

SOUND

Blues Traveler

Four
A&M



Before the age of samplers and high-gloss record production, God created live rock and roll and saw that it was good.

Blues Traveler is one of the few bands that still

strives to produce studio recordings with all the live heat and sweat of a backyard jam session.

The group's fourth album, *Four*, is a testament to that struggle. Even the biggest skeptics will find themselves hopping to tracks like "Run-around" or falling into the funk of "Stand." And once lead singer John Popper begins his trademarked harmonica sermon, it's all over. You're converted whether you like it or not.

■ M. Tye Comer, *The Review*, U. of Delaware

Big Head Todd & the Monsters

Stratagem
Giant Records



Big Head Todd & the Monsters have left behind the cozy pop and catchy melodies of their last CD, *Sister Sweetly*. Don't mourn the loss.

Stratagem is an evolution for Big Head Todd into textured instrumentation and good old rock and roll.

Todd Park-Mohr's vocals and lyrics are now backed by a free-flowing, loosely structured sound, alternately dreamy and pumped full of emotion. Robb Squires' bass and Brian Nevin's drums have finally matched steps with Park-Mohr's fluid guitar, binding *Stratagem* into a splendid whole.

■ Ian Corwin, *The Daily Iowan*, U. of Iowa

Black Crowes

America
American Records



A band that gets progressively less radio-friendly is one to be admired. The Black Crowes made it big by reintroducing southern rock — but with their

latest release, *America*, they're aiming to please themselves.

Sure, songs like "A-conspiracy" will catch on with their rootsy appeal. But on most of the new tracks, this band is flexing its musical muscles and developing an identity.

So if you want to be on the cutting edge, buy *America* and then brag about how you liked the band when it wasn't so damn cool.

■ Eric Geyer, U. of Texas, Houston

Cramps

Flamejob
Medicine/Giant Records



If Uncle Fester were to cover Elvis with The Clash as his back-up band, you'd know what to expect from The Cramps' latest release, *Flamejob*.

The weird and dastardly quartet combines souped-up '50s swing, twisted '60s surf and glittery '70s punk into 15 songs that mock today's rock music and replace political agendas with the humor of a cheap horror flick.

A masochistic collection of lovely ballads like "Sado County Auto Show," "Nest of the Cuckoo Bird" and "Ultra Twist," the LP is a lusty, busy dose of B-movie rock.

It's Elvis with black lipstick and Chuck Berry with KISS boots. With *Flamejob*, The Cramps are reaffirmed as the sultans of backwater punk swing.

■ Jeff Sklar, Michigan State U.

DGeneration

DGeneration
EMI Records



Punk rock never needed much more than three chords, three minutes of wailing and a little bit of unscripted chutzpah for garnish. New York's DGeneration has

all that and even throws in some eye-popping attire to boot.

Vocalist Jesse Malin and his dirty Big Apple bunch lay it on the line simple and straight — the time for wimp rock is over. Hair spray-cum-butt rocker appearances notwithstanding, DGeneration proves that the old order of business is ultimately more meaty and manly.

■ Jason Probst, *The Daily Evergreen*, Washington State U.

Our Picks

Listen, U.

(Or, *How We Learned To Stop Worrying and Love Self-Indulgence*):

Mazy Star, *So Tonight That I Might See* — Released in 1993, the LP is catching a deserved second wind. "Fade Into You" gets us all weepy.

The Boogie Monsters, *Riders of the Storm: The Underwater Album* — This debut LP proves that you don't need a gimmick to make a good hip-hop album — just good hip-hop.

Magnapop, *Hot Boxing* — Just how we like 'em, frumpy and frenetic. Solid power pop.

Harry Connick, Jr., *She* — Harry loses the Frank fetish for a big-band/Creole hybrid. By God, the man is sexy.

Love and Rockets, *Hot Trip to Heaven* — Reunited yet again, David J and Daniel Ash put together a kinder, gentler LP full of extended sonic-sweet nothings. Mellow gold.

Stereolab, *Mars Audiac Quintet* — Consistently challenging songs with a rocking Vox organ grinder. Whoomp!

Fretblanket, *Junkfuel* — We have about 7,000 copies of this disc lying around the office. Call us if you want one. Psych.

Manu Dibango, *Wakafrika* — Somehow more engaging and less intimidating than most "world music," *Wakafrika* has more hooks than a meat freezer.

Deee-Lite, *Dewdrops in the Garden* — They want to teach the world to dance, and Lady Kier still has a groove in her heart. By God, the woman is sexy.

AWARE: *The Compilation* — Buy this album! No, seriously — buy this album. No, Seriously. Buy this album.

Pocket Band

Box the Walls

"I love melody and I also love words," says Wendie Colter, singer/songwriter for Los Angeles' coffeehouse-band-gone-big, **Box The Walls**. Her commitment to crafting sweet pop melodies can be heard on the band's debut three-song EP, *like roses*.

To say that Box The Walls has a yen for perfect pop barely scratches the surface. Each song is a finely tuned melodic concoction. The dense wall of guitars on the title track provides a canvas for Colter's harmonic vocals. "Darkside," the closing ballad, has a sparse, folksy feel to it with lyrics that bring Tori Amos to mind: "If I could reach down into you/I'd pull up a handful... To see what you're made of."

The EP was released by a friend of the band, and despite *like roses'* limited distribution in local music stores, favorable response has been flowing from local press and college radio since the band's 1993 West Coast tour with the cranberries.

And although they would love to pursue music full-time, the big-money world of major labels isn't all that appealing to the five members of Box The Walls. "I love the idea of being on an indie label because the people that buy music on indie labels are music appreciators," Colter says. "[But] this is a public art form.... In order to feel a sense of accomplishment, we need the record to be heard by a lot of people." From the sound of *like roses*, that shouldn't take long.

For more information on Box The Walls, write: Long Arm Talent, 1657 Angelus Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90026.

Bryan McNamara, *Collegiate Times*, Virginia Tech



Listen Up!

U. Radio Chart

1. **Sebadoh, *Bakesale***, Sub Pop
2. **Jesus Lizard, *Down***, Touch and Go
3. **Guided By Voices, *Bee Thousand***, Scat/Matador
4. **Various Artists, *Natural Born Killers Soundtrack***, Nothing/Interscope
5. **Sugar, *File Under: Easy Listening***, Rykodisc
6. **Dinosaur, Jr., *Without A Sound***, Sire/Reprise
7. **Stereolab, *Mars Audiac Quintet***, Elektra
8. **Beastie Boys, *Ill Communication***, Capitol
9. **Various Artists, *Jabberjaw***, Mammoth
10. **Palace Brothers, *Days in the Wake***, Drag City

Chart solely based on college radio airplay. Contributing radio stations: KJHK, U. of Kansas; WFAL, Bowling Green U.; KUCB, U. of Colorado; WUVT, Virginia Tech; KRNU, U. of Nebraska, Lincoln; KTUH, U. of Hawaii; WRFL, U. of Kentucky; WXJM, James Madison U.; KTRU, Rice U.; WSBF, Clemson U.

★★★★=Chunky Monkey ★★★★★=Wavy Gravy ★★★=Cherry Garcia
★★=Rainforest Crunch ★=Compost Swirl