

## SOUNDBITES

**The Pogues**  
*Peace and Love*

Ireland's Pogues, from the spittle on their beards to the fire in their hearts, are a great rock 'n' roll band. The Pogues built their reputation in the mid-'80s as a band of drunks who sounded like the Sex Pistols gone folk. *Peace and Love*, the band's fourth release, is an eclectic work bound together by the strength of its convictions. Whether the Pogues are playing jazz, psychedelic Celt-pop or their more familiar folk-punk brew, they do it with a kick-out-the-jams energy that's hard to deny. Lead singer Shane McGowan and his bandmates also deliver some interesting lyrics about living, loving, drinking and dying in a world full of stupidity, vice and innocent beauty. Although McGowan contributes some of the album's finest moments, his fellow Pogues also hold their own in the songwriting department. The Pogues sing about fallacies and frauds, but still make it all seem like a party instead of an apocalypse. ■ Jesse Fox Mayshark, *The Daily Collegian*, Pennsylvania State U.

**Various Artists***Young Einstein Soundtrack*

What a strange mix we have here: everything from R&B and gospel to post-punk and mid-'60s British pop. You don't have to see "Young Einstein" (which flopped in the United States following a lucrative run in Australia) to appreciate its soundtrack. Unconventional instrumentation and rhythms punctuate the songs. Paul Kelly and the Messengers offer "Dumb Things," a buoyant R&B number with trumpet and a cheery '60s organ. Big Pig serve up a slice of gospel, "Hungry Town," which sounds like a rootsier version of the Pointer Sisters' "Neutron Dance." The record is marred somewhat by the interspersed dialogue from the movie, which becomes tedious after repeated listenings, but on the whole this is a fine collection of Australian music. ■ Tom Dahlstrom, *The Minnesota Daily*, U. of Minnesota

**MUSIC****Once-proud MTV is a big-time bore**

By Hank Stuever

■ The Loyola Maroon  
Loyola U.

Music Television exploded into the American consciousness on Aug. 1, 1981, with a rocket blasting off and a neon-ized version of the lunar landing. Back then, it seemed so revolutionary, yet so painfully obvious: all day, all night, in stereo — FM radio with pictures.

In its earliest days, MTV was a trendy secret of the cable sect, an offbeat channel flipped to between reruns, HBO movies and ESPN.

The original VJs were soon-to-be-legendary pioneers of the new medium. There was J.J. Jackson, a roly-poly soul brother designed to attract a black audience to a station that would for years be painfully white-oriented. There was Nina Blackwood, MTV's mistress of the night, with her shag hairdo and death-warmed-over approach to TV commentary.

There was geeky Alan Hunter, the class cut-up who never managed to be funny. There was Mark Goodman, the FM blow-dry guy who tried unsuccessfully to promote MTV's video offerings as real music meant to be taken seriously. We saw right through him the whole time, of course.

And there was Martha Quinn, the squeaky High Priestess of MTV, with her trivia questions and poodle earrings.

By 1982, the network was popular. Musicians and the record industry began to regard the music video as the essential to the marketing of the 45 single. MTV's success revitalized a sagging recording industry that had sleepily stalled at the starting gate of the decade. MTV saved — and, some still argue,

ruined — music.

Culturally, the network has grown to personify the decade and everything that's wrong with it. In his popular book "The Closing of the American Mind," Chicago Professor Allan Bloom maintained that MTV was specifically to blame for several problems with today's students and the way they think.

The key to understanding MTV's fall is to realize that the station tinkered with the formula that initially sold the product. Simply put, they now show fewer

videos. They also canned their VJs and failed to replace them with equally inspiring people.

Once set in a friendly, junk-strewn, attic-type studio, MTV now has a dull, high-tech feel. The five original VJs

each had their little nook on the cluttered set; today's replacements are superimposed against forgettable moving patterns.

Today, MTV relies on just three VJs who are effective only at making viewers hate what they're watching.

There's Julie Brown, perhaps the most distasteful factor in MTV's decline, a cockney lass with an acute ability to make her audience want to gouge out their eyes. Equally offensive is Adam Curry, the daytime VJ who attempts to make the 5 p.m. countdown show, "Dial MTV," a matter of world importance.

It is harder to judge the nighttime VJ, Kevin Seal, because he is MTV's obvious attempt to reach a college audience. Plucked from the U. of Washington, Seal is in the time slot where one can see videos that the network considers "progressive" while avoiding as many Poison



COURTESY MTV

MTV VJ Downtown Julie Brown

clips as possible.

An inordinate amount of time is now devoted to packaged programs like "Remote Control."

Designed to be a spoof on the classic American game show, "Remote Control" is an indicator of two things: how stupid fraternity and sorority members nationwide actually are and how desperate MTV is to get them to watch.

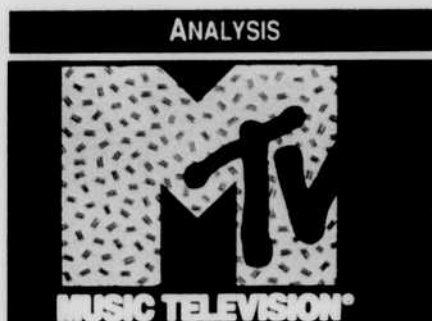
"Music News" is suddenly important enough to be programmed like an "ABC News Brief." The show is anchored by "newsman" Kurt Loder, a Rolling Stone staffer who ought to have something better to do.

More recently, MTV actually began celebrating its own demise with a show called "Deja Video." Martha Quinn has been re-hired to show "oldies" from 1984-85, an era when MTV still lived up to its original claim.

Musically, the channel now regularly lumps innovative music in with the non-progressive. In its prime, everything MTV showed was progressive in one way or another.

Once an outlet that took chances and broke new groups, MTV is now a ponderous, conservative station.

Whether ratings plummet or not, MTV's fate is sealed. All it would take now is for some bright network to come along and do the innovative thing; show rock videos interspersed with dialogue from likeable hosts. How innovative, huh?



COURTESY MTV

MTV's ever-mutating logo

**Even solo, Bob Mould stays loud and powerful**

By Josh Sparbeck

■ South End News

Wayne State U., Michigan

Bob who?!

The wheels of justice grind slowly in the music industry, so don't worry if you haven't heard of Bob Mould. For the better part of the decade, the singer/songwriter/guitarist was the frontman for Husker Du, a Minneapolis-based post-punk trio. The Huskers, along with bands like R.E.M. and The Replacements, gradually helped edge the loose, powerful, do-it-yourself ethic of independent rock toward the mainstream.

Unfortunately, Husker Du never got the chance to enjoy their growing impact. After a half dozen stunning, ambitious albums (the last two on the Warner Bros. label) the group packed it in early last year. The breakup was attributed to those two perennial rock & roll hobgoblins: drug problems and creative differences.

Mould's solo LP on Virgin Records, *Workbook*, is his attempt to rummage through the emotional debris left in the wake of Husker Du's breakup. Given the low-level sparring in the music press between Mould and

Grant Hart, his former Husker drummer/singer/co-writer, I was expecting *Workbook* to be something along the lines of an LP-length version of "How Do You Sleep," the vengeful vendetta John Lennon hurled at Paul McCartney after the Beatles' split.

The record has its moments of accusation, to be sure, but in comparison to Mould's merciless bitterness of earlier years, it's a relatively easy pill to swallow. Most of the pieces I've read on Mould and *Workbook* have fixated on the idea that the album somehow presents a more "mellow" side of the guitarist than was apparent in his work with Husker Du, but this hardly seems the case. Mould had already been experimenting with broader, acoustic-based songs on latter Husker LPs like *Candy Apple Grey* and *Warehouse: Songs and Stories*. Some of the songs here, particularly the opening instrumental, "Sunspots," and the uplifting "See A Little Light" do seem exceptionally cheery, given Mould's usual penchant for angst. But *Workbook* is far from mellow.

One can only hope Mould can keep up his momentum in the future by drawing on circumstances less horrible than the breakup of one of rock's best bands.



COURTESY VIRGIN RECORDS

Bob Mould formerly played with Husker Du, described as one of the post-punk movement's most significant bands.