

"Dame Una Sena" (Gimme Little Sign) shows another side of Big Sandy's bag, with some keen Soul phrasing (Brenton Wood, I'm told, is still huge with the Low Riders in East L.A.), with which he attains true excellence on "Lagrimas Solitarias" (Lonely Teardrops). In any language, if you can't bring the listener damn near to tears, don't attempt to do a Jackie Wilson song. While Sandy and band alike rock out like teen canteen U.S.A. or Los Estados Unidos De Mexico on "Calor" ("Slow Down"), As per Los Apson's muy loco version, they do a surprisingly faithful reading of Marty Robbins' "Devil Woman" (only a surprise in the context in which it's presented), with some tasty Spanish guitar parts and, again, some soulful vocalizing. Another rockin' highlight is "La Hiedra Venenosa" (Poison Ivy), which was a hit in Mexico for Los Rebeldes De Rock, who had the distinction of featuring a Black lead singer (footage of Rebeldes De Rock, Locos Del Ritmo, Los Crazy Boys, and others can be seen on youtube, though it's from a 70s TV special. Good performances, just the same). Caesar Rosas wails on a screamin' version of "El Microscopico Bikini," which is actually a reworking of "Dizzy Miss Lizzy," done originally by Los Apson (THEE easiest Mexican Rn'R band to find reissues on...they didn't always nail it, but almost none of their stuff is bad). The guitars are cranked up high enough to break glass, and that's GOOD! Rosas also shines on "Popotitos," or Bony Maronie, as per the fantastic Los Teen Tops' (if you like it WILD in the Little Richard/Rockabilly vein, start with these hombres) and "Dejenme Llorar," actually an original by Los Freddys, who're apparently still moderately popular in Mexico, today. Ahhhhh, but, now, Quetzacoatl must come down from the mountain and spread his multicoloured wings over the true believers (and I don't mean Los Hermanos Escovedo, though they're nice guys) whose god wears shades...Little Willie G., still in beautiful voice, and still just as handy with a rocker or a ballad, sings lead on just three songs, but leaves a lasting impression, nonetheless. Ana (Anna), the Arthur Alexander/Beatles ballad in which the hero throws in the towel so his lady love can leave him for someone else, benefits from his resonant vocals. His voice sounds none the worse for wear, and real singers only sound better with age, BUT, do you think John Lennon could have ever been so easy?! Me neither. "Hang on Sloopy," as "Hey Lupe," has been covered by dozens of Mexican bands (the name change was an easy transition, and they like mind numbingly simple 2-4 Frat Rock as much as we do!), and Little Willie G. breathes new life into this arguably overdone standard. Speaking of which...Little Willie G. also gets his dos centavos in with an insane reading of "Loco Te Patina El Coco" (Wild Thing) with crazy tempo changes and a fiery fuzztone solo that borders on Stoogelike proportions. It might surprise you to know Little Willie G. AND Los Straitjackets played it pretty close to the cover version by Juan El Matematico. Boy, this rocks. I'm at a loss for much else to tell you about it. What we have here is a tastefully constructed collection of songs done in tribute to a bonafide musical genre that's still widely unknown outside of it's homeland (and, even there, you'd be hard pressed to find too many people who give a shit. Just as a lot of young people in Japan think the wild "Group Sound" music is for squares, tuff Mexican Rock 'n' Roll is considered Oldies music by a lot of younger people in Mexico). Rock 'n' Roll eats it's young and vice versa. At any rate, Los Straitjackets have turned in yet another fine performance, making many, very familiar, songs, sound new again. If you're looking for instrumentals, there's only one, Thee Midnighters' classic, "Whittier Boulevard", which sounds like cruising with the top down and a busted speedometer down the street that is the song's namesake, but, there's plenty of A-#1 musicianship, though, not at the cost of losing that edge, which is what makes the originals sound so damned good today.

Lost in the Trees "Time Taunts Me" (Trekky 104 Carolina Forest Rd. Chapel Hill, NC 27516) Keeping it real – orchestral!

Louis "Freak Show Revenge" (superphonic) Gooley.

- **loudQUIETloud** – a film about THE PIXIES (MVD) You have two things happening here: On the one hand this documentary about the clinical, opportunistic, not particularly friendly Pixies reunion is about as polite and soulless as the band's interactions with each other. Only the drummer, who has become a practicing magician, a dabbler in self-medication, and who has a nicely documented, but overall inconsequential, onstage musical breakdown in the film, is actually "interesting." However, this film also re-reveals to me how incredibly powerful, joyous, and unique the band's music is. I do not pull those albums out, which is obviously a mistake, as one thing that is positive about the band becoming cold professionals is that they can play the fuck out of these amazing tunes and they sound incredible. Though this cannot be mistaken for a thrilling documentary, as far as the music, this is a great document.

Lovely Crash "Buddha Car" (Tokyo Rose) Give them all your lovely cash! Rock n Roll that's both trashy and classy with a powerful lady running the show like Ilsa!

Lover! (Empty POB 12301 Portland OR 97212) This is what Memphis music is supposed to sound like – dirty rock n roll with soul and grit, and just enough danger to scare your mom a little (even if most mom's now have tattoos).

- **Lena Lovich** "Live From New York at Studio 54" (MVD) Man is this a good concert! What a dynamic, amazing, hypnotizing performer, at her peak. Absurdity, witch powers, and teutonic disarmingness have never been utilized as gloriously as when Lena counts her lucky numbers and you count your lucky stars for seeing it.

W. W Lowman "Plain Songs" (Arbouse Recordings) Lushly orchestral near-epics that made this lowman a high man on the pop totem pole

Lucky Bastard (ytamericanbulldogs.com) A possessed guitar wails devil tongue lashings that lick the surface world until everything becomes permanently sticky.

Lucky Stiffs "Gold In Peace. Iron in War" (Pirates Press, piratespressrecords.com) Somewhere between Emo sensitivity and Oi! Meathheadedness lies a realm of righteously rocking, even-tempered punk rock sensibility and these stiff's rule that realm.

Ludicra (Life Is Abuse) Black Metal that gets in the pocket and transports you to whatever mystical nether-realm your belief system affords. As always, vinyl is awesome, but the low key bonus video clips on the CD are killer.

thomas lunch "diagrams without instructions" (thomaslunch.com) Quirkiness, futuristic-ishness, and pop friendliness all infused with actual rocking.

Mabel Lynch "Letting Go" (Moremusicsales.com) Lynch is a sultry chanteuse whose classic voice has the tone and experience behind it to convince you that if she's telling you how love goes, she knows.

The Mabuses "Mabused" (Magpie) A hook-filled, guitar pop, sweet-voiced journey into sound from this sorta supergroup (Jesus and Mary Chain and Siouxsie appear o this band's family tree) that amuses as well as mabuses.

Machina "Sad IliNikao" (Slusaj Najglasnije!) Scary!

Mad Caddies "Keep It Going" (Fat, fatwreck.com) This CD is showcases a rare creature: a ska/reggae/punk group that actually makes nuanced, grooving, quality music that isn't the equivalent of a dreadlocked minstrel show. Mad good!

Magic Whistle comics by Sam Henderson (Alternative Comics) Now that shit's funny!

Magik Markers "Boss" (Ecstatic Peace) Redefines "dreamy" in a way that should keep psychiatrists and sleep disorder experts in gravy for years.

The Mag Seven "The Future Is Ours, If You Can Count" (endsounds.com) Sleazy punked out surf instrumentals that brings to mind hanging ten inside a syringe!

Mainliners Crusher, crusherrecords.com) Abandoning their trashy garage/blues roots these Swedish meatballs have morphed into a classic rock/pop/stadium anthem/70s ballad band, and while most of my readers will agree that this I, in general, a sad progression (who needs to grow up?), I will say they are jarringly good at this stuff.

Makeoutmusic "Get Off My Soapbox" (Makeoutmusic 484 Canoe Hill Rd. Millbrook NY 12545) Make revolution music!

The Maladies (Darkjoy) Mal-oderous.

Mansbestfriend "poly.sci.187" (Anticon, anticon.com) I generally am confused as to why Anticon artists seem to think there music is good hip hop, but I'm delighted to report that I'm confused this time as to why they think this series of soundscapes and audio experiments even relates to hip hop in any way. Whenever a groove does kick in it's so treated and buried that it's almost subliminal. And if I have to listen to anything from an underground rap collective I really appreciate if they keep it out of my actual consciousness.

Mancino "Manners Matter" (Mancinomusic.com)

Mannequin Men "Private School" b/w "Sewers" (Criminal I.Q.) Goddamn, these are two killer rocking songs! This band is just fucking awesome!

Marinada "S/T," "U Rijeci Kesi Pada" (Listen Loudest) Primitively futuristic music that is old wave new wave. Marinaded me in an awesome music sauce!

Scott Marrow "For All the Time You Spent Losing... You Better Enjoy Your Failures" (Whiteroom, whiteroomrecords.com) Marrowvelous! Weirdly wonderful futuristic primitive music.

Masuretti "Comet" (Ceperion) Ethereal eighties Euro-music referencing sounds that are so futuristic you may not be able to buy this CD until 2041. Somehow this is powerfully driving while being as airy as a flaky pastry. This almost ghostly music will give you a welcome haunting as you will not be able to get these strange anthems out of your head and soul.

Jonah Matranga "And" (Limekiln POB 4064 Philadelphia PA 19118) Ma-trite-ga.

Nathalie Matthews (Cougar Entertainment Group, nathaliematthews.com) Independently released slick R&B is rarely on par with radio hits, and while this could use hookier production, it sure sounds better than some of her stuff out there. Matthews sings with panache and a clear, strong voice, and has some sly phrasing, and she can sing in French. What more do you want?

Matt Pond PA "Last Light" (Altitude 7 W. 22nd St. 4Fl NY, NY 10010) A shallow pond.

RD Mauzy "Honeycut" (Big Spoon) Spare, bare, and better than Cher, these striking little songs reveal a man with musical genius status stamped all over him. Ranging from chilling to Dr. Demento-ish, this collection is perhaps the Mauziest thing I've heard this century!

Mayday Parade "a lesson in romantics" (Fearless 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 92683) Pop punk that should blow the kids away and mildly amuse the old codgers. Well, I'm young, so I dig it!

May or May Not "Bike" (twothumbsdown.com) May or May Not be the best band ever, and I'm leaning mayways!

Danny McDonald "Fibrotones" (Off The Hip POB 1211 Carlton Vic 3053, Australia) I'm told McDonald is a power-pop icon in Oz, and I believe it, as these post-Garage pop gems sent me over the rainbow!

Maria McKee "Late December" (Cooking Vinyl pob 246 Huntington NY 11743) Save the drama for some other mama.

Erin McKeown "Sing You Sinners" (Nettwerk 8730 Wilshire Blvd ste 304 BH CA 90211) I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but this young lady does not seem to sing jazzy standards well enough to merit this CD's release. Still, this is relatively pleasant

Meathaus (Alternative Comics) This comix anthology proves that comix are kinda funny. Standouts: Mickey Duzyj, Farel Dairyple, and P. Williams.

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes "Love Their Country" (Fat) At first this seems like it will be obnoxious – pop punksters doing by-the-numbers pop versions of country classics with tongue in cheek – who needs it? But the trick here is that some country material is so strong that it do-see-does the sass right out of these kids. During Dolly Parton's "Jolene" the power of the song, and the way the chord changes are perfect for pop punk, and the weight of the words, make the genderfuck of the cover version (the dude is now asking Jolene to not take his man) seem more poignant and powerful than goofy. I could have used more old time Opry and less Dixie Chicks (and the Eagles shouldn't count), but the highlights make this lasoo worth spinning.

Dave Mehling "How Do I Make You Lonesome?" (BR) Mehling is smelling...like a melodic rose!

Menzingers "A Lesson in the Abuse of Infromation Technology" (Go Kart) These men are short on musical zingers.

"Messthetics #101," "Messthetics #102," "Messthetics #103" (Hyped to Death POBox 351 Westminster MA 01473) These collections of British 45s and cassettes from 1978-198 are so much better than *Killed By Death*, mainly because the focus on weirdo acts that transcend punk and make weird challenging, but somehow almost always poppy and magne!