

# GENRECIDÉ

MICHAËL EDWARDS

When Rykodisc released *Blood And Chocolate*, the final in the series of Elvis Costello reissues, I was concerned. Worried even. I had no idea whose back catalogue they were going to work their way through next - they had done such a wonderful job with Elvis Costello, David Bowie, Frank Zappa and The Undertones that it was hard to imagine who was worthy enough to go next.

Enter Galaxie 500, those graduates of the Velvet Underground school of songwriting. But not the early Velvet Underground - they were lovers of their later, more mellow moments; think 'Pale Blue Eyes' and 'Candy Says'. During the four years they were together (between 1987 and 1991), they released some of the most aching beautiful music around. Dean Wareham's falsetto vocals were so very fragile, and the gentle, near-psychedelic guitars were so very delicate that it felt that it could disappear altogether at any moment. Even when they did decide to 'rock out', it was hardly a very threatening thing to behold. They couldn't be scary even if they wanted to.

And even if their own music wasn't enough to convince you of their talent, their choice of material for cover versions should have really tipped you off - Jonathan Richman, Young Marble Giants and, quite inevitably, The Velvet Underground. Not only did they have the good sense to cover The Beatles, George Harrison and Yoko Ono, they

even showed their absolute coolness by covering The Rutles. Very impressive. Yet they were never really blessed with commercial success. In fact, it was only after their record company went under that people realised that it was impossible to find their albums any more. Deletion can be such a cruel thing. Thank goodness for Rykodisc as they saw fit to collect the band's three studio albums along with everything else they ever recorded (b-sides, live tracks, demos - you get the idea) into one convenient box set. And a beautiful box it is too - all the design was done by Naomi Yang (the band's bassist), and it will make you want to pick it up and hold on to it very tightly.

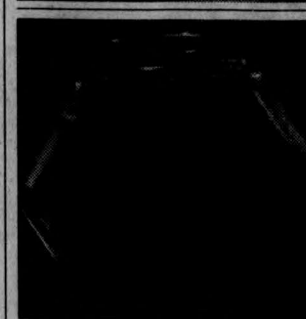
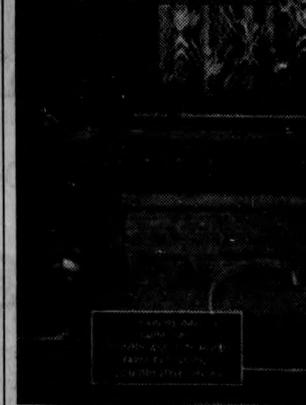
If you do manage to prise your fingers off the box long enough, you might actually get to hear some of their music. 1988's *Today* shows the band just beginning to define their sound - the so-called "fiery breeze" of Galaxie 500 (in the words of their producer and Shimmy-Disc owner Kramer) was there, but it wasn't until 1989's *On Fire* that it really came together. *On Fire* remains as the band's finest hour - from the lead single and album opener 'Blue Thunder' to their magnificent cover of New Order's 'Ceremony', this is an album to keep close to your heart and cherish. 1990's *This Is Our Music* showed the band beginning to experiment with a fuller, less atmospheric sound (that Wareham would later embrace with his new band, Luna) where the vocals were a

lot more dominant. And just when things were beginning to get interesting, they split up - Dean Wareham moved on to Luna while Damon Krukowski and Naomi Yang remained together in various forms trying to keep the spirit alive. But the truth is that neither incarnation even came close to the glory days of Galaxie 500. And that alone is as good a reason as any to snap up this truly wonderful box set.

Fluffy are apparently the UK's answer to Hole. Or at least that is what their press kit says. And that is the kind of conclusion that people seem to jump to when a band fronted by a female has something even vaguely controversial to say; loud woman = Courtney Love therefore loud female band from London = British Hole. Simple, isn't it? But at this rate, it's just a matter of time before some band gets called the American Shampoo. Yuk. Anyway, Fluffy are four angry young woman whose influences are such classic bands as MC5 and Iggy & The Stooges, and that means they end up sounding, to my ears anyway, more like L7 than Hole. So far, so good. They also write and sing songs about things that nice girls aren't supposed to mention - just listen closely to the lyrics of 'Hypersonic' for evidence of that. Fluffy's debut album is a solid piece of work where the songs can stand up for themselves, despite all the accompanying hype. They may not be the best all-girl punk band in the world ever (as Kerrang! Magazine would have you believe), but they are an awful lot better than Shampoo.

And staying with something punky, Canada's very own Punchbuggy have just released their second album on Montreal's very own Shake The Record Label. It's called *Grand Opening Going Out Of Business Sale*, and it isn't really a big jump forward from their previous work. But that doesn't mean that it is boring - far from it. Punchbuggy embrace the melodic form of punk where you can almost call it pop without offending anyone involved - just check out the vocal harmonies, and other bands who employ the same trick such as The Doughboys spring to mind. So you get memorable tunes ('Yoda' is just so darned catchy), groovy vocals and song that know when to stop - sixteen tunes in thirty-five minutes. Will you hear a better pop/punk album this year? Well, probably. But until that comes along, Punchbuggy will do nicely. Very nicely indeed.

## AFFORDABLE BED & BREAKFASTS IN QUÉBEC 96-97



Big Fish Eat Little Fish s/t independent

Sometimes a person has to wonder how major record labels can sign bands who might know five, maybe six, chords to their name and pass on a band as excellent as Big Fish Eat Little Fish. Each member of this three-piece band from Ottawa clearly stands out on their respective instruments, and their songwriting skills are also very well honed. From 'One Bum Leg' to 'Luxumburg Lane,' this band shows a diverse blending of musical styles which leaves the listener fully satisfied. They also have an excellent sense of humour, which is evident in 'The Strongest Man in the World,' and the bonus track, which has to be heard to be believed. The most memorable of the many good tracks on this album include 'Monkey Brained,' with its catchy riff and off-color lyrics, and 'Bird,' which has great vocal melodies and harmonies, accompanied with simple, yet effective music. If you are looking for something different to listen to and want to hear a wonderful band, pick this album up.

-- Charles Teed

## Affordable Bed & Breakfasts In Québec 96-97

Interested in traveling to Québec? Want to stay in a place other than the typical motel or hotel? Looking for an interesting vacation or maybe a learning experience whether on a farm or in the arts?

Then the book *Affordable Bed & Breakfasts in Québec 96-97: Agriotours* is for you. It provides all of the information on bed and breakfast locations, country inns, country and city homes and farm excursions in Québec that you need to plan a trip. There are over 550 different establishments to give the traveler an opportunity to learn more about the different regions within the province including ski areas, its countryside, its cities such as Montreal and its people.

The book is divided into sections by types of establishments and within each section there are write-ups on the type of establishment, costs involved, location, and nearby attractions. There are also maps of Québec in each section with the locations of establishments on these maps.

*Affordable Bed and Breakfasts in Québec 96-97: Agriotours* is very helpful and informative, providing information that could be used when students travel home, long weekends, Christmas Break, or even Spring Break. The book is well laid out with the information readily available, easy to understand, a section in the back provides information on various activities and locations where one can participate in the activities, i.e. locations near ski resorts, art galleries, farming activities.

-- Maria Paisley

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