

MUSIC

THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST

AMPERSAND'S *Entertainment Guide* is your ticket to the best of the season's entertainment. We will not only be bringing you behind-the-scenes coverage, but we will also try to see and hear much of what's coming out before it gets to you. In that sense, we will be a critical guide—a preview of the more attractive coming attractions.

Speaking of which, all eyes will be on **Michael Jackson**: in early March he'll unleash his first album in four-and-a-half years. We're guessing, however, that even with his newly sculpted face and a Martin Scorsese video, he will find it a bit tougher to galvanize the pop world the way he did with *Thriller*.

A few more heavy hitters will have releases in March,



from **Whitney Houston** (let's hope she finds material that can challenge that voice) to **Tom Petty**, who's coming out with his rawest, bluesiest album ever. Also: **Heart** will offer another helping of tuneful, but bland radio fare; **U2** will issue a record produced by Daniel Lanois, who was behind the boards for Peter Gabriel's *So*; and after the release of the biggest comeback album of the year, the **Bees Gees** will decide if it's worth stayin' alive. Finally, **Linda Ronstadt**, **Dolly Parton** and **Emmylou Harris** will finally get around to releasing *Trio*, the bluegrass/country album they've been talking about for almost a decade.

But for our money, rock and country fans ought to turn to smaller records. For example, *Lone Star State of Mind*, due out in early February from **Nanci Griffith**, a veteran Texas songwriter with a rich country voice and a keen eye for character. Then there's **K.D. Lang**, an irrepressible Canadian woman who looks like Buddy Holly, sings like Patsy Cline and plays a charged, giddy

Beastie: Tour of the season?

brand of country and rockabilly. Her album is scheduled for early March and is being produced by Dave Edmunds, who's also behind the boards for the second album from **Mason Ruffner**, a killer guitarist, singer and songwriter who mixes '60s Dylan with Hendrix licks and basic blues.

From England, we'll see a February disc from an acclaimed "New Dylan," acoustic guitarist **Andy White**, and March releases from **Siouxsie and the Banshees**, the **Cult** and the **Thompson Twins**. Back home, the American record of the season—maybe the year—will be **Los Lobos**'s *By the Light of the Moon*, an effortless, lilting and deeply



Ronstadt, et al.: Sisterhood is musical

evocative blend of rock, traditional Mexican music and social comment. New music is also due in mid-February from retro-rocker **Chris Isaak**, in mid-March from Boston's **Del Fuegos**, and in mid-February from **Husker Du**, one of the most prolific and best neo-punk bands around, who'll release a two-record set of typically dense, thrashing, invigorating music. For something calmer, look to the **Williams Brothers**, two of Andy Williams's nephews, who've recorded a winning LP with Everly Brothers harmonies and the folksy spirit of their former employer, T-Bone Burnett.

In concert halls, meanwhile, we'll see shows from two women with spotty new albums but good live reputa-



Lobos: Album of the year?

tions, **Cyndi Lauper** and **Chrissie Hynde**, plus anticipated appearances by **Bruce Hornsby**, **Janet Jackson**, **Madonna**, **U2** and **Paul Simon**, backed by the African musicians who made *Graceland* so stirring.

Smaller halls will play host to Los Lobos, Husker Du and the kings of Boston's grunge rock, the **Lyres**. But the tour of the season should be the **Beastie Boys**, three arrogant white kids from New York with the rudest, crudest and best rap album out. Opening for Madonna two years ago, they were booed off the stage, but now that they've got the cockiness that comes with a best-selling album, we wouldn't want to sit next to anybody who boos this time.

Finally, one for the oddity



Live Lauper

file. Twenty-five years after "The Lonely Bull," trumpeter **Herb Alpert** has teamed up with producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, hoping they'll do for him what they did for Janet Jackson, Human League and the S.O.S. Band. Perhaps, we'll get "Nasty Bull."

