

**TALK ABOUT THE PASSION:**  
*An Oral History from the First Wave  
of American Indie Rock*

EXCAVATIONS

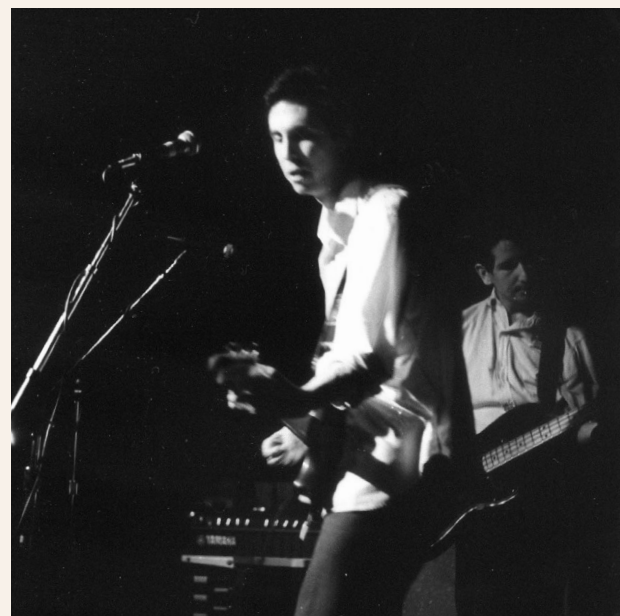




What if the US had a compilation like *C86*? In the UK, that comp sparked an entire sub-genre identity that went well beyond the British shores and coined an entire collector's market of obscure, rattly, and noisy indie singles from the mid-to-late '80s.

Surely, the US and Canada had bands of the same ilk and quality, but many disparate factors made it so a widespread movement didn't happen on a large scale. Smaller, regional compilations were released, but typically with distribution relegated to the area from where it came. Without a defining compilation, it's hard to galvanize all these tiny independent releases into their own niche, which is what we've attempted to do here – the American Jangle Underground.

Cultural hubs like NYC, Chicago, and L.A. were taking no wave and noise rock to its extremes with great success via bands like Sonic Youth, Big Black, and Black Flag's sludgier mid-'80s version of itself. Hardcore resonated with youth culture and spoke to those disillusioned and angry with Reagan-era politics. As such, harmonies, verse-chorus-verse, and melodic guitar figures probably seemed outdated, outmoded, or at the very least out of vogue in these tumultuous years. However, though some consider 1983 to 1987 to be the "Dark Years" of American indie rock, something special was indeed bubbling up in smaller cities and college towns throughout America. While these bands may not have spoken to the political climate of the time – nor did they necessarily turn rock 'n' roll on its head with an incendiary sound that



redefined counterculture – they were part of an important period between early '80s post-punk and early '90s indie rock. They are the bands found on *Strum & Thrum*.

Two bands from the Southeast helped forge this future after post-punk. In January of 1981, the dB's released their seminal debut LP *Stands for Decibels*, and later that same year, R.E.M. released their debut single "Radio Free Europe." Neither record was a purist's power pop, nor were they overtly '60s influenced. However, they both progressed guitar-based underground music in huge ways that were the litmus for what we'd eventually call "indie rock." Synthesizing classic sounds of the Byrds and Big Star, adding some of the frenetic energy of bands like the Feelies and Television, the catchiness of the Nerves and the Real Kids, while presenting esoteric and inward lyrics like Joy Division or Patti Smith – on paper it was where you'd think guitar music was headed, as a slightly catchier progression of post-punk with nods to the West Coast '60s sound. Too nervous for pop radio, but not as aggressive as punk, neither grandiose nor nihilistic – it was lean, mean, fairly clean, and very American.

In the wake of those records, 1982 saw the rise of pivotal bands that would offer new takes and further investigation into this sound. In L.A., the Dream Syndicate released the incredible *Days of Wine and Roses*, Green On Red released their sinister-yet-palatable EP, and their lighter, more pop-inflected neighbors, the Salvation Army (later the Three O'Clock), released their self-titled debut LP. All of these classic records



had a '60s influence, but while the Dream Syndicate and Green On Red went for a brooding, dark Velvet Underground/Doors influence (respectively), the Three O'Clock were almost like teenage punks trying to play the Hollies and the Move. At the same time, they weren't just throwbacks, there was a punk edge to these records. They'd all shared bills with the Gun Club, X, and Flesh Eaters. These records had a vast and lasting impact, launching what would be known as the "Paisley Underground," which gave rise to such acts as the Bangles, True West, and Rain Parade. Though the Paisley Underground scene would quickly fade, a healthy scene developed on both coasts and quickly moved into Middle America, creating a sub-genre without a name in the pre-alternative rock universe.

In April 1983, R.E.M. released their first proper LP *Murmur*. Critically and commercially a success, the record kickstarted a similarly murky batch of bands, vastly ranging in quality and sincerity, all over North America. Almost simultaneously, major labels started seeking cash-ins on this sound, while some ex-punks turned the distortion down a bit and started new bands in this vein.

In the Southeast, a particularly vibrant scene was taking foot, perhaps unsurprisingly because R.E.M. and the dB's both called it home and local producers, Mitch Easter and Chris Stamey (sort of the George Martin and Phil Spector of this whole sound), made the region a hotbed of well-crafted and intelligent guitar-oriented music bent to the left of the dial.



In the UK, this same 1981-83 period saw the rise of labels like Creation, Postcard, Fast, Sarah, as well as the rise in popularity of the Smiths, Orange Juice, and the Jesus and Mary Chain. By the mid-'80s – exactly the same years we cover for American artists here – UK indie had caught fire with the Pastels, Shop Assistants, Talulah Gosh and countless more bands that are now staples in many indie collections.

In Australia, the Church, the Go-Betweens, the Triffids, the Cannanes, and many others who had a kinship with the aforementioned British bands became popular in their own country and abroad. And, of course, New Zealand was something of an epicenter for all of this music via Roger Shepherd's Flying Nun label. The Clean, the Chills, the Bats, Tall Dwarfs, and the Verlaines made a mark that is still highly influential to this day.

Basically, everywhere else in the English-speaking world, verse-chorus-verse songs with melodic guitar figures and self-reflective lyrics were at an absolute pinnacle. These territories, being geographically smaller and easier to coalesce via small labels and venues, were able to create something that didn't happen in the US or Canada outside of a few small pockets – a scene with a capital "S." It was mostly lacking for the non-commercial, DiY American bands on this compilation who shared similar sensibilities. These two worlds, the bands, and their audiences were set apart in every way.

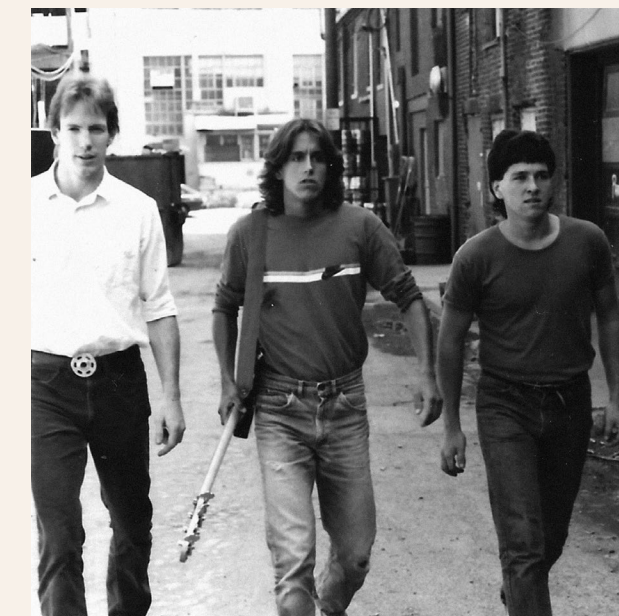
1987 is the year where this compilation ends, and not by accident. The Pixies released their



debut *Come On Pilgrim*, the Replacements broke through in a huge way with *Pleased to Meet Me*, Husker Dü's *Warehouse: Songs and Stories* saw them come close to commercial success, and R.E.M. went from being a cult band to a huge rock act with *Document*. Around this same time Yo La Tengo and Guided By Voices, two artists whose early work easily fits on this compilation in both sound and DiY approach, both quietly started to release their first few records. Embracing everything before it, especially British contemporaneous releases in an almost postmodernist take on guitar rock, these bands and others created what we now know as "indie rock," seemingly from nowhere...

By 1988, the underground was coming up, and just a few years around the corner was alternative rock and grunge, ready to crowd the airwaves, both right and left of the dial, with its more meat-and-potatoes, bro-friendly, Marshall stack populism. Jangly, melodic pop was dead in favor of this more muscular form of alternative as the '80s turned to the '90s. Anything that didn't sound like this was retro-termed "college rock" to go the way of the dodo.

American indie rock, of course, was the alternative to "Alternative," and soon Sub Pop, Matador, Merge, K Records, Teenbeat and many more fantastic labels propelled that movement forward. Finally, the United States had its own crop of labels, venues and scenes that could support it in a very big way, which helped Yo



La Tengo and Guided by Voices find much larger audiences, as did their contemporaries like Pavement, Unrest, Sebadoh and many more.

Our goal with this compilation is to bridge the gap between post-punk and indie rock as it was in America. The Darrows' Derek Chafin put it succinctly when he said, "We were not college rock, we were first wave indie rock." Indeed, a slew of indie rock stalwarts are found throughout this comp: Brent Rademaker (A New Personality) went on to start Further, Beachwood Sparks and The Tyde, Archer Prewitt of Sea & Cake fame was in Bangtails, Jon Ginoli of the Outnumbered spearheaded Pansy Division, the tireless Ric Menck found great indie success with Velvet Crush, and 28th Day's Barbara Manning went on to World of Pooh and a brilliant solo career.

In building the bridges of indie rock, it becomes clear that there were no "Dark Years" during the 1980s. From post-punk, you start with acts like the Feelies and the dB's, move on through to the Windbreakers, Crippled Pilgrims, and all the other bands on this comp, on to Guided By Voices, Yo La Tengo, and into the future with current bands like Real Estate, Beach Fossils, DIIV, and their kin. While this compilation may never approach the significance of what *C86* did for '80s indie in the UK, perhaps it will help to spark some interest in these bands (and the many others like them) from this strumming and thrumming era.

– Mike Sniper





**Chapter 1**  
*When It Began*

Early photo of 28th Day; left to right: Cole Marquis and Barbara Manning



It seems that in all rock biographies, be they of musicians famous, obscure, or whatever ladder-step in between, the most compelling part of the story is when the protagonist finds others into the same bands and scenes. While every band forms under slightly different sets of circumstances, mutual enthusiasms are often the essential spark.

You'll find here a number of musicians who were influenced by pre-punk rock of the '60s and '70s, and those whose main inspiration came from the first wave of UK and US punk bands and the resulting post-punk fallout. This combination proved fruitful; while the children of punk brought a DiY attitude and some fresh musical approaches, the big brothers brought songwriting acumen and classic sounds from the Beatles, the Byrds, and the Who.

**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** Bobby Sutliff and I first met in the front row of an Alice Cooper show as teenagers, during Suzi Quatro's opening set. We both grew up on a wide variety of music, but we definitely bonded over bands like Big Star (everybody in Jackson, MS had their records it seemed), the Flamin' Groovies, the Byrds, the Beatles, but also Sneakers and the dB's. Being from Jackson, which had no scene in the '70s, we came out of cover bands. We had to create our own deal.

**Shawn Kelly (Start):** Our first band was the Stillbornz, which was our high school punk band. We were basically a cover band playing import punk singles we were into, along with '60s and '70s power pop. That experience led to our second group, the Clean, which played mostly originals. When the Clean broke up in '81, Jay and Shawn formed Start.

**Ron House (Great Plains):** Mark, Matt, Don (*aka* Hank), and I were original members of the Columbus scene. We saw each other in various bands in 1980-1982. The impetus for forming a new band came when we saw the Gun Club and the Embarrassment. We were blown away. We wanted to be in a band like that.

**Charles Baldonado (Downy Mildew):** I had played in bands since the mid-'70s, and when Downy Mildew started I was the only one in the band that could really play my instrument. As time went on, everyone became a little more



“ *The impetus for forming a band came when we saw the Gun Club and the Embarrassment. We were blown away. We wanted to be in a band like that.* ”

– Ron House (Great Plains)



proficient. I think that limitation was very constructive in the beginning. We definitely had the punk ethos.

**Pat Thomas (Absolute Grey):** Two members were still in high school, while another older member worked at the only cool record store in town. They posted a flier looking for a drummer, and I answered it. This was October, 1983 in Rochester, NY.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** I put up an ad on a music store billboard; Mark answered and recommended contacting Dan. We were listening to so much music – British new wave and the beginning of American indie: R.E.M., the dB's, the Replacements...

**Kurt Stake (The Love In):** Our drummer Scott and I had been in a punk band called Unit Q

that started with no one knowing how to play. I moved on to start a mod band called the Jetz that had some pretty good local success with a lot of support from Rodney Bingenheimer on KROQ in L.A. An unknown R.E.M. actually warmed up for the Jetz at a gig in Orange County when we opened for the Untouchables. Imagine that.

**Scott Wingo (Crippled Pilgrims):** I definitely was coming out of the punk scene. My first band was called Trenchmouth (approximately June '79 to March '80), and we were playing hard punk just before the whole hardcore thing completely took over. We did a number of gigs with Bad Brains, Teen Idles, Slickee Boys, Tru Fax and the Insaniacs – all DC bands – and even got to open for D.O.A. on their first D.C. visit.

Wire was a big influence we had in common.



As for what was current, we were all fans of the Minutemen, Meat Puppets, Dead Kennedys, and Flipper. Of course, there was a lot of stuff happening in D.C. at the time, and we were deeply into that—in fact, Jay was a bartender at the old 9:30 Club for a year or two.

**Holden Richards (One Plus Two):** My favorite bands as a teen were the Byrds, the Beatles, and Badfinger. I discovered the Clash in '79 along with Elvis Costello. Raleigh was full of punk and hardcore – Th' Cigaretz, Corrosion of Conformity, etc. I used to be an avid skateboarder, and the music I heard first was a direct result of that. When I moved to Chapel Hill, I discovered bands that had melodic roots like the dB's and Television.

I fell in with a group of punk aficionados who were thinking of forming a band. We practiced

in a true squat. The Pound Notes were born in 1981. We played our punk originals to anyone who would listen. While I loved the simplicity and emotional clarity of punk, my songs in the Pound Notes were always more melodic, while the other writer was a true punk and wrote in the style of Pere Ubu and Wire. We had to pick a direction. That's when I knew I wanted to do something truer to my own musical preference and began One Plus Two in 1983.

**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters):** I met Derrick and Larry in early 1985 because of a flyer I posted on the University of Wisconsin campus seeking like-minded, pop oriented musicians. I likely mentioned the Smiths, the Go-Betweens, Prefab Sprout, Aztec Camera – not the sort of bands you'd normally see on someone's start-up band notice... in Madison, WI, at least. I was only really into the poppy punk bands like the

Clash, the Jam, the Undertones, and especially Buzzcocks. I played in a Buzzcocks cover band in college called the Shelleys.

**Don Tinsley (Primitons):** I believe the original lineup all met up at the Alabama School of Fine Arts. I was a bit older and didn't know most of the other band members until the early '80s music scene started happening in Birmingham. The Byrds, the Beatles, Television, Sonic Youth, Social Distortion, and the Zombies were shared references for us. Mots and Leif introduced me to the music of the Jacobites and the dB's. I remember they showed me the Golden Palomino's version of "Omaha," and I showed them the Moby Grape original; I guess that speaks to the age difference. I brought Donovan, Buffalo Springfield, Beau Brummels, and Everly Brothers to the table. I finished school in Richmond, VA, around the time punk broke and got to see



Joining ARMS AKIMBO will be a new Chapel Hill band, 1 + 2. This could be good, folks. They've recorded a demo at Wes Lachot's ultra-hip eight track studio in Durham, and it's one of those tapes that make your pop-bone tingle. Guitarist Holden Richards has entered a songwriting phase that promises to deliver some exciting moments if he can keep his muse away from commercial radio for a few years. If 1 + 2 can stay as patient as R.E.M. who busted ass playing every club in the world for two years before I.R.S. gave in, a pleasant career could develop before our very eyes. Good luck to 1 + 2.

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*and the review of One Plus Two's 7" in  
its own format.*

**WDOM** October 15, 1984  
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Just wanted to let you know that the great work has not gone neglected here at Providence College's own radio station (91.3 FM) and you are presently on our playlist. I'll keep you up to date with the progress of the E.P., while eagerly awaiting your next record that you are currently working on. Respectfully,  
*Bill Lane*  
Bill Lane  
Rock Music Director

**WJMF** October 16, 1984  
Bryant College Box 36  
Smithfield, RI 02917  
Dear Gents:  
Not to sound too MTV-ish but--  
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Can we have one, huh? huh?  
Bedazzlingly yours,  
*AB*  
John Blowers  
Music Director, WJMF

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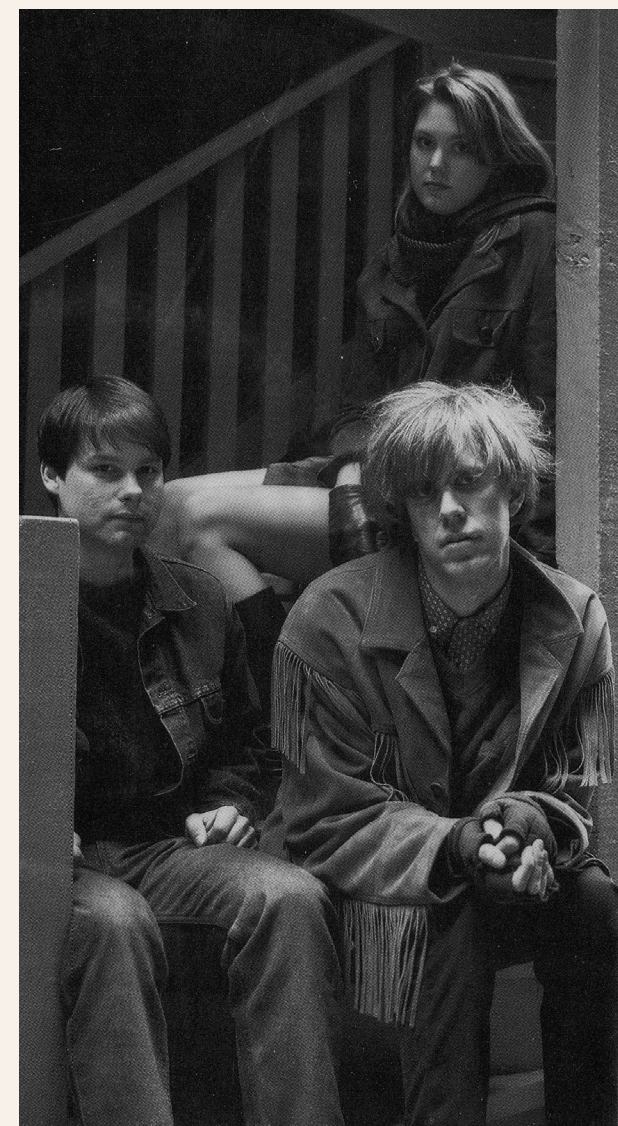
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**BILL POPP & THE TAPES • BINKY PHILLIPS**  
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FRI. MARCH 11 58.  
**BALL GREAT PLAINS**  
**MOFUNGO**  
Antietam  
SAT. MARCH 12  
**Marc Berger Band**  
**O.K. SAVANT**  
**BOBBY RADCLIFF**  
The Fugitives  
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**Blitzspeer Prong**  
**CRUMBSUCKERS**  
Record Release Party  
SUN. & MON. EVES.  
—AUDITION SHOWCASE—  
TUES. MARCH 14  
**ATTENTION • THE APPOLINAIRES**  
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WED. MARCH 15  
**RU HA HA • THE HEPBURNS**  
**THE PRIMITONS • MAJOR DOMO**  
— COMING —  
3/18 THE TOASTERS  
3/19 VOLCANO SUNS/FISH & ROSES 3/20-MURPHY S LAW  
16 TRACK RECORDING AVAILABLE

Cyclones "You're So Cool"/"R.S.V.P."  
(Little Ricky, 186 Fifth Ave., NYC 10010)  
Songwriter-guitarist Donna Esposito is a  
breathy melancholy down-to-earth singer  
reminiscent of Alison Statton (late of  
Young Marble Giants), yet her lyrics are  
as American and simple as Chris Stamey's,  
and her guitar entirely in character. Very  
sparse, unified, melodic, an extremely  
likeable trio. Surf-styled instrumental  
B-side is nice (love that guitar), like Buzz-  
cock's instrumentals on Love Bites. 7  
-JF, CJ

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MARCH 13: 2pm CRUMBSUCKERS in Stone Press Park





early concerts by Talking Heads, the Ramones, and a great Richmond band based around VCU, the Fabulous Daturas. Rather than punk or new wave, I starting working on what I was thinking of as new rock and put together a band with friends back in Birmingham, the Mortals. When playing the same clubs, I then met Mots and Leif playing with Jim Bob & the Leisure Suits. A year after the Mortals ended, I heard the early version of the Primitons, and a few months later I joined the band.

**Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors):** I met Donna Esposito when I was stalking her band the Cyclones in NYC in 1979. They were pretty big in NYC – the “You’re So Cool” 7” got a great review in *NME* and *Melody Maker*. She did gigs with the dB’s and the Bongos, who were the biggest bands on the scene back then. I was just a Donna groupie, following her band around, watching them play at places like Tier 3, Hurrah’s, and Maxwell’s in Hoboken.

I think Donna tried out for some punk bands, but was rejected, so she formed her own group. I started my own group too. It was a great time.

**Donna Esposito (Cyclones / Riff Doctors):** The Cyclones were the first band to record at Mitch Easter’s Drive-In Studio. He had been living in NYC, and played bass for us at a couple gigs. He was moving back to North Carolina and invited us down, even though the studio wasn’t built yet! So we get there late at night, and Mitch starts unpacking all the boxes of gear, connecting wires, etc. We couldn’t believe our eyes. There’s this guy in striped pajamas and goggles soldering away all night long. By 11am, we started tracking. The best day ever!

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** I was walking on the campus of the Kansas City Art Institute when I heard this incredibly melodic, energetic music blasting. The song was great and the vocals were incredible! I immediately went in

and saw three guys rocking out. I waited until the song ended and then heaped praise on the trio that was the first incarnation of the Bangtails. Somehow, Mike and I became friends and shared many hours of spirited conversation about music, art and philosophy. He suggested I might take up bass and we started a newly formed Bangtails. We practiced relentlessly for hours every day. Mark was a friend of mine and wanted in. It was explosive the first time we got together. Insane! We were jumping all over the place drenched in sweat and screaming. Something very special was happening...

**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** Jon and I met at the *Daily Illini* college newspaper. Jon had written a bunch of songs and shared a demo cassette with me. While the playing was roughshod to say the least, the songs were outstanding. Drummer Ken Golub was also a part of the local music scene. Lead guitarist, Tim McKeage, was a well-known guitarist in a few different local



“ We were all involved, in one way or another, with the college radio station, and we were able to listen to new music coming out on vinyl on a weekly basis.



– Cole Marquis (28th Day)

bands. When Tim joined the band, he instantly propelled the sound to not just being fresh and energetic, but fluid as well.

**Vandykes:** We met in a Beacon Hill townhouse in 1982. We first formed as a two-piece influenced by the Smiths, the Beatles, Donovan, and German ‘60s pop sensation Heino. Frank Dehler (Unnatural Axe) soon recruited Roger Tripp (La Peste) on drums. Brad Adams and later Kurt Henry (Phobia) filled in on guitar. Recently relocated from New York, Craig Kutner brought a psychedelic pop sensibility and a lambent wave of creativity that blossomed on two-track recordings into the Vandyke sound. British punk and post-punk, psychedelia, Flying Nun, and Australian pop influenced the band. Mixing genres, we wanted to find a bittersweet exuberance in the now, while summoning echoes of the past. We explored bipolar pop and doom for two and a half years before reforming as Tall Paul.

**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** Chaz Lockwood and I were introduced by Rochester music mogul Stan Merrell who was managing a surf band called Cousin Al & The Relatives. I had been drumming in a ‘60s cover band, and when Cousin Al’s drummer quit, Stan recruited me. Meanwhile, as an aspiring songwriter and guitarist with a cassette 4-track, I had started making demos playing all the instruments. Chaz and I began playing some acoustic gigs together where we were known as the Trout. We were working at a college radio station at the time, and we were housemates with Stan, who worked at the local cool record store Record Archive. He turned us all on to Big Star, Tommy Keene, the Soft Boys, and the whole Paisley Underground.

**Tom Sheppard (The Love In):** We were definitely into R.E.M. and all things Paul Weller. We all grew up on SoCal punk and never missed a Ramones show in Los Angeles.

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** My first band was called Traffic Jam. We were active while I was in grade school during the early ‘70s. In middle school, I joined a group called the Phantoms, and then in high school a group called the Drats who self-released two singles in 1981. We couldn’t sell either of them to save our lives, so we ended up giving most of them away. In fact, there are still a couple boxes of Drats singles in my mom’s basement. The Drats were involved in the Chicago new wave scene during the early ‘80s and eventually mutated into the Reverbs in 1983. Whereas Drats was this kinetic new wave thing, we wanted the Reverbs to sound more mysterious, like a cross between the Byrds and R.E.M. Although we sounded nothing like them, we also drew a lot of inspiration from Dwight Twilley and his musical partner Phil Seymour. Those two guys played most of the instruments on Dwight’s records, which is what John and I did in the Reverbs.





*It was explosive the first time we got together. Insane! We were jumping all over the place drenched in sweat and screaming. Something very special was happening...*

– Archer Prewitt (Bangtails)



**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** Linda Hopper and I had been friends for years. We met through our mutual friends in R.E.M. I was living in North Carolina and had a band, and she was in Athens, GA. There was so much cross-pollination in the NC/GA music scene back then and friendships abounded. Linda had a band with Lynda Stipe called Oh Ok when I met her. I was a big fan. I had toured with Let's Active and was playing with my NC band, the Broken Crayons, when they called to see if I would join them. Matthew Sweet had been playing with them, but he left to form the Buzz of Delight. I joined Oh Ok in the spring of 1984 and toured with them. In the fall, the band broke up and Linda and I decided we needed to get out of Athens and try somewhere new, so we picked D.C. We were writing songs and wanted to start a new band. When we got to D.C., I asked my old high school friend, Dan Buccino, to play drums. He had been in the Insect Surfers. We found Mitch Parker in the 9:30/D.C. Space club scene through mutual friends.

Linda and I were both fans of the Velvet Underground, Syd Barrett, and Big Star. We loved

Pylon, R.E.M., the True Believers, the B-52's, the Replacements, Let's Active... Honestly, the list is endless. I always wanted to have a band that married the Everly Brothers to the Velvet Underground. Mitch Parker had mostly been in punk bands, and Dan's band was a surf band – so we pulled from all corners but converged in the rock/pop rec room.

**Judy Grunwald (Salem 66):** I lived in NYC for a year or so, in 1978-79, and I was inspired by bands like the Ramones, Television, the Cramps, and Lydia Lunch. When I moved back to Boston, I joined a newly-formed band, the Maps. I was the singer. We recorded one single, *I'm Talking To You*. After that I had a band with David Hild and Michael Cudahy called Joan of Arkansas; I played bass. We played out but never recorded. Then David moved to NYC.

And then – Salem 66! Beth and I had mutual friends. We got together and were looking at each other's lyrics, as we both had songs already, and noticed we both used the image of a broken plate to describe a broken heart. I thought it was a sign!



by R. Storey





Salem 66 photo from their self-titled 12" sleeve



**Beth Kaplan (Salem 66):** I was a huge fan of the late 1970s Boston bands the Nervous Eaters, the Real Kids, the Lyres, the Neats – lots of the bands on the Ace of Hearts label. I used to go see Judy's band, the Maps, when I was in high school! They were amazing. Someone needs to release their single and radio tapes. I was in a band called the Insteps with my friend Richard Mason who died a few years ago. Richard and I met through an ad in the Boston Phoenix when we were both in high school, and we started playing shows around Boston in 1979. We made a bunch of radio tapes, as we used to call them. Dan Salzman, the bass player for the Maps, produced some of them.

**Judy Grunwald (Salem 66):** We auditioned a lot of guy drummers in the basement of my house, where we ended up practicing along with Christmas and Dangerous Birds, but nothing clicked. Susan was in our friend group, though we didn't know her, and she came over and played all these tom-tom beats, as she didn't actually play the drums, and we liked it! She was a visual artist and learned to play after she was in the band. I had faith in her immediately.



**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** Barbara (Bobby) Manning and Mike Cloward met through the Chico State, CA radio station KCSC. Barbara was doing some spoken word stuff with DJ Seymour Glass, and Mike heard her stuff and asked her to be in a band he had been forming. I had been Barbara's boyfriend for a while and was asked to join. Since I possessed about the same musical ability as the rest of the members – minimal to decently able – it was a perfect fit. After about a year, the bass player, Peter Beck, left and Bobby started playing bass, turning us into the classic power trio that plays on the first record.

We were all involved, in one way or another, with the college radio station, and we were able to listen to new music coming out on vinyl on a weekly basis. It seems kind of hilarious to think about now, but in a small town like Chico, CA, getting access to any underground music was very difficult. Thank goodness for KCSC.... Mike was definitely more into punk rock than the rest of the group. Since he basically spearheaded the group, 28th Day was conceived as more of a punk band than what it quickly became. If you ever get a chance to hear some of the really early stuff, it's very gnarly. But Barbara and the other guitarist's more esoteric influences tempered the punk side.



Clockwise from top left: the Strand, the Ferrets, the Love-In flyers



**Chapter 2**  
*All Over The Place*



The Ferrets meet the dB's.



There were already a lot of inspirational resources for American bands by the early '80s. LA's "Paisley Underground" scene was getting a page or two in the mainstream rock press, as was a less-tightly-united East Coast scene featuring the Bongos, the dB's, the Feelies, and many others. Boston and D.C. both had thriving music scenes with bands that would be hugely influential. But even many smaller cities had a lighthouse that bands would turn to – bands as varied as the Embarrassment from Wichita, Pylon from Athens, and the Spongetones from Charlotte set an example for young musicians who were at some remove from the major music thoroughfares. Though it would seem a certain other Athens, GA band left the biggest mark on everyone...

**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** All those Paisley Underground bands in L.A. were our contemporaries, and many of them became good friends and/or collaborators. My wife Susan and I started promoting shows for touring bands at a tiny beer dive in Jackson. Green on Red, Rain Parade, the Neats, and others came and stayed with us. We made a lot of lifelong friends like that. I was invited to tour as a member of Mitch Easter's band Let's Active in 1984 and '85.

*It was an exciting time because you could sense something was building on a grassroots level, just like it had with punk rock in the late '70s and garage rock in the '60s.*

– Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs)



**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** We loved all those bands. R.E.M. was just a huge influence on everybody it seems. The three of us saw the Dream Syndicate in Sacramento when they were touring *The Days of Wine and Roses*. I stood with my knees against a two-foot high stage, one foot in front of Karl Precoda, as he and the band ripped

through the whole album. Still one of my all-time favorite concert moments.

We opened for Rain Parade when they came through Chico. We hung out with them for the day, played an outdoor show with them at Chico State, and then opened for them at

Photo: Peggy Sue Amison.

Windbreaker Tim Lee with Mitch Easter, March '85.

WINDBREAKERS: TERMINAL.  
Homestead Records HMS 005 (US. LP).

This album and the 'Disciples' reviewed above overlap somewhat—having 4 tracks in common. In my view both LPs are essential listening—I wouldn't like to have to choose between this pair! As Stuart has already raved about the marvels in store I'll just add that on this equally wonderful record you get 6 songs produced by Mitch Easter who also plays keyboards together with Don Dixon and Let's Active's Faye Hunter who share bass duty. The other unique song is a version of Television's 'Glory' that features the Rain Parade's Piucci/Roback/Glenn/Kalwa as backing musicians.

Lash out and get the pair— be indecisive!!

Jon Storey.

**28th DAY**

★★★★★ Highest Rating . . . 28th DAY are part of the R.E.M. generation, and they should be proud of it!

Along with Paul Costain's "Halo", this trio's "25 pills" is one hit that R.E.M. will never record—a drug anthem for the '80s hitched to bloodvessel-busting guitars and one of those peculiar irresistible pop hooks that the Athens National Monument write in their sleep.

What elevates them from the chaff is that they're rough, and producer Russ Tolman's rustic approach has bludgeoned this out of them. If it's possible to believe, the results are flabbergastingly fresh. "Burnsite" blows all comparisons out the window, a totally warped attempt at a trad-dad supernatural ballad. Trees fans take note: Barbara Manning drags folk music screaming into 1985 with dizzying, gory adeptness and Cole Marquis unwinds guitar strings in unparalleled Eastern modal fashion to show off his chops as a guitarist with a mission: Karl Precoda had better look out.

There just has to be something in the air up there in Northern California to keep producing bands of this calibre. Maybe the crimson geese on the cover know the answer."

Sounds (UK)

\$6.98 suggested USA list price  
also available on high-quality cassette (72047-4)  
ENIGMA 72047-1

**PURE POP FROM JACKSON, MISS?**

The Windbreakers  
ANY MONKEY WITH A TYPEWRITER

"Any Monkey . . ." EP  
produced by Mitch Easter  
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a local club that night. They were all wearing the same clothes they have on for the cover photo of *Explosions in the Glass Palace*. That was a big moment for us, playing with this band that we really admired. We went to lunch with them when they first arrived in town and Barbara said something to the effect of, "I know you're from L.A., and most L.A. bands are pretentious dicks, but I'm not going to let you be assholes."

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** I was a huge fan of R.E.M., the dB's, Let's Active, Rain Parade, the Three O'Clock, the

first time I saw them was in a club in Greensboro, NC in 1981 along with 15 other people. I was smitten with their energy and their personalities. I played their first single on my college radio show every 20 minutes after it came out. They also became friends and were really supportive. I was lucky to join Let's Active in the fall of '83 and tour with R.E.M. for a few months. I never got tired of hearing them. A week into the tour, they were on David Letterman for the first time. I remember watching from our hotel room and thinking that this was a big moment. I also loved Rain Parade, Dream Syndicate, and Green on Red. The dB's were also friends, and a really inspiring band especially since they were NC folks. All of these bands are part of the reason I started to play music. They made it seem real and possible. It's hard to describe the atmosphere back then, it was just really fertile creative ground.

**Brent Rademaker (A New Personality):** We supported the Dream Syndicate when they played Tampa and were big fans. Rain Parade too! R.E.M. played on New Year's Eve 1980 and even though we thought their hair was too long, we loved them anyway. They were a band from the South who put out a 7", and so we followed suit. When *Reckoning* was released, it really turned our attention to other American groups.

There were a surprisingly good number of groups in Florida to share bills with, and most of the rivalry was the "cover song vs. original song" debate, and who could draw the biggest crowds and the most girls. 1981-84 were vibrant years: Stick Figures, Primitive Romance, the Fanatics, Zenith Nadir, Triple XXX Girls, Charlie Pickett & the Eggs, and more...

**Ron House (Great Plains):** One of our first out of town shows was opening up for the Dream Syndicate in Cleveland, and it was a real thrill. R.E.M., less so. I wasn't crazy about their first single or seeing them live for the first time – the Replacements blew them off the stage. I liked them better on *Life's Rich Pageant*. I loved both Green on Red and Rain Parade, but never saw them live. Being an unpopular band meant that many times we just played for the other bands on the bill. Some of my fondest memories are just hanging out at soundchecks and after-gig parties.

Bangles, the Dream Syndicate, the Soft Boys, the Barracudas, and the Church. I cherished those groups, bought their records, saw them perform, and eventually became friends with many of them later in life. We listened to a lot of obscure regional Chicago garage rock singles from the '60s too, like the Lemon Drops, the Knaves, and Saturday's Children, and we discovered Big Star thanks to Peter Buck, who told us about them after R.E.M. played in Milwaukee.

**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** I adored R.E.M. They were incredible early on and afterwards. The



How did each one feel? Put the number of the sentence under the picture.

FROM WASHINGTON, DC

**THE CRIPPLED PILGRIMS**

1. Carla was exhausted.  
2. Dennis was angry.  
3. John was upset.

1. Mona was happy.  
2. Lee was excited.  
3. John was upset.

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My kite!

My kite!

1+2

Watercolor Hair-cut

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**MARSHA ARMITAGE & THE FELINE TERRITORIES**  
**MARI OKUBO** WITH  
MELVIN GIBBS • CHARLES ELLERBEE  
WALLACE RODNEY • KAMAL SABIR • TOM VARNER

THE MIGHTY **CONNOTATIONS**  
(From Boston) 1, 4, 5

FRI. APRIL 4

**ALEX CHILTON**  
From N.C.

**THE GRAPHIC THREE HITS**  
From N.C.

**DIORS**

Lot Music Network  
PO Box 2981  
Olympia, WA 98507

The "Z" issue, Nov.-Dec. '84, \$2

**LOST MUSIC NETWORK'S INDEPENDENT MUSIC MAGAZINE**

REVIEWS:  
Z: The Op stands here,

**ONE PLUS TWO: Watercolor Haircut** 4-song 7" EP  
(New Math, 119 Northampton Terrace, Chapel Hill, NC 27514)  
Part of the '60s folk-rock revival. Nice harmonies, jangly guitars, soft dreamy quality. More direct than P.E.M., but in that same camp. VB: 4, JF: 6

OCTOBER 15, 1984

**ROCKPOOL NEWSLETTER**

**NEW AND NOTEWORTHY**

1+2  
4-track ep (New Math): "And yet another very young, interesting and homespun band from the South. Raw to be sure, but we hear something that is promising. There are times when we hear a young band's independently produced single and think it is special, and this one stands out. We are in on the beginning of something. It is "just born" pop that sounds so sweetly convincing it hurts. These are early times still for the band, they have gone through a line-up change and are now comprised of two men and two women. They are currently working on a new single. They'll let everyone know when the time is right. 1+2 can be contacted at: 119 Northampton Terrace, Chapel Hill, NC 27514."

25 ROCKPOOL OCTOBER 15, 1984

CAT'S CRADLE—Wed., Oct. 24 Chris Stamey and 7+2 (rock)

28 The News and Observer, Raleigh, N.C., Fri., November 9, 1984

In tune  
By Melanie Sill

Holden Richards, guitarist for Chapel Hill rock quartet 1+2, reports that the band's new six-song EP should be out in January

on Homestead Records, a new label owned by Dutch East India Cos. of New York.

1+2 released an EP, "Watercolor Haircut," earlier this year on its own label, New Math Records. Both records were recorded at Tritone Studios in Durham with Wes Lachot. In addition to Richards, the band's members are guitarist Susan Kent, drummer Mary Clyde and bassist-songwriter Rob Stuart.



**Stan Merrell (Absolute Grey):** It was Pat who brought much of the Velvet Underground flavor to the band. Another huge influence was the Dream Syndicate, with Absolute Grey covering “Halloween” and “Tell Me When It’s Over.” Of course, what made Absolute Grey different from the west coast Paisley Underground sound was the added influence of British post-punk bands like Joy Division and the Cure. I remember we all went to see Echo & the Bunnymen in Buffalo. That concert influenced us greatly.

**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** I really dug R.E.M.’s first two albums. Mitch Easter and Don Dixon became my producing heroes, and I followed all the early albums they worked on. Another favorite of mine from that decade was the Windbreakers’ EP *Any Monkey with a Typewriter*. I loved the dB’s album *Like This*. While we were in [an earlier band] Invisible Party, Chaz and I got to open for them twice. Years later, I organized and put out a tribute album to the dB’s called *Stand-ins for Decibels*.

“ There was so much good and worthy music at the time it was like drinking from a fire hose. But mostly it was a feeling that music was free and limitless and represented our experiences.

– Derek Chafin (The Darrows)



Another band from that period I really loved was the Reducers, as well as the Spongetones from North Carolina. We were friends and fans of Absolute Grey from Rochester. Pat Thomas, their drummer, was a maverick of promotion and was a friendly rival at first, which later grew to admiration, appreciation, and inspiration on my part.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** Glad you mentioned the much unrecognized dB’s. We were always interested in Mitch Easter and what he was writing and producing. I can’t say enough about the Replacements – raw and so musical. There was so much good and worthy music at the time it was like drinking from a fire hose. But mostly it was a feeling that music was free and limitless and represented our experiences. R.E.M. was appealing because it had attack as much as it was

dreamy. It also felt very American... We loved that they were forging a new trail. We liked being the underdog – ignored at the time by the mainstream music press – but we also knew we were a part of something larger. Fanzines popped up everywhere, small independent papers emerged, and college radio was at its zenith. College radio and this music seem to go hand in hand.

**David Steinhart (Pop Art):** R.E.M. were the thing. The first EP kind of changed how we all thought about what we could do. The mumbled lyrics and the arpeggiated chords mixed with the frenetic pace were the key in my opinion. We played shows with most of the Paisley Underground bands at one time or another, either in L.A. or on tour. Our favorite show was opening for the Dream Syndicate and American Music Club in San Francisco.

**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** The Windbreakers’ brother band was the Primitons, who lived

in Birmingham, AL. We played lots of shows, shared touring members, and drank shitty beer together. When we went out and toured, it was always cool to share bills and get to know the people from bands you respected. We played several shows with Game Theory on our first tour, which was a good pairing and a lot of fun.

**Don Tinsley (Primitons):** Early R.E.M., yeah! They also seemed to be mapping out a version of what I was thinking of as new rock. Rain Parade and the dB’s still work for me...

**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** R.E.M. played their first gig outside of Georgia in Boone, NC at a small place called PB Scotts, just after their debut Hib-Tone single came out. After the show, there was a party thrown for the

band by an organization called P.R.E.P. (Punk Rockers Evolving Progressively) co-founded by Stephen Dubner, who later co-founded the band the Right Profile and then much later co-wrote the *New York Times* bestseller *Freakanomics*. That show and afterparty changed everything. The dB’s album *Repercussion* stayed on our turntables for almost an entire year too.

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** I think we all really responded to *Chronic Town*. It stood out as being melodic, sophisticated, and enigmatic. I liked the dB’s too. I appreciated that southern take on pop. I suppose I was listening more to music from across the pond though... Roxy Music, Elvis Costello, XTC, Jam, PiL, the Fall, the Smiths, Cocteau Twins, etc.

**Michael Sump (Bangtails):** I think we were very influenced by R.E.M.’s *Chronic Town* – we listened to it a lot on the road – some

Dream Syndicate, Green on Red. My favorite local band was Sin City Disciples. We were actually the first band that played “Alternative Mondays” at the Grand Emporium, the greatest bar of all time.

**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sister):** All of those bands came through Madison at some point, and I saw most of them. Madison was far enough away from both Chicago and Minneapolis to merit a stopover. The Embarrassment from Wichita meant more to us than almost any of the other groups on the college stations. In Madison, pop bands would play shows with hardcore bands, even though that was largely its own scene. The very first White Sisters show was with Killdozer, which says a lot.







**WHITE SISTERS**  
 Kind Words (*Boat*)  
**One** for the quieter moments in life. The White Sisters are a three-piece hailing from Madison, U.S.A. whose gentle, flowing acoustic-based structures bring to mind a slightly jazzier Aztec Camera or a poignant reminder of classy folk sounds. Any debts are quickly repaid. "Misery, Me & You" is both yearning and hopeful, a lament of the kind that only youthful lovestruck songsters can successfully pen, whilst the other side "Nothing Out There" is no less moving. Too harsh to be wimpy, too soft to be overlooked, a cornerstone gem.  
 (From Boat Records, P.O. Box 3362, Madison W1 53704, U.S.A.)



**Shawn Kelly (Start):** We listened to all of those American groups, but didn't feel as if they were direct influences on us. Rather, they were contemporaries. We recognized similarities between Start and a group like R.E.M., but we didn't look at them as a model for our sound. It was good to know there were other groups with similar styles and approaches out there, but when we began we felt all alone in the States.

**Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors):** I loved R.E.M. I saw their first show in NYC. All their gear got stolen, so Andy Schwartz from *New York Rocker* magazine bought them new stuff. They were great. Donna was real good friends with the dB's. She worked with Will Rigby and Chris Stamey at 162 Spring Street, the first trendy bar in Soho. I saw the dB's multiple times. They pretty much were the Beatles, only in 1982; they were that great. I have no idea why they didn't make it big. They were our favorite band. Mitch Easter was also the bass player in Donna's band for a while – another great guy who really encouraged us.

**Kurt Stake (The Love In):** I absolutely loved R.E.M. from their first EP on and saw them whenever I could. One day I saw Peter Buck at a Hüsker Dü show at the Roxy in Hollywood and went up to talk to him to tell him how much I loved them. He was a total dick to me. I absolutely couldn't believe what an asshole he was. Blew me away. I figured their career was just about over anyway, so I decided it didn't matter. Then *Orange* came out and they became huge. I've never listed to a R.E.M. song again. If a song comes on the radio, I turn it off.

I loved the Dream Syndicate though. My earlier band the Jetz was part of the mod scene, so we played with the Bangles, the Three O'Clock, and the Untouchables a lot, so I was semi-tight with them. The Love In was a little later though.

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** John and I formed the Reverbs right when the whole college radio thing was taking off in the early '80s. The circuit on which independent bands could tour was just beginning, and people found out about their favorite underground groups by reading fanzines and listening to the college radio stations. It was an exciting time because you could sense something was building on a grassroots level, just like it had with punk rock in the late '70s and garage rock in the '60s. When

our album started appearing on college radio charts alongside R.E.M. and the Dream Syndicate, John and I were ecstatic. It felt like we were part of something fresh and exciting, although we were pretty isolated in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago.

Being from the small suburb of Barrington, we mostly felt detached from everything, so we basically created our own reality, which consisted of hanging out alongside a set of train tracks amidst a clump of trees near the outskirts of town. We referred to this place as "The Happy Forest." We wrote a lot of our songs there and named our album after it.



**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** Jon was an early supporter of the dB's, feeding them spaghetti at his apartment before one of their local gigs. And Jon and I interviewed R.E.M. in a racquetball court after a Champaign gig, just after *Chronic Town* was released. However, any comparisons to R.E.M. would make us bristle, as Tim was playing Byrds riffs for years before jangly pop became hip in the '80s.

We were good friends with a great local band called Weird Summer that our drummer Ken joined after the release of our first album. The Champaign music scene was thriving then with

bands playing seven nights a week. It was very collegial, as bands would help each other out. We had a loyal local following, but often had a better response on the road. We played a couple shows with both the Replacements and Hüsker Dü, and felt a kinship with them as being fellow Midwestern bands.

**Judy Grunwald (Salem 66):** We were friends with lots of bands in Boston – Mission of Burma, Christmas, Dangerous Birds, Dinosaur Jr., the Neats, the Neighborhoods, Art Yard, the Del Fuegos, Volcano Suns, Big Dipper – too many to mention.

**Scott Wingo (Crippled Pilgrims):** Early R.E.M. were great, though they became kind of an irritant as the years went on. It seemed like everyone around me was nuts about the Dream Syndicate, and I loved some of their stuff as well – in fact, Crippled Pilgrims opened for them at the 9:30 Club – but I found listening to their entire first album in one sitting to be a bit of a bore. Rain Parade really impressed me – they really did have a few stunningly beautiful tracks. I loved the first Green on Red album. It was on constant rotation at my house.

**Pat Thomas (Absolute Grey):** Whenever the Paisley Underground bands came to Rochester, NY we played with them and started friendships... Long Ryders, Rain Parade, the Dream Syndicate, the Three O'Clock.

**Dave Swanson (The Reactions):** I was in college at the time and had a radio show. The albums of that era that had the most impact on me were *Roman Gods* by the Fleshtones, the Salvation Army album, the dB's *Repercussion* and the Dream Syndicate's *Days Of Wine And Roses*. And that was just the American bands! Equally important were the Soft Boys, Teardrop Explodes, Echo & the Bunnymen... The Early R.E.M. stuff was great, Green On Red, Rain Parade, Long Ryders, True West, Gun Club, X, Leaving Trains... all those bands. Thankfully, Cleveland was still a fairly "important" city for touring bands, so most of those bands stopped there.

When all the L.A. bands like the Three O'Clock, the Bangles, and Rain Parade came out, it was like, these are my people, where have they been!? I was (and still am) friends with guys from Chesterfield Kings, Cynics, Fleshtones, Dream Syndicate and others.





**Chapter 3**  
*Can't Get There  
From Here*



The concept and sound of first-wave indie rock had parallel evolutions across the western world. In the wake of the independent record movement and distribution network that punk (and later hardcore) developed, a space was made for more melodic fare, which in the UK begat Postcard Records and the formative eras of 4AD and Creation Records. Suddenly small labels like Sarah Records, Bi-Joopiter, and Whaam! were releasing short-run noise pop 7" singles and EPs at a heavy clip, building a huge fan base which informed what is now known as the C86 sound.

In New Zealand, the rise of the legendary Flying Nun Records and its Dunedin sound was carried by amazing releases by the Bats, the Chills, the Clean and the Verlaines. Australia had similar exports, notably the Go-Betweens who had an original roster slot on Scotland's Postcard where label mates Orange Juice had helped influence this sound very early on.

America's Homestead Records, led by current Matador Records head Gerard Cosloy, was responsible for bringing a lot of these releases stateside; they also released a lot of the music which inspired or is featured on *Strum & Thrum*. While Homestead's A&R was unparalleled – the label did a ton to help the bands on its roster – the sheer size of North America and its fanbase made a cohesive “scene” centered around a label or

group of artists very difficult. Indeed, most of the artists on this compilation operated without being aware of those bands and labels, yet arrived at more or less the same sound. Still others were more aware of it and followed it with a collective fervor.

**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** I was vaguely aware, but I was definitely more interested in the bands that I knew and encountered, which were dumbass American kids such as ourselves for the most part.

**Brian McCafferty (The Reactions):** I worked in record stores and have been a music obsessive since childhood, so I was always reading up on what was going on in any music mag I could find. I never got fully into the Flying Nun thing, but I liked some of those C86 type bands — Biff Bang Pow!, Jasmine Minks, Television Personalities, the Loft and Primal Scream.

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** I became aware of some of this later... The Pastels and the Verlaines. I really went crazy for the Moles. Incredible band.

*We were aware of those scenes; we knew we were a part of a larger thing, international in scope. The style may have differed between the States, England, and Australia/NZ, but the undercurrent was the same.*

– Derek Chafin (The Darrows)







DARREN

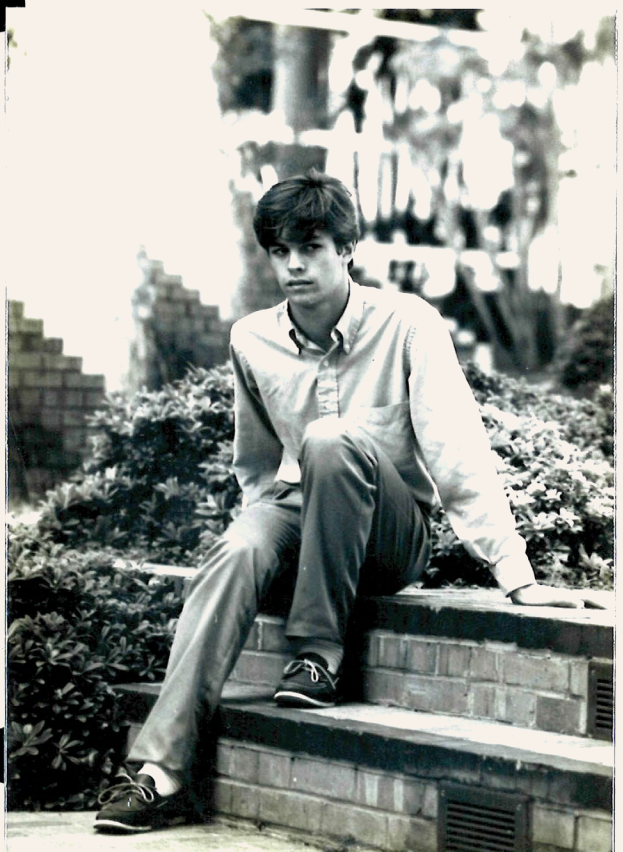
VOCALS, GUITAR



BRENT

VOCALS, GUITAR

A NEW PERSONALITY



KEYBOARDS



DRUMS







A New Personality playing live.



**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** Jon was very aware of those scenes as he had a stellar vinyl collection and even had his own fanzine called *Hoopla* that he wrote in his pre-college days when living in Peoria, IL.

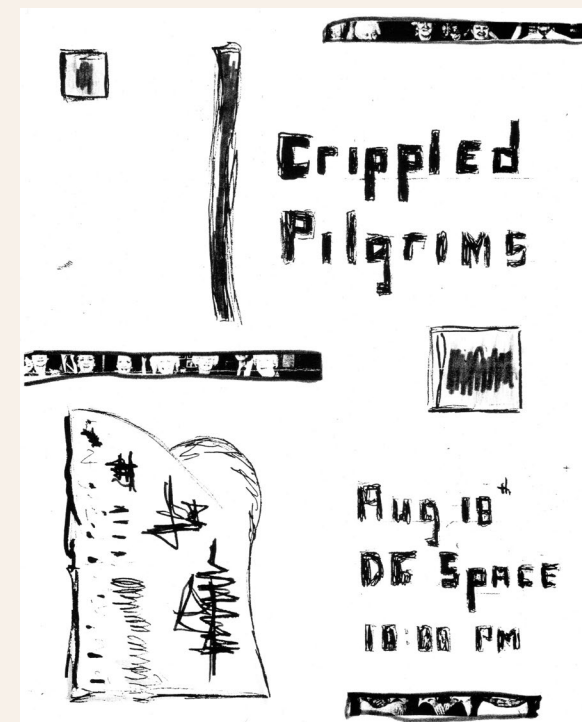
**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** My other band the Rumbles opened up for the Go-Betweens when they were touring in support of their album on Capitol, which introduced me to an appreciation of their music from then on. I was also a fan of Paul Kelly and later the Chills. Since then, I've been really turned on to the CS6 scene and Flying Nun bands.

**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** The first time I heard "Pink Frost" by The Chills was on one of our Northwest excursions. Loved it then and now. Barbara became much more involved with the whole New Zealand scene after she left the band — she went on to collaborate heavily with Flying Nun acts and even released an album recorded in New Zealand.

**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** We loved the Go-Betweens the most.

**Beth Kaplan (Salem 66):** I loved the Go-Betweens especially, and we played with them at CBGB's once.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** We were aware of those scenes; we knew we were a part of a larger thing, international in scope. The style may have differed between the States, England, and Australia / NZ, but the undercurrent was the same. If memory serves, we thought Australia was quirkier, had some fun baked in with a tiny bit less edge,



**THE OUTNUMBERED** Why Are The Good People Going Crazy? Homestead HMSO19 £4.99  
THERE'S currently an excitement in local US music that there's not been on an independent British release for months. The problem is keeping up with it, especially as the records become more easily available. I recommend Fuzztones' Lysergic Emanations (ABC), the Beat Farmers' Tales of the New West (Demon) and Red Rockers' Schizophrenic Circus (CBS) but I'm particularly fond of The Outnumbered's combination of Seventies' punk thrash, Sixties' mod melodies and Eighties' solemn words.

# HOMESTEAD RECORDS:

"We're aggressive,

**PHANTOM TOLLBOOTH**  
*Power Toy LP/CS/CD*  
We think it's pretty sick. Includes "Billie Holiday's Nightmare", "Barracuda" and the monumental "Over The Pipes." Produced by Spot.

We're ugly,

**VERLAINES**  
*Bird Dog LP/CS/CD*  
As in Paul, not Tom. Their first new LP in over two years. Licensed from Flying Nun Records, New Zealand.

And we know more

**THE CHILLS**  
*Brave Words LP/CS/CD*  
The most critically acclaimed band ever to have this name. Produced by Mayo Thompson. Licensed from Flying Nun Records, New Zealand.

Than you do!"

**SALEM 66**  
*Natural Disasters, National Treasures LP/CS/CD*  
The 3rd Salem 66 album, and the first to feature new members Jim Vincent and Tim Condon. Produced by Ethan James.

Thanks to Ron House and GREAT PLAINS for the slogan. LP's and cassettes are \$7.98 postpaid, compact discs are \$14.98 postpaid (U.S. funds only). Catalogs are free.

Manufactured & distributed by **Dutch East India Trading**  
PO Box 800, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-0800

Clockwise from top left: Holiday newspaper article, Homestead Records ad featuring Salem 66, review for the Outnumbered's *Why Are The Good People Going Crazy* on Homestead, Crippled Pilgrims flyer





Dan Reich/drums

Donna Esposito/guitar, vocals

Marc Seligman/bass

but really beautiful melodic music. Labels were a big part of what we listened to.

**Ron House (Great Plains):** Even though we didn't sound like those bands, I mostly loved them. We got to play with the Go-Betweens, and that was truly a thrill. Flying Nun and Creation tapes were on in the van constantly.

**Brent Rademaker (A New Personality):** We were super aware of the Glasgow Postcard Records scene, Factory Records, and Zoo Records... Darren would get the latest singles from this heavy metal dude at a great record store in town. This was still post-punk in its time, pre-Creation or Sarah, etc. We got into that as it came out.

**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters):** I got into the Scottish independent scene with Postcard and was buying Creation records from the get-go; I especially loved those early Primal Scream 7"s, the Loft, and the Pastels records.

I was more of a CS1 guy, but eventually got into some of the CS6 bands too. I'd say the White Sisters were distant cousins of that scene. I went to London in 1986 and met a guy named Alistair Agnew who was a contributor to the NZ zine *Garage*. He played me the Bats, the Clean, and the Chills for the first time.

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** Back when we had the Reverbs, we didn't really care about any music from overseas, except for maybe the Barracudas and the Soft Boys. We also really loved the Church.

But with the Springfields, after "Sunflower" was recorded in 1985, I started to become aware of British groups like Primal Scream, the Pastels, Razorcuts, etc. It sounded to me like those bands were doing something very similar to what Paul and I were doing, so I sent tapes of our music to Matt and Clare at Sarah Records, Martin Whitehead at Subway, and Alan McGee at Creation. All of those labels eventually re-

leased music by the bands Paul and I were in. I'd be willing to argue we were some of the first people in America to become aware of the so-called "CS6" bands, and our groups were some of the only American groups signed to those pioneering British indie labels.







**Chapter 4**  
*Translate Slowly*



It's a safe bet that all of the bands represented on *Strum & Thrum* garnered what little airplay they ever received on college radio stations. While the actual playlists of university stations during the '80s were pretty varied, most of the bands here really didn't have the sonic qualifications to be considered "punk," and therefore, a new descriptive term emerged: "college rock." These new upstarts that blended classic pop and rock sensibilities (particularly those of the '60s canon) with a post-punk outlook became college rock.

By the mid-'80s, R.E.M. had become the Beatles of college rock and had a string of *Billboard* "Top 40" albums. That they managed to do so while maintaining the respect and adoration of the independent music community is no small feat; no doubt their flag-waving on behalf of local music scenes endeared them to many (see Peter Buck's guest article, "The True Spirit of American Rock" in the October 1984 issue of *Record* magazine for a particularly compelling example). The fact that they were so popular, and that their sound had distinct echoes of the Byrds and other folk-rockers, led to a characterization of much college rock as "jangle pop." There is a lot of truth in this description, as many of the bands here had the same initial influences as R.E.M., while others took a big part of their sonic blueprint from the Athens combo themselves as many attested to above.

Following the relatively modest commercial success of R.E.M., major labels began digging for truffles in the indie scene, and a lot of bands that bore even remote sonic or visual similarities to Stipe / Berry / Buck / Mills were occasionally taken out to dinner by a suit. As you'll soon read, many of the artists on this compilation were courted by some big labels. Others sent out tapes and received no reply. What most of these bands have in common is a dead end either way.

**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** I remember the term people used back then was "college rock," which is pretty funny because this music was the main reason I dropped out of college!

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** We called our music "jangle & strum," a term



*I remember the term people used back then was "college rock," which is pretty funny because this music was the main reason I dropped out of college!*

– Lynn Blakey (Holiday)

we made up because that's what we did – jangled and strummed. Mostly people lumped us in with the emerging alternative music movement. I think they called it college rock back then, because there was this new culture of college stations with free-form playlists, and the college DJs played the coolest shit.

**Dave Swanson (The Reactions):** I know at different times jangle pop was almost a derogatory term, but I always thought it was kinda cool, especially if that's what your guitars did! "Twee pop" I would object to, but not jangle.

**Beth Kaplan (Salem 66):** We hated the jangle term. We thought of ourselves as a real rock band, which we were in our souls, even if we didn't sound like it.

**Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors):** We rejected the terms jangle and jangly pop. We considered ourselves to be "metal gum," like half-the Monkees and half-Led Zeppelin.

**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** Jangle pop is fine, as I like the descriptive nature. The jangle describes the tangled and dense guitar lines

U.S. ROCK						
independent airplay						
IN	LAST WEEK	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL	FORMAT	WEEKS ON CHART
1	3	Hoodoo Gurus	Mars Needs Guitars	Big Time	LP/Cass	JAN 86
2	1	Husker Du	Flip Your Wig	SST	LP/Cass	
3	6	The Fall	This Nation's Saving Grace	PVC	LP/Cass	
4	51	Golden Palominos	Visions of Excess	Celluloid	LP/Cass	
5	34	Lyres	She Pays the Rent	Ace of Hearts	12" EP	
6	37	Salem 66	A Ripping Spin	Homestead	LP	
7	★	Dead Kennedys	Frankenchrist	Alternative Tentacles	LP	
8	2	The Rave-Ups	Town and Country	Fun Stuff	LP	
9	★	Robyn Hitchcock	Gotta Let This Hen Out	Relativity	LP/Cass	
10	★	Cocoteau Twins	The Pink Opaque	Relativity	LP/Cass	
11	30	O Positive	Only Breathing	Throbbing Lobster	LP	
12	8	Gene Loves Jezebel	Immigrants	Relativity	LP/Cass	
13	7	The Primitons	Throbbing Lobster	12" EP		
14	14	Fetchin' Bones	Cabin Flounder	DB	LP	
15	27	Angst	Life-Life	SST	LP	
16	29	Cabaret Voltaire	The Arm of the Lord	Caroline	LP	
17	★	Barracade	Whitfield and The Savages	Dig Yourself	Rounder	LP
18	15	The Arms of Someone New	Susan Sleepwalking	Office	LP	
19	★	The Residents	Big Bubble	Ralph	LP	
20	4	Black Flag	In My Head	SST	LP/Cass	
1	2	Husker Du	Flip Your Wig	SST	LP/Cass	
2	20	The Rave-Ups	Town and Country	Fun Stuff	LP	
3	★	Hoodoo Gurus	Mars Needs Guitars	Big Time	LP	
4	33	Black Flag	In My Head	SST	LP/Cass	
5	10	28th Day	Enigma	LP/Cass		DEC 85
6	★	The Fall	This Nation's Saving Grace	PVC	LP/Cass	
7	22	The Primitons	Throbbing Lobster	12" EP		
8	2	Gene Loves Jezebel	Immigrants	Relativity	LP	
9	5	Dead Milkmen	Big Lizard in My Backyard	Fever/Enigma	LP	
10	27	Crippled Pilgrims	Under Water	Homestead	LP	
17	19	Miracle Legion	The Beckyard	Incas	LP	
18	★	Executive Steaks	Nausea	Fundamental	LP/Cass	
19	6	Husker Du	Makes No Sense At All	SST 7" single		
20	★	Rave Ups	Town and Country	Fun Stuff	LP/Cass	
21	2	Return of the Living Dead	Soundtrack	Enigma	LP	
22	★	Primitons	Throbbing Lobster	12" EP		
23	★	Grapes of Wrath	September Bowl of Green	Netwerk	LP/Cass	
24	15	Mojo Nixon and Skid Roper	RBI/Enigma	LP		
25	7	Cabaret Voltaire	Drinking Gasoline	Caroline	12" EP	
26	4	Tones on Tail	The Album Pop	PVC	LP	
27	★	Crippled Pilgrims	Underwater	FOY	LP/Cass	
28	54	The Mosquitos	That Was Then, This is Now	Valhalla	LP/Cass	
29	18	Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds	First Born is Dead	Homestead	LP	
30	★	Tom Traccoli's Dog	SST	LP/Cass		

that are often found in the music, and pop is what we were.

**Don Tinsley (Primitons):** I have no problem with jangle, jangle rock, or jangle pop as niche-words, though I don't think that covers the whole history of the Primitons.

**Scott Wingo (Crippled Pilgrims):** Jangle was a bit of an onus at the time, though I've always loved that archetypal Byrds sound. In D.C., the emphasis was very much on loud, fast, and pissed, which I loved. But our sound was sort of an anomaly. Jangle became a term I think the whole band really wanted to get away from, and I think you can hear that happening in our second record.

**Holden Richards (One Plus Two):** I think once we were signed to Homestead, the whole indie nation had gone jangle. The Reverbs, Salem 66,

ARTISTS' ALLIANCE GALLERY  
1629 SNOW AVE.

STREET DANCE  
OCTOBER 23  
FRIDAY  
7PM - TILL?

a new personality

TRIPLE XXX GIRLS

FRIDAY  
OCTOBER 23  
7PM - TILL?

triple xxx girls

STREET DANCE  
1629 SNOW AVE.  
ARTISTS' ALLIANCE GALLERY

A NEW PERSONALITY

A New Personality will have a record release party this March 11 & 12 at Ms. Lucky's in Tampa to celebrate the release of their 12" 45 *A New Personality -83*. There will be 50¢ well drinks 9-10 p.m. & free movies. (P.S. We've heard the record and it's excellent.)





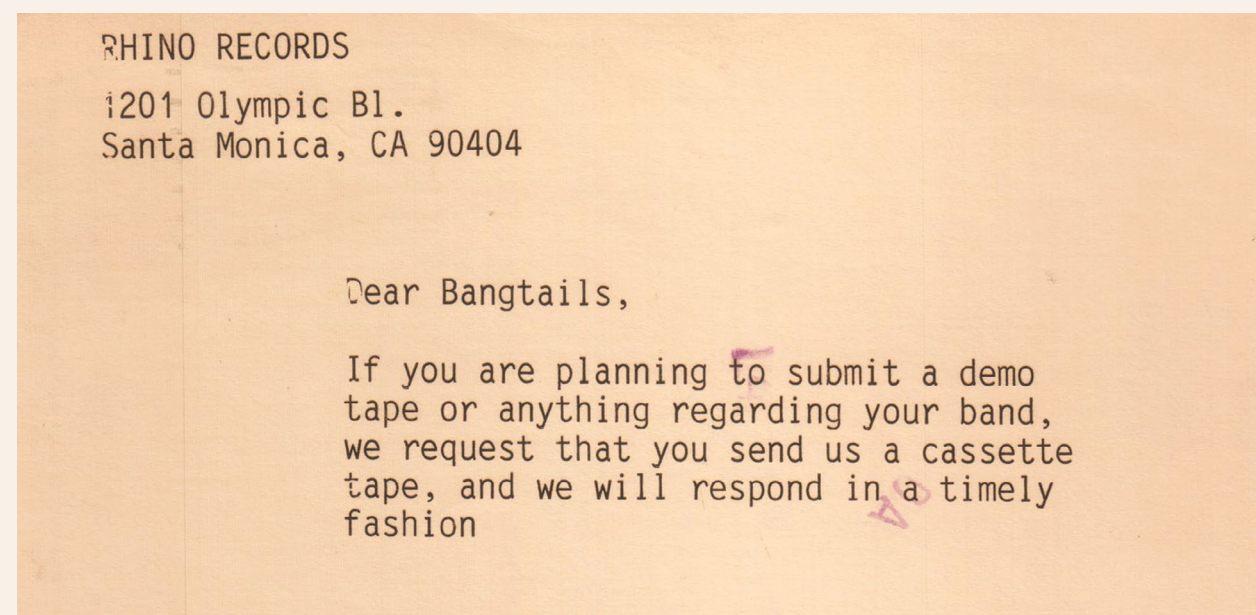
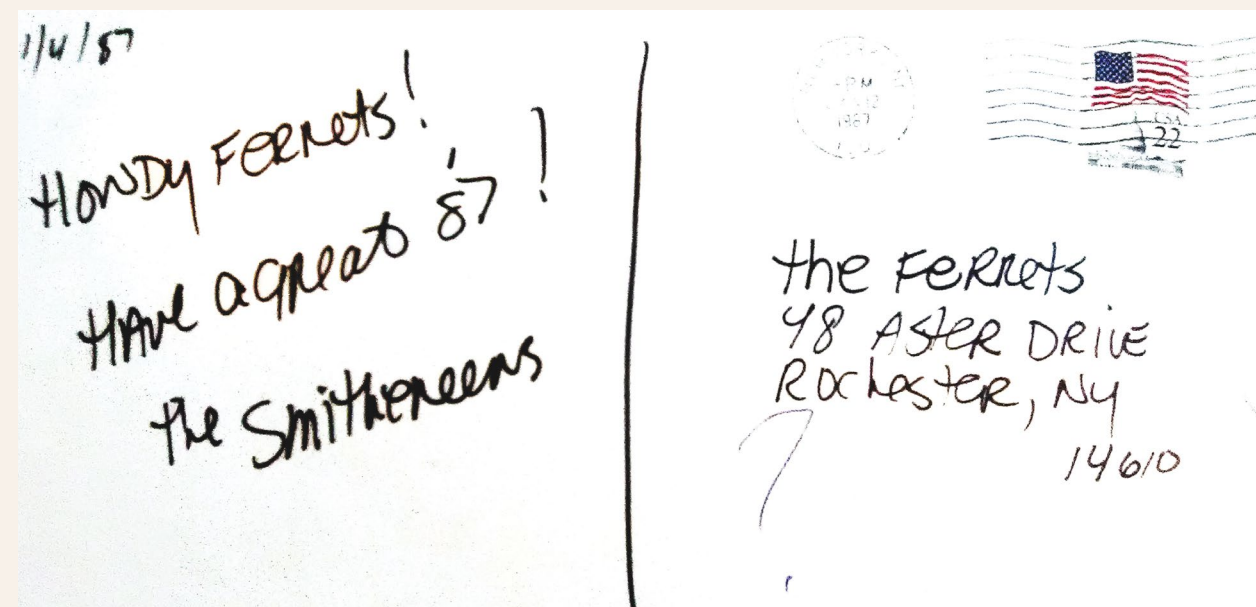


Left to right: Jay Moglia and Mitch Parker of Crippled Pilgrims performing at the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C.



Pop Art performing at Bebop Records





Let's Active, R.E.M., etc. I had a discussion with Peter Buck at a party one night where we discussed records we liked, and inevitably the Byrds, Big Star, and the Beatles all came up.

**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** Jangle isn't a term I would put on 28th Day. We were more influenced by bands like Sonic Youth, the Fall, and Mission of Burma after the first album. I would consider us indie if anything, although that term seems to represent a broader umbrella of like-minded bands and artists than a musical genre.

**Ron House (Great Plains):** I hate to say it, but indie rock was what we were. We weren't jangle. We weren't retro enough for garage. Sometimes we wished we were punk. Just don't call us college rock!

**Chaz Lockwood (The Ferrets):** In the local papers, indie rock did not exist yet. We were called new wave.

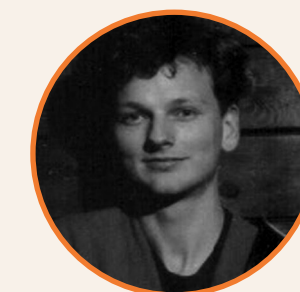
**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** We toured a couple times a year, generally. We were lucky enough to get thrown on as openers with folks like the Church, Richard Lloyd, and X for a week or so at a time. The rest of the time, it was different from day to day. There was usually some-

one you knew who was out on the road at the same time, so you'd share a handful of bills with bands like Game Theory, the Reducers, Dumptruck, or the Neighborhoods.

We were lucky to have the support and interest of some cool indie labels, but we were overlooked when it came to the big time. For instance, *Rolling Stone* listed the Windbreakers as one of "The Best Nine Unsigned Bands in America" in 1984 or something. Within a year, every band on that list was on a major label... except us.

**Pat Thomas (Absolute Grey):** The local bills we played were mostly at a Rochester club called Scorgies. We also made our way to CB-GB's (which scared the shit out of us), and went to Boston to play with Salem 66. No labels came calling around Rochester, NY, so we never got the major label, or even bigger indie phone call! We did however get a call from the manager of 10,000 Maniacs just before they got signed to Elektra, so for about 30 seconds we thought something might happen. It didn't. He got too busy with them when they exploded in the UK.

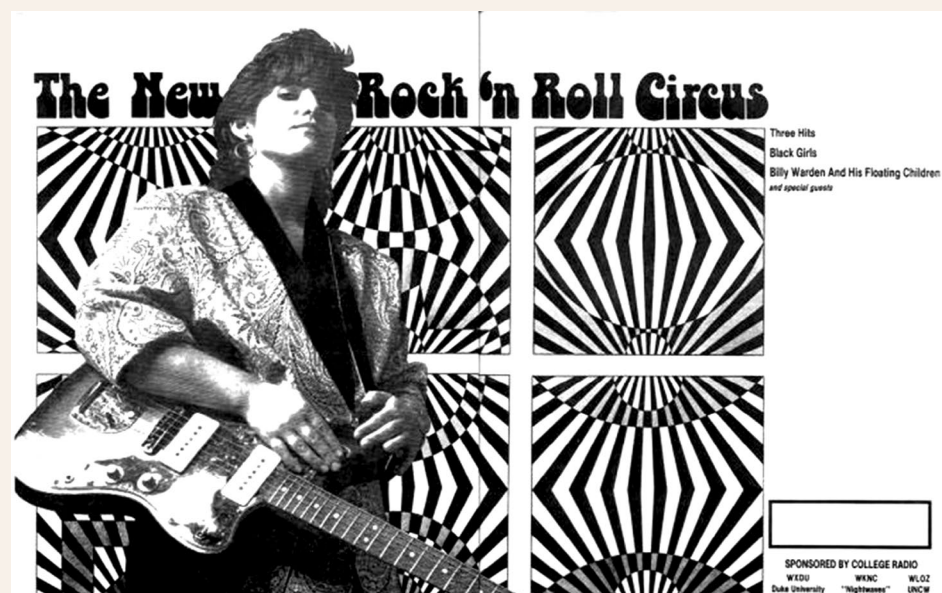
**“ We really thought that getting a single of the week in the NME would open the floodgates. It didn't, but we did get a few very nice form letters from several labels.**



– Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters)







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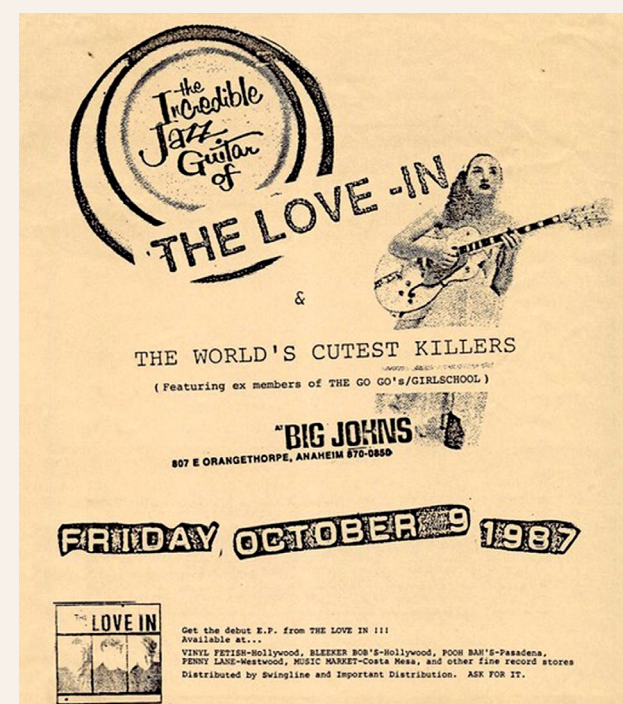
– Tim Lee (Windbreakers)



**Shawn Kelly (Start):** The Lawrence, KS scene featured many groups in the early '80s, each with their own sound. We shared equipment and practice space with groups like Get Smart and the Embarrassment, and we were always at each other's shows. There wasn't a sense of competition between groups in those days. We were all in it together. For a year or so, we were the go-to opening band at Off the Wall Hall, which was the venue for touring groups. We opened for groups as diverse as TSOL, Bad Brains, and the Bongos. Start never undertook a full tour though. Instead, we'd cruise up to Nebraska or over to Missouri for one-off shows. We didn't have the resources or wherewithal to put together a big tour.

And as far as interest from major labels? No. We were pretty much ignored. James Grauerholz – William S. Burroughs' personal secretary and our producer – loved our sound and supported us. But the big labels weren't coming to Lawrence. We sent some tapes, but never heard back. If some of the labels would have come to town, they would have found half a dozen bands that would have sold records and made a dent in the history of American punk/pop/rock.

**Tom Sheppard (The Love In):** The scene was pretty disjointed, as far as I recall. Sunset Strip metal was going strong, and we were a couple years away from Nirvana's big

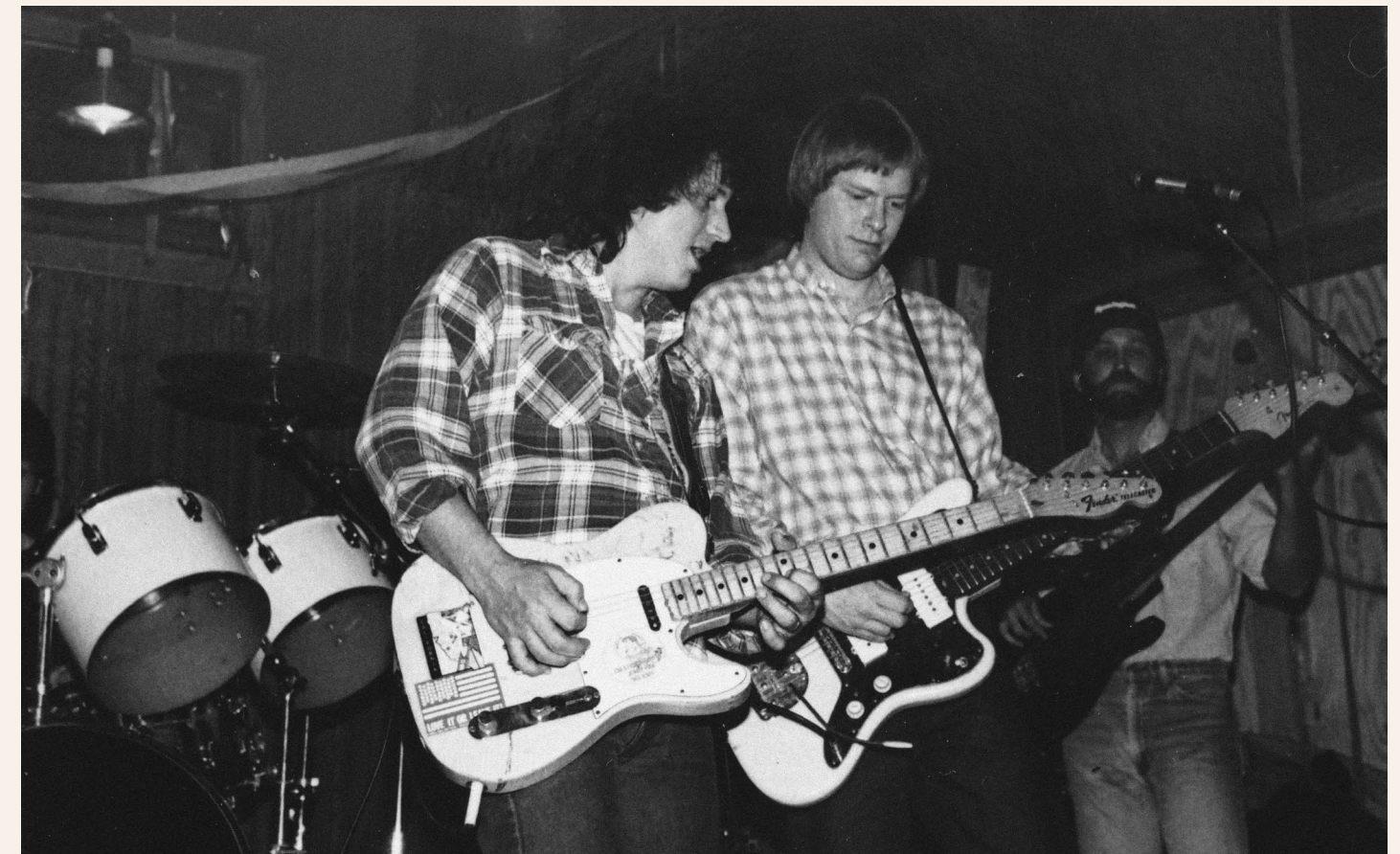


breakthrough. We had a big deal lawyer not long after we released our self-produced EP. He shopped us to labels pretty aggressively, but we didn't get a lot of play. In L.A., every metal band post-Guns N' Roses was being courted like crazy, but we were on our own little jangly island.

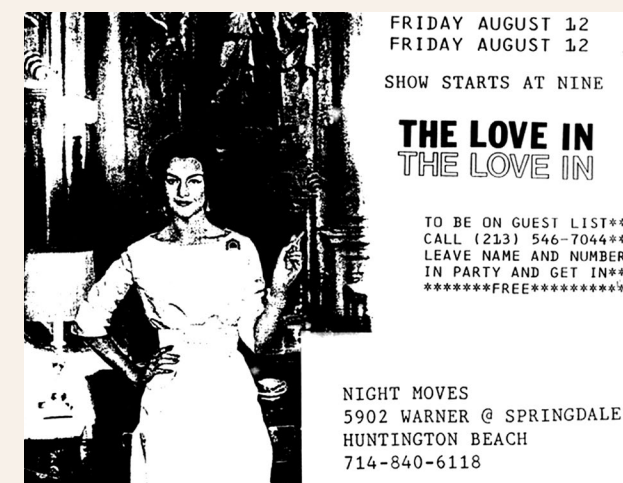
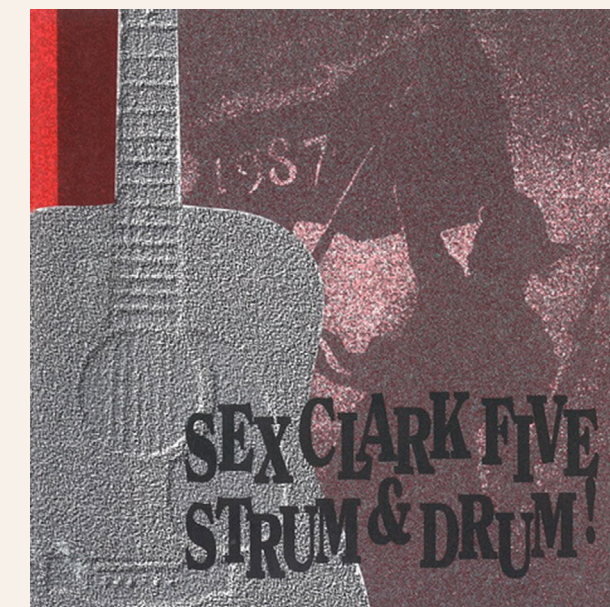
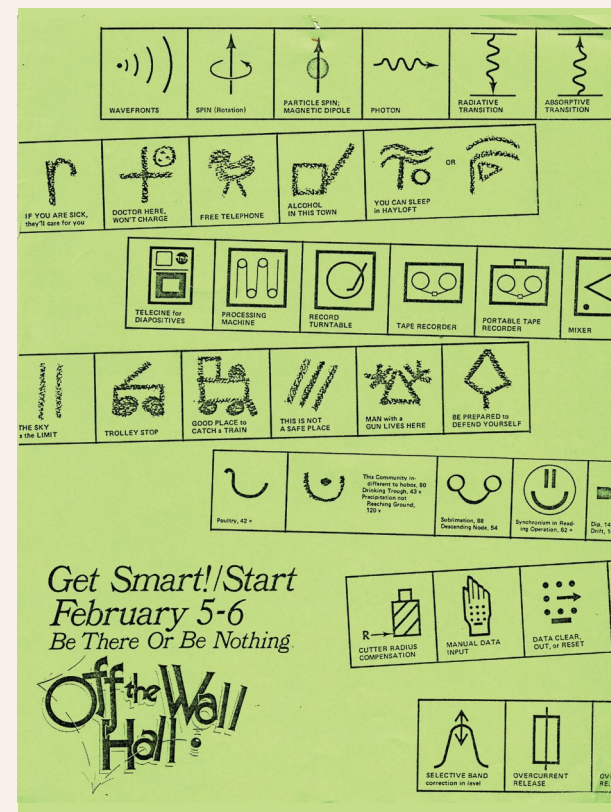
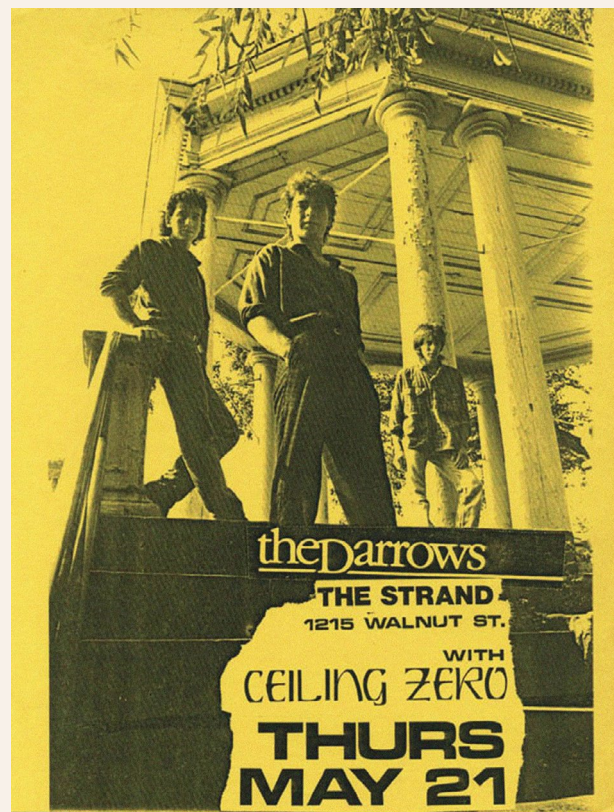
**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** We definitely knew we were part of the indie rock nation in the '80s, being on the CMJ playlist. We were cheering for Hüsker Dü and the Replacements when they got signed to major labels, but we were well aware of the challenges those bands faced moving up from indie status.











much we'd need to make a full length LP, saying he really liked the single and heard good things about us. This was all very exciting. They were just starting out as a U.S. branch of the Aussie label, and it seemed like perfect timing. Then either he left the label, or got the boot or whatever, and interest from them dried up. We ultimately signed to Homestead who released a 6 song EP called *Cracked Marbles*, but the band was on its last legs by then.

**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** Our first two albums were on Homestead Records. For our third album, we had an offer with Coyote Records, a subsidiary of Twin Tone, but since we knew we were breaking up, we decided to release it on our friend Phil Strang's local label, Edible Records.

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** With Drats, we released our own records, but with the Reverbs we wanted to sign with an independent label that could get our music distributed to a larger audience. We ended up going with a tiny label based out of Michigan called Metro-America, although for the life of me I can't remember why. We were mostly excited that Metro-America was manufactured and distributed by Enigma Records in Los Angeles, which was cool because they were putting out records by Plasticland and Green on

Red, and we liked those bands. *The Happy Forest* was also released by RCA Victor in Japan as part of a series called "Here Come the New Americans," which included records by the Long Ryders, Tommy Keene, the Spongetones, and a bunch more.

In the beginning we made our own records, then we started putting out records on indie labels like Enigma, Sarah, Subway, Creation, Summershine, and Bus Stop, and eventually Paul and I put together a band called Velvet Crush that was signed to Epic Records/Sony Music. We worked our way up to a major label over time. It seemed like a natural progression.

**Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors):** We had Polydor and Go! Discs in London interested when our *Cowboy and Spin Girl* EP came out. It got a great review in *Melody Maker*, so naturally the NME hated it.

**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters):** We really thought that getting a single of the week in the NME would open the floodgates. It didn't, but we did get a few very nice form letters from several labels.

**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** We got a pretty good review in the *New York Daily News* where the highest rating, 3 stars, went to X's *See How We Are*

on Elektra, and the second highest (2.5 stars) went to the Ferrets! Around this same time, I think our album was shown among some other releases for a minute on some MTV show (maybe *120 Minutes*), which Chaz was lucky to see. That was my only ever appearance on MTV and probably only Chaz remembers it. Apparently, an A&R guy from EMI called and left several messages on the answering machine at our little label, but no one ever called him back.

**Beth Kaplan (Salem 66):** All our records were released by Homestead. There were periodic "feeding frenzies," with A&R people in touch with our manager and coming to shows (or rumored to be coming to shows). Not fun.

**Judy Grunwald (Salem 66):** At one point, we sent out a tape to some major labels. I wish I remembered which label it was that responded with something to the effect of, "Girls in bands are a passing fad, which has reached its zenith," and hence they were not interested in "girl bands." They then further remarked that we should "keep them abreast of any further developments."

**Brent Rademaker (A New Personality):** We had a local label, Green Records, that was started by Pam Weiner from WMNF Community Radio.

She played great records, and she supported us as well as the Stick Figures. Sub Pop – when it was still cassette-only – put us on the *Sub Pop 7* compilation. Open Records from Miami released a song on a compilation of Florida bands, *The Land That Time Forgot*. I.R.S. Records was interested in signing us, and our dad flew out for a meeting, but it fell through. We also got interest from Mercury Records after our video for "Essential Things" aired on MTV's *Basement Tapes* show. But as the '80s wore on, Darren and I moved to Los Angeles to become the next Byrds. [Editor's note: He's referring to *Beachwood Sparks*].

**James Butler (Sex Clark Five):** A couple of large labels showed an interest. The pressure was on from both within and without the band to record in a "real" studio. But things didn't click. We like accidents. Clocks don't like accidents.

**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** We got signed to Epic Records somewhere around 1986, after we recorded a session with the Records' guitarist, Huw Gower, producing. The A&R guys who signed us introduced us to Epic's head of marketing at the time. He walked into our meeting and said, "You sound like 10,000 Maniacs, and they don't sell records." Then he walked out.



Even though we made a video that got played on MTV's *120 Minutes*, we got zero support from Epic. It was depressing and a death sentence. Meanwhile 10,000 Maniacs went on to sell millions of records a couple of years later. After four years of a lot of hard work, we were done.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** We had a deal with Atlantic and were managed by the Talking Heads' manager. I turned down a deal from A&M because they didn't want the band – which meant they didn't want what I was really about... How could the words "independent rock" not be appealing? Fuck the system, we'll do it ourselves! But we knew we also wanted a larger platform. We would moan about record companies artistic control, but sure did want their abilities to expand an audience. Some things never change.





**Chapter 5**  
*Tell Me When It's Over*



The story of the demise of most, if not all, of these bands are fairly routine. These tended to be young bands, and the academic milieu in which they often existed sometimes made a career choice inevitable. Other than that, there are plenty of “we took it as far as we could,” and “we were moving in different directions musically” stories, plus a complicating romantic entanglement or two.

Beyond that, underground music itself was changing. The gloss and veneer of acts like the Hooters, the BoDeans, the Connells was reacted to viscerally by the up-and-coming future indie rock elite around 1987 and 1988. Although the artists on this compilation share way more with the crop of acts that followed and nothing-to-little with the aforementioned both in sound and ethos, a cleaning of the slate of that which was dubbed “college rock” seemed inevitable.

**Michael Sump (Bangtails):** As far as our break-up, Kansas City was just too isolated. It was impossible to get anywhere as a band at the time.

**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** We were losing steam as a self-managed band when we recorded our third album. The recordings were some of our best yet (with the phenomenal drummer Jonno Peltz), but a brutal west coast tour exhausted us and led to an amicable break up.



**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** We only did the one record. Barbara ended up on Matador; that's about all I think a band like 28th Day could have hoped for at the time. We were getting weirder and less commercial as time went on anyway. The first record came out on Enigma in the US, which was a pretty decent sized label, and on Virgin internationally. So I guess we flirted with bigger labels.

Barbara and I were in a relationship for the first couple years of 28th Day. We eventually broke

up, but the turmoil surrounding that split just became too much to deal with. We were all really young. Barbara put it best in the liner notes for the 28th Day reissue, “It wasn't the pressure of success that ended the band, it was the pressure of crumbling friendships. It stopped being fun when the playing ended, and that is what ended the playing. It's only natural.” It's too bad, the material we were developing just before the end was a real leap forward for us. We're all great friends still, although sadly we hardly ever get to see each other.



“ [We] never actually broke up – we just stopped practicing, and then forgot to book gigs.



– Shawn Kelly (Start)

Top: Three Hits from the back of their 1984 “Sharp Focus/Just One of the Guys” single; bottom: cover of the Springfields 1988 single on Sarah Records

To fight back at the senselessness of it all  
To feel defeated and yet still not fall  
To damn all the horror you might find  
And come away being tender and kind  
(repeat chorus)

3. BACK TO SQUARE ONE (Ginoli)  
I heard about the hipsters and the beats  
Heard about the radicals and the freaks  
Who broke down the walls to set themselves free  
But that's so long ago it's ancient history  
Makes it hard for us who want change to prevail  
In knowing that others before us failed  
With this monkey climbing all over our backs  
So hard to mount a new attack  
Getting away with everything  
At this point it's all been done  
After all this change the problem's the same  
Now we're back to square one  
Now we're back to square one

The promise of freedom, the barriers down  
Merely brought a whole new set of rules to town  
What was once liberating has now turned sour  
Just think of the people drugs have devoured  
So what do you do when every thrill's been picked clean  
When every frontier's been tamed by money and greed  
When every honest thing you do just fills up  
somebody's pocket  
There's a strong temptation to just say fuck it  
(repeat chorus)

There's a crowd outside with their minds on war  
Who want to take away the rights so hard-fought for  
They're hysterical in screaming out their fears  
They want to turn back the calendar thirty years  
Here the rest of us stand, divided and splintered  
Unable to act, our hopes so hindered  
This monkey climbing all over our backs  
So hard to mount a new attack  
A new attack, oh a new attack  
A new attack...  
(repeat chorus)

4. ONE DESPERATE MOMENT (Ginoli)  
I could live by myself and not have to depend on  
anyone's help  
Cut off from everyone, I'd carve my own path and  
not look back  
But that's a tougher road, I bet  
More lonely than I thought I ever could get  
But that one desperate moment hasn't saved me yet

All the evidence surrounding me just seems to leave  
no choice  
So I'll just slip away, how can you fight 'em all  
with just one voice  
Then I shudder and I cry  
At what the consequence would be if I didn't try  
But that one desperate moment hasn't saved me yet  
The dreams that I hoped would come true are now  
rotting dead on the ground  
The chance for togetherness gets buried under  
mountains of hollow sounds  
'Cause when I think I don't need you around  
The terror of loneliness compounds  
But that one desperate moment hasn't saved me yet  
That one desperate moment's the last thing I've  
got left

5. Restless Soul (Budin)  
I've got to stop kidding myself, I'll crum out  
in the end.  
Somebody making rules, calling them fair and  
breaking hearts, there's no need.  
Late at night, there's a spirit that wanders, moans  
through my head, it won't leave me alone.  
The bird that carries me from inside  
has stolen the last piece left to hide.  
Restless soul, naive heart  
So many things that fall apart.  
I've been living with a dense fog in my eyes,  
hoping for a savior on earth.  
Yes, one give up yourself, call it love and  
lose your pride and self-worth.  
Don't want to be a bitter man, afraid  
to touch with these unsure hands.  
But how can you ask me to "only the same"  
And people make love such a brutal game?  
Restless soul, naive heart  
So many things that fall apart.  
Struggling through the future,  
holding back the cage  
and loneliness you'll never wish away.

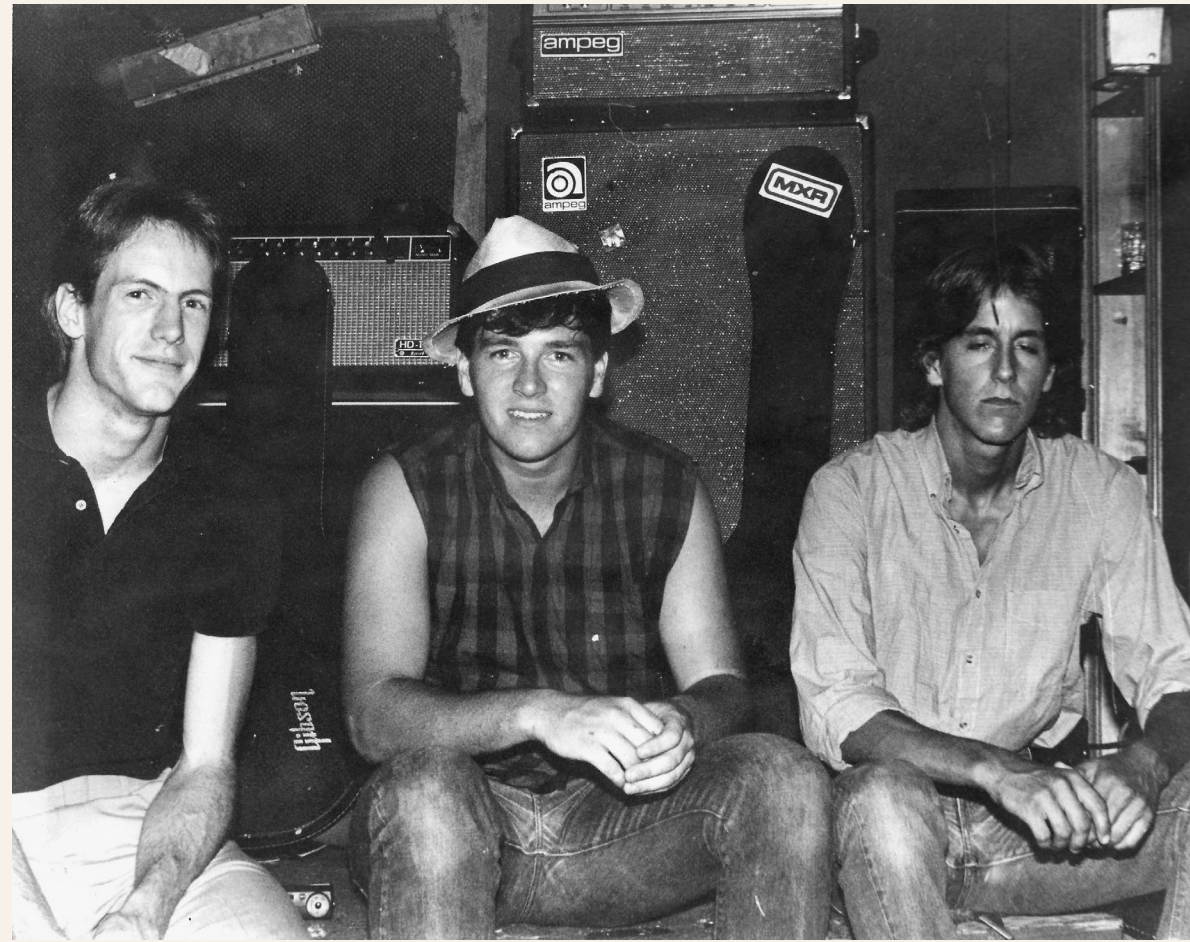
6. COVER ME WITH FLOWERS (Ginoli)  
Well it's a crazy world out there  
It's so easy to get scared  
With people running around, carrying guns  
Setting fires and throwing bombs  
But I'm not gonna take up arms  
When it gets down to the final hours  
And all hope for reconciliation soured  
Just cover me, cover me, cover me  
Cover me with flowers, with flowers,  
With flowers, with flowers  
Well it's a random world out there  
There's no telling who'll be next  
With people running around, carrying guns  
Setting fires and throwing bombs  
But I'm not gonna take up arms  
When it gets down to those final hours  
And all hope for reconciliation soured  
Just cover me, cover me, cover me,  
Cover me with flowers, with flowers,  
With flowers, with flowers  
With flowers...

Recorded and mixed at S.A. Sound Service,  
Champaign, IL, Dec. 1983-Jan. 1984  
Engineered by Willie Wells  
Cover photos—John Konstantaras  
Cover layout & design—Loren Kirkwood  
Live sound—Mike Fields  
Sleeve drawing—Tim McKeage (11/83)  
Outnumbered Legal Defense Fund—  
Roger Williamson (a.k.a. Todd Modern)  
and now, debut LP THANK YOU go to  
John Gray, Cindy Lillig, Willie Wells,  
John K., Loren K., Greg Shaw and Paul  
Grant from S&W Records, The Quaker,  
Larry Grossberg, Craig Ziegler, Phil  
Strange, Joe Dunn, Dave Fulgham, Willa  
Lichten, Dave Frye, Mark Hubel, Mike  
Belson, Jim Wald, Kenny Draznik, Matt  
Brandenburg (thanks for the amp!), Jean  
Brandenburg, Geoff Bent, Mary Cory,  
Cathy Romans, Paul Doppelt ("Happy  
Doppy"), and all Champaign bands  
who have helped us.  
Thanks to Gerald Cosloy.  
To the Mad Violets and Prime Movers—  
hey weirdos!  
ALSO AVAILABLE: The outnumbered's very  
rare 83 debut 45, "Be Warm Soon/You're  
Not Free/Boy On a Roof," for \$2.00  
from PO Box 2082, Station 4, Champaign,  
IL 61820.  
WRITE US LETTERS! We love getting mail.  
(Same address as above.)  
OTHER SHIT: Paul wanted his phone #  
in here. It's 217-367-5967.  
Jon G. did the amazing group logo.  
Lead vocals are sung by the author  
of each song.

LET US PLAY!!

Insert from the Outnumbered's 1985 LP Why Are All the Good People Going Crazy









Handmade flyer for 28th Day



**Dave Swanson (The Reactions):** A natural occurrence, I suppose. I was getting kind of bored with what we were doing. I wanted us to be louder, more rock 'n' roll. I really wanted us to sound more like Cheap Trick or something. Bigger guitars. In my mind I wanted a poppier version of Hanoi Rocks or something. They were a great rock 'n' roll band with a strong melodic sense. We didn't want that look, just more oomph in our sound. The jangle was great and all, but I wanted it more electrified.

**Rie Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** The Reverbs broke up in a parking lot after we played our second show with the Clash. I remember being crestfallen, because I thought we would really amount to something if we stayed together. Also, I had just quit going to college and convinced my parents my life was meant for rock 'n' roll. I didn't want to go back home and eat crow.

The Springfields wasn't really a group, so it wasn't possible for us to break up. We were a "studio group," a kind of made-up band that only existed on record and in our imaginations.

**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters):** In a purely selfish move, I had decided to pack up and leave Madison for Providence, RI. We were working on a bunch of demos and had recently



*We never broke up, we're still here...  
writing, recording, and playing.  
A lot of people stop.  
I have no idea why.  
I never will.*

– Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors)



gone from a trio to a quartet and back again, but I was ready to leave where I had grown up. It was an impulsive move at the time, but I had become a fan of so many Boston bands and had friends living in Providence that the path eastward seemed laid out in front of me.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** We formed in mid-1985 and went until around 1991. By the end we felt music was getting heavier, a precursor

to what would become grunge. Hüsker Dü and Jane's Addiction spoke to that front, Sonic Youth and the Pixies signaled what was ahead.

**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** We were pretty ephemeral in our existence. There was no real interest from bigger labels, although Linda and I did go on to start other bands and record for bigger labels. D.C. was a hard place to be. I'm not sure either of us were super happy to be there.





John Brabeck

Ric Menck

## THE REVERBS

MANAGEMENT:  
P.O. Box 40867/Chicago, IL 60640/  
(312) 275-8390



It always felt like an in-between place, even though we made great friends and saw a ton of music. So it was more due to personal stuff. Linda decided she wanted to go back to Georgia after a year or so. There are also rumors of a particular fight. My bad, but we are still close friends to this day.

**Judy Grunwald (Salem 66):** Things, even bands, have a natural life-span. The band was over, and we were OK with that. We all went into academics after the band. Sometimes I still think about doing a record, my husband owns a studio. The kids are in college. Even the small life is dramatic.

**Pat Thomas (Absolute Grey):** The high school members went off to college, I got bored of living in Rochester, NY and moved to San Francisco to start Heyday Records.

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** I think we got disillusioned and burnt out. We were driving the momentum and it was a grind after awhile. We started shifting focus and having differing interests, unfortunately. Some outside interest and enthusiasm would've been helpful.

**Tom Sheppard (The Love In):** I think we'd all give you different reasons, but I'd guess the biggest reason we ended was just life / growing up. I was studying film and really focusing my energies on writing / directing and breaking into that business. Kurt and Scott were finishing school and lived in Orange County, an hour away from L.A., and I lived in Hollywood, which made rehearsing increasingly difficult, especially once we all started working and getting day jobs. Kurt moved to Australia for a few years. We've all stayed friends, though.

**David Steinhart (Pop Art):** Jeff and I have varying stories on this point, but it's safe to say that Jeff having a kid, the band realizing that we were not going to be stars any time soon, and an English label that took forever to release an album were all big contributing factors.

**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** Chaz got engaged, and his fiancée decided he needed to grow up and work on getting a good job (and a master's in Library Science). She also told us we couldn't call him Chaz anymore, he was now "Charles." Meanwhile, I was focusing on becoming an audio engineer and aspiring producer. I worked

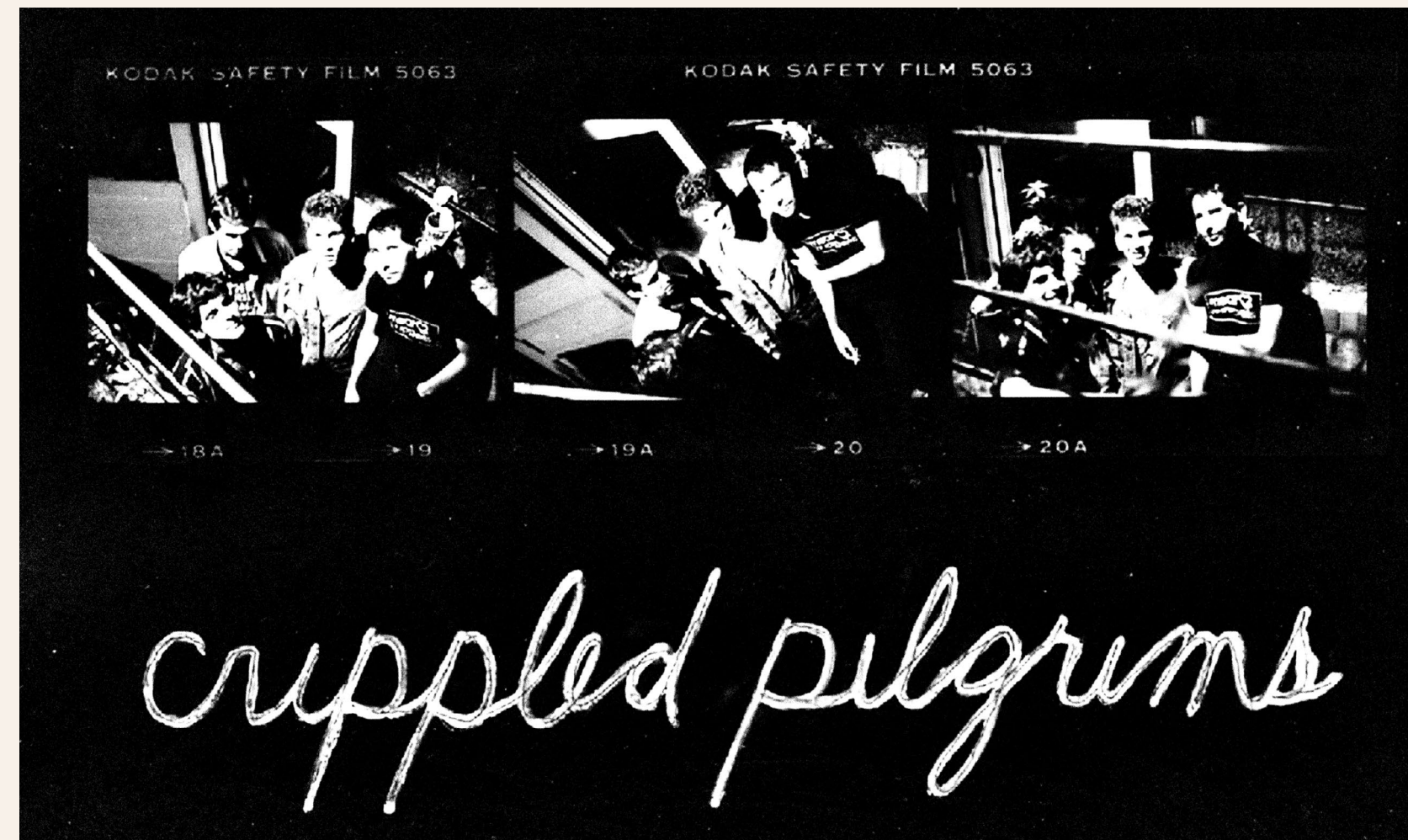
through the early '90s at a 24-track studio outside of Rochester.

**Shawn Kelly (Start):** Start never actually broke up – we just stopped practicing, and then forgot to book gigs.

**Tim Lee (Windbreakers):** We got lots of good press, college radio support, and we were on cool labels like Homestead and DB Recs, but we never achieved any sort of popularity outside of a handful of record-collector types. We sure had a good time, though.

**Ron House (Great Plains):** For me the band's demise is summed up in my line, "We finished more than we could start."

**Frank Bednash (Riff Doctors):** We never broke up, we're still here. We just change the band name every once in a while for fun. People ask me, "Who's in your new band?" And I'll say, "Oh, you know, Donna!" No sad stories, it was all fun. We got to go to England, we've made a dozen CDs with Geoff at Parasol, and we're still going – writing, recording, and playing. A lot of people stop. I have no idea why. I never will.







**Chapter 6**  
*New Day Rising*



One of the main objectives of *Strum & Thrum* is to link the bands featured here with the heyday of early '90s indie rock. Far from coming out of nowhere, artists like Yo La Tengo, Guided By Voices, Pavement, and the early '90s rosters on labels like Matador, Teenbeat, and K emerged from, or were informed by, the jangly rock of the '80s. Indeed, many artists featured on *Strum & Thrum* went on to form or play in influential indie bands of the '90s.

We asked artists whether they felt a kinship with acts from the early '90s and whether they thought those bands were continuing what they had started in the '80s.

**Shawn Kelly (Start):** Yes, definitely. Woven from the same thread.

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** Well, I'm always looking for good melodies and songcraft. Those bands had plenty, and I bought a lot of those records. It was exciting to hear raw shambling tunes getting some respect and turnout. I thought it was a very good time for music overall.



“ ... [the] '90s scene was just a continuation of what came before. Garage rock into punk / new wave / post-punk into college rock into lo-fi into indie and on and on. Great music will always be made by interesting people.

– Cole Marquis (28th Day)

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**THE BOB:** How did you hook up with ABSOLUTE GREY?  
**TIM LEE:** I just met them when I was up there on one of those Let's Active tours, and Pat had "Any Monkey With A Typewriter" and loved it to death and wrote about it in his fanzine. They sent me a copy of "Green House" and I really liked it. So I wrote back and said I really liked it, and if they ever needed any help to give me a dial, and they called me up. I think it worked out real well, it was one of the more fun projects I've ever done.

**THE BOB - MAY-JUNE 1987 - ISSUE 30**

**THE BOB:** I made Pat feel like "Any Monkey With A Typewriter" when it came to the Max Martin!

"Every band should have a Pat Thomas, so that the world gets to hear about them!"  
- Jim Huie (of Invisible Party/The Ferrets/The Rumbles)

When I first heard the song "More Walnuts" from the Greenhouse record I realized that the sound that my band, 28th Day, was attempting to achieve on the West coast was also happening on the East coast. Absolute Grey was a close cousin to 28th Day, different but from the same musical family tree.  
- BARBARA MANNING:

# The Bangtails Hypnotic Downpour Revolve Records

Bangtails fans will be pleased to hear that the band has released their first record, a self-produced, five-song EP on their own label, Revolve Records. The uninitiated might also bend an ear; you may be pleasantly surprised to find such high quality on so totally an independent effort.

The three-piece band has proven a durable entity in Kansas City's "alternative" scene over the past two years. Their live shows have been marked by energetic, innovative playing and exceptionally strong songwriting with plenty of hooks. Both of these qualities are evident throughout the record, but one will be pleased to note that the Bangtails, as novice producers, have set their sights a little higher. Witness the aural collage of guitar feedback, steam whistles and pseudopsychedelic choral brush strokes which segues **Giants** into **A Dead Rain**, making side two of the record some sort of opus in two movements.

Hypnotic Downpour is an ambitious record, yes. The Bangtails do present us with a tight, energetic rendering of "Patron of the Arts," the first track on the record and a long-time staple of their live shows. You'll be singing along with the refrain. But you'll fail if you try to describe to a friend the effect of the second song "Shot Full of Daylight," a down-tempo tune with alternately chunky or screaming guitars and a slinky smooth bass line. In the end you'll simply put on the headphones and listen closely. The third song, "While Laughing," opens breezily with some nimble guitar work and gains momentum, rolling through to a tastefully applied, surprising accordian at the middle eight and shutting down

side one with a stuttering bang.

Flip it over; side two demands attention. "Giants" barrels powerfully through an account of one man's disillusionment with the suburban domestication he has somehow found himself ensconced in. I won't reveal the end of the story. "Giants" fades, with sweet acoustic guitar, into the aforementioned trip through groaning guitars and found-sounds which build to a dead stop. Therefrom emerges "A Dead Rain." (Resurrection.) Archer Prewitt (bass) and Michael Winston (guitar) must be doing something different here, because the guitars come together to create an unusual texture and depth while still maintaining the momentum of the song. Winston delivers a sincere vocal, rife with tangible frustration as he sings "Standing out and planting in my garden/Finding out that all my seeds are damned," speaking in clear metaphor. "A Dead Rain" gallops along with more than a couple dynamic changes and builds again to the high level of energy that characterises Bangtails' performance in general.

With the recording and production of the record out of the way, the Bangtails will likely be doing more live shows locally, with an eye toward getting out on the road for some regional tours. They are hoping that, with proper distribution and canny promotion of the record, they'll be able to get some notice outside KC, expand their audience and eventually gain the attention of a few record labels. In the mean time, they offer their audience a thoughtfully produced record which hints strongly at exciting things to come.



Left to right: Eugene Benevolent, Michael Winston, Archer Prewitt.



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### AUGUST 1987

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JULY 27	CALIFORNIA 28	ADARSON 29	LAWRENCE 30	CHAMPAINE, IL 31	FT. WORTH AUG. 1
YARDAPES - BANGTAILS	BUDDY REED & the RIP-IT-UPS	BLACK STAR	MACKENDER HUNT BAND	DUKE TUMATOE & the POWER TRIO	JUKE JUMPERS
RECORDED PARTY	B BLUES/ROCK	REGGAE	ROCK/R & B	R & B/ROCK	BLUES/R & B
LOUISIANA CANNI ROCK MAMOU	TULSA STEVE PRYOR & the MIGHTY KINGSNAKES	LAWRENCE 5	K.C. BLUES SOCIETY AMATEUR BLUES FINALS	ADV TEX JOHN LEE HOOKER	NEW YORK KRISTY ROSE & the MIDNIGHT WALKERS
HOMESTEAD GRAYS	R BLUES/ROCK	COMMON GROUND	L FREE	LITTLE CHARLIE & the NIGHTCATS	COUNTRY/ROCK
ROCK	I	REGGAE	A		

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>AUGUST</b>					
		<b>CEREAL KILLERS &amp; GREY MATTER</b>	<b>SHARON AKERS</b> SOLO ORIGINAL ROCK & ROLL	<b>DEBRIS</b> DANCE PARTY 11PM free	<b>RUDE BUDDAH</b> PLUS BRAILLE PARTY 11PM
<b>DEBRA TIDWELL</b> "TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THIS" 8PM TONIGHT	<b>FRITZ HAUSER</b> FROM SWITZERLAND SOLO DRUMMING 9PM	<b>BENEFIT FOR THE AZTEC COMMUNITY</b> 8PM	<b>the SLEEP OF REASON</b>	<b>DOLCE VITA</b> FROM N.Y.C. 10:30	<b>RED DOGMA</b> GOING AWAY PARTY Plus THE DEVIL'S LUNCH BOX 10:30
<b>CABARET DINNER THEATER</b> from the producers of "4 in the Right Fluff" more comedy	<b>POETS 8PM</b> RICHARD HILLIARD GAYLORD & FRIENDS	<b>PATTY HARDEE</b> THE NEW WAVE WOMAN IS FLYING SCARED 8:30 PM <b>KAZZ</b> ONE MAN SHOW 11PM	<b>ALIEN</b> 9:30 PM ROCK	<b>THE PRIMATES</b> PLUS <b>RED ECHO</b> 10PM	<b>THE CRIPPLED PILGRIMS</b> 10PM
<b>GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT "TERMS OF ENDORSEMENT"</b> FRIDAYS 8PM SATURDAYS 7 & 8:30	<b>NIGHT LIGHT</b> LAZER-MUSIC ENSEMBLE 8 PM	<b>PATTY HARDEE</b> THE NEW WAVE WOMAN IS FLYING SCARED 8:30 PM <b>KAZZ</b> ONE MAN SHOW 11PM	<b>PATTY HARDEE</b> THE NEW WAVE WOMAN IS FLYING SCARED 8:30 PM <b>MICHAEL BARRON</b> 10:30 PM	<b>BYRD</b> ROCK-REGGAE 10PM	<b>9353</b>
<b>DINNER FROM 6</b> SPECIALS AVAILABLE CALL FOR RESERVATIONS 347-1445	<b>FILM FUN-DRASER</b> 9 PM	<b>RUBEN JACKSON • SIBBIE O'SULLIVAN • BRIAN TATE • SHARON MORGAN-THALER • FOODHEAD</b> 8PM POETS	<b>FAN THE HAMMER</b> PLUS THE PEACH OF IMMORTALITY	<b>MADHOUSE</b> PLUS GUESTS	<b>SKY TO GROUND</b> ROCK-JAZZ

1984

**ADDARTS** Activities for Downtown Development in the ARTS  
The Galleries Place - Market Square Neighborhood Association



**Salem 66 (Judy Grunwald):** Guided By Voices — brilliant beautiful music. Yes of course, it's all a continuum.

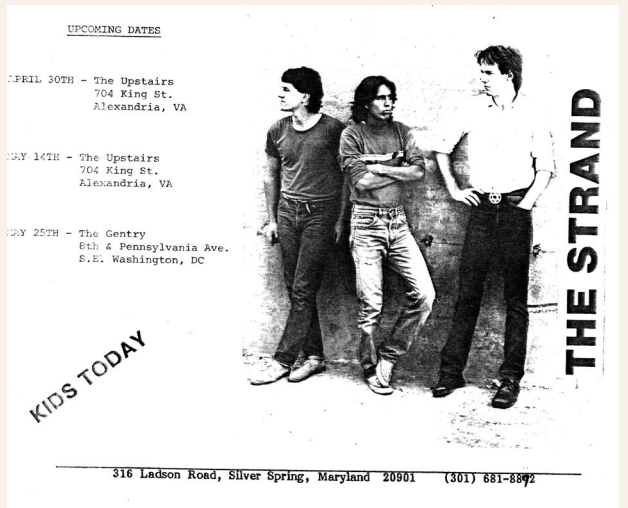
**Dave Swanson (The Reactions):** To some degree yeah, it was a continuation of the stories started in the early '80s. I liked Yo La Tengo, but I never got into Pavement. I was in Guided By Voices for a while, so there ya go. Pollard wrote (and still writes) great songs and that was a fun couple years.

At the time it was called "college rock" before it was indie rock. I think indie rock is a valid term if describing the fact that you were on an independent label with an independent spirit not tied to the whole major label, corporate thing. I think indie rock became a useless term once it was thought of as a genre. I think a lot of the "indie rock" thing of the '90s was very unfocused, and many of the bands had zero image or attitude. I was never a fan of the whole Seattle thing either.

**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** Yes, absolutely. We played on a bill with Yo La Tengo in the '80s and loved their material and them as people. Ira from YLT did our live mix the last time we played Maxwell's in Hoboken opening up for Soul Asylum.

**Jim Huie (The Ferrets):** Well, Yo La Tengo was around in the '80s, as I was a fan of theirs and Uncle Tupelo's first albums. I dig Guided By Voices, and even played in a GBV tribute band for a few years. I wouldn't be so presumptuous to think that any of those bands ever heard of the Ferrets, but I think we were all a continuation of the college music scene of the 1980s which drew from punk rock, new wave, the Paisley Underground, and the southern jangle rock sound of Let's Active, Guadalcanal Diary, Tommy Keene, etc.

**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** I absolutely feel like that '90s scene was just a continuation of what came before. Garage rock into punk/new wave/post-punk into college rock into lo-fi into



indie and on and on. Great music will always be made by interesting people.

**Holden Richards (One Plus Two):** It is a natural extension of what was happening, we all knew it was going to be heavier.

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** Velvet Crush was active during the early '90s, and so Paul and I were heavily involved in the whole "indie rock" thing, although at the time it was getting kind of confusing as to what sort of music people thought we played. Some called us "power pop," others called us "indie rock," and we simply thought of our group as a rock 'n' roll band. If you trace things back to Buddy Holly you can see where this whole "groups with guitars" thing started, the beginning of "indie rock." We're just part of a long lineage.

**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** Absolutely a continuation. Seems like it still flows on and will forever like rivers and their tributaries.





**Chapter 7**  
*Reckoning*



**Finally, we asked artists what they thought about the concept of *Strum & Thrum* and what it might mean to people hearing this music for the first time.**

**Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs):** Not many people heard the Reverbs — not back then and not now either. It's cool that younger folks will get the chance to hear our music. Maybe they'll be inspired by it in some small way. The Reverbs were barely a blip on the rock 'n' roll landscape, but we were serious about what we were doing, and being included on this comp means there must still be some life in the music we made.

I hope for younger people it's like how the *Nuggets* and *Pebbles* compilations were to me — the gateway into a previously unknown world of mystical and magical sonic delights. I also hope people remember these records were created before the internet changed the way people discover music. You read about this music in print fanzines, maybe heard the songs played on low-watt college radio stations, and discussed it all passionately with a secret cabal of maniacs who shared similar passions. It was grassroots music, not stuff the mainstream knew or cared about. That's one of the things that made it so special.



**Shawn Kelly (Start):** We hope that the groups on *Strum & Thrum* get their dues. We were all operating largely in the dark, but we knew that we were onto something.

**Slim White (Bangtails):** I always thought the Bangtails were a pretty cool band. Sump had a very specific kind of skill set as a writer, guitar player and singer. Prewitt was a cool guy, very gentle and kind, and a lot of fun. I'm glad that this stuff is still interesting to people. *Strum & Thrum* reminds me of the *Nuggets* compilation of old psychedelic also-rans — a bunch of bands that did their part, even though they never made the cut.

***Strum & Thrum reminds me of the Nuggets compilation of old psychedelic also-rans — a bunch of bands that did their part, even though they never made the cut.***

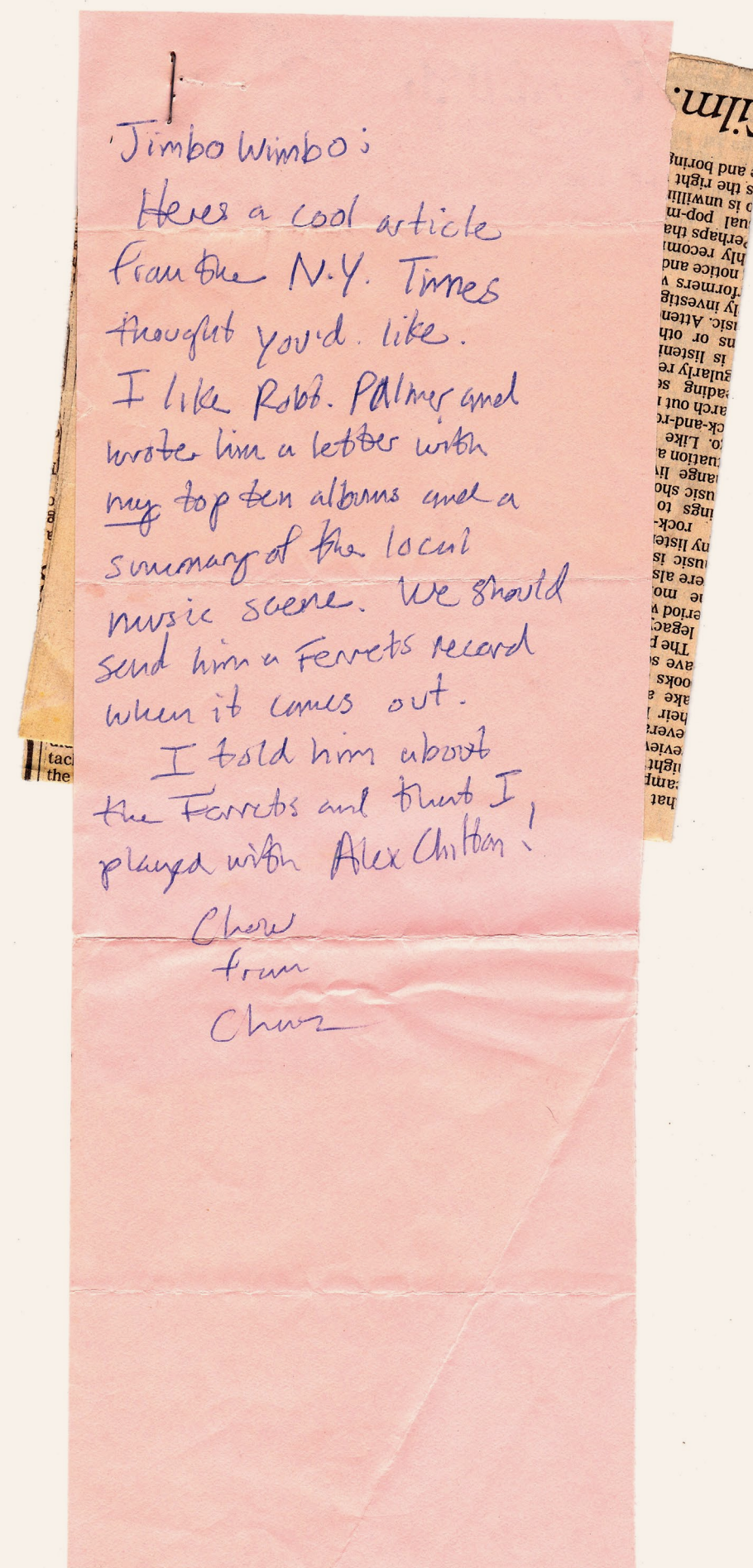
— Slim White (Bangtails)



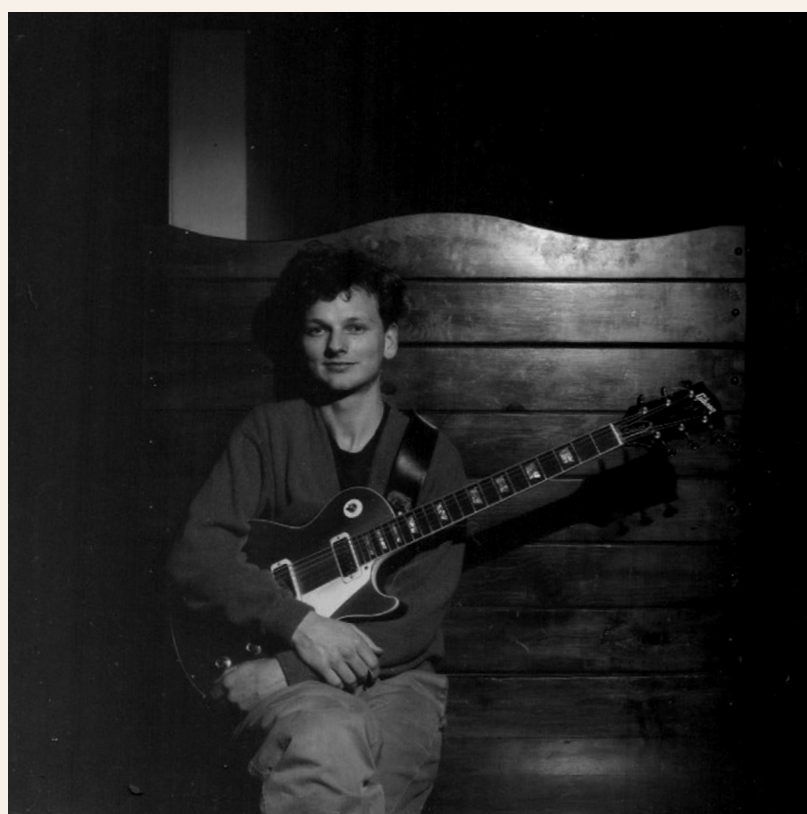
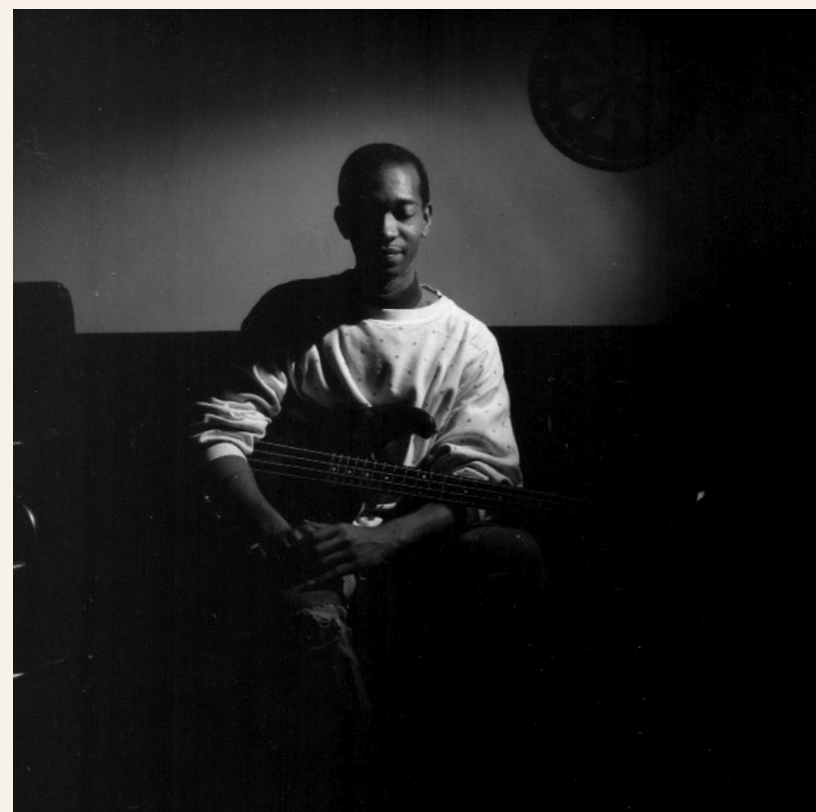
**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** There was definitely a zeitgeist that a lot of artists experienced at the time so it's going to be great to hear many of them all on one record.

**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** We are definitely proud, humbled and stoked (not necessarily in that order) to be part of this compilation with so many great bands from that era. When is the summer tour?!

**Cole Marquis (28th Day):** I'm super happy somebody still gives a shit about 28th Day and the other lesser known bands of the day.











Bobby Sutliff and Tim Lee of Windbreakers



**Jeffrey Underhill (The White Sisters):** It's great to have this reminder of a more earnest and simpler time, when it took longer and required some digging and luck to find out about new bands. Imagine relying on just a photo and some words on a page in a fanzine or a regional music and arts publication to catch your attention!

**Lynn Blakey (Holiday):** There's a lot of bands I missed out on back then, but there are many I was friends with like the Windbreakers and One Plus Two. I love that Salem 66 is part of this. My first band, an all-girl folk garage band called the Broken Crayons were fans of them. I remember being pretty psyched about another all-girl band in the mix. Plus they were good.

**Dave Swanson (The Reactions):** I think it's great to document this stuff. There were so many bands wandering in similar circles all over the globe, trying to find their way. It's cool to look back and piece that all together.

Left: The Reactions; right: 28th Day poster with Barbara Manning peeking out underneath



*[We] were barely a blip on the rock 'n' roll landscape, but we were serious about what we were doing, and being included on this comp means there must still be some life in the music we made.*

– Ric Menck (The Springfields / The Reverbs)







**Chapter 8**  
*Reckoning:  
Memories and more...*



**Here we collect a few leftover memories from the artists.**

**Pat Thomas (Absolute Grey):** The 1980s were an incredible time for college radio – they’d play just about anything you sent them. Tons of fanzines – they’d review just about anything you sent them. There were plenty of indie distributors who could get your self-released vinyl into stores across the country. It felt like a nationwide movement, led by bands like R.E.M. and the Dream Syndicate. And the nationally known bands were friendly; you could arrive at a local club during sound check and hang out with them! We were all young and naïve, and it was amazing.

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** The industry hurricane took its toll on us. Always under the microscope. The pressure! It was our first experience – so we made a bunch of mistakes, but learned so much and came out better in every way on the other side. I think of those times as three guys in a foxhole together enduring the hurricane around us. There’s nothing like first love.

**Archer Prewitt (Bangtails):** I remember recording the EP in some dude’s basement. He was a bit older and jaded. I think we tested his patience after a week or so of bashing away and trying to get mixes that we liked. Mike and I were unhappy with how he was mixing this rather ambitious song-into-song piece. It had all these tapes playing backwards in between, and it was recorded as one take. He just wasn’t getting what we wanted, and we were on top of him trying to direct everything. So, he finally blows and tells us to “mix the damn thing ourselves!” We didn’t know what we were doing, but we did it anyway. He was thrilled to get us out of there.

Mike and I practiced almost every day. We were possessed. I think we got 500 12” EPs pressed, which I’m fairly certain no other band in KC had done up to that point. We were our own rag-tag distributors. I think we were very proud of that record, though it could have sounded a lot better. Bangtails were easily one of the best bands I’ve ever been in. We burned bright for a good while and we had a hell of a great time together.

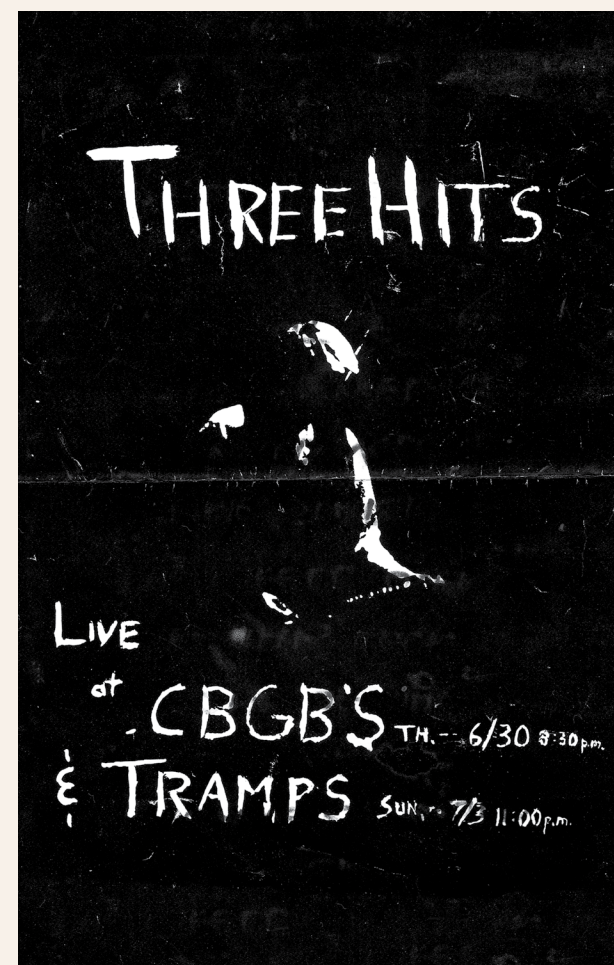
**Paul Budin (The Outnumbered):** The mid-’80s were a great time to be in a band, with vinyl still being the main source of music, no streaming







Crippled Pilgrims; top: Mitch Parker and Jay Moglia; bottom: Jay Moglia, Dan Joseph, and Scott Wingo in the studio



Top: The Darrows outside CBGB; bottom: Three Hits flyer

that shortchanged artists, and the ability to be a self-sufficient band based on playing live gigs and selling some records from the back of your car after the gig. We were very fortunate to be inspired by and play with so many great bands.

**Michael Kurtz (Three Hits):** We played shows with Guadalcanal Diary, Alex Chilton, the Swimming Pool Qs, the Right Profile, Zeitgeist, Love Tractor, Jason and the Scorchers, the Graphic, and a lot of other bands of the time. We won a songwriting contest, held by WRDU, the biggest rock radio station in Raleigh, NC. As the winner, we got to record with Dave Adams (who just had a hit covering the song “Carousel”), and to open up for George Thorogood where bottles were thrown at us.

tion, and a crazy ton of shitty shows as well... It's always the scary stuff that stands out though. Besides being robbed at gunpoint on tour, the story we end up talking about pretty often is the one time our van broke down in east Texas. Five of us spent the 20-degree night freezing in the van and got picked in the morning by a guy with an extremely impressive array of guns on a rack on his pickup. We weren't sure if it was going to end well, but we were too cold and tired not to take his help. He turned out to be the nicest guy imaginable. He fed us, helped get the truck fixed, and sent us on our way.

**Tom Sheppard (The Love In):** We printed, sold, and gave away maybe a couple thousand copies of our EP, and we still get occasional re-

*My favorite part of being in Great Plains were the practices. Getting there and setting up, smoking a bowl and popping a beer, talking band news and gossip, then trying to write the best song ever. Like hunting for Moby Dick!*

– Ron House (Great Plains)



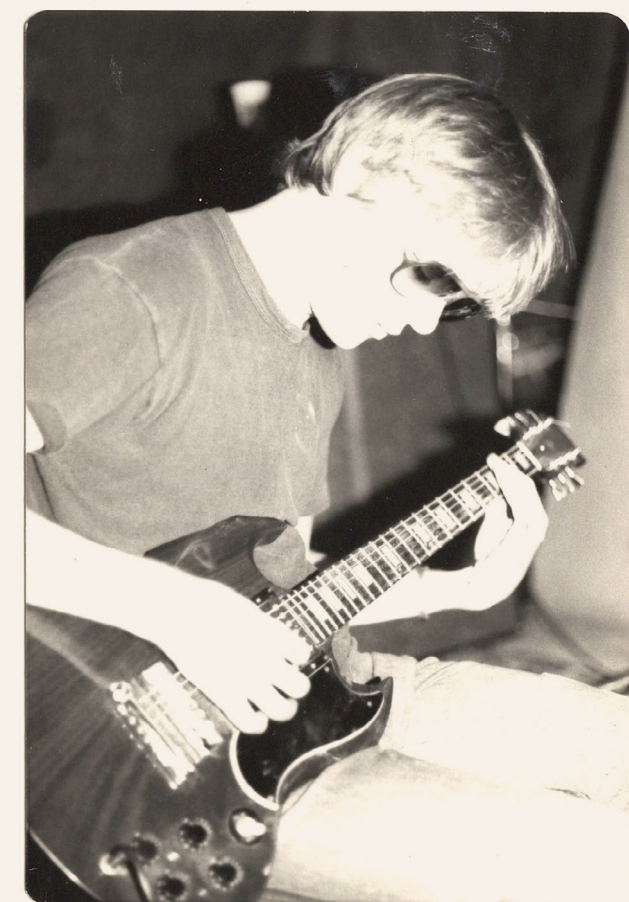
My guitar tech was a guy by the name of Tim “Skully” Quinlan, who I met in Greenville, NC. He was one of the music directors at East Carolina University, and they spun our single “Sharp Focus.” Tim left the station to become our main roadie. When the band broke up, Tim went on to be one of Pearl Jam’s guitar techs. Sheila used to joke that, “Our band didn’t make it, but our guitar tech did!”

**David Steinhart (Pop Art):** We toured for about five years on and off. Favorite opening shows: Mojo Nixon, 10,000 Maniacs, Rank and File, Flock of Seagulls, the Lyres, Jane’s Addic-

quests from people asking for them. But sometimes it feels like it was all a paper dream, now crumpled and buried at the bottom of a junkyard. Try googling “Love In.” You might find us on the 5,000th search page after every song with “In Love” in the title, just below some archaic 1960s porn. With a name like the Love In, we’d get booked on these kind of retro sixties-influenced hippie band shows, even though that wasn’t really our sound.

One time we were playing at The Music Machine in Los Angeles, on a bill put together by Greg Shaw of The Cavern Club and Bomp Records.









We were hanging out before the show in front of the club, and Sky Saxon of the Seeds walked by and asked us if we had any weed. We used to call Scott's VW van "The Love Machine," and I nervously said, "We might have some in The Love Machine." And Sky, sporting a beard down to his ass, actually said, "The Love Machine? Far out, man!" I can't remember if we actually smoked with him or not, but we'd been to see him play, with Redd Kross backing him, and heard him on Rodney Bingenheimer's show on KROQ all the time, rambling about how GOD is GOD spelled backwards, and how your cat will eat you if you die, but your dog won't take a single bite of your flesh. We thought he was such a cool character. We were all totally star-struck that night, for sure. I don't know, maybe that was just a long way to say, "We met and possibly smoked weed with the great Sky Saxon."

**“ We spent so much of our time on the road searching for pay phones and getting rolls of quarters. I think about that sometimes. The kids today have no idea.**



– Beth Kaplan (Salem 66)

**James Butler (Sex Clark Five):** A highlight from one of our tours was playing with Peter Buck at Maxwell's in Hoboken. He was hanging out with that night's headliner, Nikki Sudden, and a bottle of Jack... In any case, he said he liked our "guitar-driven sound" and wanted to have a go. I must say there was no danger of us sounding over-rehearsed! Though actually we never cared much for R.E.M., but we didn't have the heart to tell him.

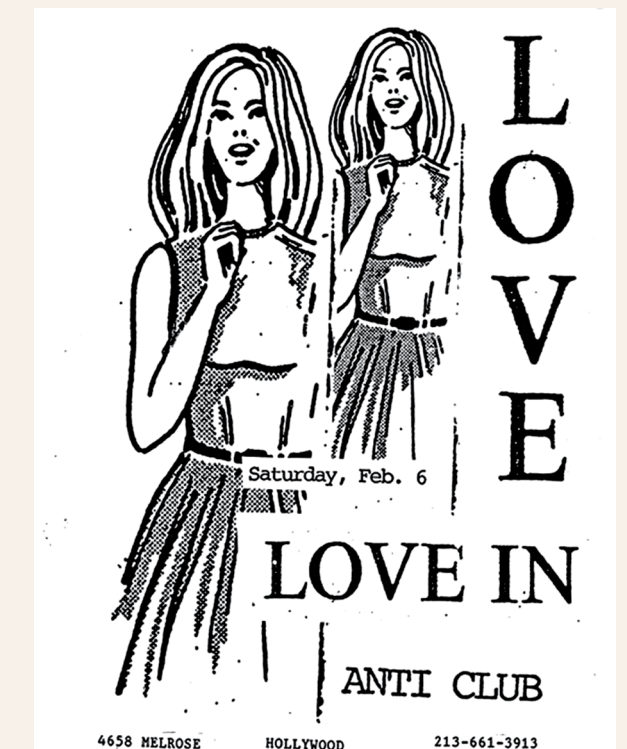
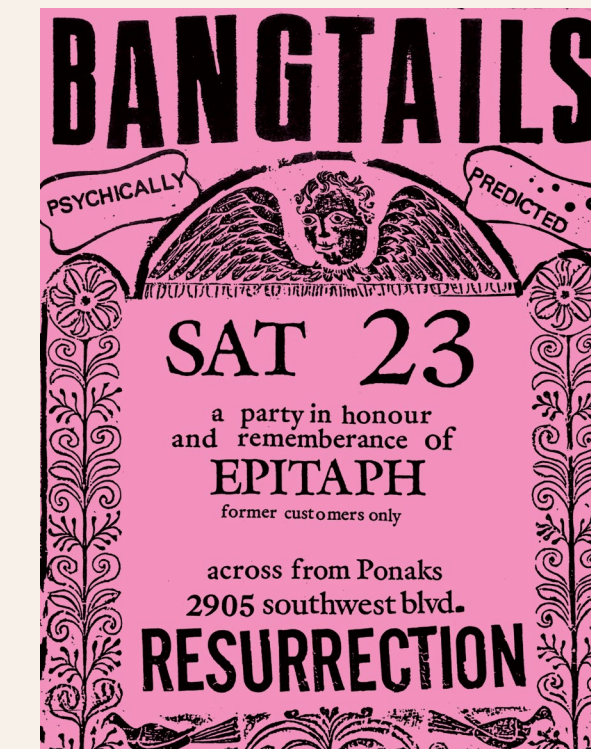
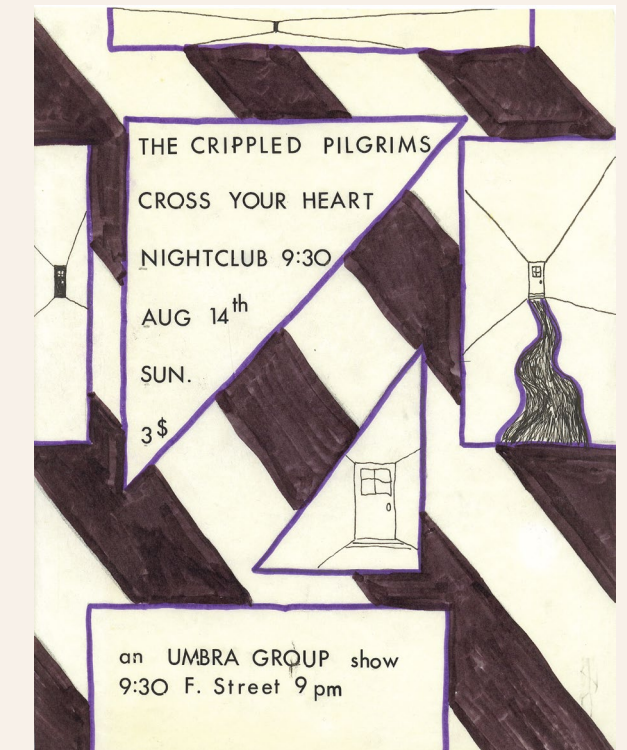
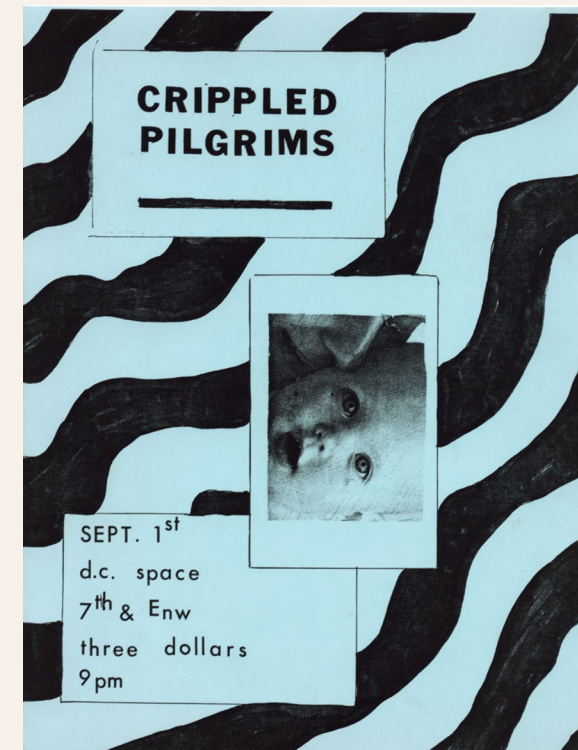
**Beth Kaplan (Salem 66):** We spent so much of our time on the road searching for pay phones and getting rolls of quarters. I think about that sometimes. The kids today have no idea.

**Bill Lasley (The Strand):** The very first time I stepped up to test a mic at a live show, a giant blue spark leapt out from the mic to my upper lip. I think the lights actually dimmed. I blame that incident for the way my vocals sounded ever since.

**Ron House (Great Plains):** My favorite part of being in Great Plains were the practices. Getting there and setting up, smoking a bowl and popping a beer, talking band news and gossip, then trying to write the best song ever. Like hunting for Moby Dick!

**Derek Chafin (The Darrows):** I remember writing these songs, rehearsing in my basement, and then playing CBGB's – it seemed

impossible. Everything was new. The writing was unfiltered. I had just started writing then, so now I look back and see essence – the things that will always make you you, regardless of what one goes on to do. The beauty of those days of never being certain how the day would end. The cast of characters we met. The circus and the intensity. The fun, vitality, and comradery, and also being a part of something even larger musically that spoke to who we were, and in many ways still are. The full picture of a band, of being part of one, is in both what it feels like inside, but also what it means to those around it. Complicated. A creative marriage. I don't remember the awful, the hard, or sad in any proportion compared to the joy.







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Underground 1983-1987*

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The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill.

The Darrows performing live (back);  
photo taken by Jay French.

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