

Chatting with Big Fish

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• PART III -
MACGYVER VS. THE A-TEAM •

A faction of the blue room bursts into *The Love Boat* theme.

PETER: I told you it was scary in here. They should at least sing something good, like *The Dukes of Hazzard* theme.

CHUCK: They're trying to make a TV movie about *The Dukes of Hazzard*. Daisy goes to college, or something.

PETER: They don't have good shows like that on television anymore. They should put *The A-Team* back on.

LARRY: My girlfriend's father watches *Columbo* in reruns, and he said that if I liked *Columbo*, I'd like *Macgyver*.

CHUCK: Yeah, the guy makes bombs outta cheese.

LARRY: And *The A-Team* song made them kinda predictable. 'Bom-ba-bom-bom, bom-bom-bom.' As soon as you hear that music you know they're gonna start pulling shit together like chairs and ceiling fans and stuff like that.

PETER: Yeah, *Macgyver* used practical scientific knowledge, but *The A-Team* just started getting stuff outta nowhere.

HEY, I wonder who would win in a fight between *Macgyver* and *The A-Team*.

LARRY: Well, *Macgyver* didn't fight.

PETER: He'd better. He's outnumbered four-to-one.

CHUCK: But if you put them in a game of Trivial Pursuit, I imagine *Macgyver* would probably win.

LARRY: Yeah, especially if he got to the 'Bubble Gum and Baking Soda' category.

CHUCK: I imagine Mr. T would probably know all the sports questions.

PETER: He'd clean up in the 'Gold Jewelry' category.

COREY: He wears 33 pounds of gold because that's the age that Jesus died.

PETER: Do you think?

COREY: Yeah, in was in an interview with Mr. T. It's true!

PETER: You read an interview about Mr. T?

COREY: No, my brother had a cassette tape. He was a big Mr. T fan.

CHUCK: I think Mr. T should do a tape where he's reading the Bible.

COREY: The tape that he did was called *Respect Your Mother* or something.

PETER: Did he tell kids to take their vitamins and stuff?

COREY: Yeah. But my brother doesn't listen to it anymore. Actually, no, that's funny because he does listen to it again.

PETER: The daily affirmations of Mr. T. Corey: 'Always love your mother. Treat her right, treat her right.'

PETER: Whoa, you guys know the lyrics?

COREY AND LARRY: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

COREY: (Rapping) 'M' is for the money that... something. 'O' is for the oven with the burnin' heat.'

PETER: You guys should play this on the weekend.

COREY: 'T' is for the time that she stayed up late. 'H' is for the hard-earned money she spent putting clothes on your back and tryin' to pay the rent.

'E' is for every wrinkle I've put on her face. 'R' is the last 'cause she taught me respect...', or something.

CHUCK: Did you hear that cover Mr. T did of a WASP song? It was on a video and the original was 'I Wanna Be Somebody Cool' or whatever, and Mr. T's was like, 'You Don't Wanna Be Nobody's Fool.' It's an anti-drug song.

COREY: It's from the tape! I'm not kidding. The tape is called *Be Somebody or Be Somebody's Fool*. Seriously.

PETER: So has this been a big influence on your musical career?

COREY: (Laughing) Whatever.



Most people thought that the departure of Bernard Butler would essentially mean the end for Suede. But instead, they recruited a new guitarist, wunderkind Richard Oakes, and have just released their third album. *Coming Up* could almost be called a step back for the band because the majority of the album is much closer in spirit to its debut album than 1994's *Dog Star Man*. And that means that there is a lot more of the glam-rock influence than the cinematic grandeur that made songs like 'The Wild Ones' so memorable. There are some epic touches though, particularly on 'The Chemistry Between Us' and 'By The Sea', but most tracks on *Coming Up* are of the straight-forward rock variety that gave Suede fame in the first place. This is particularly true of 'Flinstar' which could pass as a half-hearted rewrite of the debut single 'The Drowners'. Nevertheless, this is a good, strong album that should take care of those cynics that thought Suede's days in the spotlight were over. I have a feeling that this one is really going to grow on me.



I imagine there was a time that being called the best new band in the UK actually meant something. But these days, the music press over there seems to do it on an almost-weekly basis, and one of the latest bands to have that accolade laid on its heads are Kula Shaker. The sound is that of classic guitar rock in the vein of many other British bands. The original slant, however, is to take some Eastern influences a la George Harrison in his 'My Sweet Lord' days. Mind you, the cover of the debut album, *K*, also features such icons as Rudyard Kipling, Frankenstein and Ken Dodd so maybe the spell that the mystic casts simply moves tongue in cheeks. Still, the band's blend of psychedelia and rock is really rather good - in places there is a passing similarity to The Stone Roses (which may be due, in part, to John Leckie's production duties with both bands), but Kula Shaker has a funky full sound of its own. An impressive enough debut that I can almost believe the hype.

Now that The Shadowy Men From A Shadowy Planet are no more, Huevos Rancheros are Canada's premier 'surf' band by default. But I wonder if it wasn't going to happen anyway as Huevos Rancheros' last album was a wonderful affair that could hold its own against anything that the Shadowy Men ever did. The new EP (or mini-album, depending on your point of view) is called *Get Outta Dodge*, and it has a real western twang to it - think of Duane Eddy (if you can). Almost every single track proceeds at a heckuva pace with such wonderful titles as 'Interstate Death Toll' and 'Night Of The Iguana'. The

whole thing is just as entertaining as anything else the band has ever done, and so is as good a place as any to start discovering the world of the Rancheros (or to keep enjoying them). Good stuff.

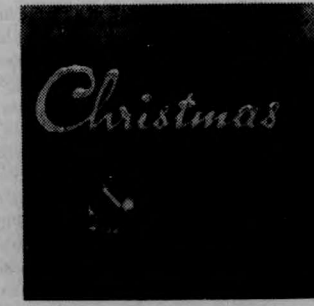
From time to time, I hear from people who are lucky enough to live somewhere where they get the chance to attend decent concerts. And they invariably tell me at some time that they've just seen the best show they've ever seen, and that concert was by Jonathan Richman. Despite the fact that he hasn't had much in the way of commercial success, Jonathan has always an impressive cult following for both his live shows and his records. His newest album, *Surrender To Jonathan*, features some new songs, a few old favourites and one of the worst sleeves I've seen in a long time. But just ignore that and concentrate on the charming music that lies within which combines Jonathan's delicate guitar touches with flourishes of organ, horns and even a spot of accordion. Music like this is timeless - some songs sound as if they were recorded in the 1960's, yet they haven't really aged at all. After listening to *Surrender To Jonathan* a couple of times, I have this real urge to attend one of his live shows just to see if my friends are right. I think I already know what the answer is.

It's that time of year again when record companies take revenge on society by releasing CD's packed to the gills with Christmas music. These are the CD's that you end up buying on a whim, listen to during the festive season and then stick at the back of the closet for eleven months of the year.

What of this year's offerings? Fortunately, most of them have managed to slip through my fingers, but there are two sitting on my desk, mocking me. I finally got up enough courage to listen to them, and the first one, Celtic Christmas II, really wasn't all that bad at all. Or maybe I should say, it really wasn't offensive in any way, much in the

same way that Enya couldn't offend anyone (although a frighteningly large number of songs seem to be about disasters and other not-very-seasonal things). Every track is of the gentle, lilting variety with traditional instruments and mainly Gaelic vocals. It is going to be used as piped music on airplanes over Christmas, and it could almost make me rethink my view of the festive season if it wasn't for the CD that followed it.

Five of the most frightening words in the English language must surely be 'Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer Mambo', but that didn't stop me from giving Christmas Cocktails a listen. I made it through about ten seconds of the first track (the reindeer monstrosity) before I had to hit the 'skip track' button and work my way through all kinds of loungey takes on Christmas classics. Sigh. What is it about this time of year that makes such horrid music acceptable? If you work your past three different variations of 'Jingle Bells' (including such gems as 'Jingle Bells Bossa Nova' and 'Cha-Cha All The Way'), you can find some half-decent tracks thanks to Nat King Cole, Julie London and Dean Martin. Anyway, if you really want to get yourself a good Christmas album, get Phil Spector's *A Christmas Gift For You*, and avoid almost everything else like the plague.



CD Reviews

RHEOSTATICS
THE BLUE HYSTERIA

Canada's most artistic band has released its seventh album. Is there any other way to describe the latest Rheostatics offering? It is a work of art. Like a good painting, it pulls emotion with every stroke. The first single, 'Bad Time To Be Poor,' pretty much sums up the struggle to survive in today's fast paced living. 'It is a bad time to be poor/cause we don't give a shit no more/if you want to go for help don't look next door. The line's been drawn and staked outside.'

The album has some typical Rheostatics humour on it. Four little songs are testament to that, as well as 'The Idiot,' with a classic sing-along line of 'all I remember is someone's spit on my face.' The mysterious Feed Yourself, a murder mystery that reminds you of how easy it is for the police to make someone look guilty when they want to. The best song on the album, however, is probably the hidden track. An acoustic tale reminiscing about growing up with music: 'My first rock concert was a stadium affair our dads drove us down to the front gates there we looked at all the people with their rock and roll hair... We saw E.L.O. but they sucked but Meatloaf was wicked so we gave it up for the fat man.'

Rheostatics are currently on tour with the Tragically Hip, and although they are not coming to Fredericton the tour is stopping in Saint John at Harbour Station on December 7.

• ANTHONY DAVIS



CORROSION OF CONFORMITY
WISEBLOOD

For the first time in thirteen years and seven albums Corrosion of Conformity has not gone through a lineup change. It is also the first time in four albums the band has not altered its music style. The band should try to be consistent more often, since this album is a big improvement over their previous effort. Not that 1994's *Deliverance* was a bad album; it defined a bluesy, hard rock style. However, *Wiseblood* perfects it. Songs such as 'King of the Rotten,' 'Bottom Feeder,' and 'Man or Ash' hit the listener like a sledgehammer, and Pepper Keenan and Woody Weatherman's double guitar attack has never been better. One of the best hard rock releases of the year, *Wiseblood* could prove to be the album which will move C.O.C. from the shadows into the spotlight.

• CHARLES TEED

ENIGMA
LE ROI EST MORT, VIVE LE ROI!

I never realized that Enigma and Deep Forest were the same group. Actually, they are not, but I could swear that... Anyway, this is Enigma's third release and it's titled *Le Roi Est Mort, Vive Le Roi!* What's up with the funky french title? Oh well, I guess that's why Enigma is called Enigma. Listening to the CD, I couldn't help but feel enigmatic. Michael Cretu is the driving force behind the band. Michael's wife, Sandra Cretu, does some of the female vocals on this CD. I couldn't help but picture them in my head sitting at home with little thought bubbles that contained dollar signs emerging from their heads. This has already been done. It's been done a lot actually. There are no booty shakin' tunes on this CD, unlike its two predecessors which contained 'Sadness, Part 1' - that colossal dance hit that featured a Gregorian chant - and 'Return to Innocence.' However, amidst all the chanting, wailing and repetitive beats there are some half decent tracks on this CD. 'The Child' and 'The Roundabout' actually made me tap my feet. None of the songs made me stand up and dance until I was a puddle of sweat. My suggestion: If you are thinking about buying this CD, don't just enjoy Enigma's previous releases and buy Anne Murray's new CD instead.

• DENNIS GERMAN



BLIND MELON
NICO

No, they do not have a new singer. The songs on this album are of the 'new to you' variety. Many feature Shannon Hoon and his acoustic guitar, while others were tracks that took Hoon's voice and guitar (and sometimes other members of the band) and were edited, with the full band being dubbed in. The Blind Melon super hit, 'No Rain,' appears in a wholly different form. According to the liner notes, this version of the song was used to lead into the album version for live shows. Filled with feedback and slurred speech, it is definitely not hit material. A couple of notable songs on this album include 'Soup,' the title that was used for their last album, and the album closer 'Letters From a Porcupine,' for which Hoon is singing and playing guitar over the phone into an answering machine. This album is for die hard 'Melonheads' only. The songs are mostly those that didn't make it onto other albums, and it shows.

• ANTHONY DAVIS

MAZZY STAR
AMONG MY SWAN

Mazzy Star is just one of those bands that will never experiment with its sound. Those of us who are familiar with the previous two releases - the more popular of the two being *So Tonight That I May See* - will realize that the new CD offers no surprises. As a matter of fact, it sounds exactly like their previous stuff. This may sound bad, but it is actually a good thing. Mazzy Star is comprised of Hope Sandoval and David Roback. Hope offers her velvet smooth voice, while David backs her up with a variety of instruments. Hope has one of those voices that could lull a lion to sleep. This is sombre folk-rock and I don't suggest listening to this in a walkman or any other portable listening device unless you are carrying a sleeping bag with you. This CD is to be enjoyed at home. 'Take Everything,' 'All your sisters,' 'Roseblood,' and 'Look on Down From The Bridge' are the tracks that I've listened to more than twice. Especially the last one which I had to listen to with a box of Kleenex.

If you enjoy *Cool Whip* than you'll enjoy this CD. It's rich, creamy and consistent. And at the end of it, you'll walk away with a bittersweet smile on your face.

• DENNIS GERMAN



TORN
SOLITUDE

If you look at the debut CD from Torn, a Fredericton area rock band, from an independent level it is outstanding. It does not lack production, none of the band members are weak on their respective instruments, and the tunes are, for the most part, well written. On a professional level, however, this CD is missing a few elements. While tunes like 'Receive' and 'Solitude' start off well with their great vocals à la Carter McLaughlin and excellent music arrangements, the songs following these two tracks are not as well developed. Two songs, 'Robbie (the way out)' and 'Life' are obviously filler songs, and the other five tracks, while not awful by any stretch of the imagination, are noticeably weaker than the opening two tracks. All told, this is an excellent start for Torn, and while not completely at par with the giants of the hard rock industry, they are well on their way.

• CHARLES TEED



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