

Spinning minds and ever-ringing ears: happy Valentine

by Leighton Shearer-Sonier

Since I came to Canada, I've sensed this great alternative love affair between the local music underground and the soft-spoken, loud ripping psychedelic bands from across the pond. Lush first hinted at it, then Ride, The Cranes and on and on. My

Bloody Valentine are here for another sensuous rendezvous — their way.

My Bloody Valentine don't make too much of an entrance. In fact, they don't move much at all. This is the realm of the shoe-gazers — an existential realm, a pulsing, tearing chaos of a realm. A great sense of the band as stone emerges: they are immutable,



My Bloody Valentine brings us into the realm of the shoe-gazers, an existential realm of pulsing, tearing chaos. Despite this, My Bloody Valentine's recent concert gave Toronto something to think about: hopelessness and hope together. • photo by Alek Sharma

CONCERT

My Bloody Valentine
The Opera House
Monday, March 9

letting the blast of the ever-decaying world envelop and blow over them.

Images of chaos flicker through the band, projected onto a cinema screen backdrop. This is the power and the mystique of My Bloody Valentine.

Not once does singer Kevin Shields raise his eyes to greet the audience; his guitar is all, the sound everything. The weaving of this thick tapestry of melody and silence doesn't need his face.

Debbie Goode is lost in the buffeting winds of the end of the world, bounding on the bass lines that feed the vortex which spiral around the band. She has enough to fence with; we are too much.

Bilinda Butcher stares into the void from which the chaos must come. The projections wash over her as she joins Kevin to chant into the maelstrom with hushes and whispers, lost in their own musical power's force of destruction.

Behind them is Colm O'Ciosoig, encouraging, encouraging. His drums

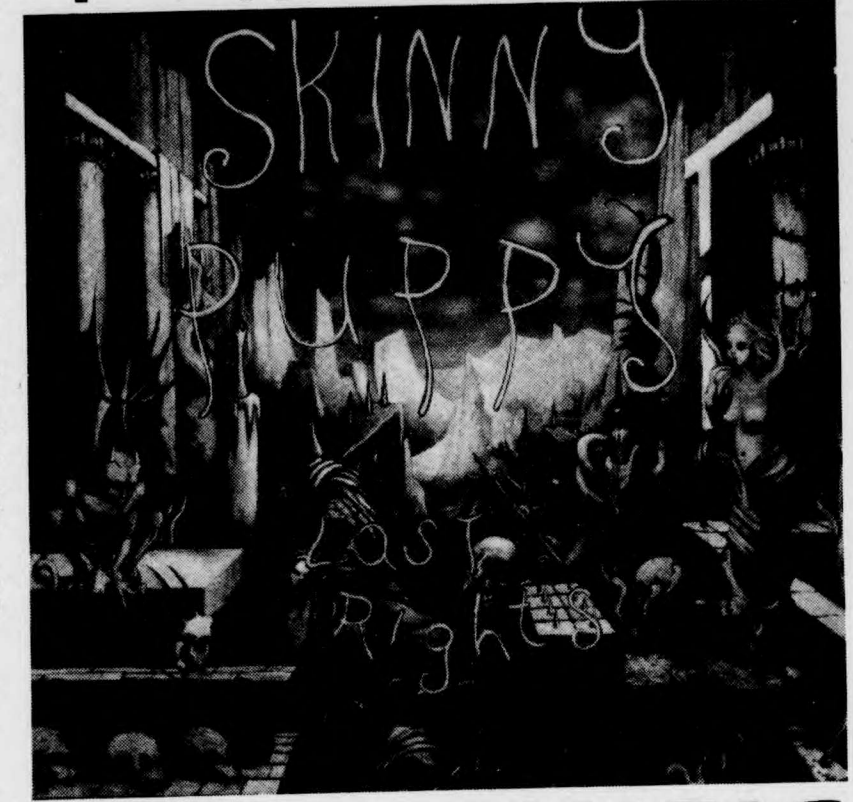
never let them stop. Transfixed, we can only hold ourselves in and hope for the best.

To describe My Bloody Valentine as "one song after another" would be an injustice. Rather, this is one tear after another, the deconstruction of a carefully planned melody. Slowly they bare the raw anarchy of their

music in a ten-minute blast of white noise: atonal, ringing, forever.

This was an Experience. My Bloody Valentine had given Toronto something to think about — hopelessness and hope together. In the end, we were left with three things: beauty among the ruins, spinning minds and forever-ringing ears.

Apocalyptic Skinny Puppy



by Prasad Bidaye

With each successive album, Skinny Puppy maintain their acute sense of originality and artistry. *Last Rights*, rumoured to be the band's finale, destroys many of the customs they've pioneered in their career, finding them at their most explorative and apocalyptic.

Having forged the perfect link between electro-industrial dance and macabre theatre on their previous effort, *Too Dark Park*, musicians Cevin Key and D. Rudolph Goettel move forward with an abrasively loud yet intricately melodic masterpiece. *Last Rights* is worthy of the kind of praise that Einsturzende Neubauten and The Legendary Pink Dots have achieved in the past.

Key bashes his drums harder than ever. His collaboration with Goettel's dramatically damaged orchestrations conjures up sounds and noises with a visceral intensity that attains improvised spontaneity while keeping a definitive musical foundation.

At some moments, *Last Rights* is so chaotic that the speakers might blow up from near-excessive distor-

MUSIC

Skinny Puppy
Last Rights
Nettwerk records

tion. Don't be alarmed — it's the intention of the artist.

It's always a pleasure to hear Nivek Ogre scream. Distorted, reverberated and crazed, the innovator of throat-edged poetry neglects his traditional focus on environmental and political issues, opting for more abstract lyrics. In "Killing Game," he announces, "I played the killing game... first!"

Last Rights contains possibly the most autobiographical lines he's written. Ogre has inspired masses of suicidal goths all over the continent, something imitators like Nine Inch Nails have attempted to do for years.

New age connoisseurs will try to pigeonhole this album as some kind of a psychedelic trip, but true fans will recognize it as perhaps Skinny Puppy's attempt at opera. (Opera!) With no gaps between the songs, and orchestrated with samples of traditional instruments, *Last Rights* creates exciting visual images, capturing much of the theatrical drama the band has earned a reputation for in their live shows.

Unlike most of their decade-old counterparts, Skinny Puppy have only grown crazier.

Nix McDonald's mix of pics' picks

by Ira Nayman

Francis Ford Coppola has said that being a movie director is the last

dictatorial position in the world. In compiling a film soundtrack, it must be nice to be able to say, "I want this, and that, and — ooh! — I must have

one of those!" Unfortunately, the results aren't always as fascinating for listeners as they are for the director.

Highway 61, directed by Bruce McDonald, follows the road made famous in a song by Bob Dylan. One of the film's conceits is that, as it moves down Highway 61, it explores American popular music, from rock and country to jazz and gospel. The soundtrack reflects many of the styles encountered in the film.

The soundtrack opens with a truly forgettable rock number by Nash the Slash called "Into the Land of the Fire." Fortunately, this is more than made up for by a high-energy version of Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" by Rita Chiarelli featuring Colin Linden, and the Bourbon Tabernacle Choir's jazz-tinged "Put Your Head On."

Sam Larkin's "Sally On" is an exceptional folk track. Jane Hawley's "Momma's Waitin'" not quite so good country. From there, the album starts to run into problems.

The soundtrack strongly reflects McDonald's musical interests. If you don't share his interests, you're not going to like a lot of cuts.

I mean, Tom Jones singing "It's Not Unusual?" Really? I never thought I'd own an album with a song by Tom Jones. Hell, I never thought I'd live in the same neighbourhood as anybody who owned an album with a Tom Jones track on it.

The Razorbacks' "My Way or the Highway" is typical rockabilly, which means it contains more attitude than creativity. "Dance" and "Mr. Skin," by Acid Test, are undistinguished dance numbers. And, for better or worse, I have always been immune to the charms of zydeco music.

Between each song is a snippet of dialogue from the film, in the order in which they appeared. As a mnemonic device for people who have seen the film, it's wonderful.

As for the music, the liner notes suggest you further explore the works of the individual artists you like. Better yet, go to them directly.



Although it's not well known, Bruce McDonald (centre, with Valerie Buhagiar and Bruce McKellar, the stars of *Highway 61*) became a director just to be able to put all his favourite music on a soundtrack album. The soundtrack to *Highway 61* is great...if you happen to be Bruce McDonald.

Jerry Jerry not from New Zealand

by Nina Kolunovsky

Montreal, besides being the world's most exciting, vibrant, multi-faceted and all-around greatest city, has one major claim to fame. It is the city where I was once seriously told that Men Without Hats is "from New Zealand."

That was also when I decided to dedicate the rest of my life to promoting Canadian music.

When I found out that Jerry Jerry and the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra is Montreal-based, as well as mostly Montreal-born and bred, I was determined to like them. After listening to the first song on their second album, *Don't Mind If I Do*, I was afraid that might take some effort. The song is unoriginal, has way too much drum and is only occasionally melodious.

Luckily, with one notable exception, the rest of the songs are much better. The jazz-influenced songs ("Jimmy Reeves," "Grandiose," etc.) are perfect in all respects. "No Ass Tattoos (In Heaven)" is hilarious, poignant and has a catchy tune — a considerable feat in my book.

In fact, this is the case with the rest

MUSIC

Jerry Jerry & the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra
Don't Mind If I Do
Aquarius records

of the album. The lyrics deserve to be listened to because they are funny and timely.

The quality of the music surprised me — this is obviously not just a bunch of guys strumming the drums and beating the guitars. Not only are all the instruments recognizable on the album, but they actually sound good. This more than aptly makes up for the occasional lack of originality.

The album left me with only one question, which concerns the alleged song "The Ballad of John Card & the Booze Rookie." The question is: "Why?" The song is worthy of a high-school band just dabbling in the complicated concepts of "original lyrics" and "slow songs."

If it had to be included on the album, it should have been the last song, just to remind us of the tremendous improvement the band must have made over the years to become as good as it is.

MUSIC

various artists
Highway 61: The Soundtrack
Shadow Shows/Capitol Records

CRZ
The Ever Expanding Corporate 105.5 Top 16

- Curve.....Doppelganger.....Anxious
- Lush.....Spooky.....4AD/Polygram
- Phleg Camp.....Beaker.....Final Notice/Cargo (C)
- Sugarcubes.....Stick Around For Joy.....Warner
- Jesus and Mary Chain.....Reverence EP.....Blanco Y Negro
- Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprosy.....Language of Violence.....A&M
- Corrosion of Conformity.....Blind.....Relativity
- Bad Religion.....Generator.....Epitaph
- DHI.....Machine Altar Transmission.....Fringe (C)
- Skaface.....Mamooska.....Skaface (C)
- Rollins Band.....The End of Silence.....Imago
- Ride.....Leave them all Behind.....Creation (C)
- Skinny Puppy.....Last Rites.....Nettwerk (C)
- Screeching Weasel.....My Brain Hurts.....Lookout!
- Teenage Fanclub.....Bandwagonesque.....DGC/MCA
- Big Star.....Three/Sister Lovers.....Ryko

C Denotes Can Con. We were away for a couple of weeks but we're back. Did you miss us? I didn't think so. Call 736-5656 for requests and such. Record of the week: Afghan Wigs - Congregation. Support college radio.