

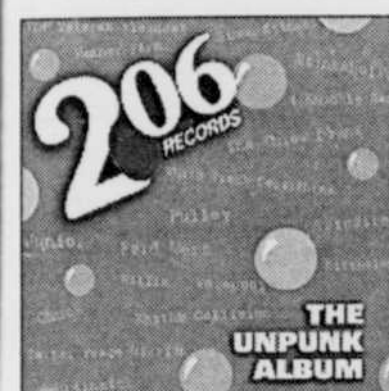
MUSIC

Since June is a popular month for weddings and commitment ceremonies, this month's column is styled according to a traditional superstition. I discovered "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue" in these recent recordings—

ROTATIONS PER MONTH

by
Rosemary Morrow

although I stretched the definitions a bit. RPM is also dedicated to lovers this month, in defiance of Oregon House Joint Resolution 29. The measure, which has the potential to



THE UNPUNK ALBUM
Various artists • 206 Records

redundantly ban same-sex marriages, is one giant leap backward for Oregonians. Something old (school) arrived in the form of this Seattle label's compilation of artists. Pure and punk as it wants to be, this collection includes Brainsick, Stinkaholic, the Throw Downs and Manner Farm churning out some of the region's most kick-ass noise. This disc is punk according to Pop (as in Iggy), not the other way around.

A much needed estrogen shot is provided courtesy of the White Trash Debutantes, a skanky crew who almost make the Lunachicks look sane. I preferred this disc to the other spins 206 sent: downway's *knackknacker* and Belvedere's *Because No One Stopped Us*. Both too repetitive. There is enough variation on *Unpunk* to make it a decent listen.



GENRE-FEST, VOLUME 1
Various artists • Ivy Records

Genre-Fest is something so new that it even includes previously unreleased and exclusive material on this collaborative effort, billed as "a Northwest comp-elation." Although the most recognizable group is Harvey Danger, each featured band excels on this mellow, groovy album. *Genre-Fest* includes 15 bands from the Seattle area, the beautiful survivors of the scene formerly known as grunge.

Conceived by Phil West, the collection reflects Seattle's arty, indie underground that didn't wipe out on the wave of teen spirit. There are so many musical styles represented here that the *Fest* defies classification. Particularly good selections are Melody Unit's '60s-reminiscent "Obstacle Golf"; Gordon Raphael and Anne Hadlock's "A Million Days," which sounds like an edgy Mazzy Star; and Ring's trippy "Ginger."

Kill Switch...Klick offers a fresh perspective

from the dance floor. And Maxine rejuvenates the fear that "I Will Die in a Fast Car" with this intriguing and eerie lament. If you like your music varied, ranging from goth to electronic to rock, then join the *Fest*. No word whether more volumes will follow, but one can hope.

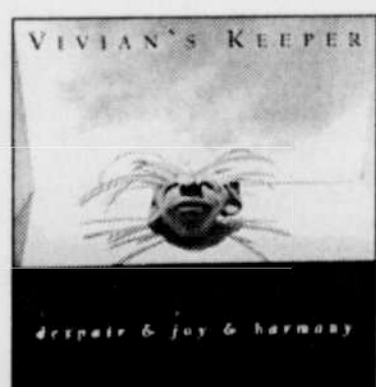


OPENINGS
Joan Szymko • Virga Records

Joan Szymko borrows the text for her choral arrangements from a range of sources, but mostly poets. "Variations on a Theme by Rilke" was written by Denise Levertov; "Eli, Eli" comes from a work by Hanna Senesh; and several others were written for Do Jump! Extremely Physical Theater. But for me, the literary thing just didn't work since the music was such a bore.

Openings isn't for everyone. If you like gospel, women's choruses and the nuns in *The Sound of Music*, then Szymko may be your thing. But I should warn the secular folks to stay away. Granted, not every composition on *Openings* is religiously influenced, but it sure feels that way. Only one song lists a reference to God, but all tracks are spiritually oriented. Listening to the album reminded me of trying not to fidget in church. So, obviously, I would not want to pay to hear angels singing in my house.

I did get a thrill, though, while listening to one track. On "Viriditas" (penned by the 12th century's Hildegard of Bingen), I thought the Elektra Women's Choir was singing "I am the yeti for good," which seemed like a twisted variation of "I am the Walrus." But the koo-koo-kachoo bubble burst when I read the liner notes: "I am the yearning for good."



DESPAIR & JOY & HARMONY
Vivian's Keeper • Joanna Agee and Adam Bentley

The cover of this debut release by Vivian's Keeper is not the only thing that is blue. The first track, "Rainy Day Lonely," evokes a mood that can only be conjured by someone who has lived in Puddletown way too long. The first time I listened to this album—several months ago—I was not impressed, but I guess time has a way of changing things. The second time around was better.

While all nine tunes are folksy and acoustic, I preferred those sung solely by Joanna Agee. I was also impressed that there's no trace of pretension, from the primitive press kit and non-gloss photos, right down to the simple vocals. Here is proof that less is more.

And just when you thought it was over, they add a jovial surprise: Listen for the hidden instrumental track tagged on the end.

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