



Palatable plastic

by Andrew M. Duke/NP

Front Line Assembly — *Corrosion* (Wax Trax!)

Bill Leeb has paid his dues; he has performed with Skinny Puppy (as Wilhelm Schroder on keys and voice) and flogged records in Vancouver. Front Line Assembly, with help from Michael Balch, is his newest form of self-expression. The band first appeared on the English compilation *For Your Ears Only* (Third Mind Records) and the *Corrosion* album is now licensed to Wax Trax! in Chicago.

"Lurid Sensation" and "Right Hand of Heaven" are starting points featuring incessant tightly knit rhythms that weave throughout the mix, almost overshadowing the keyboard hazes and delicate found arias and chants ("Concussion") that thrive and swell beneath and culminate in "On the Cross". Legendary Pink Dots and The Tear Garden could be cited as references.

The rest is more aggressive, with hard percussion and metal dominating, most notably in "Controversy". Samples seem to be randomly thrown in, except "Dark Dreams", which uses Martin Luther King's "In the name of Jesus . . ." as its foundation. "Thewrack Part III — Wisdom" concludes *Corrosion* in a rather controversial/ambiguous tone. In the rhetoric of a lynching/riot-inducing speech against "anybody who isn't a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant in America", a qualification is made: "Jesus wasn't a Jew, Jesus Christ was a white man . . ." The *Disorder* EP is soon to follow.

Didjits — *Hey Judester* (Touch & Go)

The Didjits perfected their tunes playing local chicken coops in Mattoon, Illinois, the "bagel capital of the world". The combination of the Simms brothers, Rick on vocals/guitar, Brad on drums, and bassist Doug Evans, know how to rock, rock,

rock. Deja Voodoo and the Gruesomes come to mind as they do the surf/grunge/grind guitar thing and Rick S. wails away (he can't sing, but he sounds great when he tries). Evans used to be into Led Zep, AC/DC, and Kiss,

while the brothers went for the Clash and Sex Pistols. Much enthusiasm and lyrics about fish ("King Carp": "I am the baddest dude/and you know what my fins can do", "Under the Christmas Fish": "This fish is gonna ride you/Praise God the Christmas Fish!") and guns and bottles and iguanas and going crazy echo labelmates Killdozer and make for an album that is good, good, good.

The Godfathers — *Birth, School, Work, Death* (Epic/CBS)

If Billy Bragg got together with some friends and actually rocked, his band would be called The Godfathers. This five-piece from London gives a damn about the working class. "Cause I Said So" has a sharp edge to it: "All you need is money and a little bit of luck/I ain't greedy, baby, all I want is what you've got." Living life according to the punch-in clock and quests for *true* friends and *real* love (no sappy sentimentality or explicitness for the sake of it are found here) are common themes paired with big-sounding '70s rock, Beatles psychedelia, and even a bit of post-core grinding. Tracks such as "Love is Dead" are realistic, not merely song titles to laugh at. The epitome of this LP is the title track: "I've been abused and I've been confused/And I've kissed Margaret Thatcher's shoes".

The Church — *Starfish* (Arista/BMG)

The Church began in Sydney, Australia, in 1980 and debuted with the album *Of Skin and Heart* in 1981. A flurry of EPs and singles were later released, many compiled as LPs in North America. One wants to take their warm, soothing new *Starfish* album and pour it into a tub and bathe in it, experience it, not just listen to it. Vocalist Steve Kilbey doesn't force himself to do anything special; he simply sings and leaves it at that. The tracks are slick only in that they are simple and to the point, lacking the usual overproduction. The current single and video is "Under the Milky Way", though this is not the album's only standout. *Starfish* will probably be a real sleeper until people hear enough cuts to realize it is all quality material.

Dead on Arrival lives

by Norm Barnett

Dennis Quaid is quickly becoming a film superstar, and his latest film, *D.O.A.*, is certainly not going to hurt his aspirations. Unlike his film *Innerspace* but like *The Big Easy*, *D.O.A.* is enjoying critical as well as box-office success.

This effort is a remake of a 1940s movie with the same name which was relegated to a quick B-movie fate. Quaid goes a long way in giving this movie a presence which otherwise would have been missing. He is in virtually every scene and adds a number of deft comic touches. But the other star of this movie is the atmosphere and the detail which lend themselves to the '40s *film noir* genre from which it came.

The plot itself is interesting enough, with Quaid playing

Dexter Cornell, an English professor. One of his students kills himself after handing in a novel to be graded, and from there Cornell finds out he has been fatally poisoned. At this point the movie really takes off as he tries to find out who his murderer is before he dies.

The directors are the same people who brought us the "Max Headroom" TV show, and they successfully use many of the same effects to make the most of Dennis Quaid's condition. The camera often follows a hand-held style, and as a very interesting effect, the quality of the film deteriorates along with the health of Quaid's character.

The directors also don't pass up the opportunity to inject some humour into what is a very serious situation. Someone who has a very limited time to live is obviously going to be very impatient, and there are a number of jokes played off this. When Cor-

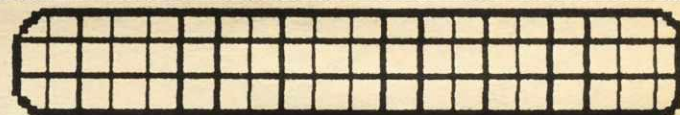
nell wakes up in the morning to find he's slept in the women's dorm, it doesn't really matter because he's going to die anyway. Unfortunately, this is where Meg Ryan enters the story. Her character is a little irritating and doesn't interact with Quaid's character as well as he does with the others. As a young student whom he suspects, she never fits in with the pace of the rest of the movie.

This is an excellent movie for details, and none of the plot twists are contrived, which leads the viewer quite smoothly to the conclusion. This whole movie has an excellent dark, grainy old-movie feel to it, which is enhanced by the fact that it starts and ends in black and white. One wonders whether the whole movie would have been better this way, but Hollywood's lack of success with that style in the 1980s must have quickly coloured that idea. *DOA* is still an excellent film as it is.

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