

through *Virgin* records



SMASHING PUMPKINS

"Gish"

Chicago's Smashing Pumpkins are not the new Jane's Addiction, Nirvana, or Doors — they are, however, the new saviours. The quartet, made up of Billy (vocals), James (guitar), D'Arcy (bass) and Jimmy (Drums), defy comparison. "Gish" is available on CD/Cassette and limited LP, and it's out now. The name may be vegetable, but the sound is 100% meat!



"Peel Sessions"

Available on 12" and CD single — features 'Siva' (from "Gish"), 'Girl Named Sandoz' and 'Smiley'.

"I Am One"

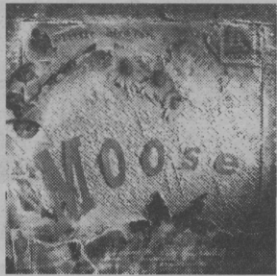
Available on 12" and CD single — features 'I Am One' (from "Gish"), 'Plume' and 'Starla'. Also available on limited edition 10" featuring 'I Am One', 'Terrapin' and 'Bullet Train To Osaka'.



MOOSE

"XYZ"

Moose are K. J. McKillop (guitar, vocals) and Russell (vocals, guitars) and they are about to pull sharply into focus with their debut album. Completed with REM's earliest mentor Mitch Easter, the album features a classic set of songs, and is available on CD/Cassette and limited LP (with bonus live single). "XYZ" features the fabulous new single 'Little Bird'.



MOOSE

"Little Bird"

Available on 12" single with 'There I Go Again' and 'Theme from Ace Conroy', and CD single with the extra track 'ZYX'.



VERVE

"Gravity Grave"

"Verve are gigantic" was the first thing ever written about four unknown 20 year olds from Wigan. Verve harness the Jaggeresque energy of visual magnet Richard Ashcroft with the band's supremely 'felt' musicianship.

Verve are the UK's bravest and most exciting rock band, and this single is available on 12" single featuring 'Gravity Grave' (extended version), 'Endless Life' and a live version of 'A Man Called Sun', with the CD single containing a bonus live version of 'Gravity Grave'.

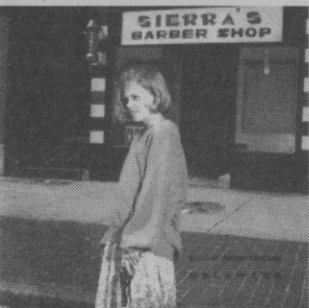
Also available on limited 10" featuring 'Gravity Grave' (edit), 'Endless Life' and a live version of 'She's A Superstar'.

DROP NINETEENS

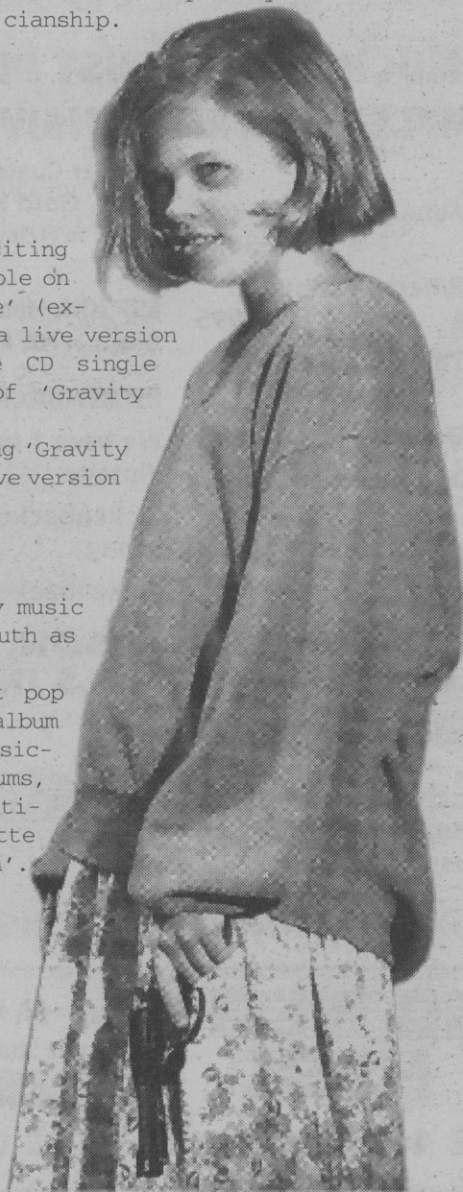
"Delaware"

A record of blissfully contradictory music and lyrics owing as much to Sonic Youth as any 90s alternative pop.

Drop Nineteens are Boston's newest pop world-beaters, and their debut album "Delaware" is an impressionistic music-scape — walls of guitars, careering drums, dance drones and rock booms. This multifaceted album is available on Cassette and CD, featuring the single 'Winona'.



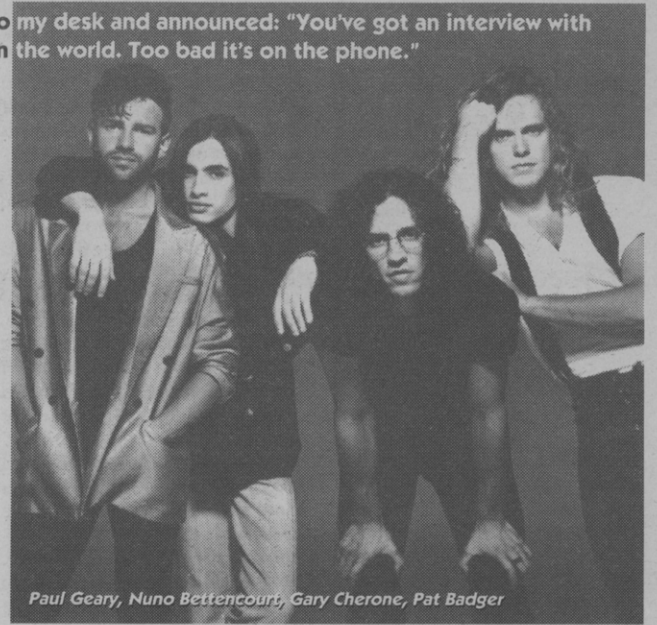
Virgin



One day the boss came over to my desk and announced: "You've got an interview with one of the best looking men in the world. Too bad it's on the phone."

Miffed that he'd assume I'm interested in talking to someone merely 'cos they're handsome, I feigned indifference. When he told me who the hunk was I didn't have to fake it. Nuno Bettencourt from Extreme. The identikit pin-up American rock band who don't so much kick out the jams as pull out the amps and go gloopy acoustic at the drop of a blow-drier.

Who hasn't endured 'More than Words' more times than they care to remember, or 'Hole Hearted', hits that have helped Extreme sell four million copies of their last album *Pornograffiti*. Now they're releasing album number three, *III Sides to Every Story*, a 78 minute



Paul Geary, Nuno Bettencourt, Gary Cherone, Pat Badger

EXTREME

epic divided into three sides culminating in a final segment called 'Everything Under The Sun', itself divided into three "movements". Fearing the worst (a rock opera scripted by Toto performed by Guns n' Roses) but impressed by bio notes which quoted Nuno saying how much music from the 60s and 70s means to him (good call!) I set the tape rolling.

It's not entirely my thing, first listening, but side one in particular dazzles as a brilliant pastiche of myriad musical styles and reference points played with heartfelt conviction and technical virtuosity, the whole wrapped up with a complex production that intros one song with a 70 piece string orchestra and samples others with items as diverse as children in a playground and Martin Luther King.

Unfortunately by side three the album bottoms out into the sort of prog-rock power-pop squelch which could have taken place in any minor league, mid-west stadium of the the early eighties. Even worse, some of the songs name check God. But sides one and two reveal that Nuno is a big fan of Van Halen, Queen and the Beatles with echoes of Bread, King Crimson, Aerosmith and Hendrix as well.

Now I'm talking to Nuno on the phone in America and he sounds kind of bored, but he perks up when I mention the Beatles. Extreme had their symphony recorded at Abbey Road and it was, he confirms, a "very inspirational experience".

"The Beatles are to me the greatest band that ever was" says Nuno and it's hard not to like him. Even though, from what I can tell over a wire cable ten thousand miles away, he's not the funniest guy in the world and he's real serious about his beliefs. Don't be fooled by that oft-brandished bare torso and he-man hair — Nuno is a Christian. Not that Extreme preach religion. Rather, they write songs about such things as peace and the Rambo mentality of kids they grew up with who couldn't wait to go to war.

"We're definitely entertainers," says Nuno, "we're not out to preach to anybody about anything but we do tend to see some things and have views and opinions. I suppose we just like to create the conversation, get people to talk about it."

And no, he wouldn't call *III Sides* a concept album.

"It's conceptual like any other Extreme record is in the sense that the record is a diary of where the band is at mentally and physically. What we're thinking about, what we're talking about."

So how does a man with his

moral convictions deal with the sleazier aspects of the recording industry?

"You know, what you do is, you have the ability to create your own world around you. The classic saying 'if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen' — whatever you want around you it can be around you but if you don't want it you don't have to have it. We're not believers in rock and roll and drugs and sex, we're believers in ourselves."

And what does rock and roll mean to Nuno?

"We try to get back to the

instrument out of an obsession with music rather than the guitar itself, having first played drums, then bass. It's his obsession with music, and reverence for that which has gone before, that earns Nuno my respect as we embark on one of my favourite topics — how young people today are ignorant of rock history and don't recognise the sources that have inspired many of their contemporary heroes.

"Yeah, it's too bad," concurs Nuno, "Even a person of my age, if I wasn't the youngest of ten kids in my family I prob-

"GOING BACK TO MUSIC AND NOT DOING DRUGS AND NOT SCREWING EVERYTHING ON TWO OR FOUR LEGS IS ROCK AND ROLL — THAT'S THE REBELLIOUS THING"

fundamentals of rock and roll in our music and what we grew up on. Back then in the 70s when people were doing drugs or a lot of Jack Daniels and stuff, that was more part of an era than part of the music. Most of the bands that are out now took the images of what happened back then as opposed to the music and made *that* rock and roll."

But you didn't mind posing provocatively (standing starkers behind your guitar) for *Interview* magazine recently?

"That was a very important photo for me. I've always wanted to do that photo and I knew people would take it the wrong way but I worked with this particular photographer, he's the only one that would do it in the right way. It was a very spiritual photo for me, it was more of an artistic photo that I've always wanted to do with just a guitar. Obviously with the way things are these days I didn't expect anything different than people thinking I was posing nude for a magazine, but I'm not there to cater to the rest of the world, I'm out there to cater to myself, be happy with myself."

Of course, magazines like *Guitar World* aren't interested in Nuno's torso — they're praising him as one of today's greatest young guitarists. He's suitably modest about his inclusion on last year's *Guitar Legends* bill in Seville alongside the likes of Keith Richards, Joe Satriani and Brian May ("Believe me, I know what I'm capable of doing and what it isn't and to actually be considered any kind of a legend is a little out of control for this point of my life") but he says it was a big thrill and he's still high off it.

Nuno ranks Eddie Van Halen among his personal guitar heroes but says he started playing

ably wouldn't have been turned on to a lot of the music that I was. It's a shame that a lot of the guitar players these days and kids in general aren't going to get a chance to dive into that Queen catalogue or Zeppelin catalogue or that old Aerosmith catalogue because it's very important to see where the people they like came from as opposed to just liking them. I think it's a responsibility of older brothers and fathers and mothers to keep it going, keep passing it on. At least in the States there's these classic hits stations that are very popular and they play a lot of old stuff."

If rock and roll doesn't mean sex and drugs and excess to Nuno Bettencourt, what does it mean?

"Whatever somebody wants it to be. It's wanting something that usually always seems nobody else wants you to have. It's doing what you love to do regardless of what anybody else tells you. It's going for what you believe in no matter what anybody tells you is right or wrong. It's a passion to me. And nowadays going back to music and not doing drugs and not screwing everything on two or four legs is rock and roll — that's the rebellious thing, because everything else is safe and very corporate."

Do you have any great interests outside music?

"Music to me is air, it's not even like something I do, it just is. It might as well be part of my body, or my feet or something. It's an obsession, it's in my blood — all the time — I walk in a beat sometimes. I can't sit down, I can't go to the bathroom without listening to music. I don't like to take a shower or be in a car without listening to music all the time. It's pretty much what *is* to me, you know?"

DONNA YUZWALK