a boys club. But I think in some ways we were respected by all of the bands when we were on The Warped Tour and we’re known by everybody but there’s still some lack of respect. It’s frustrating.
RUDE: How’s life on the road?
Theo: It’s fun. We’ve had so much fun. We were just on tour with the Go-Gos and we had a blast. Right now, we’re touring in a Winnebago which is really nice for us.
RUDE: What do you do when you’re not touring or working with the band?
Theo: I do a lot of stuff. I started acting in the past year and I still do some modelling. I emceeing at a club called Life in New York City doing “Lust for Life” on Wednesday nights. We have a lot of punk bands come there.
RUDE: Have you done any other crazy jobs?
Theo: I’ve had a lot of crazy jobs. Telemarketing. I handed out flyers on the street. I babysat for a long time. I go-go danced for a long time too but I haven’t done that in a while.
RUDE: Walking down the street do people ever gawk at you?
Theo: Yes. I get grabbed.
RUDE: How do you handle stuff like that?
Theo: Often, I wear shirts that cover my arms because I get grabbed. People grab you by the arm, yank you and look at your tattoos. The funnest is when they see you and they’re like “Let me show you mine!” and they take off all their clothes to show you this tiny little Woody Woodpecker.

YVONNE GARRETT
PRB PUBLICITY

Yvonne has been promoting and publicizing punk, street and ska bands for over a decade. She cut her teeth in the mid-’80s doing freelance work with bands like Pussy Galore, Naked Raygun and Suicidal Tendencies. After a stint doing artist relations at Caroline Records, she accepted a position at Reprise Records as Senior Director of National Media Relations promoting bands like L7 and Babes in Toyland. Tiring of the major label run-around, she broke out on her own in 1997 opening PRB Publicity which has represented a mind boggling array of rude artist including Goldfinger, H2O, Reel Big Fish, Agnostic Front, Stubborn All-Stars, Dropkick Murphys and the Bouncing Souls.

RUDE: Some people think of punk rock as a “boys club.” Do you think it is?
Yvonne: First of all, I’m 35, so for me, punk rock started in ’77. I didn’t get into it in the ’80s like a lot of girls did. Since I grew up on the West Coast, it was never a “boys club.” It was an “anybody you could find who listened to this weird music club.” I’m also the type of woman who’s never put up with that type of bullshit and I’ve never really gotten that kind of vibe from anybody. Some of that came out of the East Coast hardcore scene, but I never got that from any of those guys because I’m older than they are and I’ve been on the scene as long if not longer than they have. The first people I met when I moved to New York were people like Lou and Pete from Sick Of It All. They’ve always been very polite and open to women being part of the scene.

Another thing is that I don’t date in the scene. I think a lot of the time women set themselves up because they’ll dress all girly and they run after the bands and when you do that, you’re not really contributing to the scene and you’re certainly not doing anything positive for the image of women in the scene.

RUDE: Do a lot of women want to participate in the punk scene but certain things keep them out?
Yvonne: I think it’s a closed scene in a number of ways for both women and men because you just can’t jump into any scene. I’m also very active and ingrained in the rockabilly scene and if your not old school, they’re going to look at you a little weird. You just can’t go out to Hot Topic and buy the clothes, shop up and say you like Blink-182 or you like Brian Setzer and expect that people are going to accept you. It definitely was different, to use that horrible phrase, “back in the day,” because there wasn’t really anybody around. But I think that if women are smart and they have their shit together, they can come up with ways to work in the scene. It’s not like I’m someone who said I just have to get a job in music. I couldn’t stomach doing anything else.
Northern soul is one of the coolest sounds around. It is also one of the least appreciated. Less an innovation than a nod to a style, northern soul is more or less a list of songs. A juke box selection at a diner in Philadelphia. A set list written backstage at a theater in Detroit. A stack of records next to a turntable at a dimly lit dance club in Birmingham. A compendium of music from cities worldwide that spans four decades.

Actually, make that five. Northern soul has a new voice. The Inciters hail from San Francisco, worlds away from the night clubs of 1960's Northern England that spawned the original northern soul craze. A collection of scooter enthusiasts, mod fashion freaks and bored punk rock castoffs, the band members found each other hanging around at scooter runs and all night dance parties. For a band this big, they have stayed with a pretty stable line-up of committed instrumentalists and charismatic vocalists. With a sparkling new album, Doing Fine, just released on Jump Up! Records, they are ready to take the sound they love to their friends in the underground music scene and beyond. I recently had the chance to speak with trumpet player Rick Kendrick. He squared me away on his band and the Northern Soul sound.

**RUDE:** How long have The Inciters been together?
**Rick:** We've been together about five years. Before that I was in Durango 95. A couple of the guys from that band went on to start The Reducers. By the time Durango 95 started getting offers to tour, we had broken up. That band was a lot like Dexy's Midnight Runners because we had a violin in the band. Dexy's covered northern soul songs as well, but nobody ever knows that. All people ever think of is "Come On Eileen." But some of their early stuff will blow you away. Before they got that violin going and pulled their pockets out they had a good strong horn section. Their album Young Soul Rebels is great.

**RUDE:** How many people are in the band?
**Rick:** Right now we have 10 members. There are 11 on the new album, but one person moved away.
Tone and all that. To an outside person, they wouldn’t be able to tell the difference. The more you get into northern soul the more you start to hear what makes up the sound.

**RUDE:** Well, who came up with the name northern soul.

**Rick:** The term came from back in the early '70s. The DJ scene in Northern England was very competitive, just like in the early ska and reggae scene in Jamaica. The DJs were trying to out-do each other by spinning cool, rare tracks that nobody else had. DJ’s were actually covering up the labels on the records, just like they had done years earlier in Jamaica. Some media guy along the way dubbed it northern soul because this was all going on in Northern England. As the DJs had to look harder for material they tended to sift out the harder edged stuff they were getting from all over America. Everybody’s got a different view on it, but to me it’s a faster, driving soul. Songs we call “stompers.”

**RUDE:** What got you guys interested in starting a band that played this type of soul music?

**Rick:** I always had an appreciation for Motown and soul, but that’s pretty much all it was. Being a Mod in the early '80s, my love for the music grew gradually from that and from being involved in the ska scene. I started looking for some other kinds of music. We got deeper into soul, then we discovered northern soul and got into that and it just opened up a whole new world. A lot of us grew up listening to ska and Oi! Bill, the singer, who does a lot of the songwriting, went straight from being a punk into being in this band. He had an awesome voice and a great style. He decided he wanted to sing instead of yelling in a punk band. He got into northern soul overnight and really embraced it.

**RUDE:** So what is your definition of “northern soul?”

**Rick:** I get asked this all the time. For starters, it’s all American music, but northern soul is a European distinction. There is definitely a style to it. It’s not Motown that you hear on oldies stations. It’s usually got a more driving bass line, nastier backing vocals and stronger horns. It’s like hearing the difference in traditional ska, and rocksteady, and 2-
hotels around the city and there are scooters buzzing around everywhere. There's a rally in June that's even bigger called King's Classic.

RUDE: Are there any other bands playing this type of music?
Rick: There are no other bands playing northern soul that I know about. But there is a huge scene. It's all about DJs and collectable records. Vinyl records drive the whole scene. I wish there were some bands because I would love for there to be a live northern soul scene.

Us too. Here's hoping The Inciters influence some young bands to include the northern soul sound in their repertoire. We also hope The Inciters do some serious touring and stick around for a long time.

Love" by Nancy Wilson and "Just Look What You've Done" by Brenda Holloway. She got up on stage with us once in Los Angeles and sang that song. She still performs a lot in England and Germany where the northern soul sound is really popular. A lot of the old singers will get invited to all night soul parties and sing a song karaoke style.

RUDE: How did you go about trying to get this sound in the studio?
Rick: By trying some old tricks we read about and by using some Motown tricks the engineer knew about. But this is 1999, and I'm sure we are bringing something new to it. We recorded at the Wax Trax studios in Chicago for three days non-stop, pretty much around the clock until the engineer just dropped. Then we went on tour. We went all the way to Montreal. We had a gig set up in New York but it fell through. That was the one city I really wanted to play on that tour.

RUDE: And The Inciters have played with Desmond Decker?
Rick: We played with Desmond Decker a couple of times. He wasn't very nice the first time we played together. It was in San Diego, and I brought an album for him to sign. He acted like I was being a pain and didn't say a word to me. Not long after that, I was on vacation in England and I went to see Laurel Aitken. I muscled my way backstage and met Laurel and some of the guys in his band. A couple of weeks later we went to England to play some shows with Desmond Decker and the guys in his band were the same as the guys in Laurel Aitken's. They were kidding around with me and they dragged me over to Desmond and said, "Hey, this is the guy who said you were an a**hole." I couldn't believe it. I mean, he may be, but he's still a legend and he deserves my respect. Anyway, he stood up and apologized for not being nicer when we first met. He was really cool. His bandmates said that it's just because he's so stoned he doesn't know what's going on. But when he gets on-stage he can still perform.

RUDE: I know you guys are big into scooters.
Rick: A couple of us ride scooters. Our first three years we played mostly at scooter shows, but we also try to play outside the scene. Scooter Rage is a big show out here in San Francisco. We've played three of those. There's 300 plus scooters for that. They rent a hall in the city here. The big party's on Saturday night when they give away all the trophies for best scooter and stuff. People stay in hotels around the city and there are scooters buzzing around everywhere. There's a rally in June that's even bigger called King's Classic.
Citizen Fish
Active Ingredients
(lookout)
This album by the usually ska-punk band made up of former members of the early '80s English street punk band the Subhumans, has the band sounding, well...very punk! Lots of songs emphasize the off-beat, especially on the verses, but it is usually in the guise of a strong guitar stroke that doesn't really take the listener back to the islands. Where it does take you is the gritty city streets of England. Streets Citizen Fish see as full of the human refuse of a desperate, abused and media dazed society.

Songs about corporate piggery, social divisiveness and the pending environmental meltdown. The lyrics weave in and out of a punk texture that is interesting and capable of rocking out when it needs to. Great punk album by some serious vets.
Chalmers

Royal Crown Revue
Walk on Fire
(side one/dummy)
This was a critical record for these guys, what with all the touring and jammin' and jivin' around the world. Sure, they had put out a couple of pretty good albums, but could they really live it up? The answer is yes. Yes like, yea, baby, yea, yea...yea.

Remember about a year ago when you were standing around some dusty parking lot on the Warped Tour and turned to your buddy with the spiky green hair and said, "OK, they sound great...but where are they going to take it from here?" Well, for starters, lead singer Eddie Nichols has taken his solid Tin Pan Alley stylings and turned into a full-blown crooner a la Dean Martin, who I dare say, Mr. Nichols gives an honest run for his money. The band plays masterfully, subtly, originally. They are such relaxed player that they can sell anything. Nothing ever sounds nostalgic. Pure jazz.

Most importantly, and I can say this because I know these guys, don't worry about them becoming another solid band that gets lost in the shuffle of an industry and music buying public full of morons fixated on trends, because The Royal Crown Revue don't care. These cats will always land on their feet. Each member is cool, smart and one of the best players and songwriters in the business. So enjoy them while you can.
Chalmers

Hot Stove Jimmy
Theme for a Major Hit
(jump up)
Art, jam, punk, noise, ska, hardcore...I haven't heard this many sounds on one album in a while. A demented rock opera from a band that has grown creatively and technically since their debut album which was released three years ago. In fact, this album is a major achievement in a musical style charted by only a few bands like Mephiskapheles and Deconstruktion. A rambling record that goes from part to part without ever following a standard song structure. The horn section weaves pretty standard lines through avant and ska rhythms. The vocals are a rant buried in the mix. After listening to the album a few times, I think I was most impressed with the solid drumming, which holds the whole thing together, never letting anything sound hokey or silly.

Some of the tracks were produced by the esteemed studio wiz Steve Albini (Nirvana/Slapshot) but with some impressive female mic work by vocalist/bassist Jen Johnston (The Distillers)." Performing as the backing band for three other artists, these label-running madmen appear a total of five times. Boasting a substantial amount of unreleased and hard to find material by many Helcat artists, as well as tracks from upcoming albums slated for release in spring 2000, this comp is an easy sell. Ska titans Hepcat serve up another heaping helping of their signature roots styling with the unreleased "Riding the Region." Rancid, who do a sped up version of Sham 69's "If The Kids Are United," also join up to support three rocking reggae artists, Mad Lion on the devestating original "Tell Me What You're Feeling," Buju Banton on "Misty Days" and Buicaneer on "Bruk Out." Other favorites include Joe Strummer's "X-Ray Style," David Hilliard Rocksteady 7's "The Fool" and The Gadjits' "Bad Gadjit." The surprise hit on Boot is the debut of Brody Armstrong's (wife of Rancid vocalist/guitarist and Helcat prez Tim) band, The Distillers. Coming at you loud and fast, The Distillers ride the true spirit of punk on "LA. Girl." Hopefully, Helcat will keep giving us "the boot" again and again, with a swift kick in the arse!
Chalmers

Give 'Em The Boot II
(Helcat)
The second in the series of astonishingly good compilation albums, the new Boot should come with a tag line stating "now includes 20 percent more Rancid." Performing as the backing band for three other artists, these label-running madmen appear a total of five times. Boasting a substantial amount of unreleased and hard to find material by many Helcat artists, as well as tracks from upcoming albums slated for release in spring 2000, this comp is an easy sell. Ska titans Hepcat serve up another heaping helping of their signature roots styling with the unreleased "Riding the Region." Rancid, who do a sped up version of Sham 69's "If The Kids Are United," also join up to support three rocking reggae artists, Mad Lion on the devestating original "Tell Me What You're Feeling," Buju Banton on "Misty Days" and Buicaneer on "Bruk Out." Other favorites include Joe Strummer's "X-Ray Style," David Hilliard Rocksteady 7's "The Fool" and The Gadjits' "Bad Gadjit." The surprise hit on Boot is the debut of Brody Armstrong's (wife of Rancid vocalist/guitarist and Helcat prez Tim) band, The Distillers. Coming at you loud and fast, The Distillers ride the true spirit of punk on "LA. Girl." Hopefully, Helcat will keep giving us "the boot" again and again, with a swift kick in the arse!
Chalmers

F-Minus
(Helcat)
Twenty songs in 17 minutes? You do the math. F-Minus continues to rack up the hardcore points on their latest release, their debut full length on Helcat Records. Not to propagate the east/west "feud," but California bands tend to not have the right stuff to pull off a legitimate hardcore record. However, the buck stops here. Brad Logan and company turn out a fine, adrenaline rush of a record. Topics such as class struggle ("Class Machine") and the state of modern society ("Disfigured") are addressed with abrupt, brutal honesty. Top that with some impressive female mic work by vocalist/bassist Jen Johnson on the heavy tracks "Better To Die" and "Spit At The Truth" and you have yourself a winner, albeit a very short winner.
Chalmers

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Chalmers
Main Street Saints
Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven
(GMM)
Stellar debut from this group of Kansas City thugs. Main Street Saints specialize in street punk anthems with catchy choruses and weaving guitar riffs. Simple production, but it sounds really good. Maybe this is because they got one great guitar sound and stuck with it. The drums sound full and are well played. The vocals are strong and ruff but never sound forced or fake. Throw in a verse from the German national anthem, lyrics about street fightin' and working for a living and top it off with a rousing chorus of Oi! Oi! Oi! and you've got a great album.
Chalmers

The Ejected
The Best Of The Ejected
(Captain Oil)
The Ejected, one of punk's forgotten favorites, truly shines on this "best of..." collection. Short, fast, snotty and straight from the streets - what Oil! is all about. There's no primping or posing here, just honest to goodness music with a bit of aggro and a lot of emotion. Tracks about football, coppers and the pub never get old, especially when they sound this damn good. Give this disc a spin at all costs and cross your fingers The Ejected gig again sometime soon.
Jay Hale

The Authority
On Glory's Side
(Outsider)
More Oi! anthems for the working class Time to raise a pint and shout along. Don't tell anyone, but these songs actually have some structure and fairly intelligent lyrics. "Two Sides" and "Teenage Authority" are my two faves. Oi! that's grown up... not just drinkin' an' fightin'... Social commentary and introspective revelations? Oh shit! quit thinkin' punk! Great version of "The Guns of Navarone." A good drunken time.
Andre Stoopid

Against All Authority/The Criminals
Exchange
(Sub City/Hopeless Records)
Sub City, a politically vocal division of Hopeless Records is at it again, teaming up two great bands for an album to benefit the Berkeley, Calif. Free Clinic and its needle exchange program. The album features unreleased tracks by Against All Authority and The Criminals as well as covers of each other's songs.
Against All Authority, known for their eyebrow raising lyrics, offer up four tracks that combining ferocious punk with elements of ska. The band serves up a platter of disaster with "The Bottle's Lookin' Better." Highlighting some of the lower points of being in a band, this ditty documents the harshness of slamming it on the road. "WWYD?" attacks the church with crunching guitars and lyrics that would make Greg Graffin of Bad Religion blush.
The Criminals display their talents for mayhem with some grinding, working class punk. Discussing topics like making ends meet ("Down and Out") may come a-dime-a-dozen in the punk world but The Criminals pull it off with crafty songwriting. Hearing the bands cover each other is worth the price alone. AAA and The Criminals take each other's best tracks and twist them with their own signature styles. Jesse Luscious definitely has the chops to tackle "All Fall Down" and AAA almost surpasses the original with "I Want To Stab you With Something Rusty" - completely appropriate for an album that's proceeds go to fight for clean needles for intravenous drug users.
Jay Hale

Buford O'Sullivan
The Club of Hopes and Fears
(Ska Satellite/Moon)
With a lineup boasting such esteemed players as Victor Rice, Bucket, and Eddie Ocampo, you'd assume this record was gonna smoke. Guess what? It does. Combining a plethora of styles to create a well-rounded release, O'Sullivan throws in some smoothed out rocksteady, punchy third wave beats and some nicely placed horn hooks to power the disc and grab hold of your senses. I swear I heard a slide whistle in there somewhere. A solid effort overall and I anticipate more fine releases in the future.
Steve Dwyer

Ann Beretta
To All Our Fallen Heroes
(Outlook)
To All Our Fallen Heroes is a blistering combination of all things rock 'n' roll. Mixing elements of hardcore, punk and even an ounce of ska, there is definitely something for everyone. Starting off with their most powerful track, "Fire In The Hole," Ann Beretta builds up an emotional powder keg of sound that doesn't ease up as the burning wick gets shorter. The dueling vocals on this disc really power the songs. The outright fury on the track "Eye For An Eye" is similar to that of Rancid whereas "Vengeance," has a dash of country flavor. "Burning Bridges," featuring the Less Than Jake horn section, is a standout track that could survive without the brass accompaniment but is better for it. Also appearing on the album is Johnny Bonnell of The Swingin' Utters, who chimes in on "Haywire." The band wraps things nicely with a revved up rendition of Cheap Trick's "Surrender."
Jay Hale
The Stubborn Allstars

*Nex Music* (Stubborn)

The All Stars' third full-length album goes back in time to the era when rhythm & blues originally spawned ska. The album reminds me of the late '60s Studio One tracks. "Wash Away Evil" put me on a deserted beach with an ample supply of pina coladas, and kept me there through the rest of the CD. Great displays of musical talent featuring such hot artists as King DJango, Victor Rice, Agent Jay, Victor Ruggiero, Eddie Ocampo, Lord Sledge and new Bosstone Roman Fleisher. This CD is a must have.

Robyn Hale

Vice Squad

*The Rarities* (Captain Oi!)

This should've been called "Vice Squad 101: Introductory level." A nice little overview of the various line-ups and incarnations of the band. From their first show to early '80s demos, you get 22 tracks of semi-classic punk of various sound and song quality. Some times the quality of a recording makes a track almost un-listenable, while other tunes really rock. The liner notes are extensive and read like a transcript of Great Aunt Bertha's vacation slide show. If you like Vice Squad, pick this up. And if you want to take a nap, go find the liner notes.

Andre Stoopid

Guttermouth

*Gorgeous* (Nitro)

This is a good, obnoxious, punk rock album. It comes complete with blatantly sarcastic lyrics from a guy who calls his own mother an asshole. This album definitely helps me get in touch with my less serious side. Musically, Guttermouth continues to come up with fast and furious punk tunes that shake the walls and tickle your balls. This album roots planted firmly, they may help carry this genre for a number of years. I was pleasantly surprised in that what you hear is what you get; no pretenses, pure, sloppy, head splitting punk rock. A little disappointing that this was only an EP, but still an excellent effort from this outfit.

Paul Van Dorpe

The Jackie Papers

*I'm in Love* (Panic Button)

The Jackie Paper's pull from the classic Dead Boys, Germs old school style of punk rock. Their Jamaican labels, the Phase One catalog is relatively small, the quality of the tracks are excellent. On these song, which range from love songs of the Desmond Dekker/Whailers vocal style to much more rootsy and dub sounding numbers. The rhythms, all original, are played by the Channel One studio band the Revolutionaries with drummer Sly Dunbar and bassist Lloyd Parkes as foundation. These songs have not seen the light of day in twenty years. A superb album of reggae tracks from that period.

Smeenge

Pressure Cooker

*Pressure Cooker* (Self-released)

The nine members, give or take, of Boston's Pressure Cooker came together in 1997 and instantly created a unique mixture of ska, rock-steady and reggae music. Their sound draws mainly on the traditional Jamaican ska and reggae sounds of the early-to-mid 60's. This, their second full length, blends musical flavors better than a Dairy Queen Blizzard and the tasteful vocals of Craig Fujita and Howie B. is the cherry on top of the sundae. With zippy ska tracks like "Peacemaker" and "Holly-O" and the slow and sultry "End of Time" the group really hits the ska vibe nicely. The only thing sub-par on the album is the production, which at times is a little thin. These guys have proven themselves to be one of the hardest working live bands in the northeast. It they just get a little better in the studio they could take over the world.

Robyn Hale
Good Riddance
Operation Phoenix
(Fat Wreck Chords)
Outstanding hardcore unit. Good Riddance bring it on with both barrels loaded. Social conscious thrash-core mixed with an overabundance of attitude. The production quality is excellent and they are not an average three chord garage punk band. Politically inspired with songs that open your mind rather than ram some media generated issue down your throat. Extra bonus points for the hidden version of Black Flag’s "My War". Why do Black Flag songs sound better when not sung by Rollins?

Paul Van Dorpe

Tiger Army
(Hellcat)
Tiger Army comes at you with claws outstretched playing top-notch psychobilly rock. These boys definitely don’t screw around. With a howling sound, think The Misfits meet Eddie Cochran, Tiger Army crams many of punk and rockabilly's tastiest elements onto one disc without any dodgy nonsense. Songs like “Nocturnal” and “Never Die” are a bit more on the punk side of the spectrum whereas the remainder of the songs are fine examples of early bad boy rock ‘n’ roll. If you are a fan of bands like the Amazing Crowns, Tiger Army’s debut is definitely where it’s at.

Jay Hale

Greetings From the Welfare State
(BYO)
Two very enthusiastic thumbs up for this 20 song compilation. Even the most cynical fans of compilations (myself included) will find at least a band or two (or three) worthy of a listen. A veritable cross section of working class British style punk. This CD is perfect for that Friday night party you were thinking of having. Turn it on and leave it on, this CD is loaded!

Paul Van Dorpe

Anti-Heros
Underneath the Underground
(GMM)
Kick-ass Oi!/street punk. This is the quality I expect from the Anti-Heros and GMM. Pissed off but catchy as hell. Think Sam Kinison as a boot boy... No, that’s s’posed to be a good thing, really. Found myself hummin’ along almost immediately. Then came the urge to break things... You know how it is. Found the nude pic of Lars Frederiksen disturbing, yet slightly erotic. Reason enough to pick this up. Oddly enough, Underneath the Underground is the perfect musical companion for a hung-over Sunday morning sit-in ‘round the kitchen smokin’ butts and drinkin’ coffee. More fuel to slap you back to reality.

Andre Stoopid

Angelic Upstarts
The EMI Punk Years
(Captain Oi!)
An essential band to complement any punk collection. The Upstarts have always stood tall amongst their legendary punk peers. This CD kicks in the finest old school UK fashion. The EMI Years takes on a nice little journey from three chord classic punk to drum machine synth pop. Don’t be dissuaded from the latter, this CD is loaded with classics.

Paul Van Dorpe

The Misfits
Famous Monsters
(Roadrunner)
Since 1977, seminal New Jersey punkers The Misfits have been bringing their brand of sci-fi fla-vored rock-and-roll to the masses. They’ve released over a dozen albums and countless seven-inches. Famous Monsters is the band’s latest and greatest work since their reunion back in 1985. This is the follow-up to 1997’s disappointing American Psycho. Fortunately for Misfits’ fans, this album exceeds all expectations. The band showcases its rediscovered talent with the opener “Forbidden Zone,” a song that proves beyond a doubt that vocalist Michale Graves has found his place within the Misfits sound, and that the band can play without Danzig and still be worth listening to. One of the best songs is “Dust To Dust,” a real tearjerker that conveys the meaning of teen angst more than a dozen Nirvana albums ever could.

Cornelius Walsh

Mission 120
Turn Up Your Radio
(Fork In Hand)
This album is pure punk rock power ballads with a rock n'roll kick. The lyrics are great! I don’t know about you, but I have no problems relating to tunes about girls, beer and hindsight. Listen to this album once and it will stick in your head like an overplayed TV commercial...and that's not a bad thing. With their catchy intro's and hooks, the Mission add a new flavor to the punk rock world. The tight guitar and slammin' drums leave you almost in a haze. Not only can they play, the drummer even sings a tune. If you like modern day pop punk, and you’re looking for something new, then the Mission 120 is for YOU.

Trettor

RUDE INTERNATIONAL • ISSUE 5 • 2000
The Clash
From Here To Eternity — Live
(Epic)

Still pissed that that the Indigo Girls butchered “Clampdown” on that god awful tribute to The Clash? Well Epic has actually redeemed itself by releasing a 17-song masterpiece featuring live recordings from the late 70s and early 80s. Strummer, Jones and the boys have never sounded so good. Hitting high notes with terrific renditions of “Career Opportunities,” “London Calling,” and “Tunnel of Love.” Hey, don’t stray from the formula if it works, huh? The saddest thing is if they quit posing so much and practiced and got tight, they could be a good second (or is it third) generation GBH/Exploited sorta band. Nothing new.

Jay Hale

Inspector 7

Veni, Vidi, Vici
(Radical Records)

Unlike their apparent Roman influence, Inspector 7 hardly bring down the walls. Pure suit and tie, 2-Tone ska. It’s all high energy, fun loving punk ska, pure and simple. These guys have been stalwarts on the New York area scene for years, but I’m not seeing much growth. My biggest problem is that I’m always looking for bands that take their music outside the margins. It’s not a cut on Inspector 7, I was hoping to get slapped around by them and all I got was a nudge.

Paul Van Dorpe

The Casualties
For the Punx
(GMM)

These guys are so fuckin punk! I can tell cuz this release is mediocre at best. The production is weak, with generic four chord riffs, boring lyrics and tons of pictures showing how punk and spikey they are. Creative high is in the song titles: “Casualties,” “For the Punx,” “Punx and Skins,” “Chaos Punx” and “Punk Rock Love.” Hey, don’t stray from the formula if it works, huh? The saddest thing is if they quit posing so much and practiced and got tight, they could be a good second (or is it third) generation GBH/Exploited sorta band. Nothing new.

Andre Stoopid

Screeching Weasel
Thank You Very Little
(Panic Button)

Pop punk fans rejoice! Screeching Weasel is back. Well, that’s to say the ever-changing Chicago outfit has cleaned out their recording closets and have put forth a double CD of unreleased goodies. Side one consists of studio out takes and hard-to-find crap Ben found too dodgy to put out on earlier records. Many of these old tracks are top notch. However, on some, you realize why they never made it to your stereo. The second side is all live material from the band’s 1993 tour. Starting off sounding like it was recorded in a metal garbage can, the album turns the corner into what you’d expect from SW - - honest to goodness pop punk mayhem. Old time fans, as well as rookies, will thoroughly enjoy this disc.

Jay Hale

Beerzone

They Came, They Saw, They Conquered
(TKO/Flat)

After one listen you’d swear it was 1981 all over again. Leaning heavily on punk’s early days, Beerzone’s latest release gives punk rock a 20cc shot of hilarity right in the arse. Never taking themselves too seriously, the band churns out tracks about Viagra, women, football and, of course, beer with a Murphy’s Law sized dose of fun. Check out the terrific guitar work and tell me this band doesn’t rock.

Jay Hale

The Gadjits
Wish We Never Met
(Hellcat)

After putting out one of the best ska/new wave records of 1998, the brothers Phillips and keyboardist extraordinare Hillary Allen step it up a notch. The ska riffs take a back seat on Wish We Never Met and are replaced by straight up rock ‘n roll. Songs such as “Bad Gadjit” and “B.C.” appear on this disc much like they do in the band’s live set, gritty, harmonious and exciting. Most apparent on the album is the bands unabashed love of Elvis Costello. With the production crew of Vic Ruggiero (The Slackers, Stubborn Allstars) and Victor Rice (too many bands to list), you know there is bound to be some top notch old school ska. “Thinkin’ Bout You,” a track many might consider a Stubborn knock off, stands apart from the rest. It certainly is the rudest these cats get on this disc. Expect really big things from this band as they have many bright years ahead in their still very young musical career. Gadjits Rule OK.

Jay Hale

The Pietasters
Awesome Mix Tape #6
(Hellcat Records)

As an avid fan of this band, I’m still looking for Awesome Mix Tape #5. The Pietasters are not just a ska band. Nah, they’re much too complex for that. They play a terrific mixture of Staxx soul and R&B and have the chops to back up their drunken
attitudes. Although many were not impressed with their Hellcat debut, The Pietasters truly shine on Awesome Mix Tape #6. The songs are excellent this time, full of catchy hooks and brilliant lyrics.

Jay Hale

The Rough Kutz
A Bit O' Rough
(Skanky 'Lil Records)

Why is it always that the best bands out there are the ones you've never heard of? The UK's Rough Kutz certainly fall into that category. Borrowing heavily from the 2-Tone era, these blokes really know how to jam. Extremely mellow rhythms that are easy on the ears and music to the soul on every track. The horn arrangements are well placed with the organ playing culminating in some of the most danceable tracks to recently hit the wax. Everything you love about ska is right here on one disc.

Johnny Fatts

Blood for Blood
Livin' In Exile
(Victory Records)

If you thought Boston hardcore was lacking, here's your wake up call. Straight out of the trenches come Blood For Blood, hands down the city's most violent band. Although they may not be smacking people around in the streets themselves, BFU fans know how to mix it up at shows, Livin' In Exile, their latest release, comes at you like a Tyson uppercut after the bell - destined to hit and leave a painful reminder the next day. Loaded with pure adrenaline, BFU take hardcore away from its metal tendencies and rev it up a la Agnostic Front. Tracks such as "Anywhere But Here" and "Cheap Wine" pull no punches coming straight from the streets. Sure, they may be overly pessimistic but that is the world in a nutshell for these brutish Bostonians. If you don't like it, too bad. They're not gonna sugar coat it and they're not gonna sing songs about "doin' it all for the nookie."

Jay Hale

Pressure Point
Life's Blood
(TKO)

Hmmm... lemme see here. Released by TKO... produced by Lars Frederiksen... what the hell do you think the outcome'll be? Fucken rock and roll, baby! Oi! Oi! fucken Oi! muthafucka! All six songs rock, but it's all over way too soon. Only six songs? What's up with that? I'll tell ya my theory: Marketing strategy. Ya gotta keep the masses screaming for more. Once it gets too long the A.D.D. kicks in. But no, they've kept me wanting more of this music called punk rock! I must purchase new releases. Capitalist bastard running TKO. I am now his Bitch.

Andre Stoopid

The 4 Skins
Singles and Rarities
(Captain Oi!)

Can't get enough Oi!? Who can these days? Cure your jones with this collection of lost tracks from street punk pioneers The 4 Skins. Digging up lost 45 recordings, tracks from compilations and a bunch of angry music that never hit the stores, Captain Oi! does it again. Although some of the cuts are a little rough around the edges, this record truly represents the spirit of the 4 Skins. Grab a beer, turn on some football and enjoy the tunes.

Johnny Fatts

MegaSuperUltra
Power Pop Art
(Jump Up)

Solid mod rock from this Chicago trio of parka clad hipsters. Cool mod beats for all dance happy fans. Simple production, three chords and a dirty sound from a band that has honed its sound playing live. In your face vocals with a soulful edge and broad range. The vocals also have a decidedly English power pop sound, and a near English accent. The plethora of great mod style bands emerging around the US and UK like MegaSuperUltra, a band with potential beyond their current accomplishments, ensures that the scene will stay strong for a while.

Smeenge

Before You Were Punk 2
(Vagrant Records)

I don't know why everyone digs
Johnny Fatts's predecessor, at least it doesn't taste like New Coke. Although this sequel is not as impressive as its original sound, Vagrant Machines, Rocket From the Crypt and The Hippos rock on without the big hair and have you singing along. Although this entry doesn't sound like New Coke's 1985 debut (which was the real deal), the band's new album, Hopeless Romantic, packs a punch and sets the stage for a career that could be compared to that of The Bouncing Souls.

The Bouncing Souls

"Hey, beer drinkers!" is the introduction to The Bouncing Souls' new album, Hopeless Romantic. The band continues to deliver on their promise of fast, loud, and furious punkrock. The album features a mix of punk, rock, and reggae inflections, creating a unique sound that sets them apart from their peers. With lyrics that range from political to personal, The Bouncing Souls continue to prove that they are one of the best bands in the business.

Libertine

See You In The Next Life
(Substandard Records)

This record attacks you right from the get-go with pure rock 'n roll energy. Blazing guitars and nasty drums, combined with well-placed gang vocals add up to one of the better records to grace my stereo in many, many months. The production makes many major-label efforts pale in comparison. Half the time you swear Joe Satriani is strumming his axe in the studio. Kudos to Libertine for turning out some of the best original punk rock in years.

Guttersnipe

Join The Strike
(Sidekicks Records)

Oi! from Sweden? You're damn right! Guttersnipe is back with another hard hitting, beer swilling, fist pumping album of street punk anthems that make you want to lace up yer DMs and put the boot in. Performing songs about violence without sounding like common thugs, Guttersnipe produce a great record of skinhead sing-a-longs. These fellas continue to give us the history lesson we rightly deserve.

Angelic Upstarts

Blood On The Terraces
(Captain Oi!)

A re-release of the scandalous 1987 album that garnered the Upstarts "most hated" status by the Home Office. Captain Oi! continues to give us the history lesson we rightly deserve. Apparently the British authorities didn't find humor in the record's title and imagery. Luckily, we blood thirsty Yank's do, and the music's not bad either. Upon first listen, I thought someone slipped an Animal Boy-era Ramones disc into my stereo. Starting off a bit slow, the Upstarts pick up the pace and attack the establishment with authority. "I Wanna Knighthood" is just killer. Blood On The Terraces is a little new wavy, but a fun romp nonetheless.

Wallride

Will Last Forever
(Bronco Bullfrog)

Barcelona meets Hermosa Beach, Wall Ride are seriously reminiscent of early So. Cal punk which is a high compliment if you can pull it off, and they do. Really good songs that are more dirty than todays American crop of fun in the sun punkers. Some of the best Black Flag I have heard since Black Flag. Strong chops of the rhythm section almost betray them, as at times the technical proficiency almost drowns out the feeling. But ultimately, the music has feeling, and that is what counts. Female vocals belts them out, and surprise...it's all in English. No muss, no fuss. I hope they tour stateside to see if they can do it live as well as they do it on record.
A Tribute To The Exploited — Punk's Not Dead
(Radical Records)

Although few of the bands on this tribute are household names (yet), the Exploited sure are. Forming in the UK in 1979, the Exploited influenced hundreds of punk acts. It's certainly about time these blokes got a tribute album that's got the suss. Up and comers such as Billyclub ("UK82") and Squiggy ("Fuck The Mods") put forth hard as fuck efforts. The disc also features New Jersey stalwarts Blanks 77 ("Punks Not Dead") as well as what has been heralded as the Bruisers' final recording — their bone-crushing rendition of "SPG." If you're a fan of the Exploited, pick up this release. Play it loud and piss off your landlord.

Jay Hale

Lee “Scratch” Perry & the Upsetters
The Upsetter Shop V: 2 1969-1973
(Heartbeat)

From his work with artist from Bob Marley to the Beastie Boys, Lee Perry remains one of music's great innovators and visionaries. The Upsetter Shop traces Perry's formative years as a producer in the hectic world of late '60s reggae. From wild instrumentals like "X-Ray Vision" to over the top vocals on "Uncle Charlie" this collection presents a vivid picture of those glory days.

Robyn Hale

The Randumbs
In Search Of The Abominable Sonoman (is this right title?)
(TKO Records)

You have to admire a band as ridiculous as The Randumbs. Although their songs may be goofy as fuck, they completely encapsulate what makes street punk fun. Brian King's gruff vocals and witty attitude complement the powerful playing of his band members and often invoke the sounds of early Rancid. Clever musical breakdowns and choruses give the tracks on In Search Of... an original and welcome edge. The Randumbs' greatest contribution on this CD is a new theme song for punk rock alcoholics; "I Need A Beer" is perhaps the best booze-related track since the salad days of Murphy's Law.

Johnny Fatts

The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs
Live on KXLU
(Triple X Records)

For the past few months the hype surrounding The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs has been huge. After seeing the ads, reading the interviews and hearing the word on the street, the critics were right. This band totally has the heavy punk-a-la Iggy and The Stooges down cold. Mixing grinding guitar riffs with big, fat bass licks over weighty vocals, The Cheetahs kick some serious ass. The last three songs on the disc were produced by Wayne Kramer of MCS fame for Chrissakes! If this is how they perform live I imagine their studio work is so tight it cuts off their circulation.

Johnny Fatts

Punk Rock Jukebox
Volume II
(Blackout! Records)

As if you couldn't get enough punk rock covers, Blackout! returns with their second go-round with Punk Rock Jukebox. Featuring some of the best artists out there, including Dropkick Murphys, Anti-Flag and Violent Society, as well as a host of other bands on the cusp of nation-wide notoriety, PRJJ dishes out some
choice cuts. There are also some I could give or takes as well as some shit that never should have seen the light of day like The Enkindels take on “White Wedding.” Although the majority of this comp holds its own, I guess you just can’t win them all.

Jay Hale

Big Bad Bollocks
*Night on the Tiles*
(Soundproof Records)

Raise your pints ye lads & lassies…. this release is chock full o’ pure rockin fun drinking songs. I don’t even know where to begin … this is one of the best CD’s I’ve heard in a long time. Catchy little diddys like “Guinness,” “Drunker than I was,” “Drinkup Yabastards,” “Football Song” and “Night on the Tiles” make me long for a lazy Sunday afternoons throwing them down at the local pub. Every song on this CD is amazingly catchy you can’t help but sing along after only hearing the first chorus. Even if you’re not a big fan of drinking songs, or are sober for that matter, you’ll love this CD.

Robyn Hale

The Ultimatics
*The Vicious and the Glamorous*  
(Wurmhole Music)

Lyrically, this disc has some really good material. Attacks on California, a diagram of a white trash picnic and songs about hot chicks usually add up to at least 45 minutes of pure joy. However, lackluster production really drags down the vibe. It is very tough to hear the vocals underneath the avalanche of guitar and bass, which is really a damn shame. Clever pop punk with some garbled hooks that would be better served with a crisper sound. The foundation is there and it’s only a matter of time until these guys can put out a better sounding record. I’ll certainly keep my ears open.

Johnny Fatts

Return of the Read Menace  
(AK Press/Honest Dons)

Talkin’ bout a revolution? Well, forget that hippie shit. What you get here is a boatload of pop punk bands, some emo, a lot of covers and Wat Tyler doing some fucked up karaoke song called “History of the Soviet Union Part One.” AK Press, one of the world’s leaders in revolutionary literature and audio recordings worked in conjunction with Honest Don’s on this opus and, surprisingly, everything works out as intended. Sure, it’s not all punk, but everyone involved with this disc has a firm belief that all voices should be heard. And if that’s not punk, then what is?

Jay Hale

Tilt
*Viewers Like You*  
(Fat Wreck Chords)

Back with another angry release, Tilt continues to be one of the hardest rocking bands out there. Although *Viewers Like You* isn’t as instantly catchy as their last record *Collect ‘Em All*, these Bay-area veterans still keep up the intensity. Cinder Block’s vocals are completely captivating and the boys backing her up can more than keep a beat. In fact, it’s the rhythm section controlling the songs on this disc. Viewers Like You offers nothing really new for fans of Tilt so if you’re already down with them, you’ll dig it. If not, try any earlier disc and build your way up.

Johnny Fatts

Hudson Falcons
*Desperation and Revolution*  
(GMM)

Heavy on the politics as well as the guitars, Hudson Falcons take street rock into a more refined direction. Mixing punk with out and out rock, the Falcons add poignant lyrics to their music. They addresses bleak subjects like class struggle, politics in Northern Ireland and the exploitation of child workers overseas, while mixing it with driving music. They wear their opinions on their sleeves without being overbearing, allowing the listener to formulate their own opinions. Although the subject matter is a bit heavy on “Desperation,” the slick playing makes it easier to take.

Jay Hale

World of Ska
*(Triple X Records)*

I’m about to say what a lot of people have been thinking lately – much of the ska influenced stuff out there lately has been pretty lame. You have teenagers cashing in on “metal-ska” as well as assorted chumps vying to be the next Operation Ivy or Less Than Jake. Luckily for all the die-hard rudies out there, Triple X has assembled the terrific World of Ska comp featuring the tried-and-true power players of ska. On one disc you have the electro-stylings of the Selecter, traditional blue beat action by “The Godfather” Laurel Aitken, jams by Judge Dread and others. If you’re looking for some old school flavor, look no further than this disc.

Jay Hale
The Masons
Plymouth Rock
(Middle Class Pig Records)
What do you get when you puree
the Amazing Crowns and The
Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and
top it off with three fingers of The
Misfits? A great three-piece
garage outfit with enough sense
to know what rocks and what
sucks. It's been a long time since a
band claiming to be "Del­ta
punk" has blown the doors off
the hinges with such intensity.
Jay Hale

Steal Pulse
Living Legacy
(Tuff Gong)
Named after a popular racehorse,
the story of Steel Pulse begins in
Here, singer/songwriter/band­
leader David Hinds was tagging
along to gigs with his roadie older
brother. Becoming enthralled with
the world of music, and motivated
by the Black militant movement in
the U.S. and the teachings of
Jamaican Rastafarian culture,
Hinds gathered up his "homies"
Basil Gabbidon (guitar), Selwyn
Brown (keyboards), Ronnie
McQueen (bass), and Basil's broth­
er Cohn Gabbidon (drums) in his
father's basement. They played
their first gig at a pub called The
Crompton, using cardboard boxes
for drums, one amplifier for two
guitars and a bass, and borrowed
keyboards. In 1976, after garnering
a deal on Anchor Records after
winning a local reggae competi­
tion, they released what became a
minor hit "Nyah Love."
Pulse began gigging regularly in
London, just as punk exploded, and
quickly became the punk scene's
favorite reggae band. They played
shows supporting bands like Gen­
eration X, The Adverts, The Stran­
glers and XTC, and in October
1977 opened for the legendary
Burning Spear. The road to inter­
national stardom was not without
potholes. They would run through
three record labels (Island, Elek­
tra, and MCA), and go through
endless band member changes.
Ultimately though, Steel Pulse
would go on to be the first British
reggae band to win a Grammy.
What you find over and over
again throughout the hour of live
tunes on "Living Legacy", aside
from the poetic songwriting,
infectious melodies, incredible
musicianship is a feeling that Steel
Pulse is much more than an
immensely talented reggae band.
Their music is the music of revo­
lution, potent and alive. They have
a spirit you will never find in the
many pseudo-ska/rap/rock bands
dominating today's "teenage
wasteland" of MTV and pop
radio. For those who have never
heard Steel Pulse, "Living Lega­
cy" is an excellent introduction; it
is a collection of classic songs
from the past and present, record­
ed live at venues in Puerto Rico,
France, and Holland. The Ethiopi­
an Proverb in the liner notes says
it all: "To one who does not know,
a small garden is [like] a forest."
James Blackwell

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As a welcoming to our new digs on Kingston St. in Boston’s Chinatown District, RUDE: International sponsored its first, of what will be many, office parties. The excuse... an afterparty for The Mighty Mighty Bostones’ Hometown Throwdown. The soire featured the live sounds of trad ska faves Pressure Cooker as rude dudes came from far and wide for an evening of drinking and music. (Photos by Jay Hale)
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