

SOUND

Siouxsie & the Banshees

The Rapture
Geffen



Siouxsie & the Banshees begin their 14th album, *The Rapture*, with "O Baby," a clever pop distraction closely resembling their 1992 hit, "Kiss Them For Me," but hardly representative of the rest of this collection. A handful of other tracks on *The Rapture* conjure the dark and dreamy moments that have always made the Banshees' music vital and relevant.

With ex-Velvet Underground member John Cale as co-producer, the group has expanded its musical scope, using not only the Middle Eastern instruments heard on their last album, *Superstition*, but also some inventive string sections.

■ Rob Hooper, California State U., Los Angeles

L.A. Guns

Vicious Circle
A&M



L.A. Guns' *Vicious Circle* is a better Frisbee than musical compilation. Most of the songs are the same old fare — decent music but little to make the mouth water.

Technically, the music isn't half bad — but there's nothing here that other bands haven't already done, and done better. With so-so guitar work, bland vocals and backup bass and drums that can only be described as forgettable, what's there to like? Welcome to late '80s glam metal, redux.

■ James Frusetta, State Press, Arizona State U.

Simple Minds

Good News from the Next World
Virgin



The Simple Minds' new effort, *Good News from the Next World*, strikes a mid-'80s nostalgic chord, but the heavy synthesizer sound is fresh again. Although the album is 90

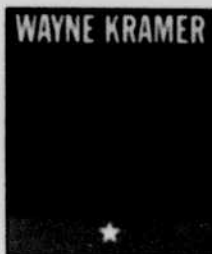
percent keyboards, songs are unexpectedly

deep and robust. "She's a River" and "Night Music" kick it off to an explosive start, setting an upbeat pace for the entire disc. The downside to such consistency is that many tracks sound the same. Listen to it in spurts, and you'll like it all the more.

■ C. Alex Foster, *The Northeastern News*, Northeastern U., Massachusetts

Wayne Kramer

The Hard Stuff
Epitaph



Although Wayne Kramer and his defunct band, the MC5, are highly respected in the punk community as genre pioneers, Kramer falls way short as a solo act.

The Hard Stuff's spoken-word/heavy-metal crossovers are poorly planned, with rocky transitions.

Kramer seems to prefer babbling to making statements during his spoken-word moments ("Incident on Stock Island"). And his verses have evidently never been introduced to his choruses — the bridges aren't even in the same time zone. The result is little continuity and rhythm. Although Kramer is best known for his guitar playing, his riff bits are sporadic with no real substance.

■ C. Alex Foster, *The Northeastern News*, Northeastern U., Massachusetts

Zumpano

Look What the Rookie Did
Sub Pop



The Vancouver-based four-piece Zumpano is typified by pop melodies, cheesy synth riffs and star-crossed lyrics.

Highlights of their debut effort *Look What the Rookie Did* include the Partridge Familyesque "Rosecrans Blvd.," the spectacularly slick pop of "I Did You" and the '60s flavored "Oh That Atkinson Girl." Zumpano's songs bear all the manic energy of a blissed-out 14-year-old at her first proper rock and roll concert.

Zumpano play pure, unadulterated pop, a sorely underrepresented art form in 1994. Although *Look What the Rookie Did* might be the next sleeper hit of the college music world, Carl Newman's dreary vocals eventually rain on the pop parade of the band's well-crafted songs.

■ Stuart Reid, *Daily Iowan*, U. of Iowa

Listen, U.

The Lupins, Peach — With a name like The Lupins, it has to be good. The Lupins pump out good ol' Irish jigs. *Peach* is set for release early this year, just in time for St. Patrick's Day.

Toots Thielemans, East Coast West Coast — If you're lonesome for Mr. Rogers' neighborhood, pop in some Toots. This album features music from jazz greats John Coltrane, John "Dizzy" Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis.

Joi, The Pendulum Vibe — Message music was never so smooth. Sinéad lite mixed with hard-core Sade makes for slinky yet danceable rhythms and rhymes.

Afro-Plane, Afro-Plane — Psychidialectic-hypnofunk and many other 24-letter words. Afro-Plane's funk is surpassed only by their psychoclimic catatophicaldiaobatical word usage. Peace out.

Sinéad O'Connor, Universal Mother — Sinéad was punk rock when punk rock wasn't cool, and her new, delicately lush CD is equally subversive in its earnestness. Her hair is back, too.

Wade Hubbard, Insanity Lane — In the fine tradition of journeyman musicians, Hubbard writes love songs — nothing but love songs. Plus, he digs Stevie Wonder, turning in a fine cover of "Golden Lady."

Zuzu's Petals

Zuzu's Petals are alive and touring — despite some close calls. Soon after this crunchy-cool three-piece began its latest tour in Seattle, guitarist/lead singer Laurie Lindeen was choked by a "grunge girl."

"A really bombed grunge girl," adds drummer Linda Pitmon.

It seems the drunk wannabe was friends with the opening band. "We had three Pearl Jam Jr. bands open for us," Lindeen says. "Then we got up there in our little lamé dresses, and [the audience] just hated us." So Lindeen put on a stocking cap accidentally left on stage, thinking the trendy crowd might approve. But the slurring teenybopper wanted the hat back; hence the grunged grip around the singer's throat.

Fortunately, the tour has improved since then. At the Los Angeles club Hell's Gate, Zuzu's Petals' diversity won the crowd's approval.

The band is on the road supporting its sophomore effort, *The Music of Your Life*, on Twin Tone Records. Mixing addictive, steamy-sweet melodies with just enough power-pounding grooves, this all-female band breaks the boundaries of classification. From the Ventures-sounding surf guitar line in "Chatty Catty" to the in-your-face brash beat of "Do Not," these Minnesotans have more hooks than a tackle shop.

"In the beginning, reviewers would say, 'They're somewhere between Scraw! and Babes in Toyland,'" bassist Coleen Eldwood says. "That killed me. It's like, could they cover any more ground?"

Zuzu's Petals prove that tenderness and force can get along. Even if the group is getting choked in Seattle, true rock and roll aficionados will embrace them.

For more information on Zuzu's Petals, write: Restless Records, 1616 Vista Del Mar, Hollywood, CA 90028

■ Aaron Cole, *Long Beach Union*, California State U., Long Beach



U. Radio Chart

1. Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, *Orange*, Matador
2. Liz Phair, *Whip-Smart*, Matador/Atlantic
3. Thinking Fellers Union Local 282, *Strangers From The Universe*, Matador
4. Sebadoh, *Bakesale*, Sub Pop
5. Soul Coughing, *Ruby Vroom*, Slash
6. Woon, *Chocolate + Cheese*, Elektra
7. Smashing Pumpkins, *Pisces Iscariot*, Virgin
8. Silver Jews, *Starlite Walker*, Drag City
9. Cranes, *Loved*, Arista
10. Kicking Giant, *Alien I.D.*, K

Chart solely based on college radio airplay. Contributing radio stations: KAMP, U. of Arizona; KBGU, Bowling Green State U.; KRNU, U. of Nebraska, Lincoln; KTRU, Rice U.; KUCB, U. of Colorado, Boulder; KUOM, U. of Minnesota; KVRX, U. of Texas, Austin; KWVA, U. of Oregon, Eugene; WCBN, U. of Michigan; WEHR, Penn State U.; WICB, Ithaca College; WIDB, Southern Illinois U., Carbondale; WISU, Indiana State U.; WRPI, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; WUTK, U. of Tennessee; WUVT, Virginia Tech; WVUM, U. of Miami; WXJM, James Madison U.

★★★★★=Pong ★★★★★=Space Invaders ★★★=Pac Man
★★=Super Mario Bros. ★=Sonic the Hedgehog