



JOINT FORCE One Inch Punch
CD EP (BMG)

Long-time companions OJ, Slave and DLT unite under the name Joint Force, and deliver a superb-all-over debut release. Opening with DLT cutting up portions of the 1991 OJ and Slave album *What Can We Say?*, *One Inch Punch* takes you on a ride through booming hip-hop feels, funky beats and Jamaican flavoured reggae. The first single, a rap and ragga combo called 'Static', is given the funk/jazz treatment when remixed by Beasties producer Mario Caldato, while other highlights come in the form of the reggae brilliance of 'Homie Phobic', a remixed version of the bFM classic 'Burntime', and the rapping by Slave on 'Mindless Violence'. But full credit to all parties, for this is the finest local hip-hop debut since the Posse dropped *Against The Flow* in 1988.

THE ASHVINS Spanning The Bowl
7 Inch Single (Spotty Dog)

MEAT MARKET Dial 'M' For Meat Market
7 Inch Single (Spotty Dog)

New from Palmerston North label Spotty Dog are these two seven inches, pressed on genuine Himitangi vinyl. The Ashvins present four songs dressed up like a car crash. Abusive guitars and a relentless barrage of drums collided with vocals that veer from singing into shouting. Individual appraisals aren't important here — although 'I Live in a Swamp' is the coolest — this is music to get seriously fucked up by.

Understating it, Meat Market have a more selective appeal. Imagine that horrid kind of monotonous performance poetry, interspersed with extremely high pitched singing, layed over the top of a bass distorted so low only dogs could hear it (thanks Grapple!), while someone slaps a bloated wet belly in the background, and you've got a fairly good idea of what Meat Market do in their spare time. Both are available from Spotty Dog Records, PO Box 1500, Palmerston North.

GREG JOHNSON Don't Wait Another Day
CD Single (Pagan)

Mr Liver Man produces the goods with such regularity these days, it shouldn't surprise when he arrives with a wonderful tune like 'Don't Wait...', but where are they coming from? Built on a gorgeous piano melody straight from your favourite dream, it glides into a delicate pop tale of great beauty. Breath holding for the album starts here.

BAILTER SPACE Splat
CD Single (Flying Nun)

After coming seriously close to parodying themselves on last year's one dimensional album *Vortura*, Baiter Space return with a dazzling pop single. 'Splat' features a hypnotic, subtly layered

collection of Parker-created guitar lines, combined with a naive 'up yours' vocal swagger. 'Retro' comes inna-Thermos-stylee, but the New York based trio manage to form actual sentences over a repetitive groove. Things are rounded out with the Gordons-like 'At Five We Drive', and a remixed version of *Robot World*'s 'Fascination'.

THE SML Mixdown
CD Single (Wildside)

The SML are two parts Jon and Tom from Shihad, and one part Date from Head Like A Hole. 'Mixdown', the single (as well as the title of this seven song EP), initially passes as a love song of fragile beauty, until a closer listen reveals Jon describing the process of 4-track mixing. Also of note is Iron Maiden's 'Runnin' Free', reworked as an 'intimate' sing-along, revelling in its lack of tunefulness. But frankly, the remaining collection of low-fi, experimental, often impromptu sounding jams, is nothing we would have missed, had they not been heard outside the four walls of the Stench Room.

HEAD LIKE A HOLE The Not Nicomjool EP
CD Single (Wildside)

Not Nicomjool sees Head Like A Hole go childish in front of a 4-track once more, six times over, then wind up with the anarchic wizardry of 'Chalkface' (that contains the immortal line, 'you need me like a third eye'), the third single from *Flik Y'Self Off Y'Self*. Each of the six 4-track recordings comes in at under two minutes, and they're mostly a collection of random buzzes and beats. The only work of major interest is a quaint little number that became '1 Pound 2 Pound'. Strictly for fans and collectors only.

NIXONS Special Downtime
CD EP (Pagan)

An acoustic effort from the Nixons due to the theft of all their band gear last December. Recorded in four days at York Street, this eight song EP doesn't stray too far outside the boundaries of folk-tinged pop, and is largely uncaptivating in its execution. The exceptions are 'Basement Static', with its laidback Radiohead-feel, and the brilliantly rollicking 'Laughing', which holds major potential as a classic drinking song.

SEMI LEMON KOLA Otherwise
CD Single (BMG)

I'm in agreement with the boss of BMG — the cover does look like that of a relaxation tape, but the content is far from it. The big, spacious pop sound of 'Otherwise' encompasses huge angular power chords that form a base for the strong, emotive vocals of Tosh Graham. It's a good song, spoilt only by a decision to go apeshit once the end is in sight. Side two gives you the intricate funk/rock tune 'Fear Of Adoption', and 'Henry XXL', both featuring the unmistakable voice of the Hallelujah Picassos' Roland Rorschach.

CICADA Oscillator
CD EP (Failsafe)

Their press bio is full of crap about aiming to capture 'a broad frequency response and deep audal scope', and although that doesn't say it all, it's a fairly revealing statement as to where Auckland four-piece Cicada are coming from. At times *Oscillator* becomes more an exercise in

cramping endless dynamics and chops and changes of moods into songs ('Sway' and 'Winter'), and as a result it sounds forced and rigid. On the simple side, they keep seriousness in check on the Baiterish feel of 'Alphajerk', and go all out on the EPs best track, the swirling, rhythmically frantic 'Spine'.

SOUTHSIDE OF BOMBAY Umbadada
Cassingle (Pagan)

'Umbadada' is a crisp, horn-driven soul track, that finds a good groove, but epitomises the overall lack of sympathy Southside Of Bombay are given in the studio. Absolutely no bottom end features on the title track or the B-sides, 'Divide and Fool' and 'Taura'. Much of the energy of Southside's awesome live show comes from the heavily funky rhythm, and until that is captured in the studio, any future releases will be failing to show the true spirit of the band.

SALMONELLA DUB Dub Tom Foolery
CD EP (Curious)

Don't know much about history, psychology or dub, but I liked some of this a lot. The mellow style of 'Panza' impressed most, as did the rise and fall of 'Tom Foolery'. 'Orbital Projector Mix' and 'Panza Dub' were just a little too lacking in pulse for the straight frame of mind I was in, but this is excellent pot music for sure. Available from PO Box 21-075, Christchurch.

SULATA Never
CD Single (Deepgrooves)

Former Colony singer, and Three The Hard Way backing vocalist, Sulata Foai, ventures out solo for the first time. 'Never' has all the necessary ingredients for a successful pop/soul single — a sweet melody matched with cruisy bass and drum beats — but this approach reveals a voice that is not being given full room to stretch. Something hard and funky might suit more. Of the B-sides, 'Motion' could have come from the Stock, Aitken, Waterman songbook, and the mid-tempo dance track 'Always' is formula enough to go down well at the Box at three in the morning.

WADD Wadd
CD EP

Christchurch band Wadd come from the high energy, power pop angle — nothing more and nothing less, and that's just fine. Taking cues from a host of US guitar bands — Pavement, Sugar, the Replacements — they vary wildly, from the speedy, Sugarish 'Pick Me Up', to painfully slow and earnest tunes like 'Scenery Stream' and 'Zero Plus One'. What separates Wadd from a lot

of other local bands who take a similar approach, is that they don't play the forlorn, sensitive card in a feeble attempt to get laid; they simply put their collective foot down and play. Although Wadd's influences are blatantly obvious, they pool them, deconstruct them, and put it all back together in the shape of good, three minute pop songs. Available from 50 Riccarton Road, Christchurch.

SIMON AND FIRE Sweet Valentine
CD Single (Jayrem)

Simon And Fire are the Auckland duo of former Herbs man Toni Fonoti and his brother Brian. The title track is a very clean and wholesome Pacific-flavoured serenade that passes without fanfare, but the real deal kicks in with 'Shashamane Rock'. A sparsely arranged ragga/pop jam, 'Shashamane' features guests Brother Zeb and Mighty Asterix. The protest song 'Weapons Of Peace' follows, but whereas Fonoti's 'French Letter' took a staunch approach, 'Weapons Of Peace' delivers its message with all the impact of a Christmas carol. Definitely an odd one.

STATE OF HATE The State
Cassette EP (Lizard Mull)

Nine grunty hardcore tunes from Palmerston North's State Of Hate is what you get on *The State*, their debut release. Rhythms stay pretty much true to classic 4/4, but race full tit from start to finish during each song. Meanwhile, there's brilliant punk melodies going on here — no matter how hard the vocalist tries to sing out of tune — especially on 'Don't Get on the Plane' and 'Alone'. Available from the Hatecrew, PO Box 11, Longburn.

JACQUI KEELAN-DAVEY Parihaka!
Cassingle (Hark)

Not the elder Finn's solo tribute to Te Whiti, but a weirdly haunting, almost mournful diatribe from Hamilton's Jacqui Keelan-Davey on the same topic. In contrast, 'Happy' is a unique AOR ballad of the kind not heard from local lips since Sharon O'Neill ruled the airwaves with 'Maybe'.

RHYTHM OIL The Art Of Flying
Cassingle (Rhythm Oil Records)

Previously starring as Obviously Five Believers, Rhythm Oil have written and recorded a quirky, off beat song that Otis Mace might use to fill up space on a solo project — unfortunately Rhythm Oil are serious. Side two, 'Stars and Bars', is a bit more on to it, displaying the Auckland trio's fondness for flat-out hard rock of the Quo variety.

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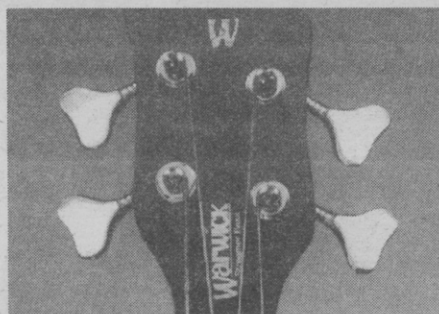
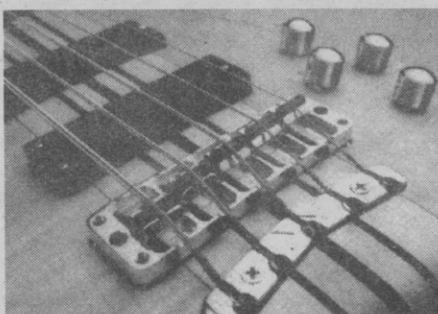
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