

one David B. McMacken and is some of the best stylised human characterisation that I have seen for a long while. His screwball, distorted pictures truly reflect the debauched world of the BulletBoys.

Listen with an open mind and try very hard to forgive the BulletBoys for their medieval attitudes. Find some redeeming qualities in their excellent cover of the Tom Waits' song 'Hang On St. Christopher.'  
LUKE CASEY

#### HINDU LOVE GODS Hindu Love Gods (WEA)

Bit late on this one but it's worth crowing about. Hindu Love Gods are Warren Zevon, plus R.E.M. without Stipe. Superstars on holiday, doing things without pressure, or so they say.

The philosophy here is that spontaneity and live-in-the-studio energy are the essence of good rock n'roll and these deities sure prove that with a neat selection of R'n'B covers.

Robert Johnson gets treated well on 'Walkin' Blues' and 'Travelin' Riverside Blues' but it's Zevon's lived-in drawl and Peter Buck's chugging raunch that makes Muddy Waters' 'Mannish Boy' the star of the show. Other good turns, surprisingly, is their beefy version of Prince's 'Raspberry Beret' and Woody Guthrie's 'Vigilante Man' doesn't suffer too badly either.

So there's grit in this here holiday breakfast.  
GEORGE KAY

#### POWER OF DREAMS Immigrants, Emigrants and Me (Polydor)

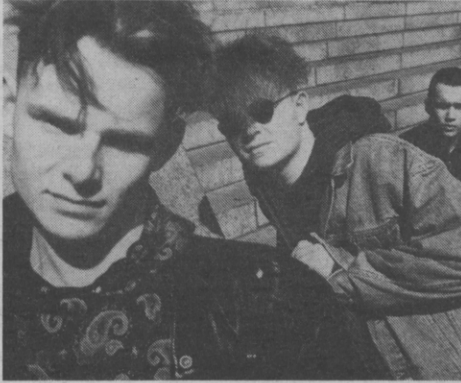
Young, gifted and Irish, this Dublin trio is the latest in a crop of bands determined to seize the opportunity created by U2's mega-success and consequent promotion of Irish rock n'roll.

Much has been made of the fact that budding genius songwriter Craig Walker is only in his late teens, a veritable spring chicken in years but mature enough to fashion fourteen quick fire gems for the Power of Dreams' first album.

They have a directness and simplicity that recalls the kinetics of the Undertones but that's where the similarities end. The snappy, tuneful guitar-propelled 'The Joke's On Me', 'Where Is The Love' and 'Mother's Eyes' owe more to the Edge than the O'Neills and on ballads as fine as 'Had You Listened' there's a sound more in common with the territory being



Bullet Boys



Power of Dreams

worked over by the likes of the House of Love than to the punk that fired the Undertones.

Sources aside, *Immigrants* is a tour-de-force of simple, direct songwriting flair. Walker should be around for a while.  
GEORGE KAY

#### TANGIER Stranded (Atco/Atlantic)

Very little seems to be known about Tangier outside of their native America, but they deserve as much attention as many other pop-metal bands get while coming over as slightly more viable because of their relative obscurity.

Their minimal four piece line-up is certainly capable of churning out some AOR classics such as 'You're Not The Loving Kind' and 'Caution To The Wind' and still leaving space for some Cajun style blues on 'Takes Just A Little Time'. Tangier seem to have all the cards for a winning career, just not the exposure to really put them in the big league.

To those who love Warrant, Great White and Poison, you owe it to yourself to give *Stranded* a spin and tell all your friends. Sadly, I personally feel that any group with a drummer called Bobby Bender is doomed to failure.  
LUKE CASEY

#### SAIGON KICK Saigon Kick (Atlantic)

Saigon Kick are an interesting find indeed. They sound like a crazy hybrid of Jane's Addiction, Wonderstuff, Simple Minds and Faith No More with enough new twists to make them one of the more exciting groups to come out of America in the past year.

They manage to fit elegantly from anthemic pop songs such as 'Colours'

to full metal crunch on 'What Do You Do', mocking that social small talk, all without any hint of contradiction.

The core of the group seems to be one Jason Bieler, a man who has incorporated every facet of music from the sixties onwards into his band's repertoire. Check out the uncanny Beatles resemblance on the song 'My Life' for real proof.

Along with Kings X, Saigon Kick stand as one of the few bands making quality rock music in a wash of production line groups. "No Clones Here" could be the catchphrase to identify this newer wave of American music.  
LUKE CASEY

#### TELSA Five Man Acoustical Jam (Geffen)

Unplugging from the Marshalls to perform an acoustic set is not something that hasn't been done before (Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, G'n'R etc) but to do a whole concert and album that way is unusual. Telsa's first two albums are very electric so to hear them proving themselves in this context is very interesting, even if the novelty does wear a bit thin.

'Modern Day Cowboy' and 'Signs' are highlights, as are surprise covers of Beatles, Stones and Grateful Dead songs. Probably most suited to listening to on a lazy Sunday afternoon.  
GEOFF DUNN

#### INTERNATIONAL COMPILATION (Mute)

Over the last ten years Mute records have, through their own efforts and a Blast First distribution deal, put out more indispensable records than just about any other label. I mean, imagine what life would be like if the Birthday

Party, Laibach, Diamanda Galas and Big Black had never got the international exposure they deserved. We should probably be thankful for the label's big commercial fish like Depeche Mode, Erasure, because the money they bring in has allowed Daniel Miller to keep looking for really interesting groups.

What none of this explains, however, is why a label with such a rich back catalogue should put out a compilation half full of dross. It makes commercial sense that Depeche Mode, Erasure and Inspiral Carpets should appear, but why Blast First should be represented by the terminally lame Easy, why the least exciting songs available by Wire and the great Mark Stewart should be chosen, and why Ohi Ho Bang Bang were allowed into a recording studio at all is beyond me.

Still, it's difficult to go wrong with Nick Cave and Laibach, and Crime and the City Solution and A.C. Marias also shine. Apart from that there's fairly characteristic material from Renegade Soundwave and Nitzer Ebb and something inconsequential from someone called Fortran 5. So perhaps this compilation might be an amusing diversion but there have been several hundred more important Mute releases.  
MATTHEW HYLAND

#### MYSTERY SLANG Venus Grove (Virgin)

Mystery Slang is the pseudonym for Latif Gardez, a native of London, who's been hanging around the back streets collecting sleaze for his shadowy Tom Waits/Doors inspired song stories.

On the cover he strikes poses like some soulful big city shark and although his music is high in pose content, night life melodramas like

'Seven In A Ditch', 'The Dark Archer' and the rumbling, menacing 'Blind Joe' evoke convincing enough sounds and rhythms of life under the stones.

Nick Cave he ain't, even if he wants to be; but there's signs here that Gardez could develop his own language.  
GEORGE KAY

## nz singles

#### 3Ds SWARTHY SONGS FOR SWABS (Flying Nun)

More of the same from the 3Ds, thank the gods. More bowel purging guitar noise, epiphanic chord changes weird visions of medievalism, fish and bad taste comedy. Certain idiots will no doubt cry "underproduced" and "tuneless" but in doing so they'll only highlight their own foolishness because while the vocals are all inarticulate passion and satire there's more sing-song melody in the guitars than at a barbershop quartet's convention.

I'm usually all for artful contrivance in music but the 3Ds make their furious, "unprofessional" naturalness seem like the only way to go. They're not, as Jonathon King claimed in *Stamp*, the best band in the world, not when there are three Skeptics still alive for a start, but it's an understandable mistake.  
MATTHEW HYLAND

#### THE PARKER PROJECT Tears On My Pillow (Pagan) 7"/Cassingle

David Parker from Rhythm Cage and assorted muso boys turn their hand to Johnny Nash's pop reggae hit of many moons ago. While not being a complete failure, in that it retains Nash's rhythmic sway, it just seems too damn nice to me. But pop music is not all ugly and this will find its audience, could be a big radio hit, if the powers that be listen to it.  
KERRY BUCHANAN

#### CHAINSAW MASOCHIST Thrashing Around (Flying Nun)

Three choice cuts from the forthcoming LP make this a generous 45" EP. B side: 'No Good At All' and 'As It Occurs To Me'. The first two seconds worth of guitar chords on 'Thrashing Around' sound like the Pixies' 'Cactus' but thereafter the song is a laconic Chainsaw wheeze, laid back and good natured.

'No Good At All' is all swarming, bee-stung guitar and more laconic, lower register vocals from Murray

Coulling. 'As It Occurs To Me' is introspective and acoustic-ish, a lovely song which lulls you into reflective mode before pulling the plug on mood with an abrupt, mid-chord ending.

#### DEATH RAY CAFE I Love The News (Pagan)

Fronted by ex-Sneaky Feeling David Pine, Death Ray Cafe have released a 45 which is almost a mini-EP with not one but two songs on the B side — 'All Gone Crazy' and 'Mersyndol Song' — both of which have more staying power than 'I Love The News' which is an intelligent novelty song, being a sardonic ditty about our omnipresent news readers and their spurious celebrity status. It's good homespun music and clever lyrics well sung, a nicely aimed shot, but not the sort of record you play regularly as a soundtrack to your life.

The B side songs are less catchy but more interesting. Southern boogie Dunedin style, which means high octave, high octane guitar cram full of intriguing lyrics about friends who "don't hear you anymore". 'I Love The News' would be a great romp live, but 'All Gone Crazy' and 'Mersyndol Song' beg to be played at home where you can chow down on the lyrics.

#### AXEL GRINDERS Apparatus of Love (Dionysus Records)

An American indie label release for the now sadly defunct Axel Grinders, and this record stands as a fitting tribute to their warped talents, being the only one of their potentially classic songs committed to vinyl.

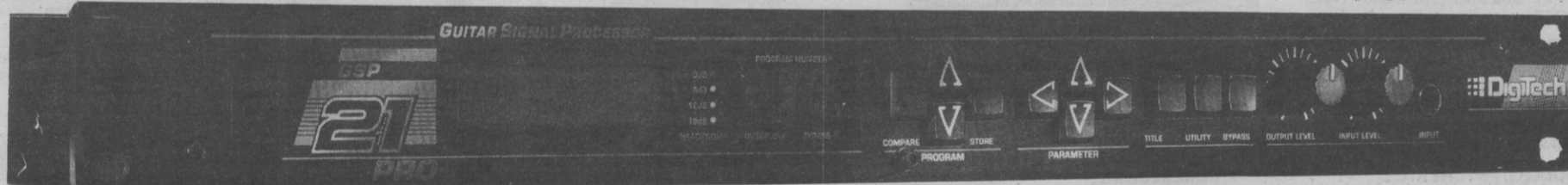
Music by John Segovia, words by Duane Zarakov, 'Apparatus of Love' was (to my mind) the best NZ single released last year, absolutely unlike anything else that made it to vinyl on these shores: a slow, dark, grind to oblivion, a pained paean to the torture of love ending in one long rapturously psychotic guitar implosion, one agonising electric wah wah contraction that leaves you hanging over the void. You won't hear better poetry this side of bedlam, and John Segovia's guitar work is a poignant reminder of what might have been had anyone had the good taste to give them some money.

'Don't Worry Be Sappy' on the B side is a complete turnaround, being a chaotic noise blast with dopey lyrics, a sort of Cyclone Ola for the ears. *Maximum Rock n'Roll* compared this Axel Grinders EP to Red Crayola and the Gun Club. Buy one of these discs (in translucent pink, clear, yellow or blue vinyl) and find out for yourself.

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