

germans

CAPE FEAR

(ARENA ROCK)

It's hard to imagine a more indie rock band than Toronto newcomers Germans. Complete with playfully ragged guitar melodies, retro video game keyboards, and slightly off-key slacker vocals a la Stephen Malkmus, it's almost as if they were put together from an indie starter kit. To top it off, they even have a goofy publicity photo and fake names listed on their MySpace page (**SEQUOIA ROZENBERG**, indeed!) However, the lead track "Tiger Vacuum Bottle" proves that these five Canucks are no joke. A perfectly orchestrated anthem that balances a gut-rumbling fuzz bassline and chiming guitars with abstract yet vaguely optimistic lyrics, it sets the bar high for the rest of the LP. Happily, the eight songs that follow do not disappoint on one of 2007's most promising indie debuts. (arenarockrecordingco.com)

the go! team

PROOF OF YOUTH

(SUB POP)

The Go! Team's debut *Thunder, Lightning, Strike* was one of the most critically acclaimed records of the past two years. An infectious mash-up of '70s-styled breakbeat grooves, Tower of Power horns, *Sesame Street* rhymes and raw indie guitar band attitude, it was also an incredible jolt of unabashed, well-crafted fun. I'm pleased to report that *Proof* delivers more of the same. The main difference is that this time around, the Brighton sextet focuses less of their energy on samples and instead hands the microphone over to a string of special guests that includes everyone from **MARINA RIBATSKI** of **BONDE DO ROLE** and **PUBLIC ENEMY**'s **CHUCK D** to the hip-hop kiddie ensemble **RAPPERS DELIGHT CLUB**. Play this one loud—and often. (subpop.com)

the horrors

STRANGE HOUSE

(STOLEN TRANSMISSION)

What's not to love about British five piece The Horrors? They've got a great name (albeit one already in use by an American group). Their visual style is a perfectly realized combination of campy Goth rock and splatter cinema shocks. (If you haven't seen **CHRIS CUNNINGHAM**'s scarily brilliant video for "Sheena is a Parasite," drop what you're doing and head directly to YouTube.) Their reference points are impeccable (what better way to open the album than with a devilish cover of **SCREAMING LORD SUTCH**'s 1963 cult classic, "Jack the Ripper"?). They even have their own theme song, for crying out loud! In short, The Horrors are the best Grand Guignol band since the early '80s heyday of The Birthday Party, Damned and Cramps. Don't miss out. (stolentransmission.com)

ion dissonance

MINUS THE HERD

(ABACUS)

An explanatory note: The following review was written while listening to these Montreal

tech/grind metal masters for 10 non-stop minutes, at which point I fell unconscious. "The music descends upon me like an army, with bazookas. I try to flee but the rhythm section is a relentless assault of ball-peen hammers pummeling me into submission. The singer screams at me as if I've been naughty and I need to be punished, or maybe I need to punish someone. I don't know; I'm confused because the music is occurring in meters that haven't even been named yet, and my body is currently in 173 pieces. *Minus* was produced by someone named **ZEUSS**. It is the greatest album ever." (abacusrecordings.com)

the jesus lizard

LIVE DVD

(MVD VISUAL)

It's hard to believe that it's been nearly a decade since Jesus Lizard disbanded. In their early '90s prime they were one of America's most influential post-punk groups. Guitarist **DUANE DENISON**, bassist **DAVID W.M. SIMS** and drummer **MAC McNEILLY** had all sharpened their chops in various '80s underground outfits, and together they formed the tightest, most explosive rhythm section of their generation. Live, however, the real attraction was frontman **DAVID YOW**, a volatile, shirtless messiah prone to guttural screams and incoherent Mark E. Smith-esque ramblings. The wildly provocative Yow was fond of revealing his man parts, an occurrence that sadly (happily?) never transpired when I caught them at Hoboken's Maxwells... though his trousers were slung dangerously low to the ground. The live show captured here, an electrifying 1994 set from Boston's Venus de Milo, likewise sails wide of any R-rated material. But it's still remarkable to see a sweat-soaked Yow deliver roughly half his lyrics while staggering, stumbling and diving headlong into a totally frenetic, enraptured crowd, prodded on by the band's searing, serrated grooves. This DVD is as fine a document as one could hope for of a time, a place, and a band, the likes of which we probably won't ever see again. (mvdv2b.com)

laserhead

RIDE YOUR STATIC

(BARRACUDA SOUND)

There's a definite retro quality about this debut from Gainesville, FL trio Laserhead. Pitched halfway between the sloppy east coast fuzz guitar jangle of late '80s Dinosaur Jr. and Buffalo Tom and the mid '90s west coast emo melodicism of Jawbreaker and Knapsack, *Ride* is an album both out of place and time. Songs such as the tense title track and the more bouncy "Bound" have a raggedy charm that should bring smiles to fans of any of the aforementioned. The hooks sometimes fall flat, as do **RICHARD RIDINGER**'s rather indistinct vocals, but if you're looking for a harmless dose of nostalgia, this works just fine. (barracudasound.com)

the last town chorus

WIRE WALTZ

(HACKTONE)

Not quite country, not quite folk, and not quite indie, Brooklyn's LTC dwells in a dark, subliminal space where hushed emotions and tales of broken hearts and regrets come to rest. Others such as Red House Painters and early Cat Power have trod these grounds before, and like them, *Wire* deals with issues of misty-eyed resignation and cotton cloud hope in equal measure. **MEGAN HICKEY** is the driving force behind this aesthetic. Her crying lap steel guitar and calm, assured vocals lend the slow-pulsed songs a state of easy grace. While this works to great effect throughout, the must hear track is undoubtedly a lugubrious cover version of "Modern Love" that reduces **DAVID BOWIE**'s 1983 #2 to a stark, ironic crawl. (hacktone.com)

lcd soundsystem

SOUND OF SILVER

(CAPITOL/EMI)

JAMES MURPHY is a schlub. This, of course, is part of his charm. There is something undeniably appealing about a chubby, scruffy-chinned, plain looking fella making it big first as an in-demand leftfield electro producer, and now as an indie star with his LCD Soundsystem project. As with the first LCD album, *Sound* is afloat with myriad sonic references, which once again have sent smitten trainspotting critics scurrying for Talking Heads, Liquid Liquid and Heaven 17 comparisons. Thankfully there's more to Murphy than that. "North American Scum" displays his finely-wrought deadpan irony (sample lyric: "New York's the greatest if you get someone to pay the rent"), while "Someone Great" is a heart-wrenching work of utter beauty. The emperor is fully clothed.

let's go sailing

THE CHAOS IN ORDER

(YARDLEY POP)

It's time to coin a new genre. Let's call it *Grey's Anatomy* music. If you've seen the show, you're likely aware of the acoustic female-fronted Adult Alternative MOR stuff that falls under this category. If you haven't, then the following list of artists ought to give you some idea: Tegan and Sara, Rosie Thomas, Ivy, Maria Taylor, Dressy Bessy, Anya Marina, Keren Ann, Weepies, Devics, Sing Sing, Camera Obscura, Lily Frost, Mirah, Anna Waronker, Feist and Jealous Girlfriends. The debut album from L.A.'s LGS (AKA singer-songwriter **SHANA LEVY**) features not one, not two or three, but *four* songs that have appeared on the show. As such, I am hereby nominating it for the *Grey's Anatomy* Music Hall of Fame. Congratulations! (yardleypoprecords.com)

the mabuses

MABUSED

(MAGPIE)

It's probably unfair to compare The Mabuses' latest LP with their self-titled 1992 debut, but then again, with the exception of an obscure