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ing *Rats*, her third with Montreal's Aquarius Records, promises to keep Sass's "Hit Train" rolling, with several high-energy tracks destined for the top of the charts. "High Road Easy," a par-



ticularly catchy rocker, has already ascended the charts and is seeing heavy rotation on Muchmusic. In spite of her commercial success, Sass still appears to be making albums on her own terms,

with new tunes like "Pissin' down" and "Ugly" showing off her gritty, dark humour. Another great new Jordan jag is the short (under 3 minutes), yet infectious "Sun's Gonna Rise"; a poignant, optimistic tale out finally ending an on again/off again relationship.

The album's opening tune "Damaged" gives a good indication of what to expect at a Sass Jordan live show: Sass's searing vocals, strong basslines and powerful guitar-work. Despite being a radio darling, Jordan also remains a devout and highly successful hard rocker in an often male-dominated field. *Rats* is an excellent album with a lot of raw energy. Despite being skillfully engineered by Nick Didia (the engineering whiz behind the most recent albums by Pearl Jam and Stone Temple Pilots), Jordan manages to keep the album sounding fairly natural by using the

original demo versions of certain songs on the finished product. Ultimately, *Rats* proves to be an excellent reconciliation of Sass's second album *Racine* (catchy tunes) and her live concerts (powerful presentation).

-Luke Peterson



Guns N' Roses
The Spaghetti Incident?
(Geffen)

The Spaghetti Incident?, Guns N' Roses fifth Geffen Records release, is a lot of fun to listen to. The album consists of twelve cover versions of various punk tunes and a much publicized thirteenth song, written by Convicted Mass-Murderer Charles Manson. The rather forgettable Manson tune, "Look at Your Game Girl" is conspicuous by its total non-mention in the liner notes and on

the cassette packaging, casting doubt on the band's claim that they had no idea who authored the tune. Furthermore, if the Gunners' were utterly oblivious to the tune's origins, one can only wonder why Axl whispers "Thanks Chas" at the song's completion. Given their predominantly youthful audience, Guns N' Roses should perhaps reconsider the efficacy of glorifying a savage killer who has been other wise twenty five years removed from the media spotlight that he so desperately wanted a piece of.

Music ethics aside, the rest of *The Spaghetti Incident?* makes for a great listen; the band seems to have had a lot of fun recording some of their personal favorites. Bassist Duff McKagan is a talented one-man show on the Johnny Thunders tribute "You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory," playing Bass, Acoustic Guitar, Drums, and providing lead vocals. The prevailing G N' R credo seems crystal clear on the soaring tune "Ain't It Fun" with lyrics like "Ain't it fun when you take good care of number one/Ain't it fun when you feel like ya just gotta get a gun/... Ain't it fun when you know that you're gonna die young." (It is probably coincidence that these lyrics bear a striking resemblance to typical Mark Savoie "Distractions" contributions).

Another great jag is "Since I Don't Have you" which has been transformed into a lavishly produced music video which has seen heavy rotation on Canadian and American video channels. Interestingly enough, the quasi-Do-Wop

tune was originally recorded by the Skyliners 36 years ago, and is thus older than any of the current members of Guns N' Roses.

In short, this is a really good album. The eclectic song selection includes offerings by the UK Subs, The Sex Pistols, Nazareth, Soundgarden and Glenn Danzig's former band, The Misfits. Because Guns N' Roses puts their own spin on each tune, you don't need to be a dyed-in-the-wool punk fan to enjoy this interesting and enjoyable album. This disc is worth adding to your collection.

-Luke Peterson



The Connells
Ring
(TVT/Cargo/MCA)

Well, ring it does—from the chiming guitars to the immaculate harmonies to the clear-as-a-bell production, the Connells' fifth album is a small, shimmering gem. One reviewer has called *Ring* 'subversive'—referring to the refusal of the band to swallow the grunge ethic and ride Nirvana's coat-tails into million seller success. The only substantive complaint (and a small one at that) I have is that there's something just a little too easy-going, too comfortable about *Ring*. This kind of guitar-pop benefits greatly from tension and real variety of mood—witness Matthew Sweet's near-perfect *Girlfriend*. *Ring* is in this corner of the music world, but it just doesn't reach Sweet's mark: I play *Ring*, and my wife hums songs from *Girlfriend* for the rest of the day.

Opening tune and lead-off single "Slackjawed" actually does have that back-bone of steel that could have made *Ring* into a masterpiece. It also shows off the primary song-writing strength of The Connells—choruses. The song is downright ordinary until they hit you with that hook—then it's running through my head for quite a while. Slower tune "74-75" is one of my favorites—again, the chorus complements a very nice song to-a-t'.

Ring is a tasteful slice of guitar pop.

-Andrew Sneddon

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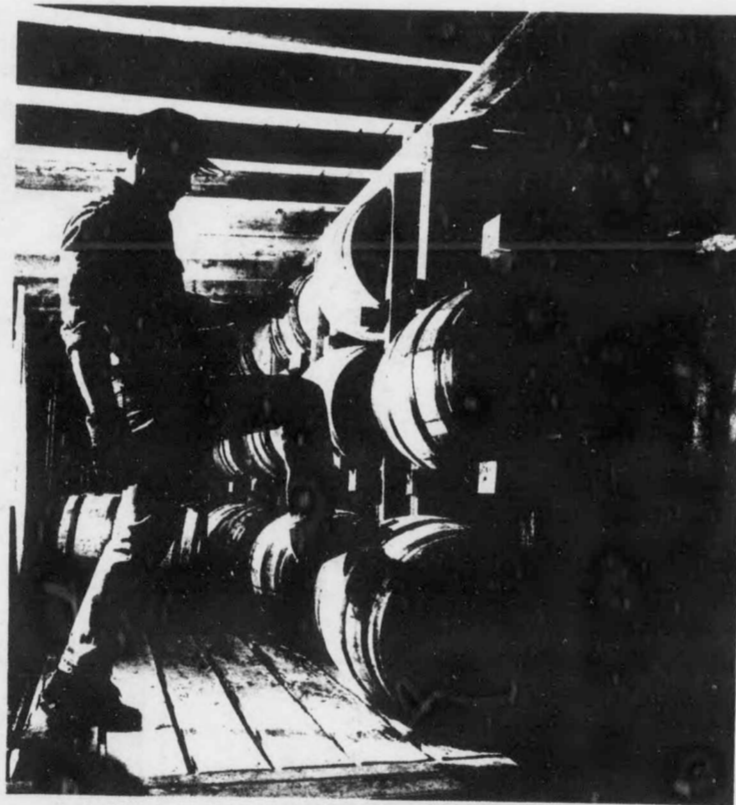
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