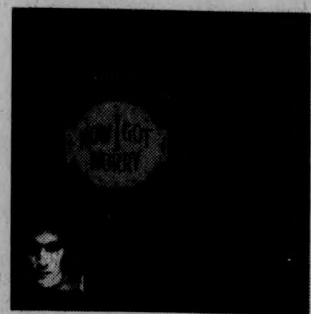




The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion have taken a lot of criticism over the years about whether or not they actually do play authentic blues. How do they deal with such allegations? They release an album with blues legend R.L. Burnside to show their credibility - impressive stuff. But then they release their fifth album, *Now I Got Worry*, and it turns out to be their sloppiest, messiest record to date. At times it seems that a punk influence is almost as important as the blues, but that is due to the rawness of the music - the distorted guitars and the almost-decipherable vocals make it hard to equate this music with the likes

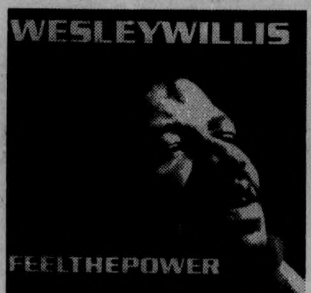
'Alice In Chains,' 'Ice Cube,' 'Lonely Kings'). The background to who Willis is makes this one of the more interesting recordings I've heard in a long time, but I challenge anyone to make it through more than three songs in one sitting.

A&M have got a lot of nerve. The idea that all the best songs that Robyn Hitchcock ever wrote appeared on the four albums that he released for them between 1987 and 1993 is a little silly. But that didn't stop them from putting out a so-called *Greatest Hits* album that covers a very small part of his illustrious career. In their defense (for releasing it, not for naming it what they did), those four A&M albums were more than a little on the patchy side, so this actually turns out to be the best way to experience that period. In this condensed form, Hitchcock's true eccentricity shines through; the more normal moments like 'So You Think You're In Love' sit almost uncomfortably next to the weirdness of 'One Long Pair Of Eyes.' There are plenty of commercial moments though, and a couple of covers, too, for good measure. All in all, not a bad collection but definitely not his greatest hits.



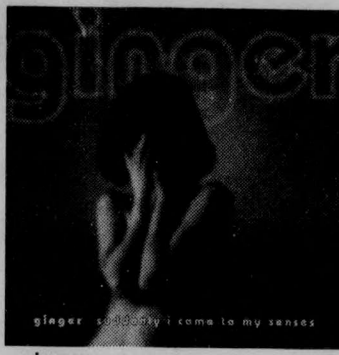
of John Lee Hooker. But there can be no debate about the band playing the blues - tracks like 'R.L. Got Soul' and 'Wail' (which is a real highlight of the album) demonstrate that point. The other real high-spot is a collaboration between the band and Stax Records star Rufus Thomas on 'Chicken Dog,' wonderful stuff. Hell, The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion are so cool, they cover Dub Narcotic Sound System's 'Fuck Shit Up' and that fact alone speaks volumes - what else do you need to know?

Sigh. I just don't get Wesley Willis at all. I understand the bit about him being schizophrenic, and how the music he creates acts as therapy and keeps him sane - music can be a wonderful thing. But as far as I can tell, it would be better if the music was kept as a private therapy session because it really is pretty awful. Maybe that's the whole point, and maybe that's why he has such a cult following, but after working my way through *Feel The Power* (his sixteenth or so album), the joke had worn a little thin. Every single song is basically the same - the same rhythm from his Technics keyboard (Country Rhythm #8), the same song structure and the same irritating two minute synthesizer solo in the middle of each song. Sigh. I just don't seem to get it. And did I mention that he couldn't carry a tune in a bucket either? Sigh.



Or that they even got the Dust Brothers, fresh from their work with Beck, in to produce this too? Sigh. Maybe it isn't quite that bad since the lyrics offer an insight into the mind of the bus-obsessed Willis, who spends his time trying to go on "joy rides" rather than "torture hell rides" and also going to see the wealth of bands that he ends up writing about (sample song-lyrics:

CD Reviews



ginger *suddenly i came to my senses*

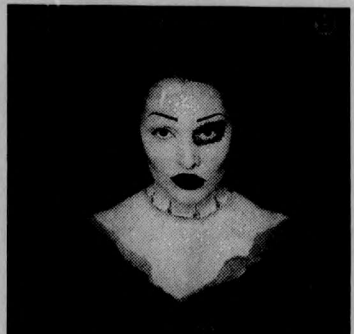
ginger has re-emerged from a cloak of obscurity to present the public with *suddenly i came to my senses*. While ginger may have come to their senses as a band, it isn't showing in their work, quite yet.

ginger undoubtedly recorded their best songs during their successful stint as The Grapes of Wrath, but now they're a different band with a slightly different sound. The *suddenly* album sways more towards a percussion-driven atmosphere, but with a soft feel. In terms of evolution, the band has added a great amount of texture to each track, intricately interweaving each instrument into the mix. And Tom Hooper has certainly learned how to fit his voice into each song, especially the tune, "What I Need."

The main problem is lack of radio singles: *suddenly* serves up nothing spectacular, while the remixed version of their past hit "Solid Ground" doesn't sound any better or worse than *Far Out*'s original mix. As an album the songs work well together, but ultimately serves as little more than background music for semi-relaxed late night study sessions.

• PETER J. CULLEN

Dalbello (Lisa, for those of you who were wondering if this was a band or a person) keeps popping up in the Canadian music scene. The first instance occurred in the late 1970s, and resulted in a Juno award for most promising female vocalist.



Dalbello *Whore*

Then, about ten years later, she reappeared and scored a radio hit with her song "Tango." History lesson aside, Dalbello appears as if she is planning on sticking around for a while, as her new album *Whore* is certainly a winner. The ten tracks on this album are a mix between 1990s radio-friendly rock ("Heavy Boots," "Easy") and progressive, yet nonetheless catchy rock ("Eleven," "The Revenge of Sleeping Beauty"). To top it off, Dalbello has an excellent voice, and surrounds herself with accomplished musicians who do justice to her finely crafted songs. A surprisingly good album.

• CHARLES TEED

The Lemonheads *Car Button Cloth*

The Lemonheads are consistent. Their past two albums (*Come On Feel The Lemonheads*, *It's a Shame About Ray*) are, in fact, both the same. This album can be considered volume three. That is not a bad thing, however, since it's exactly what people want from a Lemonheads album. It would be interesting for the band to perform something more like their early hardcore material (*Lick*), and it would be great to have the band be something other than Evan Dando, but that's okay because the new album should be a success.

Car Button Cloth kicks off with "It's All True," which is a great song that is quite catchy. The best song is, however, "The Outdoor Type," which tells a great story about lying to his love interest to fit the bill. This song is by far the best since their early days. Advice: buy this album.

• ANTHONY DAVIS

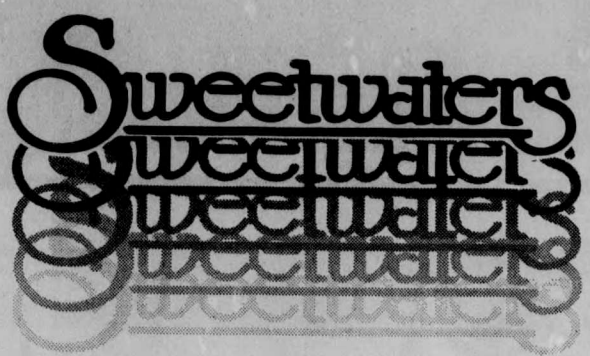
Dr. Harry A. Bohnsack

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