

# mo' better beats

## RAGE

..My Crying's Done (Festival)  
More hi energy Euro-disco. Lyrically more interesting than most of its ilk, but it's let down by an overused synth line. Still, with summer approaching and more than a few dance parties in the wind, this could well be a sleeper hit.

## KRS ONE

MCs Act Like They Don't Know (Festival)  
'Clap your hands everybody, if you've got what it takes, because

I'm KRS and I'm on the mic, and Premier's on the breaks...'  
Phew, with an opener like that, you know it's good. Ever the angry young man of hip hop, KRS is back with another tirade at fellow rappers who perpetrate, this time backed by DJ Premier, who provides a smart jazzy groove with real bass. KRS' beef is with black youth who don't (amongst other things) realise their hip-hop culture is being subjugated by whitey: 'Now we've got white MCs calling themselves nigga.'

## JUNIOR MAFIA

Players Anthem (Warners)  
Co-written and 'exec produced by Biggie Smalls, aka Notorious BIG, this is obviously a launching pad for his spin-off group of BIG protégés. Although there are nine

artists in the MAFIA, it's the Notorious one who hogs (no pun intended) all the vocal duties. Also included is the album mix, which reveals the original lyric you don't hear on the radio: 'Grab your dick if you love hip-hop / Rub your titties if you love Big Poppa...'

## SHAMEN

Destruction Eschäton (Sony)  
These guys know their stuff, and with the help of UK house producers the Beatmasters, they have another techno crossover summer hit. A strong bassline, pounding rhythm, and a radio sellout vocal — very different from 'Ebenezer Skeezer', but forgivable. I much preferred the Basement Boys' mix however, which highlights the difference between the UK and US dance vibe.

## CYPRESS HILL

Throw Your Set In The Air (Sony)  
Can this band do no wrong? Hell no! Eerie, foreboding... these guys have clearly been smoking some seriously evil ill shit. Produced by Muggs, with a remix by Rza of Wu Tang. You won't be disappointed.

## NAUGHTY BY NATURE

Clap Yo' Hands (Festival)  
Like Cypress Hill, this band can also do no wrong. Naughty By Nature have matured since the days of OPP, yet they still know better than to lose the party flavour in their current material. 'Clap Yo' Hands' is a basic party jam, with their trademark deft lyrical style and fresh beats. To prove they're thinking men too, they include 'The Chain Remains', a song about second class citizenship.

## BLOODHOUND GANG

Mama Say (Sony)  
In the vein of House of Pain, this is white rap Brooklyn style. With phat beats and great lyrics like: 'Got more balls than the Harlem Globetrotters', and 'The sound of voice leaves your panties moist', these guys won me over instantly. Sure, it's dumb, but it's fun, and BG are for real. A variety of mixes, from hip-hop to techno (which actually works, surprisingly). Beware, however, of the flip 'Kids Incorporate', which not only sucks, it swallows.

## DOVE SHACK

Summertime in the LBC (Sony)  
More smooth R&B, with Dove Shack name checkin' Warren G. Finally the 70s soul revival is bearing fruit: this is so fine you can leave your umbrellas at home. A strong male vocal over a funky, funky groove.

## DONN-AH

99 Luft Balloons (Festival)  
A hi energy techno remake of the old 80s hit. Hard to tell if it will go the way of those other retro remakes, 'Total Eclipse of the Heart' (hit) or 'Message In A Bottle' (not). The beat is fast and furious, the vocal is German. Hearing 'nein-ty nein' all the time send shivers down my spine — I guess it was all those war comics I read as a kid.

NICK D'ANGELO

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

Some Scientific Abstract Type Shit (Mo' Wax)  
Well now, it seems some smart people at Mushroom Records have picked up this Mo' Wax compilation for a local release. The, er, *Abstract Shit* in question is a collection of some of the more well known Mo' Wax trax on wax from the past year or two. It starts off with the DJ Shadow classic 'Influx', a mad collage of breakbeats, scratches, samples and dialogue, which was a defining moment for what we now know as trip-hop. Basically, every track is a winner. They may have been around a while now, but if you're only just waking up to the Mo' Wax groove (you been sleeping, fool), this is a good place to start. Blunted beats for blunted freaks.

## UNITONE HI FI

Wickedness Increased (Incoming!)  
Okay, okay, this has been out since July, but basically it's the (sensi stoked) shit and you should be soaking in it, so here goes... Unitone Hi Fi are Dutchieman and Xcellent E of Nemesis Dub Systems, joined by the master of

the smelly groove, Stinky Jim. Apparently the Nemesis lads are based in New York, and thus they claim to draw inspiration from Jamaican sound systems, South Pacific rhythms, and the sonic melting pot that is New York. Essentially this is an album of delicious, bottom heavy, ambient dub, with some lovely reagee riddums riding the grooves. Check out the sublime, bitter sweet 'Guiding Star', featuring a cameo from, who else but, the Mighty Asterix.

For an aural head trip to the centre of bass, jump aboard the hi-fi space shuttle. This is better than anything I've heard on Deepgrooves. In fact, I will go as far as saying this is a more enjoyable listening experience than either of the last two Orb albums. *Wickedness Increased* indeed. They also came up with a really cool CD design, placing neorub paper over a trippy speaker cone. Now, how's about some vinyl styles next time?

## INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

The Impact Zone (Sawtooth Recordings)  
This album was released in 94 and is a collection of past recordings, so it's not exactly new, but it's entirely relevant, because ICU are touring New Zealand this month. ICU are Jed Eye and Gus Fergusson. Jed, of course, was the man behind the infamous noise experiments that were Fetus Productions, while Guy was behind the equally disturbing Test Department (sick minds think alike). ICU is a multimedia hard trance project and their live shows promise a situation of visual sensory overload (I love a good overload). *The Impact Zone* is a collection of deep acid, pounding techno and disturbing ambience, and although it's a very cold, dark, electronic album, that probably just turns you on, and if it does, like me, you'll be looking forward to ICU — live and directed at your brain.

## LRS

[ad2v] (rev.flc)  
LRS is a Wellington solo electronic artist who has been twiddling with his knob(s) for a few years now. I remember the first LRS live performance (Psychic Droid, Bats Theatre February 93), and it was a manic, white noise on speed techno set of nightmarish proportions. LRS have slowly matured since then, and currently seem to be dwelling in the funky, minimal techno area. 'The Keys' is a shuffling, wavering track that keeps threatening to fall over before it builds in to a big ole kick drum. It sounds like something Josh Wink might have once done. 'Flechette' is a groovy minimal piece of edgy trance. LRS have potential but need to find that X factor that grabs you by the balls. Just got to keep twiddling those knobs I guess.

## JUNIOR MAFIA

Conspiracy (Big Beat Records)  
New York is working it. First the Wu Crew and now here comes the Notorious BIG, steppin' around with Junior MAFIA. The Junior Masters At Finding Intelligent Attitudes are a tight knit clique from Brooklyn, New York. All nine members are under the age of 20, but make no mistake, this is not Kriss Kross. The mentor of the MAFIA is the Notorious BIG, who has nurtured and guided the MAFIA (they grew up together) by giving them spots on his own records, and he now appears on the MAFIA album. *Conspiracy* is a hardcore, 15 track bomb, produced by DJ Clark Kent,

BIG and Lance Rivea. This is the smooth hardcore sound of New York players livin' large. First single, 'Player's Anthem', is already making big moves — Montell even did a clean(ish) cover at his gig. It samples Slick Rick's 'Ladi Dadi', so you know it's gonna be dope. There have been some wicked hip-hop albums this year, and with shit like this, East Coast are taking back the spotlight.

## ST. GERMAIN

Boulevard: The Complete Series (F Communication)  
Oooooohhhh, now this is goood. This is house music with real depth and soul, as opposed to the disposable pap that is everywhere these days. F Communication is a French label which released about four EPs by St. Germain, and here they are pulled together for a complete CD release. Ludovic Navarre, the man behind the music, has taken New York style, deep, hypnotic house grooves and blended them seamlessly with some live jazz, for a moody, emotionally rich album. It's brilliant. This is ambient house music to be savored in the lush comfort of a space age bachelor pad. Dim the lights and let the seduction begin.

## MONTPELL JORDAN

This is How We Do It (Tour Edition) (Def Jam)  
I guess y'all know what the album sounds like now, a smooth album that bridges the gap between traditional R&B harmonies and phat hip-hop beats. So, if you like that kinda vibe, then this album will do it for you. The tour edition has a bonus CD that features three new mixes: Tee's 'Club Mix' of 'This Is How We Do It' is an average house mix, but the Barr 9 mix is a wicked, slowed down hip-hop version with some cool electro effects on the 'this is how...' sample. Lastly, the Human Rhythm remix of 'Something 4 Da honeyz' is a killer — slow sparse beats, with wicked production and a rap by Redman! That clinches it. If you dig Montell, get the tour edition. Even I liked it.

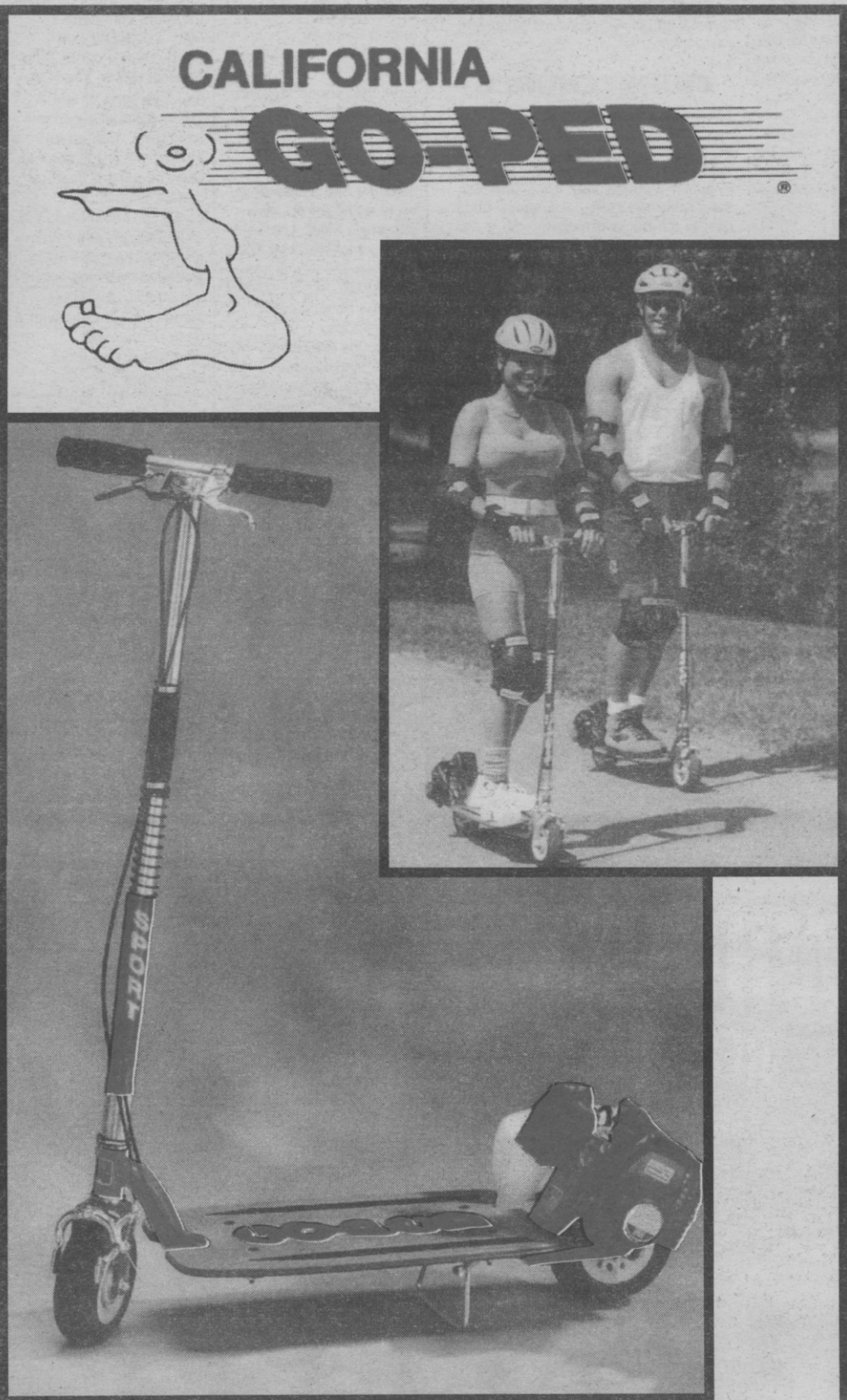
## SOUL II SOUL

Volume V: Believe (Virgin)  
After changing the face of pop music and ushering in the arrival of club culture back in the late 80s, the enduringly positive Jazzie B is back with *Volume V: Believe*. It's a tough one for them, as the world (ie. dance culture) has sure moved on. Mind warping techno, the rawness of what people call trip-hop, and the ambient fury of drum 'n' bass make *Believe* seem a tad tame in comparison. *Believe* is pleasant enough — a collection of positive, conscious lyrics over groovy breakbeats. It's not that it's bad, it's just that there is so much else out there that's better.

## SHARA NELSON

Friendly Fire (Cooltempo)  
*Friendly Fire* is Shara's second post-Massive Attack solo album, and it's a tougher sound than her debut, *What Silence Knows*. The album is produced by Mike Pelen, although Tim Simenon produces one track, with writing collaborations from Skip McDonald, Pressure Drop, Ashley Beedle and Jah Wobble. Shara does have a magnificent singing voice, and she showcases it to good effect throughout the album. Stand outs include 'Footprint', co-written by Pressure Drop, which features a long moody intro that morphs into an intense piece of dubwise soul. *Friendly Fire* is original, stirring British soul. More power to the UK sound.

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