

slipped disks • slipped disks • slipped disks • slipped disks •

Eric's Trip
Love Tara
Sub Pop

After several tapes and EPs, including two six-song CD releases (*Peter* on Murderecords, *Songs About Chris* on Sub Pop), Moncton's Eric's Trip have released their Sub Pop full-length debut, *Love Tara*. The Trippers' trademark combination of ear-splitting rockers and weirdly introspective ballads has been honed to a fine edge, and with this home-recorded 15-song collection they have delivered on the promise of their earlier material.

If there was any question in fans' minds as to whether the band could fill out an entire album with their typically two-to-three-minute (and sometimes shorter) songs, this release should put that quickly to rest. *Love Tara* is a truly inventive album. Julie Doiron's vocal talents are the spice in this musical recipe: her melancholic crooning on tracks like "Secret for Julie" is surprisingly at home on the same record with "Blinded", a grunge apocalypse that features Julie screaming her lungs out.

Rick White's voice is no less moody, and the opening and closing ballads on the disc ("Behind the Garage" and "Allergic to Love") show him to be maturing as a songwriter, as does the anthemic "Belly". As for creative arrangement, there is no better example than the naked, understated percussion break in the middle of "Stove" — it is a truly sublime moment. *Love Tara* constitutes a convincing justification of the basement recording ethic.

J. C.

Treponem Pal
Excess & Overdrive
Roadrunner

On this disc Treponem Pal successfully gives us a dose of Ministry-esque quasi-industrial metal. Gravelly, distorted voice and guitar are the ingredients to this mix. Although the album is good in its own right, it does suffer somewhat from the "heard it already — heard it done better" syndrome. It does, however, have some standout crunchers, and if you are into the (newer) Ministry sound, check out this disc.

M. G.

The Wonder Stuff
Construction For The Modern Idiot
PolyGram Records

Yet another alternative band, The Wonder Stuff has returned with its third album. *Construction For The Modern Idiot* is Miles Hunt's depiction of the world around him. From "I Wish Them All Dead", an angry attack at a child sex ring (see the liner notes) to "Swell", an optimistic description of the youth of today, The Wonder Stuff has managed to create a pleasantly diverse collection of songs.

The only major problem with this piece of work is that the lyrics tend to be repetitive. When these guys hit on a couple of words that they like, they stick with them. It is, however, surprising what you are willing to put up with when the vocals are backed with a band like this. Martin Bell, Malc Treece, Martin Gilks and Paul Clifford combine an array of instruments including the accordion and the mandolin to create a sound which combines pop with choice blasts of rage.

It's not an incredible release, but fans won't be disappointed, and those who are looking for a kinder gentler alternative music will find that the 'pop with an attitude' of *Construction For The Modern Idiot* is a good choice

J. H.

Def Leppard
Retro Active
PolyGram

Despite the skull-like cover art of *Retro Active*, Def Leppard are still architects of shallow, sugary fluff. Steve Clark, after writing most of *Adrenalize*, died of a drug overdose. The band rewarded his contribution by not including a photo of him. On the 1992 MTV video awards, the band followed Pearl Jam and received a near-unanimous round of boos, jeers, and the finger, proving that overproduced formula-written songs do little except feed radio's hunger for wonky ballads. This collection of 14 b-sides and unreleased singles is mostly filler. Though "Des-

sert Song", "Ride Into the Sun", and the three versions of "Miss You In A Heartbeat" are strong and catchy, why should anyone blow coin when radio will play the album to death?

T. C.

Robin Ford and the Blue Line
Mystic Mile
MCA

Sometimes you can tell a dud by the cover. In the words of Quincy, let the autopsy begin! The sound is a Mister Mister version of white blues. One track smacks of Dire Straits' "Money For Nothing", and probably landed them a recording contract. This material is mediocre, mere buttock parchment compared to songs by Stevie Ray Vaughn and Canada's Sidemen. In the end, adult contemporary radio ga-ga deserves death over mention, especially in the university press. Flush!

T. C.

Joe Henry
Kindness of the World
Mammoth

What do you get when you put The Band, Blue Rodeo and Bob Dylan in a blender? Joe Henry, of course. This is not to say that he is derivative, it's just what he sounds like. This cd contains a very good mix of country, blues and folk. The arrangements and production are top notch, but it seems to run a little long.

M.G.

The Frank and Walters
Trains, Boats and Planes
Setana

If the Wedding Present were a really pathetic band, they would be The Frank and Walters. This cd contains 37 minutes of sub-standard pop. We're talking incredibly sappy, bland and boring stuff here. Imagine the worst possible combination of The Proclaimers and New Order. Avoid.

M.G.

Buffalo Tom
Big Red Letter Day
PolyGram Records

Buffalo Tom's *Big Red Letter Day* is the fourth album from this Massachusetts band.

When this trio met at the University of Massachusetts in 1986, they had a little bit of a problem in that all three played the same instrument: guitar. In order to stay together, two switched instruments. This confusing start allowed them to grow together, and this album is a definite improvement over those of the past. The vocals are much stronger, and it seems as though Buffalo Tom are much happier with their instruments. It is obvious that these three work well together, and the music on this album presents a cohesive collaboration.

Listen closely and you will hear hints of what may well become known as 'Boston Grunge' sound: simple, pleasant harmonies combined with a clear beat. Listen for samples from this radio friendly album on your favourite station.

J. H.

Redd Kross
Phaseshifter
Polygram

Do you remember the '70s? Neither do I. It is just a blur of having fun playing with my Hot Wheels cars, playing with Lego and doing skids on my bike. Redd Kross, however, seem to have completely different memories with respect to the '70s. While I may not be able to enjoy this album as I remember the 'scene' 17 years ago, I can still enjoy *Phaseshifter* for being the fun album that it is. This is a pretty good party-rock album. The more I listen to this cd the more Brent Bambury's quip that "Redd Kross doesn't sound like anybody, they sound like everybody" rings true. Their sound can't be pinned down because it is so strangely and strongly familiar.

M.G.



COME BY
TODAY FOR
GREAT
CHRISTMAS
GIFT IDEAS!

AVAILABLE: HER SHOES BY D.J. & THE TANNERY BY D.J. 5472 SPRING GARDEN ROAD