

Rock

BY GLENN McDONALD

Pocket Band

Hate F—k Trio

They've just got one of those names. You know, the type that either offends you or makes you laugh.

"I think a lot of people won't even listen to us because of our name," says Sam DiStefano, HFT's singer and guitarist.

But since HFT is producing its own stuff and not aiming to be part of the mainstream music scene, they don't mind the flack.

Like many new bands, they don't want to be pigeon-holed into a certain genre. HFT fans —

"hefties" — tune in for the old-school punk sound, but the band isn't all hard core. They're punk — on the rocks with a splash of jazz and a country twist.

With gimmicks like Bob's Lawn Service — their fictitious cover band which is actually HFT in disguise — the band makes fun of being rock stars. Amid the fun-poking, they've emerged as a tight band with thought-provoking lyrics and a hot live show.

This Denver band had to play some musical chairs before they each found their instrumental niche. DiStefano started on drums, but passed the sticks to his brother Jon. When Jon broke his arm snowboarding, their friend Sean Weidon took over the kit. Jon recovered with the rhythm guitar. And Pete Cassidy, well he's always played bass.

The trio (they're actually a quartet) have released some slick vinyl 45s — "Hefty Duty," "The Truckers" and "Bond" — to add to their debut cassette. — Tricia Laine, Assistant Editor

For info on HFT tour dates and releases: Greazy Chicken Records, P.O. Box 6098, Denver, CO 80206, (303) 777-3024.

Rating System

- ★★★★★ **Barbie**
- ★★★★ **Skipper**
- ★★★ **Ken**
- ★★ **Midge**
- ★ **G.I. Joe**

The Spinanes

Sub Pop

★★★★

By blindsiding college radio in 1994 with their startling debut album *Manas*, the Spinanes — guitarist/vocalist Rebecca Gates and drummer Scott Plouf — showed that new, exciting music can still sneak through the post-Nirvana alternative marketing machine.

Rebecca Gates plays guitar like it's a natural extension of her heart, flailing from hyper chording to delicate melodies like so many mood swings. Her lyrics do much the same, and when she murmurs something like, "There's nothing so pathetic as the way I blow a punch line," you just want to hug her, or shake her hand, or something. This isn't easy-listening music, and some tracks won't sink in for weeks, but *Strand* rewards each repeat visit.

Vangelis

Voices

Atlantic

★★★★

If you've ever spent quality time in the "ambient" rooms of raves and techno clubs, you probably have vague, fuzzy memories of Vangelis' music. World-renowned for his work on film soundtracks (*Chariots of Fire*, *Blade Runner*), Vangelis also composes for television, theater and ballet. In his native Europe, he's considered something of a luminary — right up there with Bono and God.

Many of the compositions on *Voices* originate from Vangelis' *Blade Runner* sessions in 1982. It doesn't matter — he could have written these tracks in 1970 on a Moog synthesizer and they'd still sound fantastic. For those familiar with *Blade Runner*, you know what I'm talking about — if the future has a soundtrack, Vangelis has already written it.

Sometimes sweeping and epic (the title track), sometimes reflective and wistful ("Echoes," "Messages") *Voices* is a seasoned work from a veteran composer. If you're into this type of modern composition, you probably already have this album. If not, Vangelis is smart enough to collaborate with vocalists like Paul Young and Caroline Lavelle to appeal to more terrestrial listeners. Dim the lights, settle in and float away.

Fun Lovin' Criminals

Come Find Yourself

EMI

★★★½

This NYC crew approaches hip-hop from the refreshing perspective of *song writing*, which sounds simple enough but is tougher than you think. The three criminals involved (Huey, Fast and Steve) share a rap sheet that includes both techno and production experience as well as the ability to pick up and play the instruments they're sampling.

FLC are at their best when they calm down and roll with a groove like "King of New York," a bizarre jailbreak narrative with an old Marvin Gaye piano riff holding it all together. The harder stuff isn't much different from the slew of funk-punk-rap acts that followed in the wake of the Chili Peppers and the Beasties. (Except that FLC is a lot funnier — check out the loopy "Scooby Snacks.")

FLC come across with all the cranked-up bravado of veteran con men. Vocalist Huey wouldn't last long against more talented MCs, but he sounds like he couldn't care less, and that's half the trick, isn't it? Self-produced and self-assured, *Come Find Yourself* suggests FLC have the skills to pay the bills.

Victor

Victor

Atlantic

★★★½

Music hipsters will swear up and down that they've listened to nothing but Velvet Underground since they were, like, 4. But dig into any college radio DJ's closet and you're bound to find a few skeletons — and several old Rush albums.

Victor, the first solo project from Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson, is unfortunately filled with the sort of overproduced guitar histrionics that sent those Rush albums into the closet in the first place. Lifeson is a remarkable guitarist, but restraint has never been his strong suit. If you can get past that, tracks like

RADIO, RADIO

1. Noise Addict, *Meet the Real You*, Grand Royal
2. New Bomb Turks, *Pissing Out the Poison*, The Crypt
3. Boss Hogg, *Boss Hogg*, Geffen
4. Smashing Pumpkins, *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, Virgin
5. The Mountain Goats, *Nine Black Poppies*, Emperor Jones
6. The Amps, *Pacer*, Elektra
7. The Gaunt, *Yeah, Me Too*, Amphetamine Reptile
8. Various Artists, *Wavelength Infinity: A Sun Ra Tribute*, Rastascan
9. Red Hot Chili Peppers, *One Hot Minute*, Warner Brothers
10. Flying Saucer Attack, *Chorus*, Drag City

Chart based solely on college radio air play. Contributing radio stations: ACRN, Ohio U.; KJHK, U. of Kansas; KTRU, Rice U.; Texas; KTUH, U. of Hawaii; KUOM, U. of Minnesota; KWVA, U. of Oregon; WCBN, U. of Michigan; Ann Arbor; WICB, Ithaca College, N.Y.; WIDB, Southern Illinois U.; WXJM, James Madison U.; Va.; WRAS, Georgia State U. and WUVT, Virginia Tech.

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"Start Today" (with Geddy Lee sound-alike Dalbelo on vocals) can rekindle some of Rush's initial spark. Lifeson also gets points for writing weird songs like "At The End" and putting Primus' Les Claypool on bass for one track.

Combustible Edison

Schizophonic

Sub Pop

★★★★

For a lot of people, the 15 minutes of fame afforded last season's lounge music revival fad was about 14 minutes too long. While all the other "Cocktail Nation" bands tried to distance themselves from the trend, Combustible Edison actually found salvation at the bottom of that brandy snifter. And so they've set about perfecting hi-fi easy listening for the '90s.

They're good at what they do, and if you dig what they do, you'll dig *Schizophonic*. For the uninitiated, Com Ed play elevator Muzak à la Esquivel, with a Tiki twist, or whatever. It's all arch and ironic and ultimately disposable. A good break from your Pearl Jam albums, though.

It's all music all the time on U.'s music page:
<http://www.umagazine.com/rocks>

Our Picks



Cocktail Mix, Vol. 1
Bachelor's Guide to the Galaxy
Rhino

This goes out to all you

lounge lovers: Put this compilation to the hip-o-meter test and watch the needle surge past 10. In the true spirit of the genre, grab a martini and slide right into the groove of this instrumental journey through space-age pop. A string of pearls or a skinny tie can't hurt either.

Jolene

Hell's Half Acre
Ardent

Call it country with an alternative twist, folk with edge or Hootie sans hype. Jolene's like all your favorite sounds smashed into one band, and *Hell's Half Acre* proves their point — you don't have to be a hick to like twang, and you don't have to smoke pot to appreciate a good funk.

Jack Logan & Liquor Cabinet
Mood Elevator
Restless

Listen up lyric fans. The sensational sophomore release from Logan and company contains some of the most

hauntingly descriptive words since Sting, Billy Joel or the Fat Boys. Logan's voice rolls over a background of simple beats and chord structures, and with any success, the songs from *Mood Elevator* may be piped into elevators everywhere — every artist's dream.

Various Artists
Twisted Willie
Justice

It's Willie Nelson like you've never heard him before. Unlike most feeble attempts to pay homage to great musicians, *Twisted* is not a collection of songs by artists trying to copy Willie's sound. With bands like L7, Supersuckers and Gas Huffer, the sound is far from the twangy, sweet tunes of Nelson. Check out Tender-

loin's rip through "Shotgun Willie" and the Presidents of the United States of America's take on "Devil in a Sleepin' Bag."

Sepultura
Roots
Roadrunner

Raw, heavy and loud, *Roots* is a slightly varied twist on the old Sepultura. Ranting political themes remain, but the addition of native Brazilian instrumentation amid trademark pummeling guitars proves very intense. Beware — serious speaker damage may ensue if played too loud. (Crank it!)

Each month, asst. editors Rob, Col, Shad and Tricia listen to lots of lousy CDs just to find you a few gems like these.