

ROCK

BY GLENN McDONALD

Pocket Band

Extra Fancy

Los Angeles' Extra Fancy may be the nation's most famous unsigned band.

Countless aggressive live shows and a deafening street buzz have earned the band extensive media coverage — typically the sort of hype reserved for a major-label debut.

"Everything is sort of happening the opposite way from how it normally does," says bassist D.A. Foster. The band — which also includes vocalist Brian Grillo, guitarist Michael Hateley and drummer Derek O'Brien — has been playing in the L.A. area for nearly three years.

With great hype comes great headaches, though. The band is often pegged as "homocore," a media tag Grillo, the only gay member, says he could do without.

"[Our music] is not 'homocore,'" Grillo says, "because there are three straight guys playing along. Our music's for everybody." *Sinner Man*, the band's independently produced debut, incorporates the heavier end of punk, industrial and even rockabilly, complemented by Grillo's husky vocals and candid lyrics.

"When I first started this band, I was at a point in my life where I really needed to start looking at myself and getting inside my head," Grillo says. "It's very liberating to expose every little detail about myself in front of a bunch of people. The cool thing about this punk movement coming back is that people really seem open to new things."

For more info, e-mail the band at ExtraFancy@aol.com

Rob Hooper, U. of Southern California

Rating system

- ★★★★★ race car
- ★★★★ hat
- ★★★ dog
- ★★ thimble
- ★ horse (it always falls over)

Urge Overkill

Exit The Dragon

Geffen

★★★½



I've figured it out. See, Urge Overkill is less a rock band than a perpetual meditation on the state of rock band-dom. They've cultivated a martini-and-velvet image of swank that is so breathtakingly cool it threatens to take over not just the band's music — but the entire planet.

Coolness has its cost, however, and in the case of Urge, it means you can never dissociate the music from the image. Which isn't a problem if you're in the mood to just feel hip and be *rocked*, you know, like Cheap Trick *rocked*. It's in the quieter moments, like *Exit's* delicate "View of the Rain," that the coolness becomes a problem. Because in your heart, you want to sing along with a line like "Take a walk outside yourself/Get to know the person behind the face/Is it someone you can really love?" But you're afraid the boys in Urge would laugh and call you a sissy.

Musically, the band continues to appropriate the best rock riffs of the past 20 years, but I don't think that's even a crime anymore. Urge is the best there is at what they do — making dashing, disposable rock history. And that's a compliment.

Spirit of '73: Rock for Choice

Various Artists

Sony

★★★

It took three years to get this record made, as skittish major labels, freaked by the Ice-T/Warner fiasco, refused to mess with the politics of a pro-choice compilation. So sisters did it for themselves.

Featuring "girl bands of the '90's doing covers of girl singers of the '70s,"



split singles, EPs and compilation tracks, *Incidental Music 1991-95* is a great way to get acquainted with this most excellent band. For the initiated, it's a great way to get the rarities without spending a fortune on out-of-print vinyl.

Luna
Penthouse
Elektra

Before techno/house/trip-hop/etc., trance music depended on metronomic drumming and inventive guitar sounds (think Velvet Underground). Luna's Dean Wareham (formerly of Galaxie 500) has this routine down pat, and his lovely lyrical landscapes make *Penthouse* feel like a slow barbiturate dream.

Catherine Wheel

Happy Days

Fontana/Mercury

As their radio hit "Black Metallic" evidenced, Catherine Wheel can do wonders with guitar dynamics. In fact, the temptation is to call the guitars on this CD "majestic," but then you sound like a publicity person. Oh, what the hell — they're majestic. Check Rob Dickinson's duet with Betty's Tanya Donnelly, "Judy Staring at the Sun."

The Wizard of Oz

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Rhino

Divided up into a Good Witch CD and a Bad Witch CD, this collection has it all — the songs, the score, outtakes, alter-

RADIO, RADIO

1. Yo La Tengo, *Electr-O-Pura*, Matador
2. Fugazi, *Red Medicine*, Discord
3. Bjork, *Post*, Elektra
4. Foo Fighters, *Foo Fighters*, Capitol
5. Thurston Moore, *Psychic Hearts*, DGC
6. The Muffs, *Blonder and Blonder*, Reprise
7. Alanis Morissette, *Jagged Little Pill*, Maverick
8. Primus, *Tales From the Punchbowl*, Interscope
9. Matthew Sweet, *100% Fun*, Zoo
10. Buffalo Tom, *Sleepy Eyed*, Elektra

Chart based solely on college radio airplay. Contributing radio stations: KRNU, U. of Nebraska; KTRU, Rice U., Texas; KUCB, U. of Colorado; Boulder; KWVA, U. of Oregon; WCBN, U. of Michigan; WFAL, Bowling Green State U.; Ohio; WUTK, U. of Tennessee; Knoxville; WVUT, Virginia Tech; WVU, West Virginia U.

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VIBRANCE

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chunky. *Soup* should nevertheless keep Blind Melon from the pit of discarded MTV bands. For now.

Clueless

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Capitol

★★★★

Soundtracks are usually a dodgy investment. Many times, the tracks are throwaways, filler or irritating "themed" songs (Remember "Bad-dance"?). Now, *Clueless* the movie may or may not suck, but the soundtrack producers have pulled together an immensely appealing collection.

In the standout single, Kim Wilde's '80s anthem "Kids In America" gets a punked-out makeover by the Muffs (why didn't someone think of this before?). Otherwise, listen for Luscious Jackson's disco inferno "Here," still groovy despite a too-busy dance remix, and Coolio's gangsta-pop "Rollin' With My Homies." Other strong contributions come from newcomers Supergrass ("Alright"), Hüsker-Dü-esque punkers Smoking Popes ("Need You Around") and the ever-perky Jill Sobule ("Supermodel"). This CD will make you feel young, hip and beautiful all over again.



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Rapid Fires

South Circle

Another Day Another Balla
Suave/Relativity

Blame Dr. Dre. All guns-and-ganja hip-hop sounds essentially the same these days — horror flick synth lines over thick bass grooves. Ah, well. At least Houston's South Circle throw in a little southern funk and the sophisticated rhyme styles of rappers Mr. Mike and Thorough.

Superchunk

Incidental Music 1991-95
Merge

Chronicling four years of b-sides,