

Rock

BY CARRIE BELL

Pocket Band



The Lightweights

No one told The Lightweights how pros handle fame. Instead of cool finesse, the boys bicker over the phone and exude no bad-boy bravado. Saxophonist Tom Weber, 17, is almost too nervous to chat.

The innocence is as refreshing as their music—a blend of funky bass lines, horns, rock sensibilities and a mad rapper. "We wanted to couple our interests in rap and ska," says drummer Skully. "We started as a five-piece band, but added horns for flavor."

Interview finesse aside, the gang has the business mastered. They financed their demo, *A Bit of Life*. "We hit up local stores to carry the tape, and they're available at shows," says trumpeteer Matt Scheiner.

The band (with bassist Joe Baptista, rapper Josh Kolenik, trombonist David Dominique and guitarist Mikal Britt) also knows how important a good live act is. "We have to prove we aren't punk-ass kids," Britt says. "Crowds quickly realize we're serious about music. Then we go crazy on stage."

The craziness is catching, with everything from campus gigs to a "ska mitzvah" scheduled. "We're hot little muffins in demand," Skully says, adding that Scheiner has three groupies.

"Yeah, but they're all about 10," Britt scoffs.

For a demo, send \$4 to: The Lightweights, 817 Linen Ave., Baldwin, NY 11510.

Rating System



No final



Take home



Multiple guess exam



Essay test



All of the above

Ani DiFranco

Living In Clip

Righteous Babe



ANI DIFRANCO, HIGH priestess of punk-folk, continually updates old-guard feminism with intimate vignettes disguised as songs. She plays "music for people, not posterity." So the only surprising thing about this live two-CD set is that it comes so late in her career.



Two hours of recordings map her musical manna from the early days of "Anticipate" to the most current entries off *Dilate*. *Living In Clip* strips down the genius of DiFranco to its barest state, capturing versions and monologues. Her winsome blend of urban grit doesn't suffer from overproduction or overcontemplation, often the downfall of studio projects.

Like all concert LPs, annoying audience shrieks, flubs and instrument hum are included. But all is forgiven upon hearing a magnificent crescendo in an orchestral "Amazing Grace" or the powerfully eerie echo vibrating in "Both Hands."



The Chemical Brothers

Dig Your Own Hole

Astralwerks



White Town

Women In Technology

EMI



With everyone jumping on the techno bandwagon, it's hard to decipher the superb from the schlock. The Chemical Brothers and White Town travel different paths to salvation in electronica.

Dig Your Own Hole holds the unfortunate title of one of 1997's most anticipated CDs. Fortunately England's dynamic duo doesn't let fans of studio wizardry down. The record is an hour-long fusillade of rave whistles, remix madness, hip hop samples and rock guitar squalor.

Vocals by Beth Orton and Oasis' Noel Gallagher break up the noise before monotony sets in. Lovers of the Beastie Boys' wordless excursions

will find enough psychedelic breakbeats to sink their teeth into.

A month ago, a sexually confused single called "Your Woman" stormed up alt-radio playlists. You didn't really get it, but you could dance to it. Now White Town wants to charm disco biscuits with its full-length reincarnation of '80s synth pleasure à la Bronski Beat, Erasure and Depeche Mode. Jyoti Mishra even croons in a unisex tone similar to Yaz's Alison Moyet.

Amidst the knob-turning and looped keyboards lies some actual guitar. Yet experiments with Middle-Eastern ambience and schmaltzy ballads can't top the aural fixation the single induces.

Spearhead

Chocolate Supa Highway

Capitol



KRS-ONE

I Got Next

Jive



RADIO, RADIO

1. Pavement, *Brighten the Corners*, Matador
2. Built to Spill, *Perfect from Now On*, Warner Bros.
3. Helmet, *Aftertaste*, Interscope
4. Aphex Twin, *Richard D. James*, WARP/Sire
5. Wally Pleasant, *Wally World*, Miranda
6. Mighty Mighty Bosstones, *Let's Face It*, Mercury
7. The Lunachicks, *Pretty Ugly*, Go-Kart
8. Cibo Matto, *Super Relax*, Warner Bros.
9. Various Artists, *Violent World: Tribute to the Misfits*, Caroline
10. David Bowie, *Earthling*, Virgin

Chart based solely on college radio play. Contributing radio stations: KFSR, California State U., Fresno; WNYU, New York U.; KWVA, U. of Oregon; KTRU, Rice U., Texas; KUOM, U. of Minnesota; KCMU, U. of Washington; WXJM, James Madison U., Va.; WWVU, West Virginia U.; KCSB, U. of California, Santa Barbara; KTEK, New Mexico Tech; KRUI, U. of Iowa; KJHK, U. of Kansas; KRNU, U. of Nebraska, Lincoln; WHRB, Harvard U.; WCBN, U. of Michigan; KALX, U. of California, Berkeley; WRUV, U. of Vermont; KCR, San Diego State U., Calif.; KBVR, Oregon State U.

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Rap is in transition. Artists are trading in gats, girls and Gucci for peace, politics and relevance. For Spearhead and KRS-ONE, new albums are an evolution, not a departure.

Hero of Hiphoprism Michael Franti and Spearhead cruise down the *Chocolate Supa Highway* armed with skillful wordplay, funky bass and a conscience. Ras I Zulu's reggae chants, Trina Simmons' silky vocals and layered production fuse soul and technology without losing the one-love groove theory. San Francisco's rhythm collective took time to hone their craft since the '94 debut, and it shows. Crossover confidence and talent climax on duets with Stephen Marley and Joan Osborne.

Blastmaster KRS-ONE also uses nostalgic tricks to hit retro paydirt, although *I Got Next* is more in the emcee and gangsta vein. His freestyle assault is as vicious as ever, but the melody-based rhymes melt into boogie down productions. *Next's* rants are peppered up with guest appearances by Redman, Joe, DJ Muggs, Keva and Angie Martinez.

Our Picks



Indigo Girls
Shaming of the Sun
Epic

Amy Ray and Emily

Saliers deliver yet another guitar-frenzied, country-folk product embedded in sexual ambiguity. Despite an abundance of fast pieces, the duo doesn't forsake any of the lyrical introspection or pristine harmonies. One step "Closer To Fine."

Adriana Evans

Adriana Evans

PMP/Loud/RCA

The string and horn sections surrounding Evans' feathery vocals make it easy to mistake her for an airy-sounding crooner of her parents' generation, like Roberta Flack or Diana Ross. But she's a bona fide '90s soul singer with electronic drums to prove it. The lilting, upbeat tunes take you back to happier times.

Various Artists

Kama Sutra Soundtrack
TVT

Prepare to be hypnotized by the passion of the sitar and sarangi and the powerful playing of India's most respected musicians. The tracks exude

desire and emotion rivaling Peter Gabriel's *Passion* and provide a perfect setting for Mira Nair's controversial film.

The Hang Ups

So We Go

Restless

This Minneapolis quartet dishes out some of the fiercest überpop this side of the Atlantic Ocean. The 12 tracks on their second effort will have you bobbing your head and humming the infectious melodies for days.

Various Artists

Love Jones Soundtrack
Columbia

Such erotic urban reverie is contained here that you'll be left with the same desirable effect the movie title suggests. Slow jams by Maxwell,

Xscape, Dionne Farris and Groove Theory flow into jazz fusion care of Cassandra Wilson, Duke Ellington and John Coltrane, putting everyone in the mood for love.

Kinnie Starr

Tidy
Violet Inch

Need a new pro-grrrl hero to throw adoration at since Ms. Love cleaned up her act for Hollywood? Try Canadian TV-hater and performance artist Kinnie Starr. The mixing is raw, the attitude tough and the final output refreshing.

The assistant editors think these CDs will give you a reason to get up in the morning.