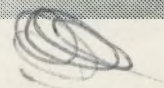


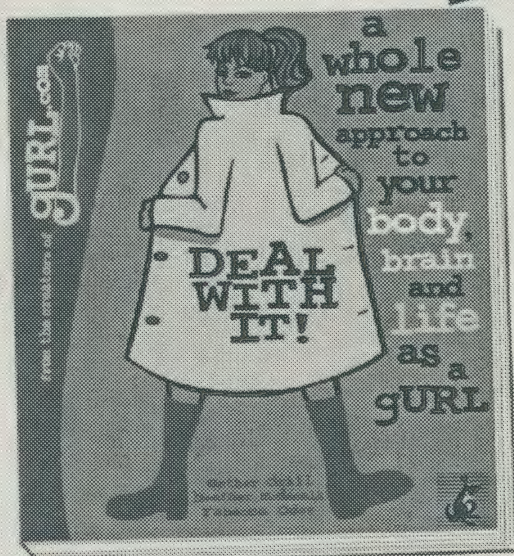
VENUS

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editor's whateva

I'm writing you this letter at 3 a.m. on a Wednesday — make that a Thursday. I'm going to the printer in just a few hours, and I'm not quite done. Yep, Last Minute is my middle name.

I won't *really* believe that I've finished this issue until I see it in print. It's been on my computer for about a year, and for the small handful of people who've actually read *Venus* before, well, they probably won't believe it either. For the many other people who've never heard of *Venus* until now, I'm about to tell you why.

I write you this letter from Naperville, Illinois, a suburb about 25 minutes west of Chicago. By the time you read this letter, I will be in San Francisco. I've been doing a lotta moving, and I'll explain that in just a few seconds.

I started *Venus* about five years ago as a freshman in my dorm room at Michigan State University. The first issue took only one day to make. It was about 10 or so pages, and it was constructed in part with a word processor, in part with a glue stick and markers. I continued printing a new issue about once a year, each issue getting a bit better, a bit thicker. I've now decided that I'm going to print four issues per year, distributing around the country (and not just in Michigan where it was distributed exclusively before) starting with this sucker.

So, back to the moving thing. It all started almost a year ago in East Lansing, Michigan, where I was on the five-year program at the previously mentioned Moo U. I majored in women's studies, which I've been defending since I moved to New York City and started interviewing for jobs — what I did right after graduation. I moved in with my best friend, J. Pants Showers, in Brooklyn, and thought I'd be able to follow my dream of getting a dope job, getting my own apartment and living happily ever after.

Well, that didn't quite happen. I'd go to interviews, and I was either inexperienced, overqualified or my personal favorite "You have a lot of experience in entertainment writing; are you sure you won't get bored here?" There was also: "Why don't you get some investors and make *Venus* your full-time job?"

Hello? I'd love to do that, but I don't really want to go the investors route. I'd rather just do things my way, the only way I'm really comfortable doing anything. So anyway, after about a month in New York (and thinking I'd be unemployed forever), I ended up getting a job as a copy editor for a hip-hop magazine. I loved it, but I couldn't afford to live in NYC. So with my bag-o-clothes, inflatable mattress and, of course, my computer, I moved to the ville de Naper d'Illinois to live with my sister. I figured: The Windy City (my at-the-time goal for a place to live) is cheaper, the goddman Midwest (which I desperately missed for the first time in my life), easier and, well, my boyfriend was going to move there (that flopped about two weeks after I moved: wouldn'tchaknow.)

So anyway, my sister, a social worker and all-around good gal,

let me live with her. My rationale was this: I get a job as a designer for whomever'll take me, and then I'll have plenty of energy left over to work on *Venus*, my real dream.

The opposite happened. I got a design job at a podunk newspaper, and the whopping three weeks I was there, I spent all my time thinking that I should be at home working on *Venus*. Hence, by the time I got home, I'd used up all my energy thinking that I shoulda been working on *Venus*, rendering me to complain about staring at a computa screen all day, and hence, not to work on *Venus*.

My next plan of attack?

Quit the day job. No two-week notice. Nothing.

The next two months were the weirdest of my life but probably the most important. Although I experienced a wonderful sensation of I-quit-my-job-and-isn't-it-fabulous, it lasted all of one day, and then I was like, "What to do now?"

OK, yeah, do *Venus*. But how do you plan to make money? I know: work at Kinko's; that way I can get discounts on copies. I applied to Kinko's and didn't get hired. I think I failed the interview when they asked me how long I intended to work, and I answered, "Ugh, I don't know. Maybe a coupla months." On to plan B, or is it plan C by now? Plan whateva was to be a free-lance writer. This plan was working. Sure, I spent most of the time just trying to get assignments and less of my time actually writing the stories, but suddenly I was able to support myself — sort of. The only downfall of free-lance writing is that you work at home all day, and in my case, that meant sitting at a desk that was inside my sister's closet. Not that her closet isn't nice, it's just that it's a bit dark.

Outta the blue, I get a call from the publisher of a San Francisco magazine, for which I'd interned and long-distance edited during college. He said, "Amy, I thought you were going to move back to San Francisco after you graduated?"

"I was?"

"Yes, that's what you said."

"Oh, I forgot."

"What are you doing now?"

"I'm free-lancing and junk."

"Would you like to work here?"

Hell yeah.

That's the end of the story, so I'm off to San Francisco for my first *real* job. I'm still going to print *Venus* on a quarterly basis as planned because I can't picture myself not doing it.

If I've learned anything this past year, it's that you've got to do what you really want to do. Even if you have to put your pride on the line, just do it. It all pays off in the end to follow your heart.

The moral of the story? Well, unless you're supporting a family, find a day job that you really love. Even if it pays shit. Or, if you can't afford to do that, never lose site of what you really want to do.

— Amy Schroeder

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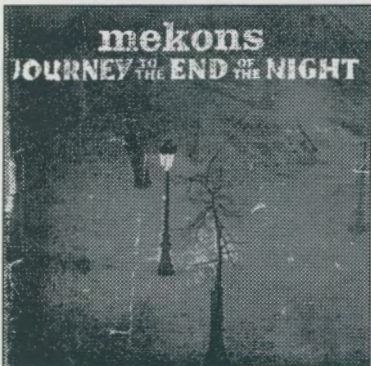


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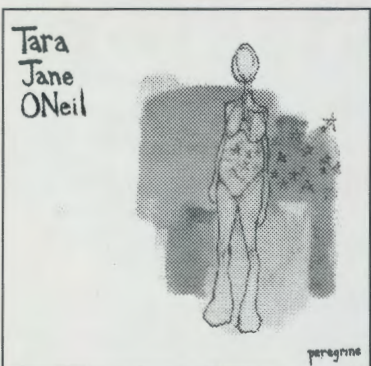
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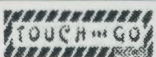
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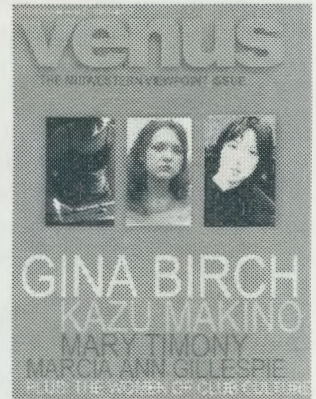


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LETTERS

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I was really impressed with *Venus* No. 5 (*The Midwestern Viewpoint Issue*). I really liked how the interviews took on a feminist perspective. You seemed to get some information out of these women that I've never read before. In your interview with Blonde Redhead's Kazu Makino, she stated that when women rock out they are perceived as being in a state of hysteria. This zine gave me a lot of helpful information. I'm studying telecommunication with an emphasis on audio at Michigan State University, so I'll be entering the male-dominated recording industry. You gave me a little more fuel for my fire. The more I know the more I (with other women) can change the music industry.

AUDRA MARKS
EAST LANSING, MI.

I sometimes run a web site for Helium, and I'm very interested in your interview with Mary Timony. Mary is a lot of fun, and I find her a little fascinating as well. She's so self-effacing, but the stuff she creates is so wonderful. I'm also enclosing a recent snapshot, in case you find it useful in a future issue. The photo was taken at the Knitting Factory in December 1998.

SCOTT BATTEN
NEW YORK, N.Y.

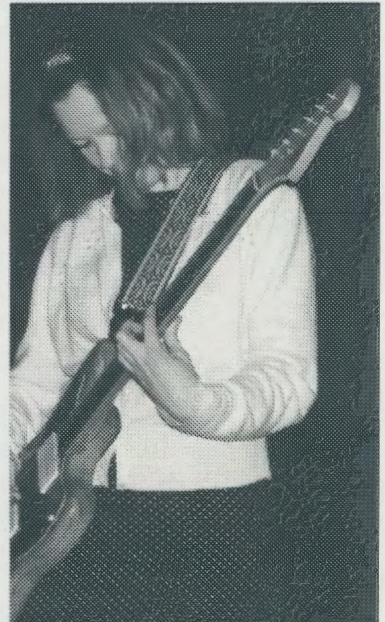
I have just received my first copy of *Venus*, and I am very impressed. I read it from front cover to back cover. I found it to be informative, entertaining, imaginative and smart! Wonderful layout to boot! Page 11's "Electric Women" is exceptional. I really enjoyed the article on Misconstrued Liberalism and Ms. Gillespie, but also got a real kick and a few laughs on the Midwestern viewpoint and reading about your various scenarios. Your band interviews were interesting too. I like everything.

TAMMY FERRANTI-LANSDOWN
BELLFLOWER, CA

Liked *Venus* No. 5 very much, though, girl, you're missing Indiana from your story ("Everything You Never Needed to Know about the Midwest.")

AYUN HALLIDAY
EDITOR, THE EAST VILLAGE INKY
NEW YORK, NY

Our response: She's right – we failed to mention the Hoosier state. And I truly apologize. Truth is, we kept looking for interesting or weirdish facts about Indiana, but we couldn't find any. We almost wrote about Dave Letterman being from Indianapolis, but who really cares about that? If anyone knows some fabulous facts about Indiana and can fill us in, that'd be great.



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INTERVIEWS

17 Although **KIM PIETERS** sent us a downloadable photo of herself via e-mail, *Venus'* editor sucks at solving computer problems. Hence, there's no photo. We really apologize for this. Maybe it's because the photo was sent from New Zealand. I have no idea.

18 JEN WOOD

19 LE TIGRE put the *uh-huh, that's right* into this issue.

22 Her Royal Truxness: **JENNIFER HERREMA**

23 RACHEL GRIMES of Rachel's

25 TARA JANE O'NEIL

27 Detroit DJ **HANNAH SAWTELL**

29 DANIELLE HOWLE

31 What should we call this story? The C in Cake? No, that's how the Sea and Cake got their name. We're not writing about them. Duh. This magazine is about women in music. Have your cake and like it too? No, that's dumb. How about an interview with **CAKE LIKE?** Sounds good.

33 Former New Radiant Storm King drummer **ELIZABETH SHARP** tells us what's up with what's going down and her new band, Ill Ease, via e-mail. "It's a hell of a lot better than getting drunk at some bar while being interviewed."

35 Atari Teenage Riot's **HANIN ELIAS** talks about Fatal, a non-hierarchical record label for women. This news just in: Elias is scheduled to release a solo album sometime this year.

37 Let's get over all this talk of how cute Miho Hatori is and the neat factor of Yuka Honda and Sean Lennon's hookup. Let's get to the point: **CIBO MATTO** is the dope shit.

FULL-LENGTHS

15 DANCE IN DETROIT

42 ISSUE OF THE ISSUE: Images of Women in the media: Two essays; well, three, really.

45 DOPE-ASS ZINES and the women who make them.

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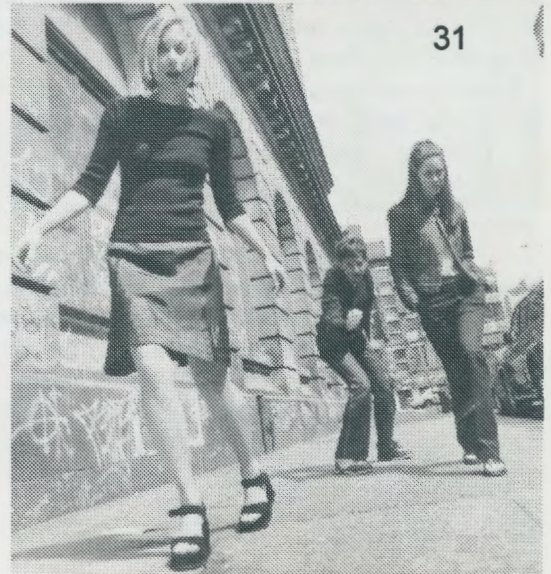
50 AND THEN SOME: Who doesn't like looking at more photos?



37



31



FOOTNOTES

In every issue of *Venus*, we pick one question for several musicians to answer. The question for this issue is "What 10 songs would you put on the A side of yer own mixed tape." To make the question a bit more challenging, we asked six women (see page 11) to tell us their favorite 10 songs of all time. I was really looking forward to hearing **MOE TUCKER's** answer because she is, after all, one of the most influential women of rock. She's also one of the first well-recognized female drummers in history.

When I received her list of songs, she didn't bother to mention the artists of the songs. She shouldn't have to, but unfortunately, I didn't know who recorded all the songs, and I wanted to list the artists with their respective songs. So, I sent an e-mail message back to Moe, asking her to tell me who some of the artists were. Her response? "You must be young."

Speaking of mixed tapes, I really like **ELIZABETH SHARP's** philosophy: "I'm pretty into the art of mix tapes — it's not just about slapping together any ol' 10 great songs. You have to allow some breathing room, peaks and valleys, time to come down etc., etc., etc."

Speaking of E. Sharp, I received a cool e-mail message from **JESSAMIN SWEARINGEN**, a college friend of her's. She had quite a bit of cool stuff to say about Sharp: "We went to Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts — total Weirdiville, but GREAT music. Apparently there's a direct relationship between collegiate neurosis and song writing talent. **ELLIOTT SMITH** and his old band, Heatmiser, come from there, and the loveable townies: **DINO JR.**, **GOBBLEHOOF** and **SEBADOH**."

Sharp used to play in **NEW RADIANT STORM KING**, then left to form a band called **SKINNER PILOT**. We all shared a practice space for a while in Brooklyn, but that was a long long time ago.

I didn't really know Sharp much in college; we were dueling workaholic musicians. We ended up hanging out with, or dating a lot of the same people (and Hampshire is about as small as K-Mart.)

I do know that we entered Hampshire in fall of '89. She was from the D.C. area and steeped in that straight-edge **DISCHORD** vibe of the holier-

than-thou politically correct '80s.

She played drums for a band called **MYTH OF SYSIPHUS** (don't remember how it's spelled) with some older students, and they kinda sucked, so she and their bass player formed New Radiant Storm King with two other '89ers (Do your own research on NRSK; they had brilliant moments.)

Sharp was one of the most evocative, different drummers I had ever heard. Listen to "New Math" on NRSK's *Rival Time*, and you'll know what I mean. I first recall seeing her play bass when the members of Storm King switched instruments for a cover of their departed guitarist's

(ELIZABETH) SHARP WAS ONE OF THE MOST EVOCATIVE, DIFFERENT DRUMMERS I HAD EVER HEARD.

"theme" song.

Then around 1992 or '93, she started playing bass for this band called Skinner Pilot, which was this guy Andrew Zaroo who entered a year after us, and drummer Andy Montleonne who played off and on for a band called Beth's Clit. They all relocated to Brooklyn in '97 after stints in Georgia and Minneapolis.

The last time I saw Sharp, I had just had my wisdom teeth removed. She came over with some cherry ice cream, and we smoked a ton of pot and watched *Welcome to the Dollhouse*. She kept telling me about this side project away from Skinner Pilot, and I was psyched for her, because I thought that Zaroo was a lame Peyton (NRSK) rip off, and her own music was better.

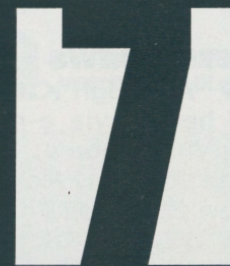
So there you have it.

Me? I'm a New York City web developer and educator. I have endured the surreal experience of teaching junior high at my old high school for the past two years while completing a master's in computer geekery at Columbia's teachers college.

I wrote an undergrad thesis on the Emergence of Punk Rock in the States around '92 to '93 and continued to write about rock music until the fall of '98 when I basically stopped playing in my own band (**VELMA**) and writing about stuff, because the NYC scene and indie-rock stuff was just stale. I've been focusing on the web and educational resources since then, but I still love the whole rock as sociology thing."

Check out her web site: www.jessamin.com.

— compiled by Amy S.



ALL THIS PLUS MUCH MORE IN VENUS NO. 7/MAY 2000:

Sleater-Kinney

Mary Timony

Broadcast

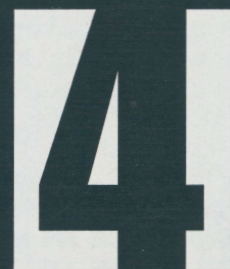
Sarah Cracknell

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Venus is a planet.
It's also the name
of this zine.



APRIL FRESH is originally from Canada, but now she "lives and rocks" in New York City. She's been playing bass for seven years. Fresh used to play in Tristan Psionic, "a semi-well-known Canadian indie band" on the Sonic Union label but quit to move to the big city and play even more. "I write stuff about the world around me and how most of it is pretty fucked up. I make art in the same manner. I have two chapbooks of my writing available." Her web site is www.april-fresh.com. Fresh wrote a guide to living cheaper in New York for this issue.



TAMARA WARREN is an aspiring (struggling) writer and potential (hopeful) filmmaker. She has spent the past five years crafting her memoir about her 89-year-old grandfather, Opa, reflecting on his survival of Auschwitz and Communist persecution, but also his influential positive attitude and his sillier side, playing games like Who Can Scream the Loudest? Ms. Warren is building a documentary for the younger generation about her story. She moonlights as a freelance journalist and writing consultant. Warren is sort of like *Venus'* Detroit correspondent. In this issue, she has written two stories on location (she lives there): Dunham dance and DJ Hannah Sawtell.

J. PANTS SHOWERS has been contributing to *Venus* since it got its start in 1995. In past issues, she drew a cartoon about the life and times of a character named Pants and participated in the egg-and-spoon race in *Venus'* 1997 "sports" issue. The 23-year-old who "lives in Brooklyn this month" photographed both the Cibo Matto and Cake Like stories. "I couldn't get my camera fixed in time, so I rented one, and the store gave me a camera with duct tape holding the battery on. When I went to photograph Cake Like in Manhattan, they asked if I was just a fan -- I guess they didn't think I was a photographer." When not inspiring *Venus* editor Amy Schroeder to get her shit togetha, Showers works as a designer for *The New York Observer* and runs a gardening service on the side.



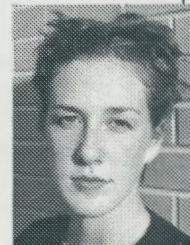
MACKENZIE WILSON is a 22-year old Michigander. While freelancing for various publications such as *College Monthly 101*, the *College Press Network* and *The Flint Journal*, Wilson also deejays for Michigan State University's radio station. Aside from her jaunt as an inspiring rock journalist, her work also has appeared on *Rolling Stone Online*. Wilson wrote the Cake Like story in this issue. "Nina and Kerry were a blast -- totally down to earth and very excited about their band. I was a little bit nervous that they would peg me as this conservative college geek, but they were so funny and articulate about things going on in their lives. They are busy women who keep it together, and they don't mind that the world is moving at light speed. They keep things real, and it's really good to know that some people out there enjoy what they're doing and don't get side-tracked by all the social bru-ha ha."

AMY BEVEVINO is a down-and-out post-graduate English major "in search of some excitement." She lives in East Lansing, Michigan, and works as a substitute teacher. "I am still writing and attending poetry workshops under the instruction of poet Diane Wakoski with a group of other women. I hope *Venus* will make it big, hire me, and save me from grad school." Bevevino and her former college roommate, Meghan Buslepp both wrote essays about women's images in the media.



ELISA LUDWIG is 24 and lives in Philadelphia. Besides writing about indie music she is finishing up a master's in Creative Writing at Temple University and a collection of short stories, which she hopes to publish soon. She interviewed Jen Wood for this issue.

DYLAN DUEL is 20 years old, and her parents named her after Bob Dylan. She studies psychology and women's studies at Michigan State University. She plans to join the Peace Corps once she gradgitates. She has red hair, freckles and the ability to wave her hands in the air like she just don't care. Actually, she does care -- about a lot. When asked to write a profile of herself, she avoided the sitch for several months and then finally wrote, "I pick my nose." Then she said, "No, don't put that." Then she said, "OK, it's true for Goddess' sake." Duel photographed the Loopy Frooty Things taste test for this issue.



by Amy S.



SUE GARNER

The latest Sue Garner and Rick Brown project is, in three words, stunning melodic rock. The wife-and-husband duo boast impressive rock resumes — both are alums of Run On, and Garner is a former member of both Fish & Roses and the post-punk girl group the Shams. For the 12-track album, Garner and Brown recruited Tortoise's Douglas McCombs, rocker Tara Key and producer/mixer extraordinaire Chris Stamey and Doug Weiselman. All four donate impressive instrumental work, making for the album's full effect — not to mention a significant transition in mood from song to song. You can do all the indie-rock family-tree tracing and linking you want, but the main thing to focus on here is Garner's graceful lyricism and Brown & Company's powerful instrumental bliss. On some songs, you'll recognize Garner's affinity for country ballads mixed with straight-up rock 'n' roll; on others, she is a slow-jazz songstress. On "Damp Spirit," Garner's indecipherable chant-like vocals are looped with simple drums, guitar chords and percussion. Garner and the gang also do an impressive to-the-point rendition of John Lennon's "It's So Hard."

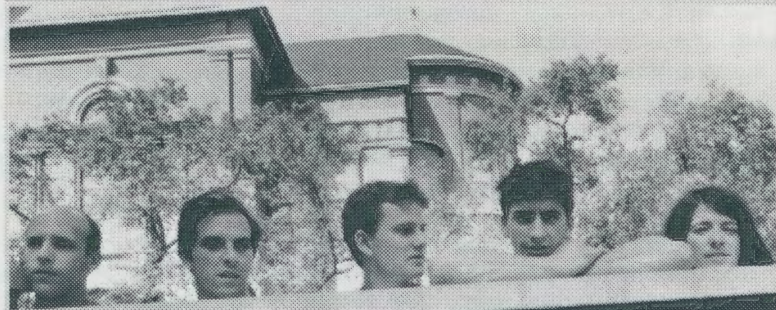


KITTIE

Who It Is: It's amazingly inspirational to hear that the members of this Ontario quartet are all between the ages of 15 and 18. Since Kittie makes some of the hardest, thrashingest metal I've ever heard, I probably don't have to tell you that their youth serves their energy factor well. Pictured from top left are bassist Tanya Candler, drummer Mercedes Lander, singer Morgan Lander and guitarist Fallon Bowman.

The Music: Kittie's been playing metal for several years, and their 12-song debut, *Spit*, was released on Artemis Records on January 11. "We're intense and a lot of people don't expect it," says Mercedes in their press release. "That's why 'Spit' is my favorite song in the world. People expect us to suck, then we get on stage and blow them away. One minute they're just standing there, then their mouths drop open and their dicks feel small."

The Dope Shit: During live performances, Tanya tears apart blow-up dolls by biting the crotch out of it and spitting it into the audience. The point? She says the destruction of the female doll represents the destruction of what men think of women. Kittie's not only comfortable with their sexuality — they define it — and they're still in high school to boot.



JULIE DOIRON & THE WOODEN STARS

Starring: Julie Doiron is the former bassist of the Nova Scotia band Eric's Trip. When she parted with the Trip in 1996, she started doing her own stuff on her own label (Sappy) under the moniker Broken Girl. Since then, she's recorded a couple dope records (using her real name), including her latest eponymous number with a dope collective called The Wooden Stars.

Featuring: a perfect combination of gentle guitar, drums, bass and sadly sweet vocals. Ms. Doiron's got a real talent for telling little stories — and all the details — about what's going on in her life. For instance, on the song "The Longest Winter," she sings, "Not even prank calls are helping to pass the time." On "Dance Music," she sings, "Please turn off your dance music; please go to bed now; I won't get up too early tomorrow. I won't stay up too late tonight. Cuz I'm tired." And on "Au contraire," she sings en français, so I'm really sorry, but my high school and college education didn't do a good job of teaching me French.

TRACY CHAPMAN

We fell in love with Tracy Chapman for her simple, sobering folkish songs in 1988 when she released her debut self-titled album featuring the big hit "Fast Car." At a time when Reagan ruled and Poisonous rock and shallow pop topped the charts, Chapman's songs not only served as a breath of fresh air but also a wake-up call. The Cleveland native sang about tough times, survival and poverty. Finally, by the end of the '80s, someone was using honesty and personal experience to write songs about what really mattered.

A year later, she released *Crossroads*, which, because of its predecessor's popularity — and because people expected a "Fast Car Part II" and didn't get it — received mixed reviews. She then took three years off before recording 1992's *Matters of the Heart* and then 1995's *New Beginning*, which boasted uplifting messages and an element of rock.

Chapman has been defined by her highly successful debut, and it's been difficult for many listeners to appreciate her diversions in style. Her latest album, *Telling Stories*, is worthy of praise and contains elements from both her earlier work as well as a new style of song writing. She reintroduces herself as the artist with some of the richest, mellowist vocals around, and reminds us that her talent is being able to mix her signature folk with other characteristics — in this case, country. The 11-song album holds true to its title, telling poetic stories about strength, pain and love. One of the album's stand-outs is "Paper and Ink," in which Chapman sings "Money's only paper only ink/We'll destroy ourselves if we can't agree." Guest vocals by Emmylou Harris along with sounds of mandolin, melody harp and pedal steel provide an attractive country quality throughout the majority of the songs.

internal/external

FEATURING...

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL FEATURING...

What it is: An experiment.

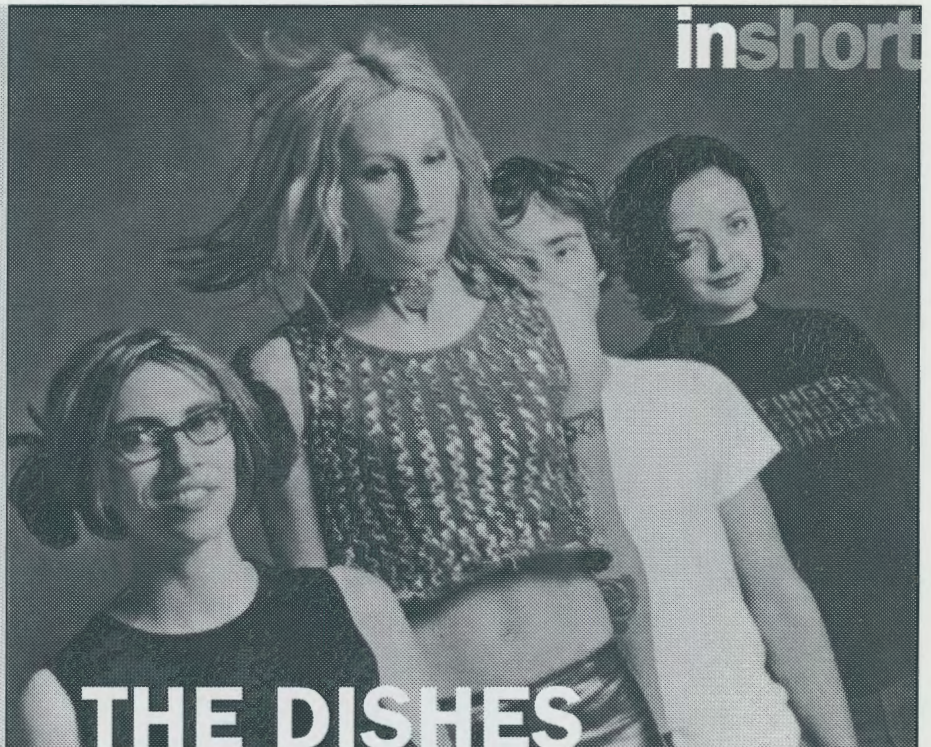
What? Paul Schuster, who plays keyboards in the Olympia, Washington, punk band Some Velvet Sidewalk and who has mixed and/or produced Julie Ruin/Kathleen Hanna and The Spells, decided he wanted to try out electronic music. In 1997 he began recording a project called Internal/External. A year later he asked co-Olympians to do what they wanted with the songs he'd written -- and basically just go with the flow.

How'd the flow go? Awesome.

Why? Because he asked all the right people, including Lois Maffeo, Sleater-Kinney's Carrie Brownstein, The Need's Rachel Carns, Ms. Hanna, Tae Won Yu of The KG, Sue P. Fox, Slim Moon, IQU's DJ K.O., Unwound's Justin Trosper and K Records founder Calvin Johnson. Of course, everyone did their own takes on the originals, but the overall sound is more new wave-ish, pop-rockin and spoken-word art than it is electronic-ish.

Standouts: "Hope," an R&B-ish pop song with nice synths and beautiful vocals by Lois Maffeo; "The Skin," a super-cool, spacey head-nodder in which Brownstein plays guitar and Some Velvet Sidewalk's Al Larsen talks; "I Knew Them," Slim Moon's trance-y hip-hop word art with theremin by K.O.; and oh, geez, lots more, but look: No more room to write!

inshort



THE DISHES

Introducing: The Dishes have earned quite a reputation as one of the loudest, fastest, most entertaining bands in Chicago. The all-woman quartet make short, ruggedly tight three-chord punkish rock songs about, well, whatever they want. In the case of their upcoming debut eponymous late-March release, they sing about being "Punch Drunk," "French Kissing" and "Burnin' Up," among other rawkin numbers, successfully packing 13 songs in less than half an hour. With their no-fuss-about-'em-energy-charged combo of guitar, drums, bass and Sarah Staskauskas' uh-huh-yeah lead vocals, the Dishes aren't a far cry from the Ramones, the Donnas or Ramones.

Who it is: Guitarist Kiki Yablon, vocalist Sarah Staskauskas, drummer Graeme Gibson and bassist Sharon Maloy.

The Scoop (a short interview with Kiki Yablon): *If there's something people should know about The Dishes (that they wouldn't otherwise unless we told them) what would it be?* "Sharon says I should make sure you know we're all virgins. But seriously, pretty much nobody knows anything about us at this point unless you tell them. Also, it bothers me a little how we almost always get compared to other female or female-led bands. (Really the whole comparison game is sort of a critical crutch anyway, but that's another issue.) One guy recently said we sounded 'like a more together Raincoats, or maybe the Muffs.' Listen to, say, Odyshape, and try to figure that one out. It's not that I care if people discuss our gender; I don't pretend it has nothing to do with the appeal. I mean, if there's a band of attractive women rocking out on one side of the room and a band of white guys in baseball hats on the other, who am I going to look at first? Maybe it's just that most people listen to vocals above all else, and our vocals are female. But it'd be nice if they dug deeper."

Who It Is: Sally Bunny Timms not only co-fronts the legendary punk band Mekons, she's also the only British person I can think of who can sing the country blues. Her previous solo recording was a five-song-only EP called *Cowboy Sally*, and it left quite a few Timms followers saying, "That was so dope, I'm pumped to hear more." After waiting two years since the *Bloodshot* release, she gives us the real deal: a full-length on the same label, creatively -- and not jokingly -- titled *Cowboy Sally's Twilight Laments*

for *Lost Buckaroos*.

The Dope Shit: This woman's got taste, all right. Her beautiful vocals give new name to the concept of the cover on the Velvet Underground's "Lonesome Cowboy Bill" and Modest Mouse's "Cowboy Dan." Standouts include the Johnny Cash's "Cry, Cry, Cry" and Guy Lawrence's "Dreaming Cowboy."

And Get This: When she's not touring, she works part time as a publicist for Chicago publicity company Biz 3.



SALLY TIMMS



**MARY LOU LORD
& SEAN NA NA**

Who: You probably know all about Mary Lou Lord, but I'll tell you more about her just for fun. She's an excellent songwriter with an edge for her kinda pop, country and punk. She's a major player in the Seattle/Olympia, Washington, rock community. Oh yeah, and she used to go out with Kurt Cobain.

It would be pretty cool if Sean Na Na's real name was really Na Na, but it's actually Tillmann. He used to be in a punk band called Calvin Krime.

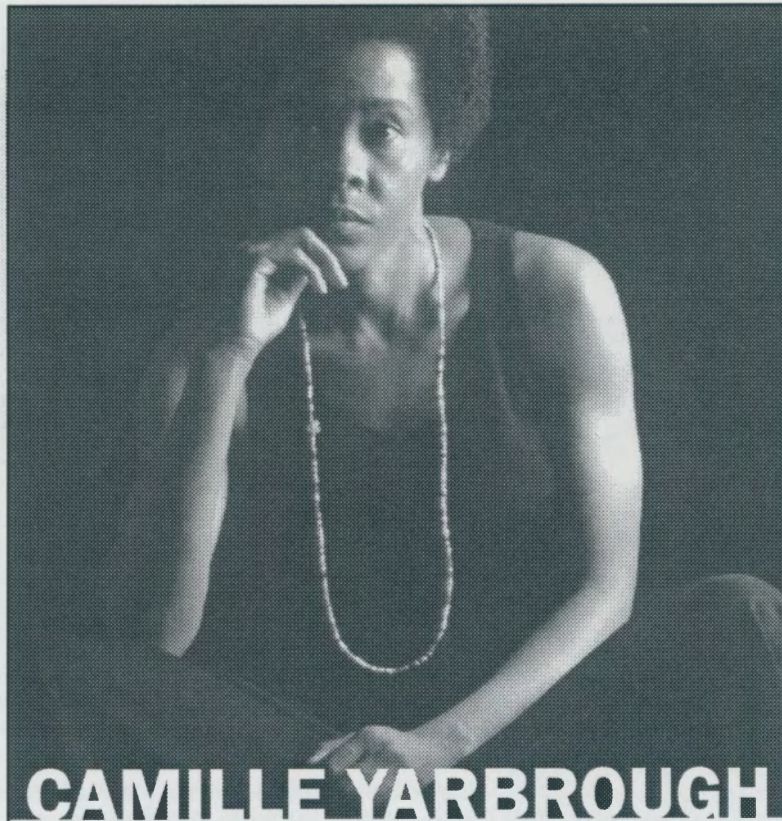
What: The two have recorded a split EP -- three songs each. Ms. Lord revamps songs by Janis Martin, Lucinda Williams and Bevis Frond. The CD opens with "Bang Bang," a swing song recorded in a barn and backed by a band called the Raging Teens. "Hard Road" is a slower, country-ish song flavored with mandolin. "Aim Low" is a pop song aided nicely with backing vocals by Buffalo Tom's Bill Janovitz.

Mr. Na Na's first song is called "Princess and the Pony," a nice acoustic guitar ballad in which he sings about convincing his friends to transform his funeral into a party complete with whiskey and rockin' out to Wire.

When: The split was released February 1, 2000.

Where: Lord will tour on the Right and Left coasts in February and March. Na Na will tour the left, right and just about all over the U.S. in March.

Why: Because it's good stuff. Too bad this is just an EP. The good part is that the two will continue to record collaborative efforts in the future.



CAMILLE YARBROUGH

Who it is: Sankofa Camille Yarbrough has done everything possible in the world of art and progressive thinking. She's distinguished herself in multiple careers as a community activist, writer, teacher, actress, composer, singer, dancer, radio talk show host and lecturer.

What it is: Yarbrough's first record release, *The Iron Pot Cooker*, is being re-released in late February 2000 on the same label that released the album in 1975, Vanguard. The record was produced at the end of the height of the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, and although it received critical acclaim back in the day, it received little or no airplay outside of lefty radio stations.

The Iron Pot Cooker opens with "But It Comes Out Mad," a six-minute song that starts off as a straight-up spoken word soul-and-blues-tinged rap story to a backdrop of guitar pluckings and bass. It then transforms into a full-fledged blues poem.

Yarbrough discusses many important topics on *The Iron Pot Cooker*, including her experiences growing up on Chicago's South Side, black empowerment and the woman's experience within this fight for empowerment.

Interesting stuff: Hip-hop music journalist Kevin Powell wrote the CD's liner notes, saying that Yarbrough is one of the founders of hip-hop and a major influence of Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu and Me'shell Ndegeocello. "I was keenly aware of the influence of musical wordsmiths like The Last Poets, Gil-Scott Heron and Melvin Van Peebles on what is popularly called rap music. Because hip-hop has traditionally been a very male-centered art form, I naively assumed that its forebears, too, had been male." He goes on to explain that *The Iron Pot Cooker* speaks volumes about the continued ignorance and oppression of women artists in American culture.

More interesting stuff: You know Fatboy Slim, right? You know his song "Praise You"? Well, it was originally written by Yarbrough. The original version along with two of Fatboy Slim's remixed versions are included on *The Iron Pot Cooker*.

And then some: Yarbrough is a former member of the Katherine Dunham Dance Company and taught the Dunham technique at Southern Illinois University. (See page 15 for more information on Dunham.)

**BIG NEWS IN
CHITOWN:
LOUNGE AX
CLOSES**

Probably the biggest yet saddest event of 2000 for Chicago independent rock fans took place right at the beginning of the new year. On January 15, the Lounge Ax closed its doors, leaving behind a 12-year history as the city's best venue to see indie luminaries.

Owned by Sue Miller and Julia Adams, Lounge Ax was the only female-operated club in Chitown. The two had been fighting to keep Lounge Ax open since 1996 when a series of noise violations had been filed against them by an apparent "yuppie neighbor" who moved in behind the club. The neighborhood had become quite gentrified since its beginnings a dozen years earlier, and the Lounge Ax would continually receive a vibe to get the heck out.

Lounge Ax lovers banded to help raise thousands of dollars to help fund their legal defense.

Although the fight was lost, Miller and Adams are now seeking a new home for the venue.

During the final two weeks of Lounge Ax's existence, the club hosted quite a lineup of bands, including Seam, Red Red Meat, Tortoise, Wilco, The Dishes, Eleventh Dream Day and Shellac, all of which said their farewells and paid homage to the club.

ANTI-TAMPON CONFERENCE

Huh? The Anti-Tampon Conference is also known as the Mid-Atlantic Feminist Conference or the Let Blood Flow Fest.

Tell me More: The feminist conference focuses on activism, radical change and women's empowerment in hope of fueling more power to the anti-tampon campaign.

Speakers, workshop hosters, presentation givers:

- *Cunt* author Inga Muscio
- The Blood Sisters (menstrual activists, creators of Urban Armour and the zine *Red Zone*)
- Lynn Lough, owner of goddess shop, On My Wings, and creator of "Goddess Girls: An Alternative to Scouting"
- Queens of Periodia

Workshop topics: Herbal solutions for PMS, art action, pelvic self-exams, reproductive choices and rights, animal rights and feminism, direct action, women and globalization, and much more.

What else? Brainstorming sessions, preparing for the direct-action event at a tampon plant that will take place in late April, yoga and viewing of the film *Born in Flames*, a video about women becoming revolutionaries.

So where is it? Harrisonburg, Virginia, which is two hours Southwest of Washington, D.C.; April 1 and 2; housing and vegan meals provided; \$10 registration fee.

If you would like more information about the conference, please send e-mail to jmuequal@yahoo.com.

ON THE LOOKOUT

UPCOMING RELEASES

February 15

- BOSS HOG *White Out* (In The Red)
- CADALLACA *Out West* (Kill Rock Stars)

February 22

- YO LA TENGO *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out* (Matador)
- SEELY *Winter Birds* (Koch)
- DA BRAT *Unrestricted* (So So Def)
- VUE *Vue* (Sub Pop)

March 7

- MARY TIMONY *Mountains* (Matador)
- SPINANES *Imp Years* EP (Merge)
- BELLE AND SEBASTIAN *Lazy Line Painter Jane* Box Set (Matador)

March 21

- CAT POWER *The Covers Record* (Matador)

March 24

- SARGE *Distant* (Mud/Parasol) Rarities, demos, b-sides and unreleased tracks from recently split-up group

April

- PIZZICATO FIVE *Pizzicato Five* (Matador)
- Broadcast

May

- SLEATER-KINNEY *All Hands On The Bad One* (Kill Rock Stars)

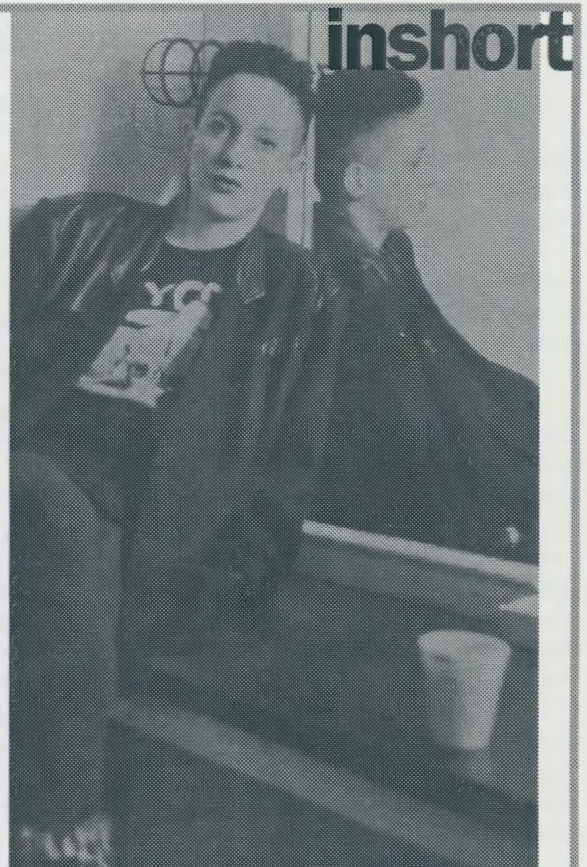
Kathy Acker was born in 1944 and died in 1997 of breast cancer. She spent the majority of her 53 years impacting all those who came into contact with her -- mainly through her writing and speaking.

Acker is most known as a novelist and performance artist in the East Village punk scene of the 1970s and early '80s. She wrote 10 novels, dozens of stories and essays, an opera libretto and a screenplay.

She started her career as a writer by publishing her own books and peddling them at book shops and also once worked as a stripper to support herself.

Kill Rock Stars Records recently released a collection of Acker's spoken-word poems, which were recorded over a period of 10 years. The title of the album is *Redoing Childhood*.

I'm not going to mislead you and say, "Oh, this will make you feel sooo good," because it won't. *Redoing Childhood*, will, however, inspire you to rethink your own childhood and how it has affected your adulthood. The spoken-word collection is a very important piece of



work for understanding lesbian identity along with sexism, inner-city life, sexual orientation, politics and many other challenging subjects. Acker speaks so directly, so vividly and with so much detail, that you almost feel as though she's in the same room with you.

Like her other work, she describes in detail her experiences with violence. The tone is sometimes sad, sometimes revolutionary and always honest.

Acker's stories are about childhood experiences, such as her first experience dancing with a boy, being part of a kids' street gang and understanding the differences between the sexes and how gender is constructed.

The *New York Times* quotes Acker in her obituary as saying, "William Burroughs was my model. For me, he was the first writer, the only one who was working politically in the field of language as power. He was questioning language. Everybody else was just thinking about it."

Acker's other novels include *Great Expectations*, *Don Quixote*, *Literal Madness* and *My Mother Demonology*.

Her opera libretto, *Birth of a Poet*, was performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1985.

She also recorded a record with The Mekons called *Pussy, Queen of the Pirates*.

One Question Gets Six Answers



We asked Edith Frost, Kahimi Karie, Manda Rin, Kate Schellenbach, Moe Tucker and Slim Moon to tell us what 10 songs they'd put on the A-side of their own mixed tape. In other words, the question is: What are your 10 favorite songs of all time?

EDITH FROST



MOE TUCKER



MANDA RIN



KAHIMI KARIE solo artist

1. "Pink Moon" by Nick Drake
2. *Best of Leonard Cohen*
3. "Melody Nelson" by Serge Gainsbourg
4. "The Camera Loves Me" by Would-Be-Goods
5. "Beat Samba" by Astrud Gilberto
6. "White Light, White Heat" by Velvet Underground
7. "Melody" by Bee Gees
8. "Claudine Longet" by Claudine Longet
9. Upsetters: First Five Albums
10. "Pop Model" by Lio

KATE SCHELLENBACH drummer, Luscious Jackson

1. "You Got the Lov" by Rufus and Chaka Kahn
2. "Golden Lady" by Stevie Wonder
3. "What Goes on" by Velvet Underground
4. "Side of the Road" by Lucinda Williams
5. "Everybody's Happy Nowadays" by the Buzzcocks
6. "Ping Pong Affair" by the Slits
7. "Stand" by Sly and the Family Stone
8. "8th Wonder" by Sugar Hill Gang
9. "Pretty Baby" by Blondie
10. "Cannonball" by the Breeders

EDITH FROST solo artist

"I cannot possibly name my favorite songs of all time because there are just too many. But here is at least one version of what that list might be. I could make a different list with more modern stuff; I guess this is the old-timey country version."

1. "Making Believe" by Jimmy Work
2. "You Belong To Me" by Pee Wee King
3. "Hello Stranger" by Carter Family
4. "Old Pal of Yesterday" by Girls of the Golden West
5. "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know (About Him)" Davis Sisters
6. "Treasures Untold" by Jimmie Rodgers
7. "Girl Left Alone" by Dolly Parton
8. "Day Into Night" by Kitty Wells
9. "Lovesick Blues" by Hank Williams
10. "Seasons of My Heart" by George Jones

MANDA RIN Bis vocalist

1. "Stutter" by Elastica
2. "Dig Me Out" by Sleater-Kinney
3. "Reject All American" by Bikini Kill
4. "Better Left Forgotten" by Steps
5. "Lost on Abbey Road" by Compulsion
6. "Little Babies" by Sleater-Kinney
7. "Song 2" by Blur
8. "Hey You What's That Sound?" by Les Rhythm Digitales
9. "Juvenile Scene Detective" by Compulsion
10. "Good Times" by Brassy

MOE TUCKER former drummer, The Velvet Underground; current drummer, Magnet

1. "Louie, Louie" by The Kingsmen
2. "Amazing Grace" by any gospel singer!
3. "Sister Ray" by The Velvet Underground
4. "Poor Little Fool" by Ricky Nelson
5. "Da Doo Ron Ron" by Crystals
6. "Bolero" by any orchestra EXCEPT Andre Kstolanitz
7. "To Know Him is To Love Him" by The Teddy Bears
8. "Bo Diddley" by Bo Diddley
9. "A Ki Wa Wa" by Olatunji
10. "River Deep, Mountain High" by Ike and Tina Turner

SLIM MOON wordcore artist; founder, Kill Rock Stars Records

"Wow, this is hard. This is not scientific -- just off the top of my head."

1. "(I'm Not There) I'm Gone" by Bob Dylan
2. "Positively 4th Street" by Bob Dylan
3. "Failure" by Swans
4. "Free Man In Paris" by Joanie Mitchell
5. "Blonde In The Bleachers" by Joanie Mitchell
6. "Jeffrey I Hear You" by The Girls
7. "No Fun" by Stooges
8. "I Want You To Hurt Like I Do" by Randy Newman
9. "Anarchy In The UK" by Sex Pistols
10. "White Riot" by The Clash

THE FIRST ANNUAL, FIRST-EVER VENUS WRITING CONTEST

You are cordially invited to enter Venus' first writing contest.

With a few exceptions, your entry can be just about anything or fit into just about any category. It can be a short story, a column, an investigative or journalistic piece, an interview, fiction, nonfiction -- just about anything. If you've got mad style, it could even be some kind of ode to Sleater Kinney, a diary entry, a travel log, or even a political theory essay you wrote for school. If you've got any kind of visual art or photos that accompany your piece, that's cool with us.

Three exceptions, one rule: No music reviews, no poetry, no haikus. You must be female.

The winners' work will be published in the May 2000 issue of Venus. Please send all entries on paper or via e-mail -- no disks, si vous plait. Merci beaucoup.

The deadline for contest entries is April 15, 2000.

Writings must be fewer than 2,500 words.

FIRST PRIZE: \$50, a lifetime subscription to Venus, and a CD of your choice.

SECOND PRIZE: \$30, a lifetime subscription to Venus and a CD.

THIRD PRIZE: \$20, a lifetime subscription to Venus and a CD.

This is just one in a slew of upcoming Venus contests.

Expect in the future to see contests for photos, bands, visual art, cartoons, zines, web sites and more. If you have any questions whatsoever about the contest, please send e-mail to Venusmag@aol.com.

Send all entries to:
Venusmag@aol.com

Or by postage mail:
420 Vallejo Street
Vallejo, CA 94590

Taking care of fun-guy business

LYNDA TWARDOWSKI CONSTRUCTS AN EASY 3-STEP DUMPING PROGRAM

So I met this guy.

Nice guy. Smart guy. Fun guy.

Love, or at least a mutual like, blossomed between us almost immediately -- or at least, as long as it takes to down four gin and tonics, two beers and the occasional cigarette. No matter. The point is, I liked him. I digress.

A lengthy bar-stool conversation turned to an exchange of business cards, e-mail addresses, longing looks out the door, and one week later, the first of many workday brighteners announced with those three most romantic words: "You've got mail."

Next came the date.

In one weekend of non-stop togetherness, he proved himself attentive, kind, attractive and interesting. Plus he drove a motorcycle. You understand.

Obviously, I was in some serious like. The e-mails continued, the phone calls flourished, the visits escalated, and then it all went wrong ... horribly, horribly, horribly wrong.

Yep. You got it. After a mere three weeks of dates and correspondence, my nice, smart, fun guy evolved into that creature every woman fears and every woman, if she's had at least one date in her lifetime, has known all too intimately: The nice, smart ... fungi.

That's right. On me like stink on shit. Couldn't get enough. Always calling, calling, calling, e-mailing, e-mailing, e-mailing. Let's hang out. Let's do this. Let's do that. Initially, I thought this was cute; enchanting even. But then I remembered, oh yes, I had a life before I met this clown; perhaps I should see how that life is progressing. I tuned back in, and lo and behold, it was progressing -- but without me. All this after only a month? You bet. Quickly, I put on my brakes and called in the ranks.

"Ranks," I said. "Ranks, we are being invaded by an outside force. He's a bit strong and overpowering, but we've got to get him to back off a bit."

"Ranks," I said. "Ranks, what do we do?"

Since it was really just me there, talking to myself, the answer came back quite quickly, not to mention, unmuffled.

"Lynda," they ... er, I said, "Lynda. Just tell him. Tell him you need some space."

And so I did. But since we already live a few cities apart and saw each other just those few weekends, fungi didn't quite understand. He

continued to invade. And invade. And invade some more. "You've got mail" didn't seem so romantic anymore. Neither did my phone's constant ringing.

And so I called in the ranks a second time. But before I even opened my mouth, I got my answer, quickly, and of course, unmuffled: "Dump him," said the ranks.

So I did.

Which brings me to the most problematic part of dating: dumping. Especially dumping a species of the fungi family. They're a fragile lot, those fungi. Sensitive to the elements, poisonous unless you know how to handle them -- they're not easy. So with that in mind, I constructed a tidy and gentle solution. I call it the three-step dumping

**THEY'RE A FRAGILE
LOT, THOSE FUNGI.
SENSITIVE TO THE
ELEMENTS,
POISONOUS UNLESS
YOU KNOW HOW TO
HANDLE THEM.**

program.

Step One: Evasion. Never return calls when you say you will. Return them, yes. But three days late. Complain of being busy often. Then drop off the face of the earth for four days.

Step Two: Avoidance. Send some form of non-interactive correspondence that shows, while you still care and have warm and fuzzy thoughts, you are still busy. Then drop off the face of the earth for seven days.

Step Three: Astonishment. This is very key. Using the same sort of non-interactive communication, perhaps e-mail or a card, drop a small, confused-sounding note that goes something like this: "Dear Fungi, how've you been? It's been a while since we've connected. Guess we fizzled, huh? At any rate, I'd still like to be friends. I'll call when things slow down."

Never call. Wallah! You're off the hook.

Believe it, sisters, this method is tried and true and comes recommended by me and now, several of my friends.

With the turnover it allows, you too could be back on the dating scene within a week. I know I was. I met this great guy ... nice guy, smart guy, fun guy.

But not a fungi. Nope. Doesn't stick too close to me at all. Just last week I talked to him. Four days later, he called to say hello, sorry he's been so busy. Then I didn't hear from him for a week. But I did get an e-mail. It said he's still busy but he's thinking warm and fuzzy thoughts.

Now, if you'll excuse me.

I've got mail.

RANDOM

How to live cheap in New York (Or at least cheaper, yo)

BY APRIL FRESH

This is not an easy task, especially if you are like me and are one of the dreaded two: Artist or Musician. But there *is* a way to cut down on your expenses — just refer to my simple outline, which I have broken down into three categories:

HOUSING

In Two words, Brooklyn and the Bronx: Trying to find a place in Manhattan is next to impossible, nevermind trying to find a place that is a decent price. The next-best thing to do is look for a place in either Brooklyn or the Bronx (yes, there are nice neighbourhoods there). They aren't more than a few stops into the city, and you'll knock a good couple hundred bucks off your rent (as compared to Manhattan).

College Boards: Check out the local college housing boards, which usually list "roommates wanted" and are, on average, a lot cheaper. The New School University (www.newschool.edu) and NYU (www.nyu.edu) have good ones.

FOOD

99 Cents Stores: Be careful with these because although most of the time you are getting a good deal, sometimes they will charge you more for something you could get cheaper in a regular grocery store. These discount stores are good for canned foods and Ramen Noodles and things that haven't sold well in other stores. Locations everywhere.

San Loco: This taco joint might not seem like they are so cheap, but their weekly specials are the CHEAPEST! Nachos for 50 cents, tacos are two for \$1, and the nice bright-yellow interior put both a smile on your face and a little sunshine into your life. Locations all across Manhattan.

Gray's Papaya: This was suggested to me from a friend who is a veteran of the NYC Live Cheap

Program. He told me that you can get a hot dog for 50 cents, which is twice as cheap as the street vendor price of \$1. This is located at 6th Avenue at 8th Street.

Dojo: This is a good place for vegetarians and friends. Prices range from \$3 to about \$7 for salads, sandwiches and Asian dishes. Make sure you get a side of their killer carrot-tahini sauce, a trademark of their's. Locations: St. Marks Place between 3rd/2nd avenues and W. 4th Street at Broadway.

ENTERTAINMENT

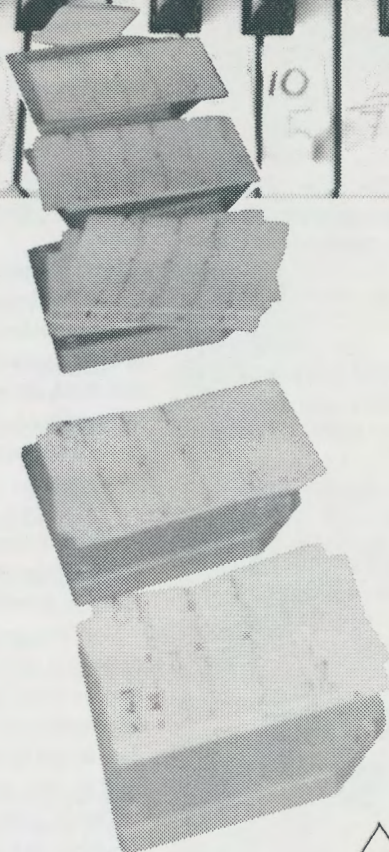
New York Public Library: A library card is free and gives you access to all the libraries in the NYC boroughs, including the gorgeous old reference library on 5th Avenue. You can check out movies, CDs and records, check out the latest magazines, attend cool discussion groups and seminars — oh yeah, and books.

Movies: Worldwide Theatre has all the latest movies, but a couple of months behind the release dates, for like \$3 or \$5. And Bryant Park shows classics all summer on Monday nights for free. *Worldwide Theater: 50th Street between 8th/9th Avenues. Bryant Park: 6th Avenue at 34th Street.*

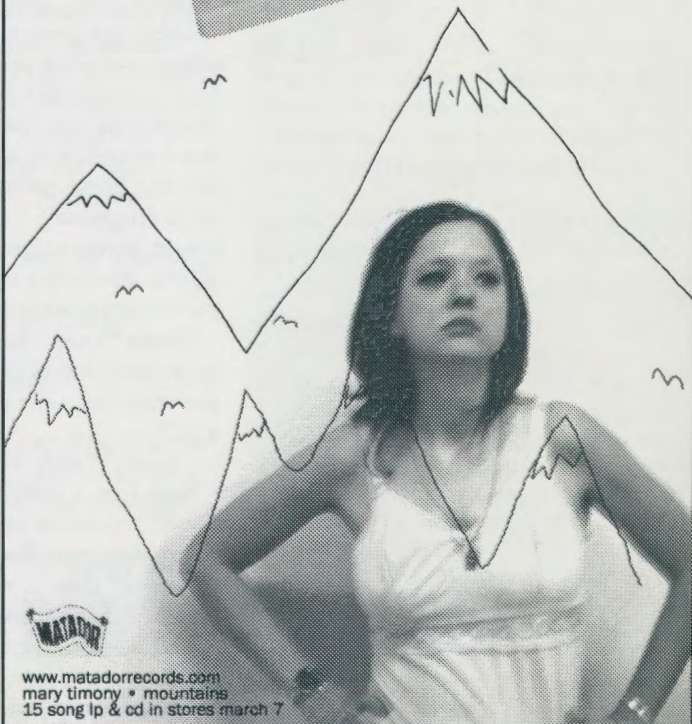
Free live venues: There are lots of bars in Manhattan that are free to get into and occasionally have a great band playing. Luna Lounge at Ludlow & Stanton Streets, The Living Room and Arlene Grocery are both at Stanton & Allen (Living Room has a one-drink-minimum policy), and Lakeside Lounge is on Avenue B at 11th Street.

Gallery Openings: There are tonnes of these every weekend; just check *The Village Voice* (www.villagevoice.com). Free art, and if you're really lucky, free food and drink.

mary timony

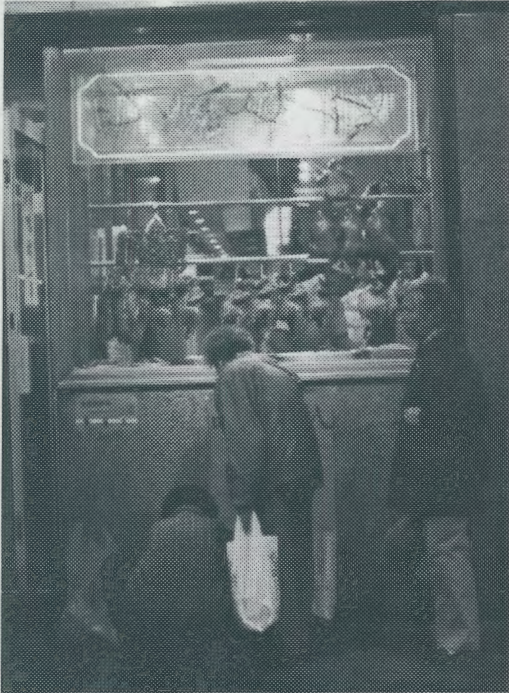


mountains



www.matadorrecords.com
mary timony • mountains
15 song lp & cd in stores march 7

RANDOM



Photos by Amy Schroeder

TOP LEFT: Three women shopping in Chinatown outside a duck seller. **TOP RIGHT:** Me inside a sandwich shop with a view of a family in Manhattan and a guy on the phone. **THE OTHER ONE:** A lingerie merchant table in Chinatown.

MAKING NOISE

NEW ZEALANDER
KIM PIETERS USES
IMPROVISED FREE FORM AS
A FORM OF SEXISM-FREE
LANGUAGE FOR WOMEN

BY PETE NOLAN

Kim Pieters has carved a significant mark as an active player in the New Zealand noise scene. She's cold-kicked it with quite a few winning ensembles, from dinghy surrealist drone-scrappers Dadamah, to the proto-feminist, long-bang-and-clang-alien-landscape clatter of Doramaar, to continuing collaborations with Stapleton and Bruce Russell (of the prototypical New Zealand noise band Dead C), to haunting the chapel with her latest spooky cave-drone band, Sleep, which just released its first CD, *Enfolded in Luxury* on the Metonymic label. Even though it took quite a run-on sentence to list her resume, that was just the edited version.

Although Pieters has played with a number of groups, a similar unifying sound connects each of them: rudimentary sketches and untamed scree of guitars buoyed by primitive and way-loose poundings of the drums, thickly intoned bass notes and occasional ghostly or alien-like vocals. Like yogis levitating and moving heavy rocks with the greatest of ease, an aboriginal telekinetic vibe permeates the sound of Pieters' work.

Over the last decade, Pieter's noise ensembles have consistently created an interesting din with the primitive tools they employ. I recently air-mailed Pieters to talk about her work with the now-defunct all-female group Dorramaar. We also discussed her feelings about playing free-form music and the possibilities of escaping the patriarchal power structures inherent in Western musical tradition. She talks about the constrictive roles allowed women in contemporary pop music (read: Britney Spears), achieving an autonomous and healthy form of musical dialogue. One of Pieters' most important achievements is the invention of a new language for women somewhere inside this realm of

free sound and surrealism. Real academic term paper-type stuff. Here's what she had to say:

What are the links between patriarchal societal structure and structured (non free-form) music? My reading of the patriarchy and structured music revolves around speech. Both are languages that already have an invested position. This is an investment that doesn't necessarily include me (since I'm a woman) in any civil dialogue — that places me and my actual experience outside of its concern. If I move there, its idea of me — not my idea of me — is its main reflection. I move in its margins, its gaps only.

Dadamah was a mix of structured songs and improvisation — sort of like the Velvet Underground. Do you play structured music at all any more? No I don't.

Why is improvised music a good forum for the development of a new language for women? Improvised music is open; it allows a rearrangement of meaning — at least that is how I view it. It allows the opportunity for new speech and therefore the possibility of a language that engages me in a civil dialogue. That places me autonomously.

Do you feel that you have started to achieve this goal? I achieve a reasonable degree of autonomy in my personal exchanges (not without troubled mind!) I am very interested in these ideas, these possibilities, but I am not an island. I live in the real world, and the real world still has much difficulty in getting past the woman thing in both public and private spaces.

Do you hope that this new language will catch on in a mainstream sense, or does the nature of the music force you to always be working from the outside?

I take mainstream as being a majority audience, and I am uncomfortable with that idea. I don't believe the audience is so homogenous. I think that this is a manufactured thing. Possibly the Internet might impact on what musics are finally generally available to people and change our listening experiences. Improvised music is often quite difficult. I don't imagine it appealing to vast numbers, but it could easily, I think, have a wider audience. It's a matter of information and access.

What happened to Doramaar? Complicated sexual politics split Doramaar. Ah, the dangers of collaboration.

What new projects are you working on? Musically, I am involved with a few

improvisational ensembles. Sleep has been playing the last two-and-a-half years, and we just released the debut CD, *Enfolded in Luxury*. I also play occasionally with Flies Inside the Sun when Brian Crook comes up the hill, and, of course, Pieters/Russel/Stapleton play every now and again. The CDs *Cactus Sky* by F.I.T.S & Sex/Machine by P.R.S. have also just recently been released. We live just outside of Dunedin on a hill looking down a small valley to the huge, wide sea. The music studio is here, and people come over and play. We always record the sessions and then we have a cup of tea. I am also, and perhaps mostly, a painter (improvised abstraction, of course!) I'm currently working on a series that revolves around the loss of archive. The graphics for the Metonymic/Medication labels are also my responsibility, and it's a great outlet for my interest in photography. I'm also thinking about another series of films — possibly in collaboration with the Sleep music.

Doramaar was primarily instrumental. Have you ever considered adding vocals to your music? I am a vocalist, and a lot of the music I've released features my vocals — often quite vaguely but not always. I love using the voice and especially enjoy the more surreal/abstract lyrics if I am using words at all.

What does Doramaar mean? Doramaar is named after Dora Maar, a Spanish surrealist photographer of the 1930s and '40s.

What music do you most enjoy? What kinds of music don't you like? I enjoy free-form music the most, but I do have to be in the mood for possibilities. I really dislike music that portrays exploitative sexuality.

How old are you? Where'd you grow up? Did you go to university and if so, what did you study? January 2000 saw me at 41 — YAHOO. I grew up on the south edge of Auckland City in a place called Bombay Hills, which is a volcanic market gardening area in the North island of New Zealand. I've never studied at university, but I did pick up, at some time, an interest in books. Around 25, I started with the Russian and French literary classics, then classical history, philosophy and religion. Then I leapt to Jungian psychology, passed by much of the first wave '70s feminist stuff and became very interested in the feminist/psychological/philosophical theory that became generally available in the '80s and '90s — and I'm still into this stuff. It's disturbing but inspiring at the same time.

Seattle's Jen Wood both draws and departs from the plethora of women singer-songwriters who have become so popular to date. Wood comes at folk music from a different angle — a long-time appreciation for riot grrrl and lo-fi indie bands that torques the quiet strumming of acoustic tradition. What she maintains and perfects is an incisive honesty that cuts through her sonorous vocals and bare-boned lyrics.

Wood doesn't shy away from talking about herself, either. From her Seattle apartment — amid the rollicking of her cat — she speaks candidly about her career.

When she was 15, Jen Wood met a woman named Madigan. The two recorded as Tattle Tale, including a cassette for the Kill Rock Stars label. Tattle Tale's instrumental and spoken-word songs covered topics such as sexism and racism in brazen, brash strokes of confrontation. One of these, called "Heart Failure Due to Demand," dealt with the life of Karen Carpenter.

After some conflict, Tattle Tale called it quits, and Wood moved to Santa Cruz to start her solo career. This was a difficult time for Wood when she was forced to re-evaluate her goals and priorities. "I didn't actually know whether I would continue to play music. It basically boiled down to that I didn't have the confidence to keep on going."

At age 19, Wood hit a crossroads that most people hit much later in life — which is nothing too surprising since Wood is clearly mature beyond her age.

After a year of some searching, Wood recorded a cassette, *No More Wading*, which has since been released by Tree Records. In the do-it-yourself aesthetic of Ani DiFranco, Wood released it on her own label, Radar Light Records. Wood said it was DiFranco who inspired her during this difficult period. "She rocks. She kicks ass. If there was no Ani DiFranco, there would probably be no Jen Wood."

Soon thereafter Wood was contacted by Tom Grimley, who had

Jen Wood



I THINK JOURNALISTS MAY NOT DECIPHER A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE VERY WELL. THEY'VE BEEN SO TAINTED BY WATERED-DOWN, LUKE-WARM SINGER-SONGWriters.

recorded Tattle Tale for W.I.N. Records. "He called me right at the height of me trying to put out this cassette, and I was like, 'Screw this, this music biz is for phonies.'" Fortunately, though, Grimley convinced Wood to stick with it. Wood went to L.A. to record her second album, *Getting Past the Static*, with help from Petra Haden of That Dog and The Rentals.

At 23, Wood is already a seasoned musician. Of course, this is a fact that journalists eat up. "For me it's flattering because I forget, and I honestly feel like I could do so much better. Being young, I do have an advantage because when you're in your mid-twenties, it's the time to take risks. I'm viewed as an artist who is pro-

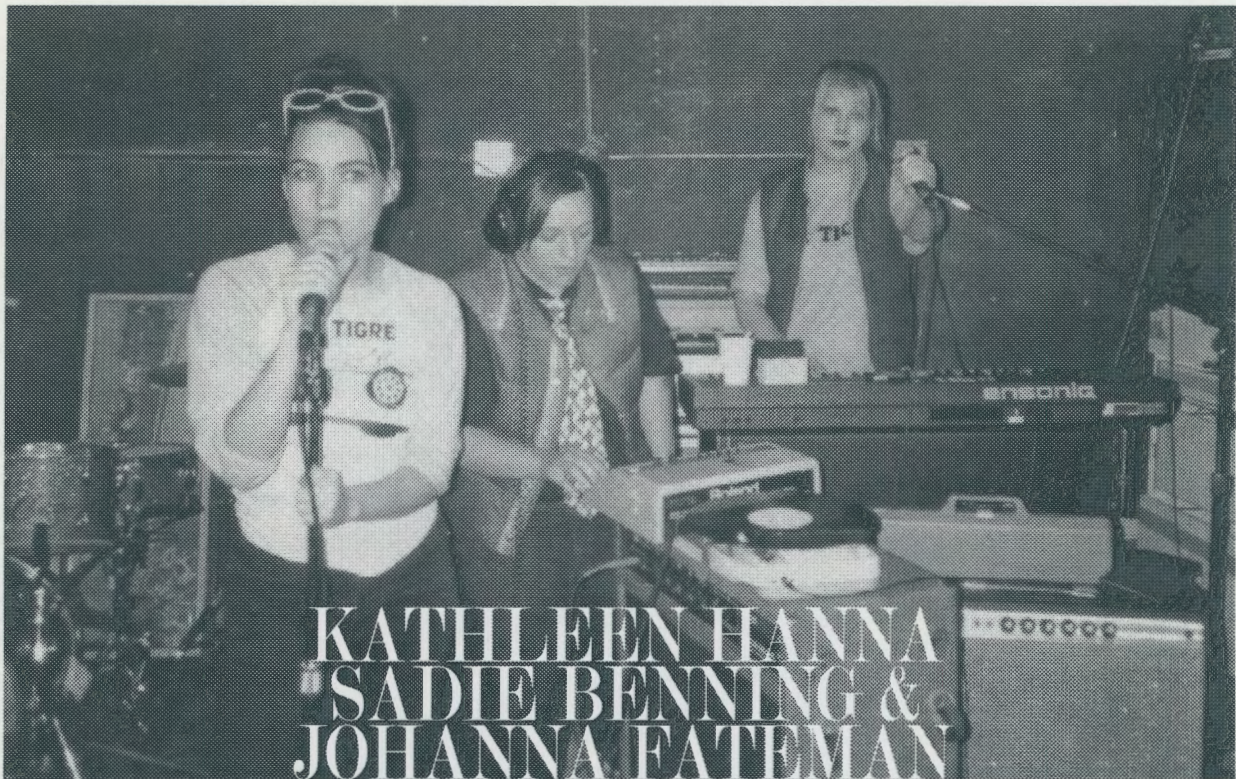
gressing and a guitarist who's going to be growing and getting better." Wood's latest EP is on Tree Records.

Besides music, Wood has other projects on her plate. She is a full-time college student, studying computer graphic design. She works at a cafe. She has recently contributed vocals to The Black Heart Procession and Juno albums. She books local shows for herself and other singer-songwriters. She also has plans to work on her label again — once she makes enough money to put out other artists. She volunteers at women's organizations and plays at Take Back The Night marches. She also plans to start a non-profit community resource center. You might call Jen Wood an over-achiever.

Wood's passion, her incredible drive to succeed is a deeply personal one. When she was 15, Wood was date-raped. At the time, filled with frustration and rage, she took public revenge on her attacker. "I did illegal things. I basically fucked up his car. Twice. I got one of those fat magic markers, and I covered the whole thing with obscenities. He lived at home, so he had to deal with that." Wood then followed up this incredible act with a subtler albeit powerful means of retaliation — her song "Bullet Box" on *No More Wading*. Haunting and coolly deploring, "Bullet Box" is Wood's hate ballad. "It's how you can't run away from the truth. Every man who's a rapist knows the truth. That's your weapon that you can use — your truth, you know, point blank."

Ironically, though, journalists have celebrated what they perceive as an apoliticism in Wood's lyrics. "I think journalists may not decipher a woman's perspective very well. They've been so tainted by watered-down, luke-warm singer-songwriters. They listen to me and they think that's cool because 'we're sick of chicks who always have to preach' but obviously they don't listen to my music well enough."

You can contact Jen Wood by mailing her a letter: P.O. Box 20502 Seattle, WA. 98102.



KATHLEEN HANNA
SADIE BENNING &
JOHANNA FATEMAN

LE TIGRE

Madonna once said something along the lines of: "I've always been really good at getting people's attention, but once I got it, what was I going to say?"

Now don't go getting me wrong: I love Madonna; she's done a world of difference for freedom of expression, especially when it comes to sexuality. But Le Tigre has more to say on their debut self-titled album than Madonna's said in her entire career.

Although the trio has released only one CD so far, Le Tigre already has a signature sound: a combination of punk, unpolished pop rock, garage and old-skoo electronic. The messages that go along with this sound are what make their signature stand out. They're one of only a handful of popular bands who aren't afraid to say, "We're strong, independent and very opinionated woman and, no, we're not afraid to say that we're feminists."

The songs get right to the point, and although they deal sometimes with complicated subjects such as sexism or New York politics, Le Tigre is able to simplify their topics. For instance, on the song "What's Yr Take On Cassavetes?" Le Tigre sings a chorus that's the same as the title because they want to know what the consensus is of the late American

filmmaker John Cassavetes, who's known for a slew of films, including *A Woman Under the Influence*, *Husbands* and *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*. After asking the question "What's Yr Take?" several times, Benning and Fateman reply: "Misogynist?" "Genius?" "Alcoholic?" "Messiah?" The song inspires the listener to find out more about this guy's work, especially since the majority of Le Tigre's listeners are under 30 and Cassavetes produced the majority of his work in the '60s and '70s.

The fact that Le Tigre's songs encourage their listeners to do some work — instead of just accepting them for their rockable, danceable face value — is what makes this band so important. Le Tigre are movers and shakers in both the literal and actionary sense of the tattered phrase.

I've only been able to find a few reviews of Le Tigre's album, and they all praise "Hot Topic," a song that lists almost 60 names. All the names, with the exception of David Wojnarowicz, are women who've made a name for themselves as the movers and shakers of the latter half of the 20th century. The songs starts with Kathleen Hanna singing, "Carol Rama and Eleanor Antin, Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneeman. You're getting old, that's what

they'll say, but don't give a damn. I'm listening anyway." It then transitions into a chorus: "Stop, don't you stop; I can't live if you stop" before continuing the list, which includes Angela Davis, Gertrude Stein, Joan Jett and Aretha Franklin.

Although they might not realize it, the Tigrettes deserve to be on this list as well: each member is an accomplished thinker, artist and punk/riot grrl activist.

Besides being known in her own right, Kathleen Hanna is known as the former leader of Bikini Kill as well as for her experimental solo music project, Julie Ruin.

Sadie Benning is a respected filmmaker. Although she's only 26, she's been making short films about her life and her identity as a lesbian since her early teens. You may have seen *The Judy Spots*, her five short films starring a papier-

on different songs. Kathleen does most of the singing. Sadie and Johanna do the programming (beats and sample-sequencing). Johanna plays keyboards, and Sadie punches in some samples live. Sadie did the turntable stuff on the record. Since we use recording processes and programming to experiment with ideas, sounds, and structures, the way we play the music live doesn't necessarily reflect who made up which part, etc. We all collect samples, make tapes, write down ideas to talk about when we get together. The process is also sort of strange because Sadie lives in Chicago while Kathleen and Johanna are in New York City.

How did you meet each other? We met at some point in the early '90s when there were a lot of incredible things happening in the world of underground and punk feminism. There were a lot of really incredible girl bands forming and

me about both these publications — what they're about, when they were published, etc. Also, do you still publish zines? I did a fanzine with my closest friend from high school for three or four years called *Snarla*. I think we did about six issues. It circulated mainly through girls in the West Coast punk scene. In terms of content, it would probably be grouped into a confessional genre associated with Riot Grrrl Press in the early to mid-'90s, although we tended to deal with stuff in a slightly more aloof and abstract way. When I moved to New York to go to art school, the terms of my work shifted away from the identity-politic issues of a punk scene to more theory-driven projects. I was fascinated by the sexual politics of conceptual art's recent history and the social structure of art school and the gallery system. *The Opposite*, Part I, was my first attempt to deal with disparate

MY MOM TOOK ME TO SEE BELLA ABZUG SPEAK WHEN I WAS, LIKE, 9, AND I STARTED CRYING BECAUSE THERE WERE ALL THESE WOMEN THERE AND IT FELT FANTASTIC. THE THING IS, MY MOM WAS IN NO WAY A LEFTY ACTIVIST TYPE; SHE WAS/IS AN RN WHO LIVES IN THE SUBURBS. KATHLEEN HANNA

mache teenager named Judy that were shown on MTV in 1998. One of her other coolest films is 1998's *Flat Is Beautiful*. The not-quite-an-hour-long film was shot partly in Pixelvision and partly in Super 8. The story traces the life of a latchkey kid, a 12-year-old girl living with her mother and a gay roommate. A 1990 issue of *The Advocate* features an interview with her along with my favorite quote from Benning. About her father, also a filmmaker, she said, "My dad said to me, 'You know, I'm really worried that all your work is just going to be on one subject.' And I was like, 'Yeah, my life.' He makes (experimental) films. What are his films about? They're about his life. It just so happens that his sexuality isn't something that people are going to label or talk about or say, 'He's the heterosexual artist.'"

Johanna Fateman is a well-known fanzine maker and musician.

It doesn't say in the CD cover who plays which instruments. Could you fill me in? We all sing and play guitar

touring, new fanzines starting, intense penpal alliances were forged. Kathleen was touring with Bikini Kill, Sadie was touring with her videos, and Johanna was writing fanzines. Our paths inevitably crossed.

Why did you decide to form Le Tigre? We started working together after Kathleen's Julie Ruin record came out. Since it was made as a recording project, the idea was to rework the songs so that we could play them live and go on tour. Johanna would help with performing the music, and Sadie would make visuals — slides or video projections. But when we started working together, we realized we really wanted to write new material and have a collaborative relationship with more fluid roles. We ended up as Le Tigre (although we plan to play a couple of Julie Ruin songs in our set too).

Johanna, I've heard quite a bit about your zines, *ArtaudMania!* and *My Need to Speak on the Subject of Jackson Pollock*. Unfortunately, I haven't seen either of them. I'm wondering if you could tell

areas of culture, for example, modernist painting and feminist underground punk music with the same language.

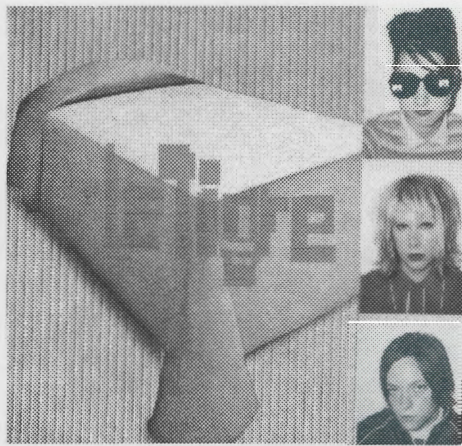
ArtaudMania!!! the Diary of a Fan was along the same lines but a more specific project. I chose a figure (Antonin Artaud) that punks and academics shared an interest in so that a collision of their discourses made sense. *My Need to Speak on the Subject of Jackson Pollock* is actually the transcript, in zine form, of a semi-facetious lecture I gave to accompany two paintings I made. It was my final semester of art school, and in a lot of ways, the lecture was a final "fuck you." It was intended to ridicule the retrogressive values of a couple of the teachers in the painting program I was in and continued valorization of Abstract Expressionist art and ideology among fellow students. I am working on a new fanzine that will hopefully be done before Le Tigre starts touring extensively.

How did your teachers and other students react to your lecture? I was pretty much ignored by anyone who

might represent the opposing ideology — you know, a lot of times art that is meant as a fuck-you is really made so that your friends/allies can vicariously enjoy your articulation of a shared sentiment. Also, I was doing something that was outside the framework of “painting.” So in the context of the program I was in, I’m not sure it even registered on the conservative art radar as something to be considered at all — critically or otherwise. I’m currently working on *The Opposite, Part II*. The first half will be about feminism and electronic music with some interviews with female techno producers and DJs; the second part is fiction.

Sadie, after reading about your films, I am very impressed with your work on identity construction and the experience of growing up lesbian in a homophobic world. What’s it like to be both a filmmaker and a musician? What are the non-obvious differences between film and music — in terms of expression and communicating political/social/personal messages? As an artist, I have been concerned with how sound and picture create meaning. For me, *Le Tigre* is an opportunity to experiment with combining these elements while working with friends and learning about technology. When I make videos, I do everything alone; the editing process is very solitary. With *Le Tigre*, we can work independently, but ultimately we are collaborating; the process is completely different. Technology can be so frustrating and expensive. It’s really amazing to be able to call Jo and ask her how to do something and not have to figure it out alone.

Kathleen, you seem like a bottomless pit of ideas (this is definitely a good thing). What inspires your music? What has inspired you to take risks in your music-making — to try things that other people never would be gutsy enough to do? One of my favorite movies is *Poison* by Todd Haynes. I guess it’s because everything these days looks like a strip mall or an episode of *Matlock*, and this movie is gorgeous. I saw it at a time when everyone around me was criticizing everyone else and making out like art was just a luxury for the rich and powerful. *Poison* was so visually imaginative; it reminded me how important art is and how freeing



it can be if only for an instant. The next Todd Haynes movie I saw was *Safe*. At the time I was really depressed because I couldn’t really write or create about the stuff I was going through because it was too painful, but I couldn’t think or create about anything else. *Safe* reminded me what a great story is about; you can be telling a story about one thing but really you are just using the story to talk about something else. Also *Safe* was so different from *Poison* but still really incredible which inspired me to do what I want as well, as opposed to keep doing the same thing as I’d done before. What I am trying to say is that Todd Haynes’ films and his career in general are hugely inspiring to me and affects how I express myself musically.

In the song “My My Metrocard,” you sing “Fuck Giuliani; he’s such a fucking jerk; shut down all the strip bars.” Do you think the mayor has heard the song? Would you like him to hear it? A lot of people complain about his politics but don’t really do much about it. You may be the first to sing about Giuliani! Way to go! KATHLEEN: I seriously doubt Giuliani has heard it, and I couldn’t care less either way.

JOHANNA: Just for the record, Blackstar (Mos Def and Talib Kweli) definitely wrote a song dissing Giuliani before we did.

What projects are you all working on at the moment? JOHANNA: Besides my zine, I’m working on my solo techno project, *Swim With the Dolphins*. We are also working on a remix for Hanin Elias’ new record, *In Flames*.

KATHLEEN: I’m trying to book a three-week *Le Tigre* tour for April 2000. I’m also trying to finish an essay I’ve been working on about the intersection

where personal psychology and political activism meet.

SADIE BENNING: I’m working on a video for *The Need* and a solo DJ project under the name GHOSTY JR, which will include a picture book and slide show.

How did you all become interested in feminism? KATHLEEN: My mom took me to see Bella Abzug speak when I was, like, 9, and I started crying because there were all these women there, and it felt fantastic. My mom also volunteered at a makeshift battered women’s crisis line that was run out of a church basement. The thing is, my mom was in no way a lefty activist type; she was/is an RN who lives in the suburbs. This means that all those women who did Redstockings and all that feminist stuff in New York and other big cities did have an effect on an enormous amount of people (like me and my mom).

In the song “Hot Topic,” you list a great bunch of influential female thinkers and artists. How did you construct this list? We wanted to make a song that was about community and history. Notions like community can seem so totalizing and problematic that we retreat to irony or oppositional self-definitions, and we wanted to say fuck that. Instead, let’s be sincere and take risks and just talk about who we are and who gives us strength as feminists and as artists. The idea of making a list song with the names of artists and thinkers that are really important to us was daunting because we knew it would be impossible to include everyone, and of course, not all of us would agree on each name. The song is partial, unfinished, a snapshot of recurring conversations, books on our nightstands, records on our turntables. We didn’t want to be elitist or obscure; we wanted to get the word out about stuff that not everyone knows about — i.e. “I fucking love Yoko Ono and Angela Davis; maybe I should look up Carolee Schneeman and Mab Segrest next time I’m at the library.”

And even though “Hot Topic” is recorded now and exists in a finished form, we hoped that it would be understood as having an open structure for other voices to shout out their own list of names.

Will there be more *Le Tigre* albums?

KATHLEEN HANNA: I hope so.

Me too.

— Amy Schroeder

"WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS, AND I BELIEVE THE DIVISION OF THE SEXES, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, PROPAGATES SEXISM."

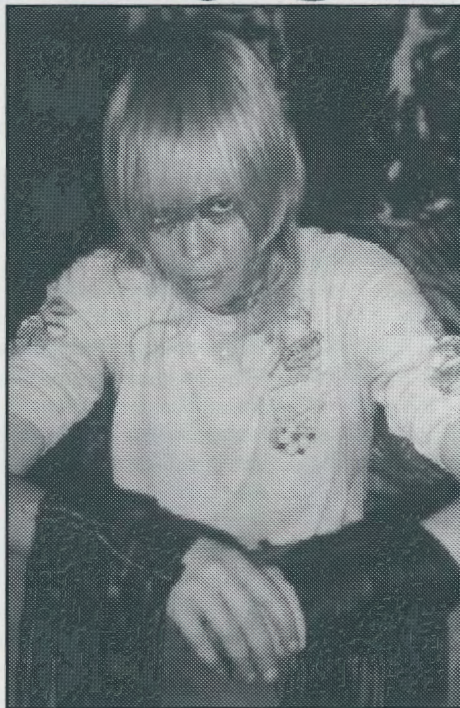
ROYAL JENNIFER HERREMA TRUX

Next time VH-1 updates their standings of the Top Billion Women of Rock, don't expect to see Royal Trux's

Jennifer Herrema sharing screen time with Spice Girls and or Paula Abdul. "Making that kind of distinction, in and of itself, is a negative," Herrema said. "It's somewhat patronizing. How often do you see a magazine of the *Hundred Men of Rock's Last 10 Years*, you know?"

But then, Herrema has long considered herself equal to any gonad-bearing rock god and has the albums to prove it. She and long-time musical/personal partner Neil Hagerty have belted out eight recordings under the moniker Royal Trux, their work running the schizophrenic gamut from all-out, Stones-inspired classic rock to atonal, free-form avant-noise slop. Their latest album, *Veterans of Disorder*, finds the band primarily in the former category, injecting anthems like "Stop" and "Waterpark" with enough ragged energy to fill a week's worth of arena shows -- even if Royal Trux is only sporadically touring the nation's seediest watering holes.

It hasn't always been that way, of course. On the coattails of the grunge movement, the band crashed the major-label shindig a few years back with *Thank You*, a collection of bluesy rockers recorded for Geffen records with Neil Young's long-time



producer. When Herrema felt as if their manager and label were beginning to whore them out to a larger audience -- trying to soften her up and making her stage presence less intimidating -- they made a break, took the cash, bought a ranch and built their own studio.

As for their old manager? Herrema reports that he moved on to another, more impressionable bunch of proteges -- baby-faced hipsters No Doubt. "They fell for it hook, line and sinker," she says of her colleagues.

Even though she's earned a unique status as a sort of Marianne Faithfull for the trailer park set -- she's even appeared in a Calvin Klein ad -- Herrema refuses to chalk any of it up to her feminine wiles, and deflects any questions that credit her extra x-chromosome. "If it has to be

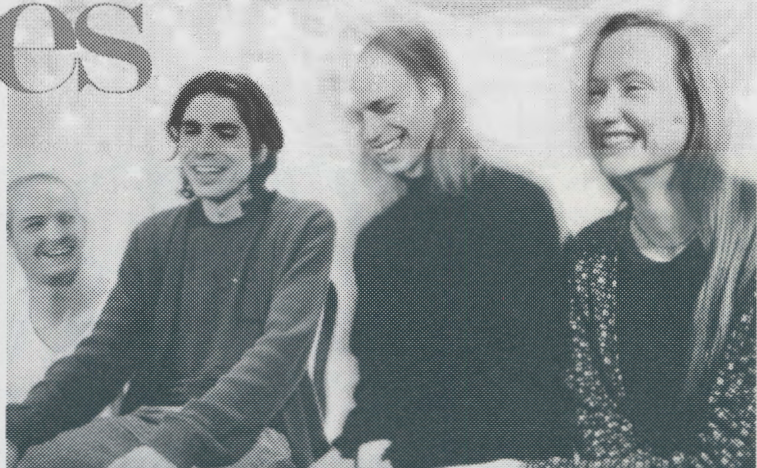
asked, then it's completely invalid. That's my take on the whole gender difference. We're human beings, and I believe that the division of the sexes, consciously or unconsciously, propagates sexism. I would just feel more comfortable not propagating that myth. What we're talking about here is music. Not to be high and mighty, but really it is -- it is music we're talking about."

True to her credo, Herrema isn't going to be working and playing in a world that offers her any concessions just because she happens to own a pair of mammaries. "It says something to me that there has to be something set aside for the so-called 'fairer sex.' It inadvertently breeds mediocrity."

-- Mike Hastings

[of rachel's]

● Rachel grimes



FROM LEFT ARE JASON GRIMES, JASON NOBLE, CHRISTIAN FREDERICKSON AND RACHEL GRIMES.

If I were to try to describe the Rachel's music with words, I may just be taking on a silly and impossible endeavor, strife with failure.

I can, however, tell you this: The band crafts a product saturated with the strength of conviction, colorful, emotional content and musical phrases that can weep at your feet or grab you by the collar. This doesn't change with *Selenography* -- the Rachel's fourth and most recent release.

Selenography is an album composed of songs that have been given the opportunity to grow with the band on the road before they were put to tape. Aside from utilizing their core instrumentation of piano, violas, cello, drums, guitar and bass, the latest album also features harpsichord, decipherable speaking and electronic elements.

Venus spoke with Rachel Grimes, the ensemble's pianist and co-songwriter. (Oh, by the way, the band already had its name before she joined.) She talked to us from her home in Louisville, Kentucky -- the city she's called home for just about all her 29 years.

BY ROB KOWALCZYK

What or who are your classical music influences? What do you borrow from these influences? Music from Saint Columba to Bach -- they are some of my favorite things to play. Bach or Claude Debussy. He made a lot of wonderful music for piano. And I think in that way what I really draw from his music is technical ideas and ways to present color that I usually don't think of until I hear his music performed or until I eventually get inside the music and hear what he is doing. Those are the major influences. I also love string quartets -- also Ravel, Bartok, Shostakovich, Phillip Glass. They have wonderful coloristic writing, beautiful counterpoint, harmony -- the slight unpredictability of a lot of that music.

Are there any particular players of this music you enjoy? Oh, I enjoy a lot of people. I don't have any people whom I always buy *just* their recordings, but I have some favorites. Especially keyboard people such as Ander Shift and Glenn Gould. I enjoy very

much Yo-Yo Ma and a lot of string players. I mean, there's just so many -- especially string and piano players who are living today as well as people who have made a lot of wonderful recordings in the past. It's really hard to say.

Do you have any musical influences other than those fitting into the classical genre? Well, I could go on all day. I listen to all kinds of music. I have influences from Nina Soloan to Asther Piasola. Like I've said before, Steve Wise, early music of Chofscan and Arcadelt and renaissance music. It really sort of blends over the last 500 years. Contemporary music, pop groups, contemporary chamber music or ensembles. Music written for what I guess you would call contemporary concert music. So (laughs) might I be more specific I feel like it's sort of everywhere. I love Stereolab and Gavin Brier. I guess there's music I don't particularly listen to. I listen to all kinds of things, especially Oriental music and just now I've discovered a lot of Chinese music. Music of the Gamalon Orchestra is an Asian influence.

Do you think you appropriate any of these musics you like into the Rachel's? I think that most every creative person appropriates something of what they like. I feel like what I gather from music that I like is technique, colors, different moments that really grab me, and I might try to analyze what's going on there and get an idea of what makes that special, what makes it pop out, such as a rhythmic trick, a certain way of voicing or overall structure of the musical work. So, sure, there are influences.

Would you say Rachel's is a rock band? No, I wouldn't.

Would you be willing to give Rachel's a certain description? No, not really.

Are you in any other bands, groups, ensembles, orchestras or side projects? Well, I have been. I used to be in a pop rock group called Hula Hoop -- played bass for years. Then I've been in a couple of different medieval and renaissance singing ensembles where it was just voices -- a capella music. I just left one of those groups. So right now I'm not in any other official group, but I do write music for other people to play, that's not necessarily the Rachel's, and I certainly play music by myself and with tons of other folks, just for fun. I'm not in any other performing groups right now.

Was the piano your first instrument? Yes.

Could you describe or tell about your upbringing or training on the piano?

My father was a pianist. And my grandmother (his mother) was a pianist.

[for some people, a particular song might be really sad and tragic. and then we get a response from different people who think it's the happiest thing they've ever heard.]

And her mother was also one. It was always in the family. In general, I think concerning my family, everybody used to play music sometimes, especially when friends came over. I don't remember when it started, but I was probably 2 or 3. I would sit down with my dad while he was playing at the piano and I would watch him play and eventually I learned to kick out melodies and tunes with him. You know then it became four hands, and on from there. My grandmother had a set of pianos -- a pair that matched. So that enabled at least four people to sit down at once. And sometimes people would play other instruments too -- clarinet, drums, or some people would sing. There's always been music in my family. I started piano lessons when I was six. That's the basic story. I went to the University of Louisville Music School when I was 18 to get a degree in composition.

Do you remember the first performance? I remember it pretty vividly. It was at my nursery school, and I played "Mary Had a Little Lamb" (laughs) for everybody at the nursery school. I remember I had on a little green dress with strawberries. I guess I was a little nervous, but I did OK.

Do you still get nervous performing today? Not much, no. It depends on the situation. It depends on how prepared I am. If I feel pretty prepared, I usually just get really excited, and I look forward to it -- that kind of nervousness. If I'm worried about whether I'm going to even get something, then I get pretty nervous. But usually it's not a debilitating kind of thing. I feel like I do pretty well on stage, and usually I enjoy it. There's a great energy, especially in playing with other people, which I really prefer. You get up there and there's sort of a group excitement that propels things.

When you're not touring or recording, do you have a day job? Yes. I'll be going there when I get off the phone with you.

Do you wish you could spend more time making music? It seems as if you already spend a lot of time making music. But do you wish you could spend more time at it? Sure. If you have absolutely no structure it could be pretty frustrating. But I wish I didn't have to do work and relate it to music in order to make a living. But I'm also not willing to necessarily do just any kind of music for a living, so that's why I chose a day job in advertising and I have to do bookkeeping. It's totally different and gratifying in its own way. It keeps a structure for me to work around, and I just have to be disciplined about my time. I feel like when I really sit down and am inspired to spend time on music I could fill up week after week, and it wouldn't be any problem. Between reading and listening, looking at scores, writing, practicing, there's those things.

Is your employer good about giving you time off to tour? Yeah, it's great. I've been there six years or more, and when I went to the job interview -- it's a very small company so there's really just one other guy -- I told him

then that I was in a band and we tour a lot -- this was with a different band -- and I just told him what the deal was, and I also told him I'll work hard for you and do a great job but this isn't what I want to do full-time. I said it up front and that was good for me because I've never felt too guilty about it. And we've usually worked it out fine. I just have to do things before I go out of town.

Could you describe the song-writing and song-making processes for Rachel's? And when do you write? We generally write a ton of it in spurts. As far as the way the band operates, truly anything goes. That's one reason why I don't really like to think about assigning a musical style or label to us. We never know what's next. Anything's really possible according to the ideas that are brought to the table. Generally, Christian (Frederickson), Jason Noble and I are the ones who bring music ideas to the table. We look at what somebody's brought. It can be anything from a couple of phrases that are complex to a fully written-out piece of music, and we just take it from there. If it's fully written out, we give it a go. We find the people we need to play it, and rehearse it in sort of a traditional manner. If it's working all right, then we leave it as it is. Sometimes we've taken music that's already written and we've added things to it or lengthened sections. We always edit as we go. I think there's a general understanding between all of us to make suggestions for other people's music. A lot of times what happens is, say, Christian writes a piece and he has a piano in mind or he may present me with a piece or a part, but he always says you're free to make something else up if you like. So, there's always sort of an opportunity for anybody to create their own personalized version of a different section or part of the song that they're playing. So, it gives people their own individual creativity.

Are there stories behind the music you make? There are sometimes contexts or images, even sometimes a story. Generally, I think people just have a vague idea of what a song might be about, even just from the title. There are some songs that are inspired by stories. Generally, though, our songs aren't really programmatic, in terms of telling a story from start to finish. Certainly our records have had thematic qualities, and some songs are definitely supposed to present a general mood.

Aside from images, does your music concern any emotions in either the song writing process or the end product? (laughs)

What I mean is: Do you try to convey a certain emotion in the end product through the song writing process? Well, that takes about the same answer. I've never played music in my life that didn't have some emotion to it. Music is just expression. It's often a complex web of expressions, feelings -- maybe not something deliberately sad or happy, but I think we may have something in mind. We have a general feel for the mood of the piece.

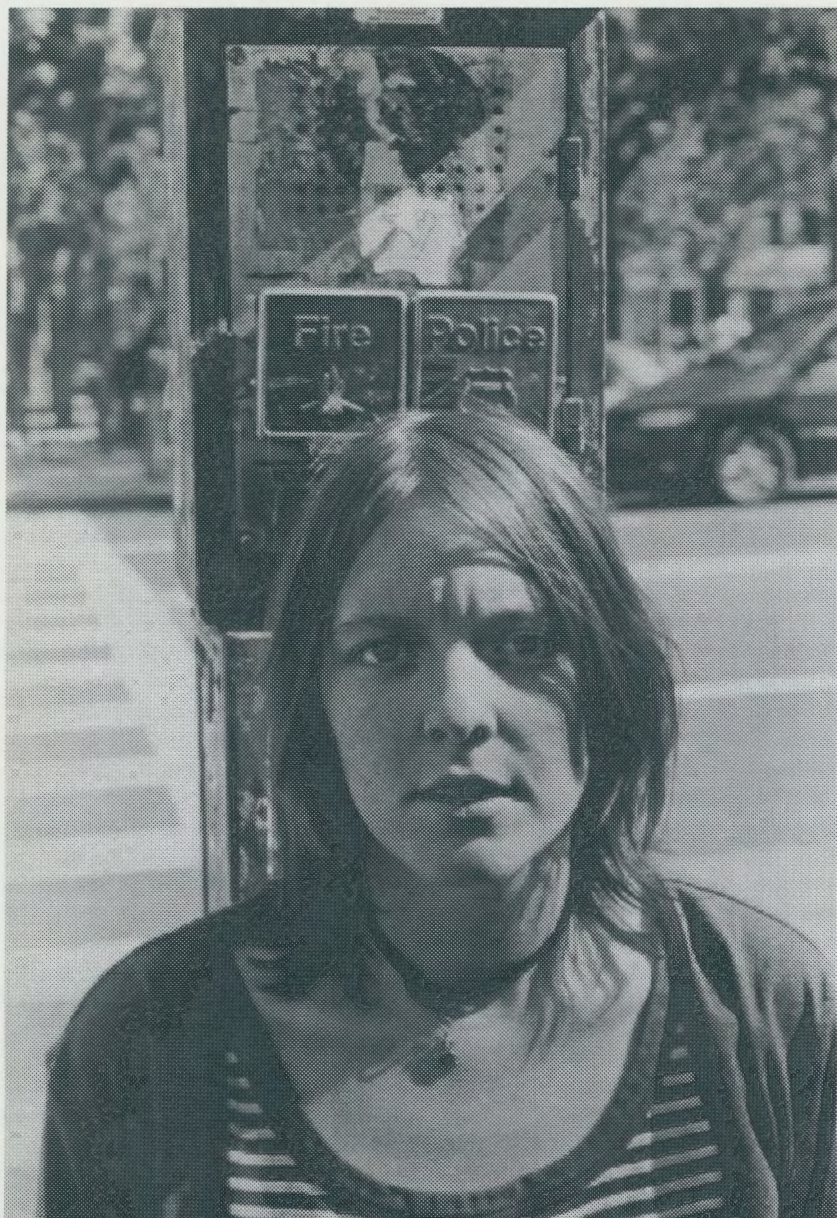
But beyond what we've done with it, or put on a record, it's really up to the person listening to make out of it what they will. For some people, a particular song might be really sad and tragic for them. And then we get a response from different people who think it's the happiest thing they've ever heard -- that it's full of joy. I think it's possible to have both of those things. It just depends on the listener and what state they're in or what their expectations are.

How does *Selenography* differ from the others, inasmuch as Rachel's approach to music? Well, it doesn't really. It's consistent with the other records in that it's music that a particular group of people have brought together for others to play. This is more of a collection over a longer period of time. So it may have more variety, instrumentation. But it's still musical moments and ideas that we have brought together, put together, in what we felt would be a pleasant order and collection. There were one or two songs that were not put on the record because we felt they didn't really belong. And we wanted to try again, as far as recording. So, it's very explicitly put together in the way that we did as far as the order and the selection and overall quality of sound.

How did having a studio in your home help or change your approach to making an album? Will future endeavors for the band be changed or aided since more members of Rachel's live in Louisville now? Yes, it's already helped. You know, that really happened more than a year ago. It's already helped us have a feeling of more steady progress rather than periodic bursts. I think we can work on a weekly basis. A lot of times what we work on has nothing really to do with practicing music. A good deal of what we spend our time on are management issues, planning tours, dealing with a lot of other business things. It certainly helps with just getting that stuff taken care of -- having people on hand to make decisions. As far as having a studio at home, it definitely frees us up as far as the pacing. We can take our time writing music and recording. We can try a lot of different things without feeling like we're under pressure, either time-wise or financially. It's very liberating because it frees us up both with our time and energy and our budget.

How and why did you decide to have elements of electronic music on the album *Selenography*? It's just been part of the way we've been hearing things for a while now. There were electronic things -- quite a bit -- on *The Sea and the Bells*. Jason has initiated that more than anyone and got the rest of us to open our ears to the possibilities of what we can add to pieces or even generate pieces from electronic sources and samples or more electronically based instruments. It just seemed natural to us.

This is just an excerpt from the interview. For the extended version, please visit our web site at: www.shemadethis.com/venus.



TARA JANE O'NEIL

INTERVIEW BY AMY SCHROEDER

You should know Tara Jane O'Neil as one of the most accomplished women in independent rock -- namely, for her work in Rodan, Retsin and The Sonora Pine. You should now also know her as Tara Jane O'Neil of, well, Tara Jane O'Neil.

On her first solo release, *Peregrine*, TJ displays her multi-instrumental talent as she did in the aforementioned bands, playing just about everything on the 10-song record, including guitar, bass, keyboards, banjo and piano.

Although she made a commitment last summer to her New York apartment to concentrate on the craftwork of *Peregrine*, the sound is decidedly less structured compared to some of her previous band work. This is a good thing -- it was her plan all along to

show up at Brooklyn's Rare Book Room recording studio with quite a few things unplanned, leaving her spontaneity and blank-filling intuition to do the rest of the work.

But like I said earlier, O'Neil played just about everything on the album, which means she owes a bit of the improvisational success to the help of her friends, including Ida's Dan Littleton on guitar and The Hall of Fame Band's Samara Lubelski on violin. The results? Subtle-yet-powerful poetic non-rock ballads with an emphasis on guitar weavings and bitter-sweet melody.

What inspired you to do a solo album? It was time.

Did you enjoy the challenge of learning how to use recording machines? Yes, it equals freedom.

What are the major differences in the ways that you recorded *Peregrine* and the stuff you did in Rodan, Retsin and The Sonora Pine? I did it in my apartment, at my own pace, which allowed for experimentation and revision. I sat with the stuff as it evolved and made my own decisions about where it should go next.

In your press release it says that with *Peregrine*, you followed through on your own notions only -- an entirely different experience. "She left many musical questions unanswered until the day was set to record the parts. It was almost like improvising with the other parts of herself."

Do you prefer this method of song-writing? I enjoy it, and I usually do write songs with many different parts and sounds. I'll do it again, but I also love collaborating with other people and want some more of that.

What is/are your favorite instruments? I really

wish I could play the bass clarinet, but I'm not good with wind instruments. I like the instruments I play. Any instrument is good for something.

How will it be challenging when you tour -- since you'll have to figure out who will play what and on what songs? I have to teach the people the songs and change arrangements for the trio that will be the band. That's a lot of work, but it's also like giving the stuff new life, like I'm covering it or something. I'm taking it slowly and trusting in Miggie, and Noel and myself. Miggie used to play in Ida; he can play everything and

is a good time. Noel lives in Louisville, is very young and went on both of the Sonora Pine tours; he, too, plays everything and is a good time.

How do you think your solo album is different or similar to your previous work -- say, in Rodan, Retsin or The Sonora Pine? Well, it isn't a rock record; it isn't totally upsetting. I'm harmonizing with myself. It is me -- the way I sing, the notes I hear.

How would you describe *Peregrine*? I don't know; it's quiet; I like it.

I really like *Peregrine*'s cover art -- a simple painting of a woman. It doesn't say in the credits who the artist is. I did it. I've been doing visual art for a while. I've illustrated two books of poetry by Cynthia Nelson. I do paintings and such, and I did the Retsin covers. The lady on the cover is made of a lot of different stuff and is a lot of different people.

If there's one thing that you'd like people to know about you and your work or this solo album -- that fans wouldn't know unless you told them -- what would it be? I want to play fuzz bass in a psychedelic rock band.

Do you plan to continue to record as a solo artist? Yes.

Do you have plans to record with Retsin soon? Yes, we're gonna work on a new record this year.

Other bands? I sure hope so.

I read about Retsin somewhere that you and Cynthia Nelson used to "sleep and breathe music. Twelve hours a day, 7 days a week; out of bed and straight to the guitar." Is this how it is for you still? Now that we live in New York City, a lot of time is wasted on getting around, doing jobs, things I don't even realize I do, but they take my time anyway. It's a real pain in the ass to live here, but we do work on the music and the art and the poetry when we're not occupied with other bullshit. This is something I regret. In Louisville, things move more slowly, so there was more uninterrupted time to work through projects.

How'd you get started in music? Have you always been involved? I haven't always been involved, but I have always been interested. I started by figuring out songs on the guitar, then quietly writing my own, and then I ended up in a hard-rock band

(Rodan).

At what age did you realize that music is what you wanted to do with your life?

Probably around 17. I moved out of my folks' house and quit showing up at school so that I could play my guitar. I didn't really -- and probably still don't -- understand the concept of doing something *with* my life. It's what I do *in* my life.

Were you encouraged to make music when you were growing up? I was given violin and piano lessons -- neither lasted more than a year or two, and I really don't remember any of it. I guess my folks were supportive of anything that made me happy, if not money-wise, but they didn't point me in the direction of this whole thing, and I wonder how they feel about it.

How/why were the names created for Retsin, Rodan and Sonora Pine? Ask Cynthia, Jason or Sean. I'm not very good at naming things.

What were your favorite bands to work in and why? They were all pretty different and served different purposes. I definitely needed them all.

Is music your full-time job? It's labor intensive, and I spend most of my days working on it somehow, but it certainly isn't a job. I don't think I would want to think of it that way -- then it would become like any job you had to show up for. I do it

mopolitan falcon which dates to the 14th century. It's medieval Latin and can also mean "like a pilgrim -- having a tendency to wander." **How did you come up with the title *Peregrine* for the album?** My friend Greta gave me a book, the first book about babies all over the world. One of the babies' names was Peregrine. I thought it was beautiful and did the research you did, and even though I've been in New York for two years, I still consider myself to possess a migratory spirit.

How old are you? 27

Where were you born? Chicago

Did you go to college? For three semesters.

Where'd you go and what'd you study? University of Louisville; confusion and heartache.

Where do you consider yourself to be from? I moved around a lot as a kid, but I feel like I'm from Louisville.

If you could change something about the world, what would it be? Pain.

Who are the most inspiring people in your life? My friends.

Who are/have been the most inspiring people to your music? Oh god, I wouldn't know where to start -- mostly people who do their thing with persistence and fearlessness despite peers and lack of cash. Also, Joni Mitchell.

What are your favorite 10 songs of all

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF DOING SOMETHING WITH MY LIFE. IT'S WHAT I DO IN MY LIFE.

because that's what I do. I make money in various ways: painting, janitorial duties, film work, etc. I guess I really don't want a job -- just some tasks that make me money -- and time to spend on my projects.

I looked up "peregrine" in the dictionary, and it has interesting definitions. I found that the noun dates to 1555 and means "a swift, nearly cos-

time? Impossible. All year I've been really into a song called "Aguas de Marco (Waters of March)" by A.C. Jobim and Elis Regina. I think that song about the midway by Joni Mitchell is perfect. "Some Weird Sin" by Iggy Pop is a good song. "The Rue of Ruby Whores" by Michael Hurley is beautiful. I don't know.

Hannah Sawtell's voice carries over the crowd in the Irish tea room. People grow quiet as they listen to her speech, attuned to her British accent. Her voice is deep, resonant and self-assured, unmasking the strength that lies behind her slight physique and fine features. Her energy and resolve are infectious as she speaks of the things she cares for: music, art, her husband, friends, family and homeland.

People are staring -- maybe because they aren't accustomed to seeing a striking young English woman sitting in the middle of a Detroit eatery, but Hannah pays no mind and takes a sip of her juice. She confesses to being a bit ill at ease, though her manner is in no way suspicious. She says she doesn't like to be under a microscope because she is not seeking any limelight.

At age 27, Hannah has created a life that is compelling. She has earned a reputation as a sought-after soul and funk DJ in Detroit and far beyond -- not an easily earned mark in Motown for a woman of her stature. In her other roles, Sawtell has been a catalyst in reshaping one of Detroit's legendary dance music labels, Planet E. She lives and works in Detroit with the man who created the label, Carl Craig, her husband. "He doesn't follow the whole romantic view of what an artist should be," she says, laughing. "He calls me quality control."

Her relationship may have given her confidence and a sense of security, but it takes a certain kind of strength to have left London, friends and family to move to Detroit -- and to make it here.

"I did not want to leave England. When I got here, I didn't have anything to do; I didn't have any friends," she says, remembering the



STORY BY
TAMARA WARREN

PHOTO BY
NICOLA KUPERUS

HANNAH SAWTELL

move she made three years ago to Craig's hometown. "We believed in each other so much that we were willing to give up things," she says with a casual shrug of a trip many people would never consider.

She reverts back to 1995 when she met and married Craig after being acquainted with him for only a short time. The two became engaged after a five-day interlude - a last-minute rendezvous in Australia. When she first met Craig, Hannah hadn't predicted the rapid courses her life would take. She was dee-jaying in London clubs and battling male stereotypes in record shops. "My real love was jazz and soul; that was my thing," she says.

She was not a Detroit techno fan and had no patience for this foreign music the first time she heard Craig deejay. "What the fuck is this crap? I just don't get it. It's totally not me at all," she says of her first reactions to techno. "I knew maybe three records, but I didn't think of them as techno. I owned *The Art of Stalking* by Suburban Knight, which is still one of my favorite records, Nude Photo or one of Derrick (May)'s other records and Mad Mike's *Galaxy to Galaxy*, a fucking jazz record."

The daughter of artists, Hannah had her own artistic streak to pursue. "We're both very fiery, passionate people," she says of her father. "I've managed to dampen my fire over the years with Carl. After you turn 25, you settle down."

Sawtell was always involved with the arts one way or another. As a child, she studied contemporary dance. She also had an affinity for theater but wasn't after stardom. "I played the ugly stepsister in *Cinderella* because I could be mean to everybody. Everyone wanted to be Cinderella, but I wanted to be the stepsister, because I thought it would be more fun."

Hannah had talent as a visual artist, but music became another artistic avenue for her to pursue. She played the saxophone and sang in the choir but became engaged when she discovered her love for vinyl, listening to late '80s pirate radio. "I used to listen to early hip-hop, funk, soul, disco, R&B. It was always around me, as well as being into indie rock. I was into a bit of everything."

She got her start in the business side of music, working on promotions for Creation, an indie-rock label. She decided she wanted a more grassroots involvement in the business and went to work for Black Market Records, a well-known London record shop. She was one of two women working in the store.

However, Hannah was stuck at Black Market, working in merchandising. "I wanted to work behind the record counter. The owner wouldn't let me work there -- basically

because I was a woman."

Hannah moved on to another shop called Honest John's, where she was actually selling behind the counter. This store specialized in the style of records she preferred -- funk, disco, reggae and hip-hop. Ironically, Carl saw Hannah deejay first, before the two became friendly. "With a crowd that was 90 percent black, there I was, a white female DJ," she says. "The last song I played was Jackson's record. People went crazy. It was the best night I had there -- imagine 800 people gigging to soul, funk and hip-hop -- Carl was totally freaked out," she says with a chuckle. "The next day he showed up at my work. On our first date we went to Wendy's and the arcade. After only being acquainted

Men are scared of me. I'm not a bitch. So many women are conditioned at an early age. I was brought up to think, 'Do what you want to do.'

for two months, he called me said and I want to get to you know properly," she says of her delirious courtship. "I'm going to Australia to deejay next week. It's your birthday; I want you to come." At first she said no but changed her mind after reprimands from friends. "It was like as soon as I got off the plane. It really was like something out of movie: I saw him and he saw me; we got in the cab and just started snogging. After five days I fell in love."

So how did Hannah decide to make the move to Detroit? Sacrifice and compromise. "He was willing to give up living in Detroit for six months to be with me in London. It was an exciting time. You could do all this stuff with someone and have fun together."

Even after marrying, Hannah had no intention of working for Craig's label. "I didn't really like anything he did until I got to know his music. I'd never heard it. I really felt quite ashamed that I'd never heard it before."

They decided to return to Detroit for Carl's music career. "Then when I moved here I stopped deejaying. When I moved, pretty much everything stopped." At first Hannah says she felt small and a bit isolated by the spacious American lifestyle and the constriction of not having a driver's license.

She accompanied Carl to the Planet E office a few times. "I noticed things they didn't have -- a proper mailing list or databases," she says. Drawing from her record label background, Hannah started to make lists of what she thought the label needed.

"We decided to relaunch Planet E." Now, with her own project, a brand-new jazz label called Community Projects, international buzz over Carl's revamped Innerzone Orchestra project and his recent performance in Central Park, Planet E seems to be doing quite well under Sawtell's contributions. She's also scored a driver's license.

"It's so hard to run a company and do other things," she says with a bit of regret. Sawtell has hopes of pursuing her abandoned artistic career. "I draw a lot. There's going to come a day when I don't want to do this anymore. I'm not sure I've found myself -- whether it's being involved as a DJ or something else."

As a woman in business, Sawtell has overcome stereotypes and defiantly stuck out criticism. "Men are scared of me," she says. "I'm not a bitch. I'm sick of it. So many women are conditioned at an early age. I was brought up to think, 'Do what you want to do.'"

Hannah admits to culture shock living in the harsh reality of Detroit and the lack of a

social state in American society. She has retained her English citizenship and is a permanent resident alien. But as she pauses to reflect on her role in this city, she is a bit more positive. "When my mother visited, she said, 'Hannah you're doing your part. Look at what you're doing at Planet E.'"

She thinks for a moment about the business of putting out records in the independent sector. "I'm working with young producers who are trying to make something with their hearts. Everyone has their part to play, and everyone has their part to play in different ways," she says. "That's me making my statement against all the run-of-the-mill commercial crap. Even in the world of techno, there are people who are trying to do something different and people trying to do the same old crap."

Hannah decided she missed deejaying and playing the soul music she loved best.

"I realized, Fuck it, I'm going to do what I want. At the end of the day, people sense when you're genuine and if you're a music lover -- whatever kind of music it is." At first she was tentative about playing out in Detroit, but to her surprise, she was well-received and now is frequently booked for gigs.

"That's my solution to the problem of musical play: to play randomly across music that is soulful and spiritual. That's the description of the music that moves me."

Hannah faces future challenges -- whether to establish herself in America, to raise a family here or to return to England, to focus on the collective business of Planet E or to concentrate on her own artistic pursuits. But, in the interlude, as a woman who has quietly earned her own twist of success in a male-dominated arena on two continents -- in record stores, promotions, as a DJ and artist, her place is not in the shadows.

WE REALLY WISH PAPER COULD TALK. OR, AT LEAST THESE TWO PAGES. WE WISH THESE TWO PAGES COULD TALK BECAUSE DANIELLE HOWLE SOUNDS SO MUCH LIKE JANIS JOPLIN WHEN SHE SPEAKS. MAYBE IT'S THE SOUTHERN ACCENT OR THE RASPINESS. MAYBE IT'S HER HONESTY OR THE FACT THAT SHE'S ONE OF THE NICEST PEOPLE YOU'LL EVER MEET. A LOT OF HER PERSONALITY COMES OUT IN HER MUSIC. HER SONGS ARE BITTER-SWEET AND THEY MAKE YOU THINK. THE SOUND IS SIMPLE -- JUST DANIELLE AND HER GUITAR. INTERVIEW BY AMY S.

DANIELLE HOWLE

Before I interviewed Danielle Howle, I'd read that she's uncomfortable being labeled as an acoustic artist or "songwriter." Instead, she thinks of herself as someone who captures bits of time. "I'm not trying to shock people with bad language and weirdness," she said. "I'm trying to tell whatever truth is there. I do not need electricity to make a big noise."

On her album, *Catalog*, she tells stories about her everyday experiences (topics ranging from climbing trees to picking stuff out of a catalog to the death of her grandpa) with just the right amount of detail, allowing the listener to picture the scene. For the most part, it's just Danielle and her acoustic guitar; however, a few other notable musicians contribute to the record, including Dan Littleton, Elizabeth Mitchell and Jenny Toomey.

Discography: The South Carolina singer first emerged as the frontwoman for the group Lay Quiet Awhile, which debuted in 1993 with the album *Delicate Wire*; a year later, she issued her first solo single called "Frog," on Simple Machines. Live at *McKissick Museum* followed in mid-1995; then she recorded *About to Burst*, another full-length, this time with her band the Tantrums. A 7-inch called *High School Dance* was next, then came *Do A Two Sable* with the Tantrums on Daemon Records in 1997. I interviewed Ms. Howle to talk about her latest record, *Catalog*, her first for Kill Rock Stars. Her most recent recorded work can be found on the latter label's sampler CD called Jackson's Jukebox.

How do you like to describe your music? Man, I wish I knew. I really can't, and it's a problem because it might annoy some people.

Why is that? Because people in passing ask polite questions like, "Hey, how would you describe your music?" and I'm like, like, well, I don't know. I feel like I might be annoying them now.

So there are no particular words that you'd like to use when describing your music? Snapshots of time, perhaps. Songs are snapshots of time to me.

Are you always writing songs? Yeah, yeah, it's fun.

Do you keep them in your head, or do you write



them down? I keep them all in a tape deck, and I keep them ... where else? I keep them just in my brain and on cassette tapes and stuff like that.

Do you write songs every day? Oh yes. Sometimes I just write songs in my brain when I don't have time to write them down. They come out,

and sometimes if I forget 'em, they come out in a different way later on, you know what I mean?

When do you find yourself being most inspired to write songs?

When I'm sittin' in my living room and I don't have nothin' to do and it's turnin' to be dusk outside, you know? That's usually the time.

How did growing up in South Carolina influence your music?

I'm sure more than I'll ever know. My dad was an Army man, so I also grew up in Southern Mississippi and in Germany -- the southern half of Germany -- so I'm an interesting Southerner.

I really like the song on *Catalog* called "From The Tops of Trees." (She sings, "I was strong and brave and longed to see the world just work itself from way up in the trees. So many years I climbed up to their tops. The wind would tell me stories when the wind would stop. I would watch them play below. They did not see me.") Do you climb trees? Yes, it's very important.

Where did you get the inspiration for the song? When you sing about liking to see the world from atop trees?

When I was little, I was shy, and I used to watch people play, and I would watch them from the tops of the trees. I just remember many times growin' up just sittin' there for hours and, not sayin' anything. **So you still do that now?** Sometimes, but not as much.

Where do you live now? I live in Columbia, South Carolina.

What was the most interesting experience while recording this album? Just getting to hang out with some of my friends who were there and checking out how the Pro-Tools works, which is the method that they used to record it, computers, and it's just kinda cool.

Do you like computers? Yeah, but they scare me. I don't know much about them. I feel really behind and like a dinosaur even though I'm not old enough to be a dinosaur yet, you know what I mean?

How old are you? I'm 31. I turned 31 on March 29, 1999.

Have you always want to be a musician? No, I didn't know that's what I was for a long time. I was in theatre and training to be an actor and all that sorta stuff, and then one day I just went, "I'm gonna sing." Then I did. But my momma told me I'd been singin' my whole life.

Do you still want to be an actress? I probably will some day, just because something will happen. I'll just do it. It's something I know I can do, but music's more challenging to me. More important. I mean, it would have to be *The Role*, you know. I'm not a real actress. It would have to be about finding the greatest role in the world that I liked. And there's plenty of other people who could kick my butt, so I'll probably just stick with music.

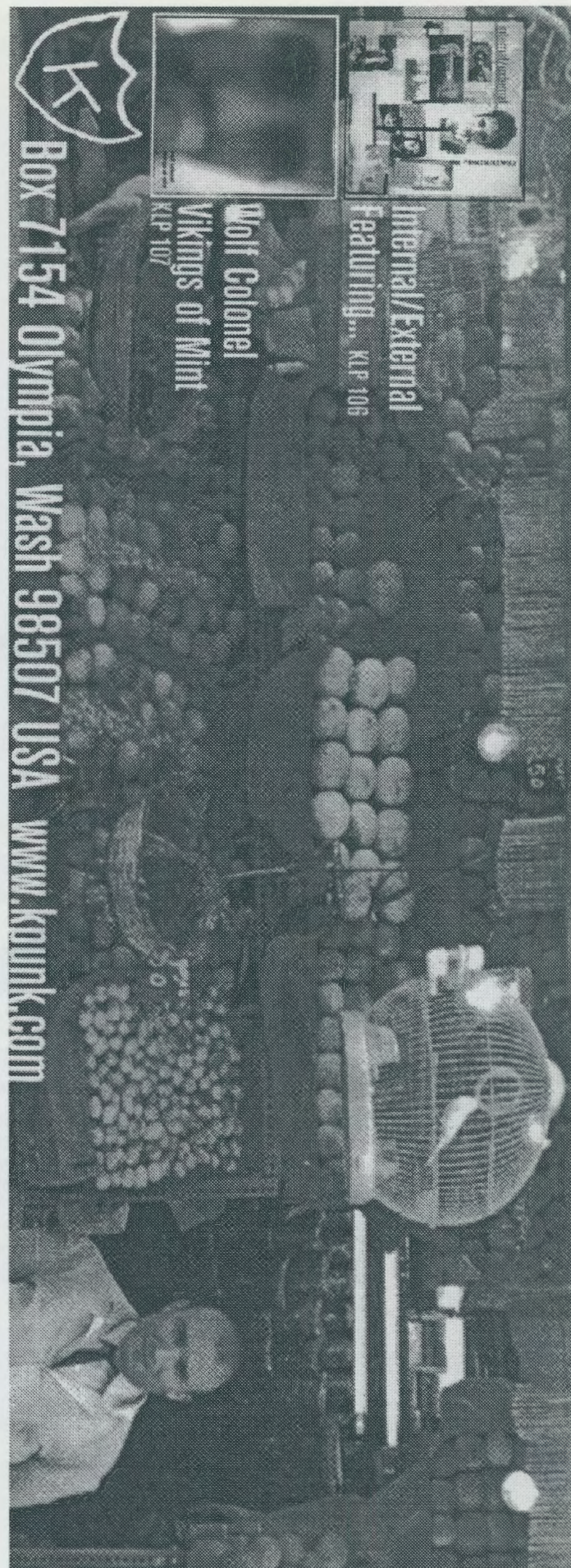
What were you encouraged to be when you were growing up? Me.

You hand-wrote your own press release, which I think is the dope shit. You say in it that you were "fired" a lot from different bands because nobody wanted a girl songwriter who only played a Casio to get her ideas across. That was like a long time ago. That was in sort of the late '80s.

Did that make you upset at the time? At the time, yeah, but I'm so glad now because all those people were losers, and they don't even play in bands anymore anyway.

All right! So it's just sort of like providence, I guess, taking care of the Danielle Unit. You know, keeping you away from strange, bad energy.

Is that what inspired you to keep on keepin on and to do more music projects? I guess "fired" is the wrong word cause it was just a bunch of punk rockers, hanging out, rocking out, having a good time. But I get too dramatic, and I say it's like "fired," but, yeah, of course. You can get pissed off from bein' "fired" but like you can see a beautiful tree -- and what really matters in life -- that's what keeps you going.





CAKE

STORY BY MACKENZIE WILSON
PHOTO BY JULIE J. PANTS SHOWERS

LIKE

Rock stars have it easy, right? I wanted to be Cyndi Lauper when I was six. I wanted to be Kate Bush in later years, and who didn't want to be Madonna? And which little boy didn't want to be Robert Plant, Bono or even Motley Crue's Tommy Lee? Rock stars seem to have so much fun.

Superstardom seems like the ideal thing for a perfect life, but honestly, it's all cliché nowadays. The lusting day-dreams of touring, the power of money and the freedom to shag anyone you please is what makes us all wanna pee our pants with excitement.

But remember what your mom always told you. Life isn't fair. Even if you're in a rock band. "It's a hard thing to do," laughs Cake Like vocalist/bassist Kerri Kenney. "We handle it with a

lot of pills — pills and therapy."

The women of Cake Like — Kenney, guitarist Nina Hellman and drummer Jody Seifert — work damn hard. It's been nearly six years since they first burst onto the New York music scene with their punky-fun debut, *Delicious*. 1997's collectively cool *Bruiser Queen* brought the band's name more to the forefront, but Cake Like struggled with balancing their golden rockstar lives and successful career paths. All have serious day jobs.

Goodbye, So What marks the trio's most defining rock effort since mastering their double working roles. "There are months where we are just focused on the band, but there are months where we don't even touch our instruments," says guitarist

Hellman, 31, who is currently gearing up for her summer gig in "Sex, a.k.a. Wieners and Boobs," an off-off Broadway show that will be running its second performance leg in Los Angeles.

Kenney, 29, who is most recognized for her foot-stompingly funny comic stints on Comedy Central's *Viva Variety* and MTV's *The State*, is currently working with her former *State* castmates on a pilot sketch/sitcom for FOX. Seifert, who is 31, is presently working with a design team that's launching a menswear snowboarding line for Ocean Pacific as well as creating her own line of hand bags.

Kenney says it's kinda funny being in a band because of the occasional freak-outs at drastic changes. "I just moved out to Los Angeles and some bands would be like, 'Oh no, what is gonna happen now,' but it's just the same. We have to set aside time, no matter if you have to get on a five-hour plane ride to get somewhere. It's a headache, but it sort of teaches you a lot because you learn not to worry about it. You realize that you have no control over the situation."

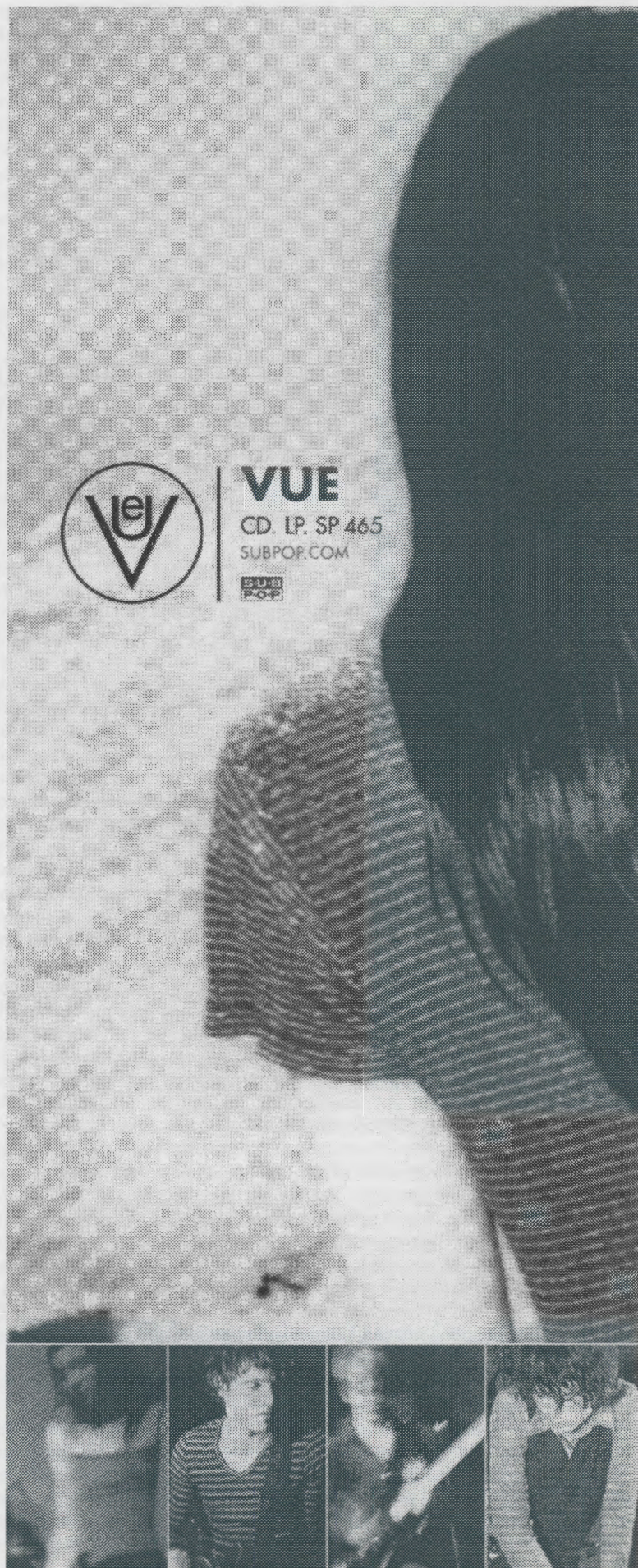
The women of Cake Like aren't worried. Writing this record was the first time the band really sat down and focused on making an album. Kenney says she struggled vocally and noticed that the band's overall playing style changed. But change is a good thing. "We all work well under pressure," Kenney says. "We set out to do this, to get together and concentrate on writing. We had never done that before."

"Plus I found myself not wanting to fall into patterns," Hellman adds. "When working closely every day, it's hard to see anything growing. But looking back at the first record, it's like shit, what was that?"

Album opener "Lucky One" creepily wains with straining Wurlitzer loops, finding its way to Kenney's brooding vocals. "My Guy" is the anthem for the independent woman, an intelligent bitch queen who knows in her heart why she's in love, but her head tries to steer her away from such a fantasy. "Don't Tell" is sneaky; Hellman's angelically soft-spoken backing vocals intertwine with Kenney's deep whispering plea: "Help me to sleep, I breathe, but don't sink; let sleep drug me; oh please, oh please, oh, take me home."

"Dead to Me" and the Sonic Youth-esque "Getaway" maintain a keen sense of rock originality found in artists such as Liz Phair and the Pixies. There's a spunky, inspiring spark long forgotten in the present teenybop mediocrity (thanks Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys). Now I remember why I like music so much. Cake Like makes it fun like Kim Deal did when I was 15 years old.

This is not a riot grrrl group trying to get noticed. With all the Lilith hype, Cake Like isn't out to be the femme fatal supergroup, screaming and kicking to get respect and props. These women know how to get someone's attention without Courtney Love attitude or Nina Hagen obscurity. "People always associate us with that stuff," laughs Hellman. "And Jody has a penis," chimes Kenney, "So ya know, we're not really into that."



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ELIZABETH SHARP

E. SHARP'S GOT THE SHAKES
BY PETE NOLAN

Elizabeth Sharp is a real sickie. She claims to suffer from a neurological disorder in which the right sort of aural input stimulates an endorphin rush to the pleasure centers of her brain. The result: dope records. Her new album *Circle Line Tours* on Swampy/Smilex is testament to that. Like a trip to New York's Coney Island, it's got plenty of fun rides if you can put up with feeling nauseous and dirty. This album swings — smooth grooves permeated with plenty of New York cool. One of the most amazing things about E. Sharp is that she is a one-woman band. She plays all the instruments herself. Hopefully, you're wondering how the hell she manages to play all those instruments when she tours. Well, when she's on the road, she employs a band, so in other words, she's a one-woman band in the recording studio.

Why and when did you start playing music? I started playing drums when I was 14. I started playing bass when I was about 17. I don't know when I started playing guitar and other stuff. I play music because I have a nervous disorder, so my brain senses music as pleasure.

Do you like to travel and tour? I love to travel and tour. I like to travel because my sun is in Sagittarius and so is my Mercury, so I like to travel, but I'm not a good communicator. In fact, I'm sort of astrologically doomed to a life of wandering. I like to tour because I like playing music every night, drinking free beer, seeing bands for free, and because it's a good way to see a place and meet cooler people than you would otherwise. Plus, our van has a good stereo.

I noticed in your press photo that you have a sticker of Spider Man on your guitar case. Do you like Spider Man or any other comics? I didn't know I had a press photo or a guitar case or a photo of Spider Man on the guitar case. Oh, OK, now I know, sorry for the confusion — my mistake.

That's a picture taken by my friend Alex Holden, whom I mention by full name only because he's coincidentally a great comic book maker, and his roommate is Caleb Seavey, who not-so-coincidentally plays guitar in the band. He has a guitar case that I guess has a sticker of Spider Man on it. You must have a high-voltage magnifying glass there, or a really keen spider sense. Since you asked, though, my favorite comic, hands down, is Krazy Kat. Second runner-up: McKay's Little Nemo in Slumberland or Dream of the Welsh Rarebit Fiend.

What instrument do you enjoy playing most? Drums.

When and how did you decide to create Ill Ease? When I moved back to New York City, I started sharing a practice space with my friend Andy Monteleone who had an eight-track tape machine and we happened to luck into a great, cheap mixing board. I started writing songs by myself all the time because I wasn't working much, occasionally lived at the practice space and have this nervous disorder I referred to earlier. I realized I really liked playing and recording by myself and not having to deal with all the stuff that always comes up when recording and writing music with other people. Time goes by and the first record comes out and I decided to, you know, "get the band together," so I asked a couple of friends if they wanted to tour, and lo and behold they did.

A lot of people know you as the dope drummer of New Radiant Storm King. Did you enjoy playing in that band?

I definitely enjoyed it a lot, but you know, to everything there is a season — turn, turn, turn.

What are the challenges and advantages of creating music alone instead of with a band?

The big advantages would be that you don't have to schedule practices. And I'm always right (joke). There aren't too many challenges I can think of. Not to sound like a jerk, but I've definitely spent time playing with different people and I really enjoy it, but at some point, it always starts to feel like a relationship or a marriage or some type of commitment thing. It has its good points and its bad points, but it's just not where I'm at right now. When I get a therapist, I'll ask her/him why. **How did you recruit the musicians you play with live with the**

Ill Ease band? Well, Andy is my friend from way back (the same Andy mentioned earlier). Caleb is a friend I knew in Massachusetts, and we reunited in New York. I met Naomi here a couple years ago, and we've been friends for a while. We all thought it'd be fun to be stuck inside a tiny, sweaty van for a while. We all like music and we all enjoy the same recreational activities, if you know what I mean.

Your songs, especially "Sick Groove," remind me of being on one of those rides at the carnival that spin a lot, except maybe not as fast. Do you like these kinds of rides? A little. But if I'm at Coney Island or something like that I'd rather play whack-a-mole or skeeball. And I never go to those proto-fascist amusement parks like Disney World because that's where they stick the pro-government chips in your brain. Not to mention they have inhumane labor practices, colonial/imperialistic worker relations and are part of the world's stinkiest media monopoly. But, anyway, I think the music sounds that way because most of the songs are in a weird time. I like the songs to sound like they're tripping over themselves but they still have a good groove. Maybe I like it because I can't dance.

Do you think living in New York City is like being in a big rat race? It's for the big rats that want the big cheese.

Did you grow up there? No. I grew up in Maryland.

Do you have any advice for young people — particularly artists and musicians — who want to move to New York? It's all right. I guess the editor of this fine magazine is moving here, so it must not be that bad. My advice would be to avoid living in Manhattan because you probably can't afford it anyway. Try Queens or the Boogie Down, the Island of Staten, the B.K., etc. Oh, and read *The Power Broker* first; it's the best book I've read in years. It's way too heavy, but it's about Robert Moses, who designed the highways, the parks and a lot of city housing from the '30s to the '70s. It's basically about what a playa he was — and about all the big-time players in city politics for the last 50 years.

If you were to make a mixed tape titled "Music For People Who Are Never At Ease," what 10 songs by what bands would you put on it? They're not at ease and they don't

want to be, or they do? Or they're not at ease and they'll just like these 10 songs because they'll feel so cosmically in tune with the never-at-ease universe? See, I dunno because I'm pretty into the art of mix tapes - it's not just about slapping together any ol' 10 great songs. You have to allow some breathing room, peaks and valleys, time to come down etc., etc. What if I just named the ten tapes I have that I'd never leave home without if I were planning on going on a never-at-ease road trip. Let's see, not in any order: 1. CCR "Cosmos Factory" / Memphis Minnie "Travellin Blues" (with some Blind Willie McTell at the end); 2. The Fall "Drognet" / X-Ray Spex "Oh Bondage Up Yours"; 3. Harvey Milk "The Pleaser" / Jucifer "Calling All Cars"; 4. LL's "Walking with a Panther" / Jay Z "Hard Knock Life Vol. 2"; 5. Stooges "Fun House" / Stiff Little Fingers "Inflammable Material"; 6. Marvin Gaye "Trouble Man" / Little Stevie "I Was Made to Love Her"; 7. ZZ Top's first album / Husker Du "Zen Arcade"; 8. L. Cohen "Songs From a Room" / Cars "Candy-O" (with live Cheap Trick/Cars in '79 at the end of both sides); 9. A Sun Records homemade best-of; 10. The best tape of all, which I'm listening to as we e-speak is a best-of Specialty Records tape that I taped from their five-CD set "The Specialty Story." It was a '40s Califboogie-woogie record label with Lloyd Price, Lou Rawls etc. on it. Five stars: has A/C, indoor swimming and free champagne with every honeymoon suite.

I read in an interview on the Drummer Girl site that your favorite record is the Plastic Ono Band. That is quite a frantic and more spastic type of record than the cool sort of grooves that you create. Actually, I'm quite a spaz myself. I'm always spilling things on people. But I love that record mostly because it's all about the bass and drums. Then there's some cool piano thrown on too, and I like the spazzy grooves, like on "Well, Well, Well." Plus the whole record just seems really honest and naked in a totally unique way. The production is killer and it flows in a really nice way too.

Would you ever want to make a record like that? Storm King's first record is pretty goddamn spazzy, I think. But sure, I'd love to make a really, really spazzy record. I kind of grew up on hardcore.

How old are you? I was born December 14, 1971 at 7:15 p.m. (CST) in St. Louis. But I've saved all my hair and fingernail clippings in a Ziploc bag, so voodoo is out of the question.

How did you get the name Ill Ease? It's from a song on the first record that has 'ill ease' in the lyrics, and my initials are E.A.S. I wish there were a good story about it, but there isn't.

There are lots of interesting sounds on Circle Line Tours. It says on the record that you don't use samplers. I put that on

the record just because I think samplers are the cheap way out a lot of the time. And anyway, it's always more interesting to play some repetitive riff for six and a half minutes than to just loop it because if you're actually playing it the whole time, there's subtle variation and you start to hear different things in it.

Are some of the sounds on the record taken from a radio? There's radio stuff

"I NEVER GO TO THOSE PROTO-FASCIST AMUSEMENT PARKS LIKE DISNEY WORLD BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THEY STICK THE PRO-GOVERNMENT CHIPS IN YOUR BRAIN."

between songs. Mostly short wave, my favorite of the major wave types.

Turntables? No, I tried scratching a couple of times and succeeded in fucking up a bunch of my favorite records.

What else? Mostly just regular instruments, plus a lot of piano. The only kind of weird instrument is a toyxylophone I've had forever. Plus the car horn and the jacket scratching - that's what sounds like scratching. Then there's just a whole mess of vibrato and a healthy splash of natural reverb 'cause the old practice space was huge and I've never been very impressed by pedals and pedal pushers. There's some backward stuff too.

What sound is playing in the background at the end of the song "False Start, Night Driver?" It's a chewed-up old four-track tape with the sound of a pot filling up with water played at fast speed, my favorite of the two major speed types. There's some pot banging going on too. I'm definitely into found sounds instead of just "Sounds Made From Instruments In An Eight Octave Scale."

Do you have a day job? A bunch of random stuff. My best recent job was working for Michael Moore's production team for his new cable show "The Awful Truth," which is, by the way, really, really funny. I wasn't doing anything especially cool or anything, I was just running around doing stupid shit. That's mostly what I do. The thing is that in New York you can get paid \$125 a day to run around and do stupid shit for different people. Which is great because I happen to be great at running around doing stupid shit for different people.

How long have you been into photography? Fo-ever.

I read that you have some stuff on display at the Museum of Modern Art. How did you get hooked up with that? Well, it's not on display but it's in their library, which is also online. I'd brought some photo books I made with color Xeroxes to Printed Matter to

a SoHo art store that's pretty cool for SoHo. I guess a woman from MOMA came in and bought them because I got a letter saying I was in the collection of emerging artists or something like that, and asking a bunch of questions about my influences and what-not. **Do you have a favorite camera?** I only use Polaroids because I don't got no teknikal no-how.

What sorts of things do you like to take

pictures of? Like the stuff on the covers. Things that don't have any scale around them but have a lot of color (usually taken close to sunset). The books in MOMA are called "27 silos of the rich and famous," which are all photos of silos, some of which are rich and famous; "the tragic rise and fall of the number 32," which are pictures of the number 32 on parking lots and in different places (kind of about O.J. and what not); "the disappearing act," which is a sort of story about this little metal object; "nothing short of monumental," and one other I can't remember the title of right now.

How do you describe your music? Crisp and clean and no caffeine. Taste great, less filling. Built to stay that way. Engineered to destroy. All the fine tuning you'll ever need.

On Circle Line Tours, you write about places and not feeling well. Where do you get inspiration to write your songs?

I've lived in a lot of places. I don't think that I don't feel well too much of the time, but I guess maybe so. A lot of the songs are stories with characters in them just told in the first person. My favorite lyricists are Slick Rick and Mark E. Smith, but I don't think I have as good a sense of humor of either of them unfortunately.

If there's anything else you'd like to add, feel free. Since you asked, let's see ... I think the world is becoming one huge corporate monopoly. In the next 100 years, governments will disappear and there will only be multi-national corporations like AT&T, Seagram's, and Time/Warner controlling all means of communication and transportation. MTV is a corporate monopoly just by itself, not to mention Viacom. The U.S. government has given up on regulating companies, and decided to become part of the showbiz spectacle. Our biggest commodity is culture, the entertainment industry is the new imperialism. Stand up and be part of the spectacle. Yeah.

HANIN ELIAS

THE ATARI TEENAGE RIOTER IS AS HARDCORE ABOUT HER FEMINIST IDEAS AS SHE IS HER MUSIC

BY AMY SCHROEDER


Like the concept of *Rolling Stone* dot com's "Artists A to Z" biography section, but they screwed up big time when they wrote Atari Teenage Riot's profile.

Actually, it starts off good, saying that ATR is a German punk/rock/jungle band that released a track called "Hunting for Nazis." But then it says: "This controversial, politically inflammatory song garnered international attention and proved to be a launching pad for Alec Empire, Hanin Elias and Carl Crack, the three men who started the band in rebellion of the trite direction in which techno was heading."

In the words of Cibo Matto, it's time to get your shit straight. Maybe the writer wasn't aware that a woman was capable of being as musically powerful and hardcore as Hanin Elias. So, without taking a few extra seconds to check facts, the *Rolling Stone* writer renders Elias a man.

"The music business is a man's world, and I'm sick of the fact that so many are taking it as it is," Elias says on ATR's site. "It's not my idea to be sexy to sell something. I have my own ideas; I have my own opinions — it's not just Alec who's the head of ATR (as usually stated in the press!) It's the whole band. We are a monster with three heads and now there's one more head growing out of it. Her name is Nic (Endo), and she's the new member of ATR."

To make her opinion even clearer, Elias recently formed a sub-label on Digital Hardcore Records called Fatal. "It's for girls who are sick of the whole system. Nothing has really changed for girls and women's rights. And we don't need rights to be allowed by men because we are right. I have



"I ALWAYS DREAMED ABOUT A LABEL ONLY FOR GIRLS WHERE WE HAVE OUR OWN LANGUAGE AND OUR OWN MUSIC."

always been an anarchist, always had a different personality, and I had to fight more than most men to receive respect for my music. I've had enough of people who still think in clichés — that girls don't do as much as boys."

In this interview, Elias talks a bit about Atari Teenage Riot's latest album, *60 Second Wipe Out*, which includes a number of impressive contributing musicians — namely Kathleen Hanna and the Arsonists. She talks even more about what it means to be a woman in the music industry and the importance of all-female record labels.

What are the differences between *60 Second Wipe Out* and previous releases? I think, of course, we develop from album to album. Nic does all the noise parts on the record, and it's different because it's a new influence. We also stopped using breakbeats, and we used more rock 'n' roll. It's also better mixed because we had a mixer in New York — Andy Wallace. He mixed Nirvana and people like them, and one track was

mixed by Dave Satie, who mixed Slayer before.

What are some of the messages on this album? I think our messages are not hard to understand. We see ourselves as anarchists, and on this album we wanted to use the word revolution very often because we think revolution had a very bad meaning from the past, and we wanted to give this word new meaning. By revolution, I mean mostly about changing the system — to change everything.

How do you give new meaning to the word revolution? I think when we stand up for it with our music, it gets a new meaning — and if we use it for anarchist longings. Is that the correct word to use in English? In the past it was used for, like, hippie reasons and for guitar music and acoustic stuff, and without violence. The messages surrounding revolution were different in the past than we want to use it.

When did you get started in music?

When I was 15. I played in a band with a guy called Kevin Spacek. We did very strange music, which was almost like psychedelic trash-metal punk. But the music wasn't very good. Then I met Alec Empire, and we decided to make a band together, and at first it was Alec and me. Then we chose Carl Crack as an MC, and three years ago we met Nic and decided to take her in the band as a fourth member. I've been in Atari Teenage Riot since 1991.

How old are you now? I'm 26.

Did you always want to be a musician? I always wanted to be an artist. I wanted to do creative work. Like everything that has to do with writing and painting, playing, acting, singing. I always was scared of having a job — sitting somewhere eight hours a day — and I didn't like that, so I always tried to go with this direction and it worked.

I'm very interested in your new record label, Fatal. When did you start the label? The idea was born very early, actually, but I didn't have any possibilities to form my own label because at first I was the only girl on Digital Hardcore Records. Then they came more and more. But they didn't have the same statements or opinions that I have. So I was always really disturbed by this hardcore boy thing that was going on at DHR: "No my record is harder and faster and more powerful than yours!" And all these record nerd stories — I couldn't take it anymore. I always dreamed about a label only for girls where we have our own language and our own music. I wanted to create a balance on DHR. I met Nic, and I met so many other girls. I can finally practice what I thought of, but I don't want it to be that I'm the leader of Fatal. I'm the creator of Fatal. I don't want to do it with hierarchy at all. So all the girls who join can do whatever they want, and I don't want to censor anything. It's better for me because I haven't got as much time to control everything. I think it just controls itself. I just released Nic Endo's EP. It's only noise, and my next EP comes out soon. I don't know when exactly. Then we are just about to work with Kathleen Hanna and her friend Johanna Fateman. We want to

do something together. I also want to record some other bands from New York. Do you know Bedroom Productions? It's a guy and a girl, and she's a rapper and she raps really different, so I'm going to do something with her. They did a track called "Socialism in New York City," which is really good. I think that will work out very well because it's on an electronic level, and it's not this rock thing — it's something different, and actually it's much easier to do electronic stuff for girls. We react much faster to situations and create much faster music and records than, you know, going to the rehearsal room and doing like drums and guitars and everything.

How do you find the bands that you want to put on Fatal? It has to have a certain energy, of course, and it should have state-

than boys. I want to open up more opportunities for girls.

What countries are Fatal records available in? I think Fatal records are available in the U.S., but I hear there's only one out — Nic's EP — because we just started. There will be more and more available in months to come; it's hard for us because we have to tour with Atari and finish Atari stuff, and I would like to have girls to send over some tapes. That would be great.

How can people contact you? On the backs of DHR CDs the address of the London office is printed. If girls or people want to send tapes, they can do it. (You can also find out more on the web site: www.digitalhardcore.com.)

What's the biggest challenge of running a record label? I don't run the record label

“WOMEN HAVE A DIFFERENT WAY OF DOING MUSIC, TALKING TO EACH OTHER AND COMMUNICATING THAN BOYS. I WANT TO OPEN UP MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS.”

ments that agree with the Fatal manifest. I don't want to have bubble-gum girl bands who dress up in pink and are really nice and stuff.

How did you come up with the name Fatal? I think Fatal is a great name because it reminds me of the 1920s, and internationally — in many languages — it means the same thing. It's just written with an "e" sometimes at the end and sometimes not. I think it will be fatal for the music industry and for the man's world in the future.

What are the responses so far for Fatal — from people you know and from musicians? Are they supportive? Yes, some are supportive, but some ask themselves or ask me why it's exclusively for girls because some boys want to do something on it too, but I think it's not a good idea. There are so many possibilities to do some stuff on DHR, and I just wanted to try to separate it because we have a different language. Women have a different way of doing music, talking to each other and communicating

alone. Lots of people are helping me. My job is as the communicator with the musicians, so I don't have to sit behind the computer eight hours a day.

What advice do you have for women who want to start their own businesses? They shouldn't care so much about reading instructions from a computer and about the rules of music equipment and stuff; they should ignore all the technicalities. It's written in a difficult language. It's easier to work things out by yourself and just try it. If they need any boys to explain them anything, they need lots of attention because the boys will treat them like babies. They shouldn't give up at any point; they should just go ahead and do everything they want. I think women-owned businesses will be very big in the future. It's especially hard in the music business for women. It's still dominated by men. I can't accept this fact. The more girls who get involved in making music — especially electronic music — the more these cliches will change.



YUKA HONDA & MIHO HATORI CIBO MATTO

STORY BY AMY SCHROEDER • PHOTOS BY JULIE SHOWERS

The first time I saw Cibo Matto perform was at Chicago's Metro Theater. I wish I could remember who they were sharing the stage with that night (I think it was Boss Hog), but Cibo Matto really stole the show.

The duo's equipment consisted of one keyboard, one small hand-held tape recorder and two microphones. Miho Hatori stood at the forefront of

the stage, smiling, looking directly at the audience, while she energized the crowd with her pop rhymes. Yuka Honda stood only a few feet behind Hatori, concentrating on her keyboard. When a song required a recorded sample or two, Honda simply hoisted her small tape player up to the microphone.

Their live performances were about

as lo-fi as you can go for a poppy hip-hop-inspired duo. Their way with words, their renditions of jazz, rock and rap along with their take on the art of mixing and sampling (ranging from Public Enemy to Duke Ellington)

is what made many of their songs easier to remember than your best friend's phone number.

It was 1996, and the duo's first album, *Viva! La Woman*, had just been released. A growing number of people were beginning to find out about the Japanese-raised-New Yorkers whose name in Italian meant "Food Crazy." Cibo Matto was so crazy about food, in fact, that all 11 of the album's songs, in one way or another, were about food.

I cannot think of another group that's managed to pull off -- or even attempted -- to dedicate an entire album to a simple theme, much less avocados, chicken and beef jerkey.

It's difficult to single out the album's standouts since Hatori and Honda invested equal amounts of energy to all their songs. On "Birthday Cake," Hatori does her own kind of rap, singing, "Extra sugar! Extra salt! Extra oil and MSGeeeeee!" On "Sugar Water," Honda slows down the tempo, creating a dreamy landscape for Hatori's equally la-lai-ing vocals.

Needless to say, Cibo Matto made a huge impact on both its listeners and music critics. *Viva! La Woman* garnered high praise and topped many publications' top-10 lists, including *Spin* magazine's "100 best albums of the '90s."

The only problem I saw with the media's coverage of Cibo Matto is the fact that many of the interviews tended to focus on the reviewers' words and not always on the band itself. A lot of descriptive work was invested in the duo's cuteness, fashion sense and how they compare to other Japanese-

American bands, such as Shonen Knife and Pizzicato Five. In my opinion, the latter-mentioned bands' styles are significantly unlike Cibo Matto's; more time should have been invested into compar-

isons of the band's influences, such as Beastie Boys and jazz musicians.

The second time I saw Cibo Matto perform was in New York City, at a taping of the PBS television show *Sessions at West 54th Street*. The best part of this experience is that the audience is so small and the sound quality is so incredible, especially since the audience sat only a few feet away from the stage.

Cibo Matto had recently released its second album, *Stereo-Type A*, and performed many of new songs along with a few from *Viva!* The difference between the first show and this one is that Cibo Matto now had a full band performing with them, as well as on their national tour. Miho Hatori once again stood at the front of the stage, singing beautifully. Behind her were Yuka Honda on keyboards, along with Sean Lennon, Timo Ellis and Marc Ribot.

Stereo-Type A takes on more challenging subjects, such as Asian stereotypes, racism and capitalism. Along with their meaningful messages, Honda decided to produce the album herself, a completely new experience. "There are people who think that women can't operate studio equipment," the 39-year-old says in the band's press release. "Stereo is also what tells you where you are located. Dolphins can see what is happening with their sense of hearing. In a philosophical way, if you listen, you can also tell where you are, or more importantly, where you're at. We have to learn to listen for ourselves with both our left and right ears, and not just believe everything we're told."

On the next three pages, we decided to print a straight-up Q&A interview with Cibo Matto.



ALL PHOTOS WERE TAKEN ON CIBO MATTO'S MANAGER'S ROOF. IT'S HIS DOG TOO (IN THE PHOTO AT LEFT).

What are your goals?

Yuka Honda: I'm not a goal person. I never think in terms of goals. I don't want to make things so desperate. For *Stereo-Type A*, I wanted to make a record in terms of what I like to do.

How'd you come up with the title for the album?

It's something we want people to think about. It's obviously a mixture of "stereotype" and "type A." We were also thinking stereo -- more in breaking down stereo and type.

You produced the album for the first time. What kind of feedback did you receive?

I lacked some positivity. Because I have very little experience, and an album costs a lot of money to make, and many people are involved. The reluctance came from those things, but a lot of people thought I probably could do it. And and I'm really glad that they trusted me to do it.

What are your favorite songs on *Stereo-Type A*?

They're all like my children, and I love all my children in different ways.

How did you get involved with music?

I was wondering about that because I remember my first incident with music was when my mom asked me if I wanted to take a piano lesson -- I was 6. I remember thinking, "What is a piano?" I remember that I sort of knew what it was, but I couldn't remember how I knew it. I knew I had never seen it before. I ended up taking lessons for not as long as I should have -- three or four years. Then I started to slack, and she kind of fired me. It's hard to say. I didn't learn the pleasure of piano then, but I love the piano now. I appreciate what I learned. I had a military-like teacher who hated me and didn't think I should be playing.

When you were growing up in Japan, did you want to be a musician? Did anyone encourage you to be a musician?

I didn't always want to be a musician. No one encouraged me to be a musician. My mother wanted me to do whatever I wanted to do. My father wanted me to be an independent person. My father was very feminist when it came to me. He was very encouraging for me to take an independent path. I wanted to be a writer. I write little poems now. I used to write for a magazine in Japan. I interviewed people and it was really fun.

What do you think are some of the differences between this album and *Viva! La Woman*?

This album feels a lot more complete, and it's a lot more my record. We had to start from scratch and decide what kind of vision we would have. We had to encounter the

problems on our own about the delivery times, and we did pretty much all the production work ourselves, so it's much more our record than the first.

What are your musical influences?

Our influences are sooo wide. I'm influenced by every kind of music. I don't think of music in genre. I think of it in a hedonistic way. I really think of it in terms of whether I like it or not. From pop to heavy metal to traditional Indian music to bossa nova to classical -- anything that makes me feel good. Depending on my mood, I like really like loud music, rap, salsa, jazz and hip-hop very much. I also like avante garde. I go see avante garde a lot. I'm all over the place.

Are there any kinds of music that don't make you feel good?

I don't like boring music.

What are your favorite bands?

Sonic Youth. They're my favorite band. Beastie Boys, Beck's band, jazz groups, Rufus Wainwright. I'm probably not supposed to say this because I'm a part of it, but I really love Sean (Lennon)'s band.

Is it difficult to work on other projects, such as Sean's band?

It's not hard to work on other projects. It's mentally the best thing. I think I would suffer a lot if I was doing one thing over and over. Mentally, I am much happier doing a lot of things. It's harder physically. It's hard for people who work with me, and I'm really grateful for people who let me do it. I think my music develops by doing a lot of things. I learn the best when I jump into another water and have to do a new thing. And I learn about what I was doing wrong before, so it's important for me to constantly put myself in a new water and swim in a new water.

Are you working on any other projects?

I am working on a solo record, which should be coming out sometime in 2000. It's going to be a jazz, avante-garde crazy thing. I want to do some crazy things. I'll probably do some remixes, but I'll probably concentrate mainly on *Cibo Matto* in 1999 because we waited for this year so long.

How long did it take you to produce *Stereo-Type A*? It took almost a year and a half from the talking stage. We recorded in a New York; we spent two or three months all together. We did it in a sporadic matter. I'm happy about the way this album came together because we wanted something spontaneous, and it's nice to go home and think about it for a month or so. I wanted to make a record that many people can listen to on different occasions, and it's nice to check



your music on a sunny day and on a rainy day and see how it sounds.

What was the best experience about recording *Stereo-Type A*?

The greatest thing that happened during the recording process is that our relationship became so beautiful. It's corny to say, but I don't know how else to say it. We had to go through so much shit in trying to make this record. There were a lot of personal issues coming out; we had some relationship crises and friendship crises. A lot of people in the band were having problems. We spent every day together -- 16 hours in the studio, and we all had strong opinions and are strong-minded people. There was a lot of "how about this?" "ohmygod," "ddddddd" -- that was the most beautiful thing. I love the people in my band so much. It feels like a family that's worked through a lot of shit.

I heard somewhere that there's going to be a *Cibo Matto* cartoon. Hopefully it will be out as soon as possible. I don't know if I'll be involved.

In the song "Sci-fi Wasabi," you sing (not in this order): "New York never had equality, it's reality, economic duality; Ain't no analogy for individuality, I got immunity from multiplicity; Where's your identity? Our name is stereotype with an 'A'; I got to get the shit straight; There is a hole on Broadway, no control, it's in my way." Can you tell me what this song means to you?

Miho Hatori: I love hip-hop, and I wanted to do something fun. I got the words for the title somehow. In the summer of '98, I was into bike-riding and Nintendo. I spent time with the two new hobbies, and I created a story. It's not just about bike-riding and the games, though. When I sing that there's a hole on Broadway - there are a lot of holes on Broadway, and it's pretty dangerous for bike riders. But it's also about the holes and fears in our lives. We can avoid those kind of holes or situations in our lives, and I kind of mixed everything together. There are a lot of problems in my life that I can't avoid. Everybody has this. Some problems you can't avoid. We can't let these holes get in our way. We have to deal with everything.

What does the title of the album mean to you? There's no one meaning. It's a mixture of stereo sound, type-A typical personality -- so many things. We love the title. It's very meaningful for us. We are Japanese, so stereotypes are what we have to live

with.

How do you come up with ideas for songs? Yuka and I write songs together. We talk about songs musically and lyrically. Sometimes Yuka will say, "You should see the cover of *Science* magazine ... blah, blah, blah." The songs come from conversations and experience from our lives -- everything, really.

How'd you get started in music? When I came here from Japan, I was hanging out with kids in the street, and we were in a punk band.

Have you also wanted to make music? When I was in Tokyo, I always wanted to create something, but it wasn't necessarily music. I was young, and I didn't know what I wanted to do. I studied art and graphics in school. I still design for *Cibo* T-shirts.

Were you encouraged to be a musician when you were a kid? I listened to a lot of music when I was a kid. When I was a teenager, I was pissed off. I was a normal teenager. When I heard Beastie Boys' *Check Yo' Head*, it felt so good. Music like that is like medicine for me.

What's the best part about making music?

It feels great. When we have a great show, I feel so great. Everyone's so happy. It's so amazing that we can create this chemical.

What are the biggest challenges of making music? Starting from a tiny, tiny sound or word and being able, in the end, after production, to make it one big song. It all comes together because of people's support or someone's idea. Basically, writing songs is a collaboration of a lot of people. It's amazing. The amazing thing about music is that you can't see it, which is pretty special to me. Making a building is obvious. You can see it anytime. With music you have to listen -- you have to use your ears and your mind.

Do you think it's more difficult to be a woman than a man in the music business? Yes and no. Sometimes it's more difficult. It's pretty much like how men in society have it easier. It can be tougher for women, but it's getting better. The industry is slowly getting wider for women and younger people. Yuka and I are pretty picky about food, and it's pretty hard to eat cheeseburgers every day. Nothing to compare, otherwise.

Any particularly interesting stories about recording *Stereo-Type A*? We were so into a snowboarding Nintendo game, and every time we didn't have anything to do, we played.

Any side projects? I worked on the Automator.





IN SHORT WITH YUKA HONDA

Favorite slang word?

Slow

What do you do best?

That's the hardest question I've been asked in an interview. There's nothing I do exceptionally well.

How about music?

I'd hate to say I do that well. I drive well. And I'm a really good cook.

What do you cook?

There are a lot of dishes I cook really well, but I'm also good at improvisation.

Who's the most inspiring woman in your life?

Right now it's Susie Ibarra. She's a jazz drummer who plays in downtown New York a lot. She's the best thing in this city. Her music is really amazing. I recommend highly that everyone see her because it's the best thing you can do for yourself. It's very inspirational, and it changes your life to see her play.

If you could change something about the world, what would you change?

If I could change that people think before they get mad, we'd have much less stressful lives.

IN SHORT WITH MIHO HATORI

Favorite slang word?

Babaganush. It's so unique sounding. When my friends started to use it, I was like, "What are you talking about? They would say, 'I'm eating babaganush!'" It's very special to me.

What do you do best?

Washing dishes. (laughs)

Who are some of the most influential women in your life?

My friends and Yuka. My mother. Chaka Khan, Aretha Franklin, Lauryn Hill, a lot of great artists.

If you could change something about the world, what would you change?

No violence.

What are your favorite bands?

There are a thousand. Hip-hop to Fateh Ali Khan or blues or jazz or Latin. There are thousands.

Any kinds of music you don't like?

Anything too deep.

TWO SHORT ESSAYS ON WOMEN'S IMAGES IN THE MEDIA

The waif, heroine chic, the return of the voluptuous woman, the lollipop heads, the pear-shaped woman, the inverted-pyramid woman, the woman whose booty is as big as Jennifer Lopez's. I feel like I've heard it all when it comes to categories, fashion "movements," and just about any "women's magazine"'s latest "story" on how to buy clothes that'll diminish your particular fruit of a body shape.

When I started laying out the pages for this article, I was thinking about cutting out a load of pictures from fashion magazines, newspapers and advertisements to make a collage. I was going to find examples of how women's bodies are obsessed about in the media. It's probably one of the most popular subjects in popular culture.

But what's the point of showing even more images? It's not as if people don't know how women are portrayed in popular media. It's not as if women don't already realize that our "average and ideal sizes" have been argued about since ... hell, when haven't they been headline news?

Size six was the ideal size for the American woman in the early '80s, then size eight in the early '90s. Now the media tells me that the size to be in Hollywood is zero. Or is it *really* size zero since many fashion designers are altering their sizes to make us feel better, and hence, buy more? Then there's all the talk of what the "real" average woman is: something like a size 12.

What happened to the "real" Barbie? I heard all about her a few years ago, but I've yet to actually see her for sale at Toys R Us. Now McDonald's is distributing mini models of vintage Barbie in its

I HAVEN'T TALKED TO ANYONE YET WHOSE THOUGHTS ON 'WHO WANTS TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE' WAS ANYTHING BUT DEROGATORY TO WOMEN. BUT WE STILL WATCHED IT? WHY? BECAUSE WE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

Happy Meals -- for girls only, of course; boys get Hot Wheels.

Point is, as much as the media enjoys defining and redefining what's "normal" and what's "perfect" for women, I don't recall ever reading a story about the ideal size for a man -- much less the average size for a man. What up with this?

So, in getting back to my original point, it's not as if we're not already bombarded with billboards and photographs of idealistic beauty images. The world's got enough of them; in fact, the world has too many of them. It's also not the case that the subject of women's beauty images isn't written about enough. It's been written about time and time again since the '70s era of feminism.

I also haven't talked to anyone yet whose thoughts on *Who Wants To Marry A Millionaire* was anything but derogatory to women -- not to mention reminiscent of 1950s values. Yet Fox's ratings (ratings for TV shows obviously aren't like movie ratings; the TV rating is a word for

advertisers) sky-rocked with the airing of the show. Why? Because we couldn't believe it. I know I couldn't. I watched it, all along thinking, "This is exactly what the network wants: more viewers, thus more expensive ads, thus, more money for them." Yet, I watched it.

And although many feminists and non-feminists alike have made their points successfully, I argue to say that nowadays we see just as many exposes, snippets and features in the newspapers, magazines and on TV shows that aid in the definition of femininity in the Western world. I read recently in a fashion magazine that the "real woman" is back -- as in the voluptuous image is currently hot and gone are the days of the waif. This is bullshit. It's just another example of how the beauty and fashion industries are able to decide what the ideal woman is supposed to look like.

So why reiterate the point, you may be thinking. I'll tell you why. It's because no matter how many times women talk about how they're not going to worry about their weight, their hair and how it directly relates to their happiness, they always do.

Someone recently said that all women are concerned about their appearance, and I thought to myself, "I'm proud to say that I'm not." But when really thinking about it, that's not quite true. Do I have a solution? Not yet.

The issue of the issue is women's images in the media. On the following pages, you'll find two essays written by former college roommates who've spent more than a few hours talking about this issue over the years.

-- A.S.

Feminism is not a hobby (Or what I might have said)

BY AMY BEVEVINO

Disclaimer: The intention of this article is to address a specific situation to which I did not receive an adequate opportunity to reply. You will find some of my bantor specifically directed toward men. Although this direction holds an amount of appropriateness, I don't mean to suggest that all men fall on the opposite side from myself regarding this issue, nor that all women stand with me.

The situation: Tonight on HBO: *Strippers Exposed*

Women dance on stage, around poles, on laps for men who sometimes (usually) chant and cheer. A 23-year-old woman receives her second set of silicon implants to increase the size of her breasts as well as extensive liposuction for her butt and hips.

My friends, all men, look toward me. "You look pissed. Why does it make you so mad? It's their choice."

No answer.

A woman sitting in an oversized champagne glass simulates sex, splashing suds. Women spank themselves, shoot ping-pong balls from their vaginas, dress as naughty school girls, grim reapers, police officers. One woman is photographed with a male fan. She says, "Look, you got some tit and a little ass in there." He hands her money, which for the first time, she accepts with her hands. An aging stripper is restricted to working Monday afternoons because she's considered too old, her butt and thighs too big to work the money-making shifts. She auditions at several strip joints, stripping for one man who usually owns the club, only to receive rejection after rejection. She walks outside and breaks down.

"Oooh, that must make you mad," they say.

No answer.

After having some time to absorb the extent of my disgust found while watching *Strippers Exposed*, I have decided to answer their question: "Why does it make you so mad?"

Where do I begin? First of all, I'm noticing a trend among my peers to relentlessly single me out whenever the conversation, television show, etc., involves feminism or women -- period. This singling out, however, is

**WHEN A CHOICE IS
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rarely an act of respect or true inquisition into my feelings. I am The Feminist. It's my bag, my hobby. It's assumed I find interest in the subject in the same way that someone may have a likeness toward, say, techno music or modern art.

Let's clarify. A hobby is something you do when you're bored or when you're done doing what you need to do. I recognize how music or art preferences can be all-consuming, but I would hardly compare them to feminism. Feminism is a life choice. You must be a feminist consciously. Gloria Steinem once explained: "You are either a feminist or a machoist." It is not something that is allowed to flourish naturally, but must be sought out. So, in that sense, it is akin to a hobby. That, however, is its only semblance. It's not like, "Yeah, she's one. You can tell by her Ani DiFranco-shaved head and long skirts." It's not on a T-shirt or poster. Feminism is always crawling just beneath the skin.

Sometimes I think people wish feminism were a hobby, that we would just hang our feminist caps in our lockers and settle down for a night of popcorn and *Strippers Exposed*. Well, sometimes I don't feel like letting things slide, or even smiling for that matter. Sometimes I get sick of fighting and explaining. Oftentimes I find it intimidating to say things in a room full of people who may be ready to resist me, who I'm almost sure will trivialize what I have to say.

Let's reflect: I'm not a feminist for the sake of male enlightenment (although that's a great thing that can happen.) It's not about men. It's not to

make them angry or happy, satisfied or turned on. For me, it's about feeling whole without the validation of men.

So, I may be squelching my anger through shows like *Strippers Exposed*. And, sometimes I do feel like keeping to myself that I'm mad because we all have to pay for these choices. Or, that I'm mad because it doesn't end with one woman's choice to strip, or one man's choice to pay for it. It doesn't end with one spectator or one ad. When a choice is made to build an establishment where woman equals pussy on a stick, this functions to perpetuate the image of man-pleasing, brainless, intatilized sex kitten. And when this image serves to discredit my opinion or her education. Or makes one woman feel less or three million women feel ugly. When it makes her stay because she's too afraid and because she doesn't think she's worth it to leave, you damn well better believe it makes me mad.

It's even further aggravating that sometimes I'm the only person in the room who's getting mad. Granted, I'm often the only woman in the room, but these are intelligent, even so-called enlightened, men. They're men who care about "the issues." Or so they say. I fail to believe that they would sit here with the same dispassion had this been a clear example of racism or homophobia.

I believe, to some extent, that even these intelligent men believe that these women bring this upon themselves -- that they choose to be strippers with the same willingness that one would choose any occupation.

And, hey, I'm not mad specifically by their choice. If everyone could walk out of a strip club and enjoy the same privileges, having been virtually unaffected by the image of a woman exposing herself to strangers, then fine, "take it all off!" This, however, is hardly the case. This is an industry that pays women more money to rub their breasts into waiting faces than they could earn in almost any other field. This is an industry that actively enforces the objectification of women, thereby increasing violence against women and young girls.

I'm angered by the ignorance with which we view these women, often

themselves victims of abuse and poverty. These jobs are uninsured, without retirement plans, and only last as long as the women are considered "beautiful" -- with little hope or few perceived options. When I watch their documentary, that is what I see. I look beyond Juicy Julie and Topless Tamara. They're not why I'm mad. The fact that they exist and will inevitably continue to exist as the ultimate commercial products is why I'm mad.

Do not be mistaken: I'm not angrier

because of feminism. Feminism only provides the vocabulary for which to speak about injustices that have always existed. It's not less of a fight without feminism. Women would still be hurt and angry but would understand it as their fault. Removing the patriarchal blinders isn't a pleasant experience. It means seeing things for what they are when it may be easier to go along or look away. Ignorance isn't the bliss that is promised. The only thing promised by ignorance is fear.

Feminism gives us the courage to speak up in a room full of nonsympathizers when you're outnumbered, when the atmosphere is hostile and your opinion is likely to be misunderstood or misconstrued. Or it allows the confidence to keep quiet, formulating ideas, working introspectively. Without a need to explain. Feminism doesn't dictate that we think, react or feel the same; it only and, most importantly, let's us make peace with ourselves.

I've had enough of tattered roles on tube, silver screen

BY MEGHAN BUSLEPP

I have to vent. One thing that has been driving me up the wall recently is the way mass media portray women. While the common perception is that women are finally able to have it all, I remain more cynical. For evidence, I point to television and big-budget blockbuster movies. From what I can tell, the women seen onscreen can be placed in one of three main categories.

FIRST IS THE STUPID SEXPOT. The stupid sexpot is the woman who has spent too much time on her appearance and really doesn't seem too concerned with much else. She can be seen on any prime-time television show or as the woman men drool over in movies. The message her character seems to be sending is that appearance -- and little else -- makes a woman appealing to the opposite sex. This woman can do one thing particularly well: attract men. She is usually treated as an object or as a sex toy and oftentimes she is a stripper or some girl in a bikini hanging on a slimy mobsteresque man.

THE NEXT WOMAN IS THE MOTHER. This woman is caring, unintimidating and bizarrely fulfilled. She spends most of her days worrying about soap scum, her children's diets and the ever-dreaded ring around the collar. The new twist on this theme is the working woman who loves a lot but has very little time. She still does all the housework and childcare but is looking to find the fastest approach possible. Strangely absent from this TV and movie world is the man. Often, when the motherly woman appears on TV or in movies, I can barely contain myself. I want to

THE UNATTRACTIVE OR OVERWEIGHT MAN IS USUALLY JUST A CHUBBY TEDDY BEAR WITH A HEART OF GOLD. THINK JOHN GOODMAN. IT DOESN'T WORK THIS WAY FOR WOMEN.

scream, "Where is the damn husband? Does he ever do laundry or make dinner?" These idealized gender stereotypes have a way of seeping into cultural expectations and norms.

Why do you think that women, who in many cases work the same amount of hours as the men around them, still have to come home and do more? This is the double-day trend in most families. When they can't keep up, women end up feeling like they've failed in the quest to be everything to everyone.

The next female portrayal, and certainly the most repulsive, is the **UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN.** This is the woman who goes home to her cats at night, who lives a lonely existence merely because she isn't perfect. She may be mousy and bookish or loud and overweight, but regardless, she is the woman everyone pities, but no one loves. Most may be less familiar with this woman, because she is not always present. An imperfect woman does not make for good male-oriented TV.

Not surprisingly, there is no such

male counterpart to this woman. The unattractive or overweight man is usually just a chubby teddy bear with a heart of gold. Think John Goodman. He's such a sweet guy, and no one seems to care about his appearance. I'm not saying they should. It just doesn't work this way for women.

What I *am* saying is that this perfected beautiful woman whom we all see on television sends a message. TV and movies tell women they can never be thin enough, that they can never be pretty enough and that they damn well better try to improve the way they look if they don't want to spend their lives alone. This is the real message that women receive. Forget about your mind; focus on your abs and your manicure.

Unfortunately, my observations tell me that women are listening to these unrealistic messages. Who can blame them? When you are told constantly that you have to be thin and pretty to be successful (read: desired), after a while you begin to believe it. Most friends tell me that their mothers were more concerned with their weight than their academic performances.

I have no trouble believing this. Women may argue that they have overcome past discrimination and stereotypes, but media portrayals tell a different story. What women need to do is organize and reject unfair and harmful expectations. Maybe our best hope is to work with young women to convince them that they are important and that the best thing they can possibly do is cultivate their minds and illustrate the falsities in popular culture.

ZINES

AND THE WOMEN WHO MAKE THEM

On the back page of the latest issue of *Stay Free!*, you'll find one of our decade's hippest ad campaign by the clothing store that's guaranteed to be in every mall in America. You have to be a "Kill TV" campaigner not to know it. It's the Gap's swing-dance-influenced "everyone in khakis" pitch.

But something's a little off. No, something's a lot off.

The major difference between this ad and every other Gap khakis ad you see on the boob toob and in major magazines is that the guy wearing the pants is being hanged.

Although it seems a bit sick, these kinds of ad spoofs represent the intelligence of *Stay Free!*, a nonprofit magazine examining commercialism and American culture. It's published about every 10 months by Carrie McLaren, a New Yorker who by day works for Matador Records' advertising department. On the *Stayfree!* site, you'll find many of the print version's stories, which include articles on "How Advertising Can Wreck Your Health" and the "Top Six Uses for a Cell Phone" (for example, a beer coaster, self-defense weapon and a dog's chew toy), plus more ad spoofs (*Panexa: Ask Your Doctor For a Reason To Take It.*)

StayFree!'s wit, criticism and freedom to say whatever they hell it wants epitomizes the beauty of the fanzine, and a growing number of women are getting in on the action. "I'm a control freak, and doing my own mag is the only way to make sure I can stuff everything in — as opposed to freelance writing," says McLaren. "Also, *Stay Free!* focuses on consumer culture, and it doesn't make sense to criticize commercialism without trying to forge some sort of alternative. The best part is probably having an excuse to talk to other writers and authors; it's like getting a top-notch education without paying tuition or dealing with institutional bullshit."

PRINT POWER

"Do you really want to know my age? I'm probably old enough to be your mother."

Though Emily Hancock won't reveal her age and she may be old enough to be my mother, she's making waves for the thousands who read *Moxie*, her quarterly, glossy feminist issues and women's arts magazine.

Moxie (check out www.moxie.com) is just one of a growing number of web sites, fanzines and glossy publications dedicated to the empowerment of young women. "*Moxie's* goal is to provide a rudder for young women who are finding their way in 'the real world' — to provide them a recurrent reminder of what a real woman is and what real women can do while they're being bombarded by airbrushed female facsimiles on billboards and TV," said Hancock.

Hancock launched *Moxie* in 1995, five years after she wrote *The Girl Within*, a book that traces women's identity back to the sense of self that crystalizes at ages 8, 9 and 10 — confirming national research that girls' self-esteem peaks at 9 and soon plunges downhill. The book piqued her interest in conducting independent research on college women's self-esteem, which laid the groundwork for *Moxie's* content and target audience.

"I found that many students confront the dilemmas they face on leaving college — what sort of job to take, whether to follow a sweetie to another part of the country, set up on their own, move back with parents, live with a roommate, whether and when to get married, whether to go to graduate school — in isola-



above: On the back cover of *Stay Free!* No. 16 is a fake you-know-what ad.

right: If this photo of *Stay Free!*'s cover did justice for its full-color glory, you'd be able to see that the guns are the same colors as the IMacs in their own ads.



Cover of *Moxie* magazine, a quarterly glossy pro-feminist publication that helps young women make important decisions.



"I FOUND THAT MANY STUDENTS CONFRONT THE DILEMMAS THEY FACE ON LEAVING COLLEGE IN ISOLATION. INCREASINGLY, THEY TOLD ME, THEY TURN TO THE MEDIA FOR ANSWERS. WHAT DO THEY GET THERE? FASHION, SEX AND BEAUTY." EMILY HANCOCK, MOXIE EDITOR

tion. Increasingly, they told me, they turn to the media for answers. What do they get there? Fashion, sex and beauty."

Hancock says because media are so important in shaping women's lives, *Moxie's* role is to "fight media with media" by offering an alternative to mainstream publications.

WEB POWER

Less than 30 minutes from *Moxie's* headquarters in Berkeley, California, is *Feminista!*, a San Francisco-based monthly-updated web site zine whose stories focus on radical feminism, critiques of mainstream women's beauty images and political issues that affect women globally.

Had the website's 33-year-old editor, Juliette Cutler Page, not been criticized years earlier for her "too feminist" writings by the editors of an online zine called RiotGrrl, *Feminista!* may never have been born. In *Feminista!'s* debut issue in May 1997, she wrote: "I want to see articles that startle people with their degree of feminism. I want to see this without seeing men degraded and called names. I want to see a multi-cultural emphasis — where are black women on the web? I want to see articles about women in physics, not someone's crush on Bill Gates."

Since its start, *Feminista!'s* monthly hit rate has increased from about 4,000 to 25,000 with an audience between the ages of 12 and 80 of various economic classes and educational levels — its core audience being women between 30 and 50. "*Feminista!* has ended up on a lot of university course lists, which is thrilling for me."

STILL SOME PROBLEMS

If you do an online subject search for feminist magazines, you're likely to find at least 50 sites that meet your request. Or do they? As Cutler Page explains, many of the new publications boasting a pro-woman perspective aren't all they're cracked up to be. "So far I've determined that there is no truly wonderful feminist webzine. I want a webzine that tackles things that are difficult, that discusses everything — all with reference to feminism. Women are 53 percent of the world's population, after all." Although the number of zines made by women are growing, in the eyes of many fellow zinesters and feminists, there's still a few problems. Behind many of the "pro-woman" pitches there sometime lurks the occasional story on "how to score boys" "what makeup to buy," etc. There's also the issue of what the sites try to sell, such as clothes and cosmetics.

Although feminism isn't exactly the easiest word to define, when you visit the sites Cutler-Page critiques, many of which have riot or grrl in their titles, you realize she has a well-researched point. After reviewing dozens of web sites, she concludes that many sites like the association with feminism, but that's about it. Some of her examples of anti-feminist material include fluffy fashion and cosmetics stories, and the writing off of violence issues. "What they seemed to want was entertainment masquerading as feminism."

The point Cutler Page makes is not an attempt to destroy the credibility of women's magazines. Instead, she's concerned about the publications' claims of women's empowerment masqueraded by the very teeny-bopper material the sites proclaim to be against. Many of the critiqued sites feel as though you're scrolling through a Delia's fashion catalog than a site that proclaims slogans

LIST OF DOPE ZINES

BITCH

www.bitchmagazine.com

The makers of this print zine (and its matching site) have an excellent response to its often-quoted title: "When it's being used as an insult, 'bitch' is most often hurled at women who speak their minds, who have opinions and don't shy away from expressing them. If being an outspoken woman means being a bitch, we'll take that as a compliment, thanks." Be sure not to search for bitch.com or even bitch-mag.com because those are both porn sites.

BRILLO

www.virago-net.com/brillo/

As if graphics of flying tampons weren't enough to get you thinking, the web site-only magazine contains insightful essays on ebonics, sexism in technology, artistic activism and whether feminists hate men. *Brillo* hasn't been updated in a while, but the old stuff is definitely still worth reading.

BUST

www.bust.com

You must, you must, you must know about *Bust*. It's probably the most accomplished, highest-distributed print zine of all women's zines. They've got a real knack for theme issues, such as the Sex issue, the Body issue, and the upcoming Travel issue. Although it's site doesn't contain much of the print version's content, it does feature the Girl Wide Web, the most extensive list of women's sites, particularly personal sites.

DRUMMER GIRL

www.drummergirl.com

This is a site for women who drum and contains interviews with some of the dopest drummers in the business, including Sleater-Kinney's Janet Weiss, Yo La Tengo's Georgia Hubley, Luscious Jackson's Kate Schellenbach and Magnetic Field's Claudia Gonson. *Drummer Girl* was created as a response to the lack of females profiled in larger drummer publications. *Drummer Girl* is an excellent network for meeting other female drummers around the country, posting your own gigs and keeping up with drumming news.

FABULA

www.fabulamag.com

In this San Francisco-based quarterly print magazine, you'll find a load of interesting stories its latest issue from interviews with Martha Plimpton and the Lunachicks to commentaries on the meatheadedness of Woodstock Park III. Although it's distributed heavily in California, it may be a challenge to find *Fabula* in other states, so be sure to check out the site for information.

THE LIST, CONTINUED

FEMINA

www.femina.com

The motto of this search engine is "Sites for, by and about women." You'll likely find all the other sites mentioned in this list along with hundreds more.

HUES

www.hues.net

Hues stands for Hear Us Emerging Sisters and is a glossy magazine that boasts the slogan "it's not your mother's feminist magazine." *Hues* focuses on women of color, women in sports, women in activism, artists and feminist humor.

ROCKRGRL

www.rockrgrl.com

RockrGrl is a glossy bi-monthly about women in music with the slogan "No beauty tips or guilt trips." The magazine is for readers interested in starting their own record labels and bands; cover stories have included interviews with Ani DiFranco, Sleater-Kinney and Yoko Ono.

SISTER

www.xanthoria.com

Sister "is a place for female DJs to get gigs without bias, providing a supportive platform for any female DJ, MC or live performer to enjoy their music where gender is not an issue." The site lists events, resources and also includes interviews with resident and guest DJs, including Amber, Dazy and Arode von P.

VAGABIJNDA

www.vagabunda.com

The theme of this well-designed site is take back the world and is written by a team of young women who are very interested in traveling the U.S. and the world. The site contains interesting first-person accounts and advice for traveling to particular cities.

WOMANROCK

www.womanrock.com

This is an excellent site for women in music with reviews, well-written feature stories, event listings and music resources. You'll also find loads of interesting interviews, such as with Mary Lou Lord, Kristin Hersh and indie filmmaker Tina Mascara.

W.I.G. MAGAZINE

www.wigmag.com

This print magazine is published in Utah and stands for Women In General. Published in Utah. Contains stuff about sports, music, art and culture. *Wiggers* will read about everything from music to art to sports.

Tell us what other zines and sites we should know about.

Send e-mail to: Venusmag@aol.com

such as "girl power" and "the new voice."

Jamae Wilson explained in her article "The Politics of E-Zines" (*Feminista!* vol. 1, issue 10) that many women's sites compromise feminist viewpoints for fear of funding loss. "The truth is, the majority of the webzines online are in it for one thing: publicity. This means if they have somehow managed to gain publicity — for example, by being recognized for their discussions on sex — they feel compelled to keep doing the same thing, the same way, in order to maintain their place in the spotlight. Few zines confront hard-hitting issues, except about sex, and that approach gets annoying and quite boring in a very short time. Frank discussion on racism and feminism is nearly nonexistent because the editors are afraid they'll lose a couple of readers or, in some cases, sponsors."

The numbers appear to back her up in the sponsorship debate. A recent study by America Online, the nation's largest on-line service, showed that — counter to the popularly held belief that the Internet is a male sphere — the majority of its approximately 13 million subscribers are female. Similarly, *Time* magazine reported in January that women now make up 49 percent of the online population, a significant increase from 38 percent four years ago. "The fact that women also account for 80 percent of U.S. household spending could add up to an E-commerce gold mine. Small wonder, then, that sites aimed at women are proliferating like Amazonian colonies all over the Web," wrote *Time* reporter Sara Hammel.

The real feminist zines are left lagging behind the money-makers, which is fine with them, for the most part, since they're the majority of them don't make a profit.

FUNDING AND THE LABOR OF LOVE

When Hancock decided last year to expand *Moxie's* readership with a print version, she put just about everything on the line, including her home. "Moxie has no backers. I financed it first by refinancing my house, and through credit cards. We really need to find the powerful women out there who want young women to have something more than what the mainstream media purvey."

Hancock runs both the print and online formats out her home and says that although *Moxie* staff members are part-time editors with other day jobs, the magazine pays \$25 for contributing articles. "*Moxie* is my most important job, but three days a week I work as a counselor in courts, helping parents and judges develop parenting plans for children of divorcing spouses." To make ends meet, *Moxie* uses pro-women advertisements, including trade ads with other pro-feminist magazines, such as *Bitch* and *Fabula*.

Hancock stresses the fact that like most fanzines, *Moxie* is a labor of love — something *Feminista!* can relate to, since it's just one of Cutler-Page's several side projects, including a book on "feminist-friendly graduate programs and internships in psychology and a potential book on "anti-psychology for psychologists." "My full-time day job is unrelated to *Feminista!*, but it pays the rent."

Like *Moxie*, Cutler Page runs the *Feminista!* website out of her home in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. "We have a desk and several file cabinets, but that's about it. The biggest challenge of *Feminista!* is getting the damn thing out on time every month. I fail to live up to my expectations on this point more often than I care to admit. I'd like to apologize to the world for that." To meet a goal of breaking even on the costs of site maintenance, *Feminista!* sells T-shirts stamped with its motto and is funded by a few advertisers. All *Feminista!* editors and contributing writers are non-paid volunteers.

"*Feminista!* is less a business than a calling for me. I suggest that all women do what they love. What could be more fulfilling than spending most of your time doing what means the most to you, whatever that may be? If you can make a business out of it, you're doubly blessed."

-- Amy Schroeder

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TO PLACE YOUR WORDS IN THE MAY 2000 ISSUE OF VENUS, PLEASE E-MAIL VENUSMAG@AOL.COM

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-- Julie Burchill and Tony Parson in *The Boy Looked at Johnny: the Obituary of Rock and Roll* (London: Pluto Press, 1978)
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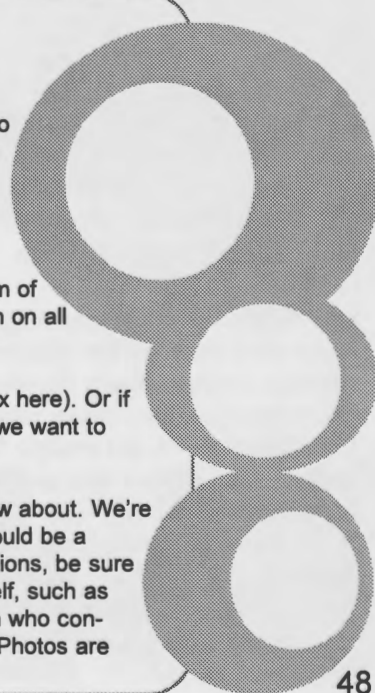
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we want you, we need you

One of *Venus*' biggest goals is to act as a forum for our readers. The best way to do that, we think, is to ask *Venus* readers to contribute to the magazine. The following is a list of the special features sections that will appear in the May 2000 issue. We're looking for shortish writing pieces. You don't have to worry about writing all fancy (unless you really want to). Just write what you think -- write how you speak. You can e-mail your pieces to: Venusmag@aol.com.

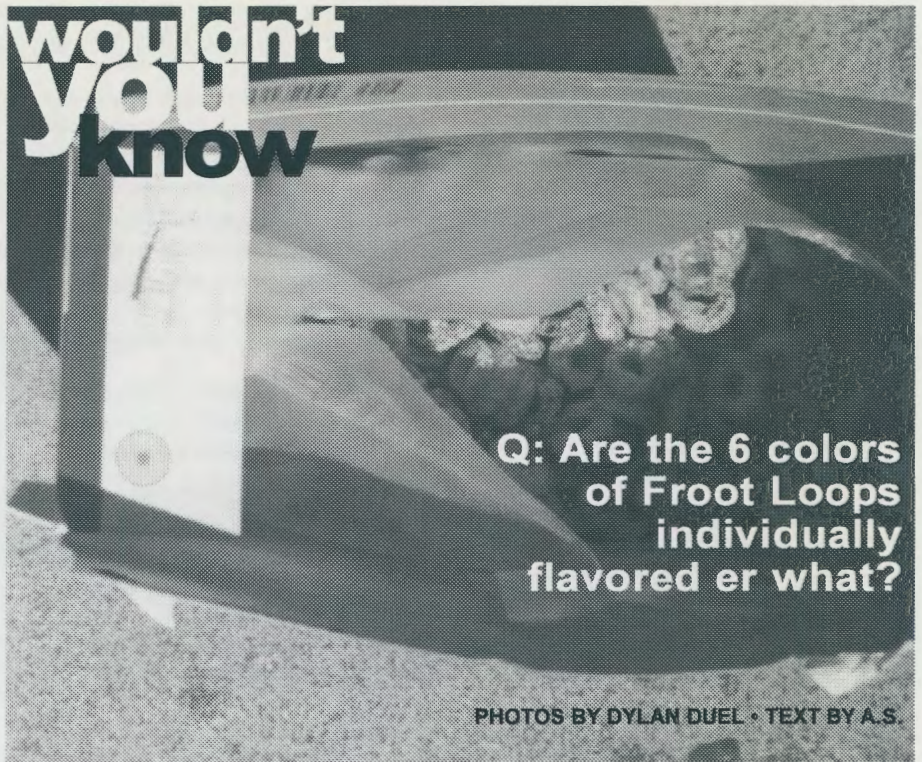
1. We want to know what you'd invent. It can be absolutely anything: a scientific concoction, a new form of dance, a new form of communication, a new social movement -- anything. If you want, you can fill us in on all the tiny details of how you'd go about creating your invention. But it's not required.
2. We also want to know your worst job, your absolute dream-it-up job (use your imagination to the max here). Or if you have a super-dope job right now (or know someone who does and want to write a profile on her), we want to hear all about it.
3. We're not done asking for your help yet, because *Venus* always wants to know who we need to know about. We're starting a special section where readers submit a profile of a woman who deserves recognition. She could be a musician, artist, political activist, yourself, your mother, whomever. When answering any of these questions, be sure to tell us your name, age, address, phone number and any other biographical information about yourself, such as your current job. We're also planning to start a section that features the music scene -- and the women who contribute to it -- in your town. We'd like to know what bands are out there, what venues they play at, etc. Photos are always good too.



RANDOM

I've always been kind of curious as to whether rainbow-colored cereals are individually flavored or if all the hoop- and stone-shaped tidbits are the same. They don't really taste like oranges or blueberries, like they promise in the ads. I guess I'd like to think that each color is representative of an actual fruit, but I always figured that the cereal companies wouldn't bother to come up with separate recipes for each color. But why always wonder when you can just call the 1-800 number on the back of the cereal box and speak to a trained cereal professional? That's what we did, and, wouldn't you know, Kellogg's (no advertising intended) Froot Loops are individually flavored.

In any event, we also wanted to ask other people what they think about this really important issue. We hit the streets of East Lansing, Michigan, home of Michigan State University. Three women were willing to take our taste test, in which they were asked to close their eyes while they tasted the five different colors o cereal.



KELLY STURGILL, 22, Studio Art Senior at MSU; originally from Canton, Michigan

Eyes Wide Open: She guessed correctly when we asked her whether the rings are individually flavored. "Blue tastes just like orange, though."
Blindfolded (well, not really): With her eyes shut, she was able to identify the yellow and red rings and that's it. "I just guessed; I couldn't tell the difference."

Comment: "I don't really like this kinda cereal. I usually eat Cheerios or Grape Nuts."



SHANNON TUGGLE, 24; Education grad student; originally from Battle Creek, Michigan (whata coincidence; this is where Froot Loops are made.)

Eyes Wide Open: In the pre-test round with her eyes open, she agreed that the colors tasted as they should. "Orange tastes like orange; yellow tastes like lemon; blue has a tart taste; red tastes like lime; purple is really sweet."

Guess with eyes closed: She correctly identified blue and yellow.

Favorite cereal: frosted flakes



ANN LACOMBE, 24; MSU alumna with a zoology degree. Lives in Livonia, Michigan, and works in a chemistry lab in the Detroit area.

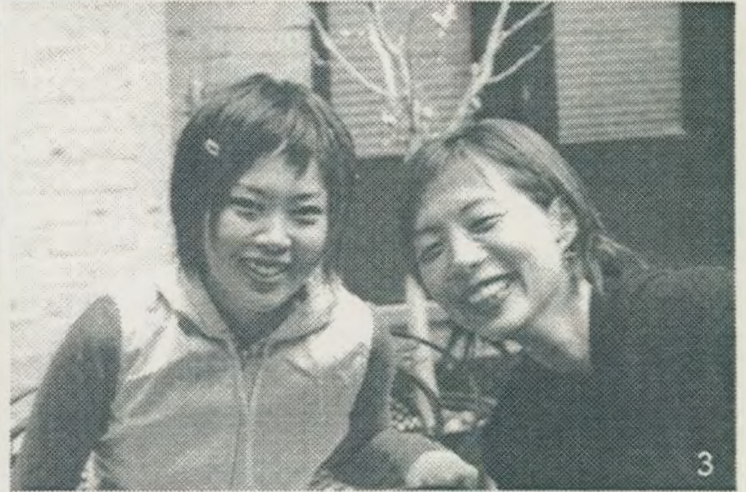
Eyes Wide Open: "I'm allergic to this kind of cereal — along with about 2 zillion other things — but I guess I'll do the test anyway."

Blind-folded: Guessed only red correctly but came pretty close to guessing orange and yellow correctly as well.

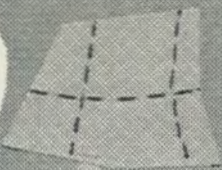
Comment: "It's been years since I've eaten this stuff. Have I broken into hives yet?"

AND THEN SOME

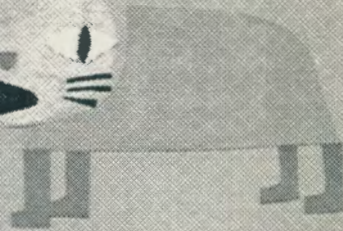
Nope, we don't do the last-page-look-at-the-fancy-pants-party-we-went-to-and-all-the-celebrities-who-were-there-collage thing, but we do have lots of photos. 1. Hanna Sawtell photo by Detroit photographer Nicola Kuperus. 2. It's like this and like that and like Cake Like and uh. 3. Cibo Matto 4. I bugged the hell out of editorial assistant Pete Nolan to take photos while he was in Iceland in the summer of 1999 and send one to print in *Venus*. I figured, "Who doesn't want to see photos of Iceland?" 5. The Rachel's



CDS



OUR music is better than your music



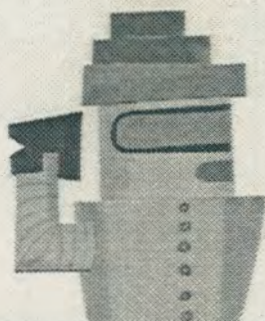
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