

Imagine **Satan** working feverishly in the kitchen trying to make the most intense and insane beef stew ever, and you have what *The Secret* sounds like. The drums are Satan's hellish hands chopping all the vegetables and the guitar represents the dead human flesh he is mixing in with the rotten, drum-diced vegetables. After working for many evil and hellish years stringing up the beef stew of torture, he forces you to partake in his damnation stew and your throat and mouth melt away and you start hooting and hollering about your misfortune and your screams sound exactly like **Marco Colsovic's** hardcore black thrash metal screams. The production is done by ever popular Umeå Sweden producer **Magnus Lindberg** (Hell's spoon) at Tonteknik Studios (Hell's bowl) which every heavy band seems to be flocking to these days. So if you're in the mood for Satan's beef stew, buy *The Secret's* new album. —Jon Robertson

Stigma When Midnight Strikes Pivotal Rockordings

Street: 03.25
Stigma = The Crown + The Black Dahlia Murder

If ever there were a time to say that modern metalcore can be done well, this is it. The visceral guitar tone on *When Midnight Strikes* is hellishly pleasant. The key factor with Stigma is that they can write good songs that strive to get your attention instead of songs trying to fit a specific format. There are wicked death metal moments that remind me a great deal of the last few moments that The Crown offered up. Aside from good chunks of melodic-yet-brutal guitar work, pretty much the only thing that slaps this record in the metalcore genre is the vocals. It's a shame that bands that made this genre popular in the first place sound like crap now. I guess it is just time to pave new ground for new bands. —Bryer Wharton

Subwaste / Tommy Gustafsaan & the Idiots Split

Subwaste
Street: 02.26
Subwaste / TGATI = two bands that have no hang-ups breaking new ground, just out to play some great '77 punk rock.

These two bands are going about punk-rock exactly how bands should. They're just playing, no bullshit and no fluff, just punk-rock done right. Buzzsaw guitars and growling vocals are present on both bands' tracks. Now, a split record is usually better when the acts are different enough to show wider range of the music they play, but similar enough not to alienate each band's fans. These two are so similar that most listeners would have trouble telling when Subwaste stops and the Idiots start. Sure, Subwaste is slightly heavier, and TGATI are a little more rooted in rock n' roll, but it's only after a couple listens that these subtle differences become apparent. If you dig on street punk that doesn't hold back, here it is

by the truck load. —James Orme

Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra & Tra-La-La Band 13 Blues For Thirteen Moons

Constellation
Street: 03.25
Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra = Godspeed You Black Emperor! + Vic Chesnutt
TSMZ has always brought to light the apocalyptic falling-out that our world has experienced since the appearance of humans of earth — and our trend to destroy anything in our way. *13 Blues for Thirteen Moons* addresses this issue on a never-before-seen vocal level unique to ASMZ's discography. Singer **Efrim** forcefully pounds poetry above chaotic violin solos that crescendo, break apart, and reunite as **Beckie's** cello follows like rain in a roof gutter, ready to fall at any point. These four tracks slam a variety of issues at hand — most directly, the United States' involvement with Black Water in Iraq, and our apparent desire to pillage our earth's natural resources. It seems as though the current state of affairs is so terrible that ASMZ have shed some of their opaqueness and attacked openly — making *13 Blues for Thirteen Moons* an opinionated, glorious and wrathful album. —Kristyn Lambrecht

Theory of a Deadman Scars & Souvenirs

Roadrunner Records
Street: 04.01
Theory of a Deadman = Nickleback + Seether + more pop crap
I know there is an audience for this band and their type of sappy pop-rock country-flavored dribble, but as to why? I'm not sure. For the sake of that audience, even though I don't think *SLUG* includes much of it, I will try to be fair and nonjudgmental, although, when shit stinks, it doesn't matter how much air freshener you spray, it still smells funny. Only having heard a select few tracks of other TOAD albums, it's all pretty damn similar, but I guess if it works and sells their records, why would they change? There are some happy songs that have some rocking moments, but most of them are power-ballad-type tunes or just plain ballads that lyrically and musically lack inspiration of any sort. When the album is done it feels like you just listened to one song over and over again. If you listen to rock radio expect to hear "Bad Girlfriend," a hell of a lot in the coming months. Thankfully, the *SLUG* audience is savvy enough to stay away from this type of music. —Bryer Wharton

Think of One Camping Shaabi Crammed Discs

Street: 03.25
Think of One = Ravi Shankar + Afro-Pop + Francophonics
While your ear might feel like it's detecting a hint of something generally Arabic or Indian, give it a better listen; this Belgian group's newest album is distinctively Moroccan. Even though the lyrics are in multiple languages,

you don't need to speak a one of them to enjoy this. Think of One takes traditional-sounding tunes and mixes in guitars and keyboards and turns them contemporary and slightly electronica. Hearing the melodies played by a guitar rather than a sitar adds a unique turn to the songs, and the modernization seems less forced and more like a cherry on top of a European sundae of sound. Add in some brass and French-pop influence and this album will totally change your thoughts on what you thought was possible from an album that has truly broken the mold. —Kat Kellermeier

The Toasters CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 28, 2002 - The Bowery Collection

MVD Entertainment
Street: 03.18
The Toasters = Madness + Bim Skala Bim + Bad Manners
Having seen The Toasters live on multiple occasions, I can confidently say that if you've seen one Toasters show, you've seen 'em all. That said, this live recording from six years ago (or roughly 20 lineup changes ago) captures America's self-proclaimed longest-running ska band delivering a better than average set. All of the horn-heavy, high-tempo staples of any Toasters set are here ("2-Tone Army," "Shocker," "Shebeen"), plus a couple of the better tracks from their newer albums. This is an especially cool record if you've only seen The Toasters in recent years, as it features notable members no longer with the band (**Jack Ruby, Jr.** on vocals, **Buford O'Sullivan** on sax) plus their rarely seen keyboardist **Dave Barry** and a cameo by **Rudie Crew's Roy Radics** on the final track. This live album is far from incredible, but if you're already a Toasters fan, it's worth a listen. —Ricky Vigil

Why? Alopecia

Anticon
Street: 03.11
Why? = cLOUDDEAD + Beck + The Blow
Yoni Wolf, AKA Why? mastermind, once a force in the juggernaut "hip-hop" outfit **cLOUDDEAD** (someone once said "they are to hip-hop as Nirvana is to, say, the blues") returns with more of the same obtuse songwriting he has displayed since he began. He can create interest out of nothing, offering commentary on the minutia of everything from kitchen towels to white-boy auto-erotic literature ("only look at black and Puerto-Rican porno/cuz they want something that their dad don't got") to sleeping positions, all subjects he flits between in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. Together with **Andrew Broder** and **Austin Brown**, Wolf complements his words with a mélange of hip-hop, new wave and twang, the trio capably realizing all sorts of mix-and-match experiments. After dozens of solo and group releases, Why? still manages to work a niche that thrives on ambiguity, forged ingenuity and unassuming trinkets, their own genre that only they know how to work. —Dave Madden

Witch Paralyzed

Tee Pee Records
Street: 03.18
Witch = Budgie + Witchcraft + 70's fuckin' metal



Damn, this is awesome. Without trying to quickly lump these gentlemen into the "stoner" category right away, **Witch** are most certainly time travelers from the 1970s, here to bring the weapons-grade awesome for all of us kiddos. **Dinosaur Jr** fans might also be interested to know that **J Mascis** is playing drums for Witch, and does a fantastic job. What is wonderful to me about this style of music is that it truly feels timeless. Although it keeps fairly simple techniques and principles close, it never seems to feel beaten into the ground. However, I wasn't a teenager in the 1970s, so I can't vouch for if my elders were ready for all that came along in the 1980s. So among this small return of old-school doom-rock, along with the likes of **Clouds**, **The Sword**, et al, Witch certainly aren't losing any ground with this excellent little album. —Conor Dow

Zimmers Hole When You Were Shouting at the Devil, We Were In League With Satan

Century Media
Street: 03.11
Zimmers Hole = Strapping Young Lad + Dethklok
Oh, hell yeah! The Hole is fucking back! This time around they're getting the worldwide release treatment via Century Media Records, which is a first for the Canadian band. It is nearly impossible not to compare this record with SYL, maybe it is because the man behind that band, Devin Townsend, plays a big role in the production of the record. Also, its guitarist, bassist and drummer are all from Strapping, though, on previous records the band didn't sound this close to SYL. But by all means the similar sound isn't a bad thing at all, in fact, it gives it familiarity for newcomers. The Hole have always made fun of metal while relishing in its greatness. The title track mocks glam metal, with other songs containing lyrical content so fun, it's ridiculous; you'll never laugh so hard while you headbang. The music encompasses many genres and makes fun of them too, from power metal to thrash to death metal. Dethklok's Nathan Explosion introduces one of my favorites on the record called "The Vowel Song," which pokes fun at metalheads being illiterate. You seriously can't get much more badass than Zimmer's Hole, this album will be blowing my mind consistently for years to come. —Bryer Wharton