

# GENRECIDES

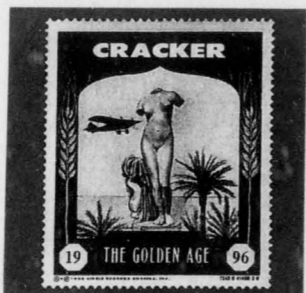
MICHAËL EDWARDS

## SO LONG, AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH

Sigh. Another year comes to an end, and I must admit that I am rather sad. Still, it does give me the chance to do my usual end of term 'reduce an artist's creative output to three or four easy-to-swallow sentences', and I do so like doing that. Anyway, before you all get teary-eyed (like myself), I can calm you with the news that there might be one last column on paper before I disappear. And if that isn't exciting enough for you, you should check out *The Brunswickan* website over the summer months as I plan to be hiding there until I can find a new home. I'll keep you posted. But in the meantime, it has been a 'blast' (I believe that is what you wacky Canadians say), and I will hopefully see you all again soon. And keep in touch.

1000 Mona Lisas - *New Disease*: Debut album from a band who shot to fame for their cover of Alanis' 'You Oughta Know'. And their cover of Wings' 'Jet' is the most memorable thing on what sounds like another generic punk/pop band.

Babylon Zoo - *The Boy With The X-Ray Eyes*: An album most notable for including the fastest-selling single in the UK ever (the catchy 'Spaceman'). The music is



remarkably similar over the duration of 11 songs, and gets rather boring very quickly. I can't help but wonder if it would have done so well if it wasn't for the use of 'Spaceman' in a Levi ad...

Buddy Rich - *Swingin' New Big Band*: Another definitive Blue Note recording is reissued. And this time, the bonus tracks outnumber those on the original album. A wonderful big band sound from the only man who could ever pull off a drum solo. An absolute classic.

Buffy Sainte-Marie - *Up Where We Belong*: This is Buffy's 'unplugged' album where she travels through her illustrious back catalogue, from 'Universal Soldier' to 'Up Where We Belong' to 'Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee'. It reminds us all what a damned good songwriter she really is.

Chune - *Big Hat, No Cattle*: Only six songs on this CD, but each one takes quite

a while to build up to a melody which sounds quite a lot like Superchunk's *Foolish* era. Hypnotic, and kind of relaxing.

Cracker - *The Golden Age*: Cracker's third album suffers from simply covering the



same ground as the other two - a few fast songs (that invariably are pissed off about something or other), and the slower, more contemplative blues-tinged songs. Fortunately, the Lowery's lyrics are as witty as ever, but one for the existing fans.

Freshwater Drum - *Diving Horse*: These guys sound an awful lot like Lloyd Cole in places (a very good thing, incidentally...), and in other places they simply have to rely on their decent songwriting skills. Not bad at all.

Gerry Mulligan - *The Gerry Mulligan Songbook*: A nice reissue of a classic jazz album, enhanced by the addition of an extra twenty minutes of music. Lots of saxophones.

Gin Blossoms - *Congratulations I'm Sorry*: The Gin Blossoms have found their musical niche, and they refuse to move from it. If you have heard any of their



singles, you know what to expect. And then multiply it by thirteen to fill an entire CD.

Girls Against Boys - *House of GVSBS*: Despite Scott McLeod's vocals sounding more like The Fall's Mark E. Smith than ever, this is the album where it all comes together for GVSBS. The music has settled into an area somewhere between Pavement, Fugazi and any group containing Jon Spencer, and the entire album is a rather memorable affair with

some nice scuzzy guitars that scratch their way into your psyche. And you can dance to it too.

Hamell On Trial - *Big As Life*: Ed Hamell's live shows are supposedly among the most impressive you'll ever see. The music is based around frenetic acoustic guitars and wordy lyrics that work better than you'd expect. His story-telling ability is also demonstrated on the very funny 'Blood Of The Wolf'. A debut that bodes well for the future.

Iggy Pop - *Naughty Little Doggy*: Iggy's umpteenth album tries to recreate the sonic assault of his early days with varied success. Not the best thing I've heard all month, but not the worst by any means.

Laika & The Cosmonauts - *Zero Gravity*: I don't think that anybody really expected a surfband from Finland, but here they are. This release gathers tracks from their first two albums (which you couldn't get in North America), and contain enough twangy guitars to make you forget all about the Shadow Men splitting up.

Living Colour - *Pride*: A greatest hits album from a band who never really lived up to the potential of their first album. The good songs are very good, but the others are a clumsy mess of metal and rock that just doesn't work.

Love And Rockets - *Sweet FA*: I can't decide about this one at all. It might be one of those albums that creeps up on you slowly, but at the moment I just find it, well, boring. Songs meander along, and then finally 'kick in' in a very predictable fashion. And with all those acoustic guitars, anything electric comes as a welcome change. And the writing seems to be trying its damndest to recreate a hit that sounds just like their breakthrough 'I'm Alive'. At the moment, thumbs down, but ask me again in a couple of weeks.



Merlin - *Merlin's Arcade*: This doesn't sound anything at all like his previous album, *A Noise Supreme*. Instead, we get something which is quieter (except for the hidden track), and guitar-based with more

thoughtful lyrics than before. Surprisingly good.

My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult - *Hit & Run Holiday*: The Thrill Kill Kult get even more kitschy with what sounds like a huge brass section, and songs that embody all things trashy. And there is a definite 60's influence that makes it even more enjoyable. A blast.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan & Michael Brook - *Night Song*: An absolutely gorgeous blend of Khan's intoxicating voice and Brook's shimmering guitar. And rather than either's style smothering the other, they entwine, resulting in something very, very special. This is the kind of album which could give World Music a good name. Hopefully the first of many collaborations.

Papa Brittle - *Polemic Beat Poetry*: A more aggressive album than its predecessor, *Polemic Beat Poetry* takes a hard stance on several important issues, particularly racial ones. The music defies classification, but is closest to Fundamental and Chumbawumba. This is one of the more successful marriages of music and politics in quite a while.

Psychic TV - *Trip Reset*: The first studio album in quite some time from Psychic TV doesn't really offer any surprises. Their continued journey into dance music continues, but there are also some more 'conventional' songs which help to make *Trip Reset* one of their more accessible works.

Renee Rosnes - *Ancestors*: Canadian jazz pianist finally gets the full backing of a major company for her finest album yet. Really beautiful music to have drifting through any room.

Ron Hawkins - *The Secret Of My Excess*: Ex-Lowest Of The Low singer returns triumphantly with an album where every song seems to represent a different style.



And everyone is a winner too. Sixteen Horsepower - *Sackcloth 'n' Ashes*: This record heralds the welcome return of banjos in a big way. There is the fashionable country influence, but also a

touch of folk too. It would be a lot more palatable without the whiny, nasal vocals though.

Slowburn - *Slowburn*: The problem with starting an album with a song as



incredible as 'Whatever' is that the rest of the CD seems to pale in comparison. Still, Slowburn seem to thrive on those slower songs that build up slowly, so now they have the recipe, they might be able to come up with a few more.

Spacetime Continuum - *Emit Ecaps*: Rather than believing what the track number on the CD player might be trying to tell you, think of *Emit Ecaps* as being one long song that changes in mood and reaches one crescendo after another. Maybe then you can fully appreciate what Jonah Sharp is trying to do. And remember - techno isn't just for raves any more...

Speech - *Speech*: The first album from Arrested Development's lead singer sounds pretty much as you'd expect it to - Arrested Development Part II (which isn't necessarily a bad thing).



The Local Rabbits - *You Can't Touch This*: Recorded live off the floor, with the minimal number of overdubs, *You Can't Touch This* finds the Rabbits developing very nicely as a band. The songs continue to travel a number of styles (from pop to country, stopping off at blues in between) with a constantly rhythmic guitar that almost makes percussion unnecessary. It all reaches epic proportions on '(Sally Ann's) Style

Denial', and very soon the entire world will be under their control.

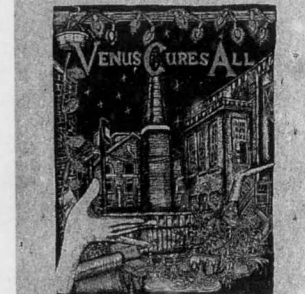
The Brand New Heavies - *Excursions*: A wonderful collection of remixes and rare tracks that epitomize all things funky. Enough to get anyone dancing.

The Watchmen - *Brand New Day*: This new album manages to hold on to the momentum which was a result of the wonderful *In The Trees*. Not a huge diversion for the band, but definitely a step forward which should result in even more acclaim.

The Band - *High On The Hog*: They're back again, sounding more polished than ever. Or in other words, they've lost their edge. High spots are a wacky version of En Vogue's 'Free Your Mind', and the inevitable Dylan songs ('Forever Young' and 'I Must Love You Too Much'). Buy a copy of *Music From Big Pink* instead.

Various Artists - *Trancemode Express 1.01*: A bunch of techno covers of Depeche Mode songs that work because they reconstruct the songs from the constituent parts rather than just add a bigger drum machine.

Various Artists - *Music From Dead Presidents Volume II*: Another collection of



soul classics from the 60's and 70's. Enjoyable, but ultimately unnecessary.

Venus Cures All - *Paradise By The Highway*: In addition to walking away with the 'Artwork Of The Week' award, Toronto's Venus Cures All have put together a loud and memorable CD that deserves everybody's attention. They really know how to use a guitar in an efficient way (hence all those Neil Young comparisons, I suppose), and yet there is enough restraint that both melody and vocals escapes from the cacophony. I would sell a kidney to see them perform live...

Y - *Crude*: Debut CD by a Bathurst band which boasts good production, and is nicely played. But ultimately, the songs just aren't memorable and the whole thing passes by almost unnoticed.

# NO MONEY??... NO PROBLEM!



Cavalier Coupe

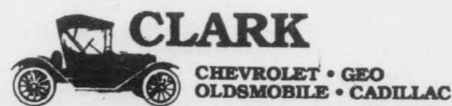
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