

music. Even the most lo-fi, oddball act (MLR) or the most novelty-esque should be drivel (a dude singing about his love of marmalade, an anti-British Airways tune) are sublime and awesome. And even if the CDs were blank, the reproductions of record covers and extensive liner notes are enough to merit purchases (Scissor Fits claim to have taken their name from a Don Martin comic sound effect; one band reworked a Television Personalities song to replace Souxsie and the Banshees with Holly and the Italians). I jones for the next release.

Metaform (myspace.com/meta4m) Soulful underground hip hop that doesn't try to impress bored backpackers, instead going for grooves that even the most mainstream heads can't help get into their heads. Meta-killer!

Augie Meyers & The Rocka Baca's "My Freeholies Ain't Free Anymore" (El Sendero Records-P.O. Box 34404, San Antonio, Texas, 78265) Did you ever notice, in the midst of the car stereo speaker wars, that the Brown Brothers generally play better stuff than the Black Brothers? I took a survey on radio stations, and I damn near floored the interviewer when I told her the only station I generally listened to in the car (this was when I had a girlfriend to drive me around. Ohhh, I was livin' large) was the Mexican station, because, it's generally the only music of any honesty you can still listen to just about anytime on the radio, if you run out of tapes or CDs. Augie Meyers has been making Gringo-friendly Tex-Mex and Conjunto styled Rock 'n' Roll since the declining days of the Second Reign of Sir Douglas and His Court of Noble Knights (Late 60s). If you've been diggin' the Mexican sounds you hear in passing, but, get dizzy listening to another language, this is the ticket. Augie is well remembered today for his contributions to The Texas Tornados, like the classic Conjunto stomp, "Hey, Baby (Que Paso?)." This new CD carries on in the same tradition. The title track smacks of the same good humor and two-step beats, not to mention Meyer's fluent accordion runs. He only summons the power of the mighty Vox Continental organ here and there, but, the squeeze-box provides all the party you'll need, here. Raw, down to earth, but, make no mistake, well thought-out music abounds, here; be it on the Country flavored "Heart of Mine" or a heartfelt cover version of Butch Hancock's "(I Keep) Wishing For You," which The Sir Douglas Quintet recorded at the dawning of their Third Dynasty. Augie really pulls out all the stops on the celebrated cheezy Tex-Mex organ on "Hey La Ronda," which, dare I say it?, is about a MOVER! So's this album. Pick up on it, but, you might just want to stock up on Mexican food makings and clear a spot for dancing. Even if you're the only one there! Note: Augie performed with the surviving Texas Tornados, and Sam The Sham at South By Southwest in Austin, recently. Field reports have been, not surprisingly, very positive.

Ken Michaels "the last of its kind" (Zomo, zomomusic.com) A true songwriter tells truths...even truths about fish! This album sounds like everything is played on the most exquisite toy instruments ever made.

Middian "age eternal" (Metal Blade) Heavy doomcore metal that made me want to vanquish demons!

Midnight Bombers "Evil Streets" (Wondertaker.com) Rockacide bombers!

The Mirage "Tomorrow Never Knows" (RPM) Of course a million 60s groups (including every Motown act) covered the Beatles because those were the freaking Beatles, but this band genuinely seemed to be covering them with the knowledge that they can hang. These demos and rarities circa '66-68 (only one of which is an actual Lenno/McCartney, the rest are originals that sound confident in their Beatles-isms that goes beyond the shamelessness of power pop Beatles-lifts) is a gem for 60s pop-psyche fans will delight in. With extensive liner notes and great photos this CD is a fantastic argument for this band you've never heard of.

Orin Spectratone International "Share this Place" (K, Box 7154 Olympia WA 98507) The best entomology-core, music-instrument-y pop (?) album of 2007. If you like cordons and insects you'll bug out when you hear this masterpiece!

Hit 45 (No Talent) Should be called Hit 45, because there's misses here!

Fairchild "ooh La La Sha Sha" (Jive Sucka) Nerd funk made me want to nerd breakdance or program an avatar to go. Genuinely joyful. Prince impersonations are bold and yes appreciated.

Mission UK "God is a Bullet" (SPV) Mission accomplished!

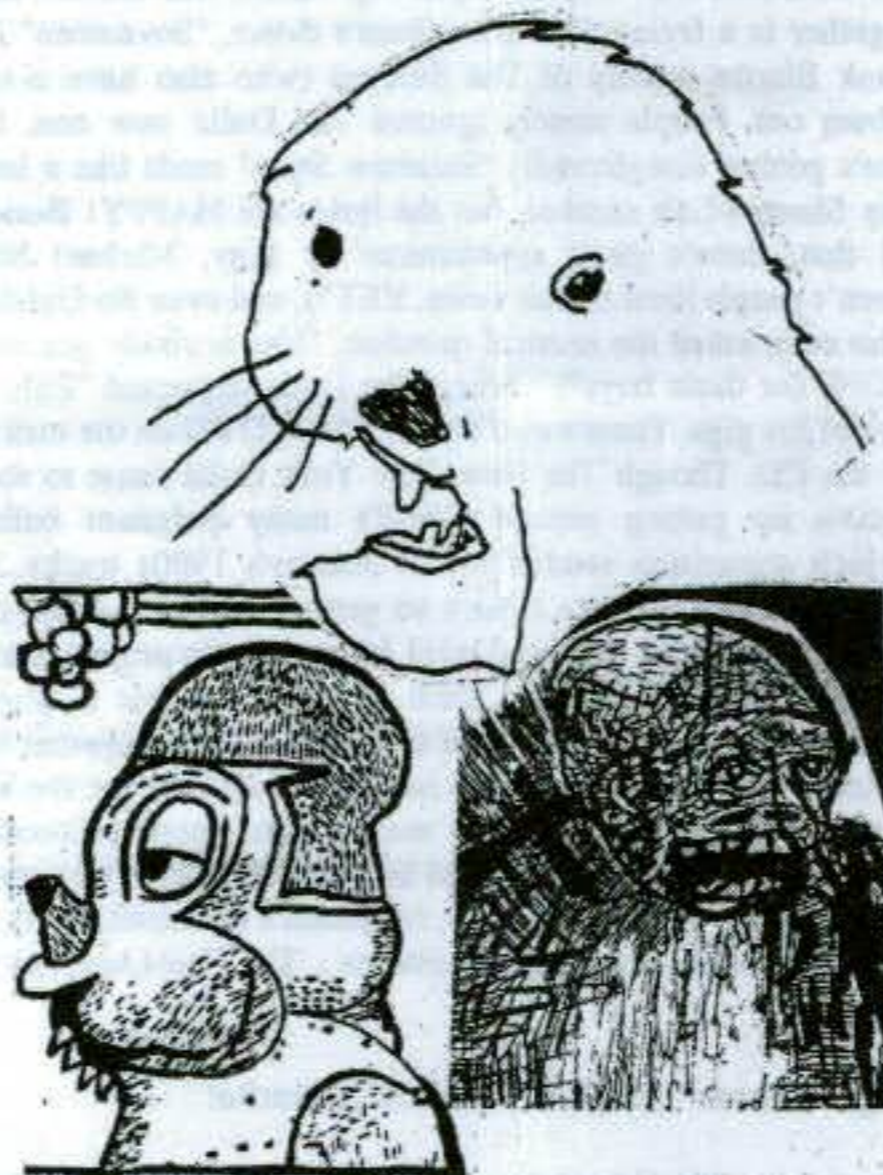
Mixican "Shades of Brown (S.O.B.)" (mixican.com) This righteous, conscious, post-modern world music collection has traditional Ethnic music either reconstituted to become a support track for high-minded hip hop, tweaked to become almost acid-dance music, or pretty much left alone to be ballady and beautiful. Not sure how these diverse tactics fit together, but I like 'em all.

The Mobile Mob "Freak Show" (Locomotive) The Mob rules!

The Mojomatics "Songs for Faraway Lovers" (Alien Snatch) One of the best blues/garage/punk bands working, these cats make the raw sound elegant and cause extreme shaking in parts of my body I like to shake.

Monkey Power Trio "House of the Mechanical Sun" (PSMR POB 980301 Ypsilanti MI 48198) This band's annual 7" EP is expanded to 12" vinyl (lotsa songs, but still a 45), and they did it not simply by making impressionistic, raw, idiosyncratic rock, but by adhering to a policy included in the between-song banter here - "Everything's a song."

Monks "Demo tapes 1965" (Play Loud/Munster) Though these recordings have been released before, if you haven't heard these rough, far-less-intense versions of the songs that would end up on perhaps the greatest rock album ever recorded, you owe it to yourself to get this. While one of the (not surprising) revelations of these demos is that the profound expertise of the German sound engineers have a lot to do with the jarring magic of "Black Monk Time," these toned down versions reveal the playfulness and genuine strangeness of the compositions better than the finished versions. And, bottom line, there's not much monks stuff to get, you might as well get it all.



Monotract "Trueno Oscuro" (Load, loadrecords.com) Despite being some of the grooviest music Load has ever released, this still has the raw sonic oomph to make you feel all of your tracts.

The Monsters "The Worst of Garage Punk Volume 1" (Voodoo Rhythm) The right reverend Beat-man presents some of the best worst music ever made, as these Swiss cheeseballs have perfected trash rock to the point where you wish a genie would grant them 3 wishes, and they would make Europop, emo, and hip hop disappear, leaving messy monster music to rule the charts.

Morningbell "Through the Belly of the Sea" (Orange) Rather than describe the details of this high concept album with it's amazing audio adventures and impressive musical (and sound effect) textures, let me just say YOU ARE GENIUSES... WE SUBMIT TO YOUR GREATNESS. Seriously, I'm not being ironic.

Morning Recordings "The Welcome Kinetic" (Loose Thread) I would skip my morning pee to listen to this masterpiece!

Mother and the Addicts "Science Fiction Illustrated" (Chemical Underground) If you were casting a punky, but not punk, menacing English rock band for your movie this is what they would HAVE to sound like!

The Mother's Mouth by Dash Shaw (Alternative Comics) This groundbreaking comic is bold, confusing, and creepy, as it alternates between being cryptic and ultra-accessible. It is

also full of weird love, though not bad love. Except for the suffocation therapy.

Motorpsycho sickle zine Just because I don't ride a motorcycle doesn't mean I can't love this zine - I can't fly a jet yet I still read *Jet!*

Mott the Hoople Under Review DVD (Sexy Intellectual) I would like to say that this is one of the more outstanding entries in this budget music documentary series because Mott's music, their weird history of gaining and losing a small but rabid fan base, and the unique character of their sunglass-disguised frontman make them one of the most fascinating bands in rock history. But to be honest, what makes this awesome is that it is one of the few entries in this series that has a genuine heavyweight weighing in with opinion, as a lead singer of the Clash just happens to be a longtime, major Mott supporter, and best of all, he is reduced here to a fawning, humble fanboy. If you aren't convinced by the recordings (and the documentary makes a pretty good argument for "you had to be there" at the live concerts) this touching display of loyalty will push you over the edge.

Mountain "Masters of War" (Big Rack) This is really and truly a new record by Mountain - the real Mountain - doing all Dylan covers. And it's good. The problem is that for something like this to get me excited it would have to be really great, and it's not. "Mr. Tambourine Man" comes closest to being genuinely exciting and vital and important, but for the most part this is just a strong, sincere, powerful, but ultimately non-crucial album. Leslie West's voice has less range than Dylan's, which (again) isn't a terrible thing, but hearing him sing for an hour would require something a little more compelling than this.

Mrsavi Pas "Elektronsks Musika Za Decu" (Listen Loudest) robots rape!

Mt.St.Helens "Of Others" (Two Thumbs Down, twothumbsdownrecords.com) This CD is so gloriously rich, powerful, and scoogey that I wanted to Mt. it!

Mummies of the Insane (Slutfish 327 Bedford Ave #A2 Brooklyn NY 11211) I know I'm supposed to hear this as a monster rock band, but to me it sounds like Ralph Kranden's Stooges cover band. I mean that as an extreme compliment! (Though not as big a compliment as a comparison to Barney Fife's Velvet Underground cover band).

Murder Mystery "are you ready for the heartache cause here it comes" (murdermysterymusic.com) Pleasantly creepy pop that makes my stereo get away with murder!

MXPX "Let It Happen" (Tooth and Nail 3522 W Gov't Way Seattle WA98199) On the one hand, you kind of want to say, come on Tooth and Nail how many times can you milk the MXPX material, and does anyone even care anymore? But on the other hand, if you do care, this is a pretty deluxe package, with great photos in the booklet, tons of videos on the DVD, and generous helpings of new tracks, demos and alternate versions.

My Fat Irish Ass! zine (\$2, POB 65391 WDC 20035) Gets fatter and assier every year! Proudly the last outlet making dirty comics out of Family Circus, and you gotta admire that conviction!

My First Time - a collection of first punk show stories edited by Chris Duncan (AK Press, akpress.org) While the title of the book invokes cherry poppin' teen sex, it might have been better to invoke a born again analogy. Because this compilation of essays about going to your first punk show is best when writers relate how their lives genuinely changed forever because a new world opened for them when they entered their first pit. When I first picked up the book I read a few weaker pieces (not the all time best edited book, from spelling errors to letting a few subpar essays in), but after reading everything I really dig the book. Hardly anyone is straight up bragging for punk cred (except for, predictably, Michael Azerrad, who boasts of seeing a Dead Boys set at CBGBs where John Belushi sat in on drums). Infact, Steven Seiscenti admits that he was bored by the Ramones when he saw them in '76. I also dig how there's no poseur-phobia - writers aren't embarrassed to cite a late 80s first show. And I also dig how many folks remember aborted first shows, where their folks or the doorman or their ride made sure it didn't happen.

Mystechs "Escape From Planet Love" (Mega Point) Reinventing themselves with radical lineup changes and a new genre of musical mischief every year or so, the Mystechs are Chicago's most satisfyingly confounding band. "Escape" is an electro sex fest that's surprisingly wholesome. It sort of feels