

**MUSIC**



**ANNIE GET YOUR GUN:**  
THE NEW BROADWAY CAST RECORDING  
Various artists • Angel Records

**A**nnie Get Your Gun was recently revived on Broadway, brought to new life by stage veteran and multiple award-winner Bernadette Peters.

Looking as if she attends the Sophia Loren School for Anti-Aging, Peters is the dramatic

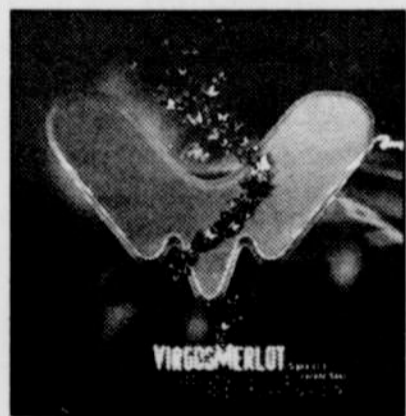
force of the show as the title character, Annie Oakley, though not its only star.

Possessing a surprisingly rich vocal range, second lead Tom Wopat (of

early 1980s *Dukes of Hazard* fame) plays Frank Butler.

Two things you must love in order to buy this soundtrack: the classic song "There's No Business Like Show Business," which is thrice rendered among the 19 tracks; and the sugary sweet, old-fashioned romance sung with amusing innocence by two people well into their 40s—further proof that age ain't nothin' but a number.

For all their sweetness, the tunes are thankfully not grating or annoying, but are performed lightheartedly by a seasoned cast. If you're a Peters fanatic and just can't get enough, catch her performance at London's Royal Festival Hall, which will be aired in August on PBS.



**SIGNS OF A VACANT SOUL**  
Virgos Merlot • Atlantic

**I**f I were a therapist for the members of Virgos Merlot, I'd be laughing all the way to the bank. Dysfunction works extremely well for the Birmingham, Ala.-based band, named for the sixth sign of the zodiac and the lovely blue grape plucked to make its namesake wine.

Imagine Alice in Chains and Trent Reznor on their worst days—personality-wise, that is—then throw in great hooks and nearly all of Kurt Cobain's angst. When lead vocalist and guitarist Brett Hestla begs listeners to "kiss my disease," or pleads with them to understand that "my soul is dead," the boy makes Marilyn Manson appear (dare I say) tame.

With the likes of Manson, Rod Zombie and

Stabbing Westward as heavy competition, the Merlot guys can definitely hold their own. Not only does their music rock, but the lyrics resonate with the pain of an intelligent, tortured soul battling with a world that wronged it. Virgos Merlot is drawing from a well that is far from dry, and devouring every drop.



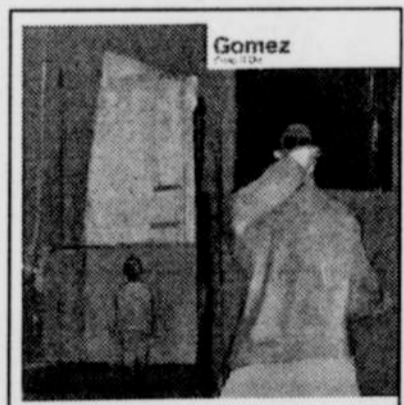
**MYTHS AND HYMNS**  
Adam Guettel • Nonesuch Records

**I** was going to compare young Adam Guettel to the world-renowned composer Stephen Sondheim, but I'm about nine years too late. Guettel has been lauded by various sources and awards, including one bearing Sondheim's name for song writing distinction, from Philadelphia's Musical Theater Festival in 1990.

Descended from composer Richard Rodgers, Guettel's theatrical genes are abundant. While his grandfather's legacy is solidified with the success of his creations—including the quintessential stage productions *Oklahoma!* and the *King and I*—Guettel has the talent to be a theater idol himself.

*Myths and Hymns* evolved from the work *Saturn Returns*, which premiered last March at the Joseph Papp Theater. The songs are based on classic Greek myths and colonial American hymnbook texts. The best musical execution is the standout "Icarus." Just excellent.

If he continues with this level of craftsmanship, by the conclusion of his 15 minutes, Guettel may outrun his famous grandfather's shadow to be the next Sondheim. Or better, the first Adam Guettel.



**BRING IT ON**  
Gomez • Virgin Records

**A**lthough this Gomez album offers good blues-rock with a rough edge, the band's sound really suffers from an identity crisis. There is nothing unique or distinguishing about any of the songs, or *Bring It On* as a whole. Rather, the group borrows its sound from more established Brits like Blur and Oasis, sans the nasal whine.

To further enhance the "little fish in a big pond" dilemma, Gomez's lead singer sounds like a clone of Seven Mary Three's lead vocalist. (Remember the hit "Cumbersome"?) If you're a diehard for new bands, give it a listen. But if you're seeking something different and extraordinary, seek elsewhere.



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**—CELIA J. LYON—**

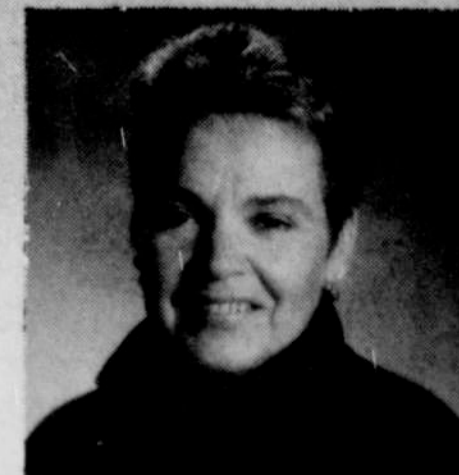
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*Note to self—next issue of just out is Aug. 6*

*(July has five Fridays, so there are three weeks between July 16 issue and Aug. 6 issue.)*