

# albums

## 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL Showcase (TTI Cassette)

One God, One Aim, One Destiny. The 12 Tribes of Isreal Band delivers a powerful message in the orthodox faith, which is not a faith of writs or rites. Ask a 12 Tribes member what it's all about, they'll just tell you to do what they do — read the Bible, one chapter a day. They believe this discipline is the only way to understand the scriptures. Completing this task takes somewhere in the region of three years. This faith is not a joke, and wearing dreadlocks and smoking herb doesn't make you into a Rasta. Understand these things and you'll gain a greater appreciation of the sentiments expressed in this album.

*Showcase*, the 12 Tribes' second album, takes a giant step from their debut, *Shine On*, Guided by JA veteran sessionman Egbert Evans, they've produced a sound with far more "bottom". If the message doesn't grab you, latch onto the rhythms.

The range of talent on display here is really quite staggering. Twelve songs, each featuring different performances, no two tracks alike. Standouts? Let's start with The Mighty Asterix, an aptly-named little dynamo who can sing like Dennis Brown or Frankie Paul and rap like Sweetie Irie or Dillinger. He's working on an album of his own, and it'll be worth hearing, judging by the grace of 'Selassie I is Beautiful'. Toni Simon, ex-Herbs, the man who wrote 'French Letter', contributes 'Chapter A Day' with a lush arrangement which speaks volumes about why Herbs aren't saying much of note these days. He also wrote Gaylene Rose's 'Nothing Comes Easy', a well hard number in the style of Marcia Griffiths. Hensley Dyer, poet turned singer, delivers one of his strongest compositions to date in 'Jah Jah Is My Guiding Star', matched by his best recorded vocal performance. Tigi Ness's 'Though We Are' is a classic with vocals reminiscent of Junior Delgado. It's been a highlight of 12 Tribes stage shows for at least a couple of years and is done full justice in a sizzling mix here, demanding to be played loud. Toni Simon's brother Brian contributes the uptempo dancehall stepper 'Train To Zion', while Brian Tait's sweet 'Tribulation Solider' recalls Asward before the disco infection corrupted



Electronic, Bernard Sumner, Johnny Marr.

them. The 12 Tribes organisation is a family affair, and the kids get a song of their own in 'Let's Give A Hand', another Toni Simon composition. It's a charmer. The set is completed by orthodox hymns from Sister Love and Sister Dee, a soulful ballad from Jahben, and the Jahman-style 'Hail Selassie I' by Victor Thomas.

*Showcase* is available from the TTI Shop in the Corner basement, Queen St, or from the 12 Tribes HQ, 23A Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn, Auckland. For mail order, send \$20 plus postage and handling.  
DUNCAN CAMPBELL

## ELECTRONIC Electronic (Warners)

Supergroups — mainly a phenomenon of the 70s when famous people from successful bands huddled

together to compare egos. Those were the days when rock stars were venerated and idolised beyond the scope of mere mortals and acted accordingly by atomising drugs and hotel rooms. Now a super-duo like Electronic with the considerable talents of New Order's singer Bernard Sumner and the unsurpassable ex-Smith guitarist Johnny Marr is easily accepted as two Mancunian mates making a record together. No big deal.

But what a record! Take the best of New Order — which means Sumner's forlorn but very natural vocals and lush dance rhythms and ice it with the Marr guitar dimension and melodic gifts and you end up with a recipe that rarely flops.

In descending order there are at least two brilliant songs: 'Reality', which is pure New Order dance time with

Marr scrubbing underneath and 'Tighten Up' which pounds insistently with Sumner's grievance "There used to be a way, but there ain't no more" being driven home by Marr's acoustic/electric flair. A slight pressure drop lead to 'Get The Message' which uses loping bottom end to carry it, which is in contrast to the priceless pop of 'Try All You Want' and 'Some Distant Memory' which sports a brief but beautiful Marr acoustic solo and an oboe outro to match.

Then it's down a degree to the mere excellence of 'Idiot Country' and include here the collaborations with the Pet Shop Boys on 'Patience Of A Saint' and 'Getting Away With It'. Electronic is an example of the perfect supergroup at work where divergent talents complement each other to make the ideal marriage.  
GEORGE KAY

## SON OF BAZERK Bazerk, Bazerk, Bazerk SOUL

Life depends on change, forward motion — stop moving for too long and you might as well be dead. Son of Bazerk are the rap incarnation of this theory, they slam their way through more styles and concepts than you knew existed, and the result is the most glorious fucking noise I've heard in a long while.

Produced by the Bomb Squad and Carl Ryder and released through their label, you'd expect certain tough rap elements and they are most certainly there, but so are a lot of other things. There's some serious vocal interplay going on between the five band members. Son of Bazerk takes the lead and the others dart around his punch. There's a nice reggae feel in places aided by Daddy Rawe's toasting and

Cassandra's high pitched call and response ties in with the soul feel that runs pretty strongly through this.

Behind it all though, are those all-important Shocklee (Public Enemy) crafted beats, kickin' harder than Bruce Lee in a bad mood they drive *Bazerk*, *Bazerk*, *Bazerk* along at a furious pace. From the opener 'The Band Gets Swivey On The Wheels' it's non-stop power, a musical shredder. 'Change the Style' uses more beats than you'd imagine possible right down to a slab of speed metal, 'Trapped Inside the Rage of Jahwell' is plain wild and 'Sex, Sex & More Sex' is as fun as just that. Son Of Bazerk do a nice take the cover of JB's *Please, Please, Please* and the similarity runs deeper than just artwork. The spirit of James Brown's powerhouse revue is very strong here, it's a non-stop good time.  
KIRK GEE

## SMASHING PUMPKINS Gish (Caroline) RAINDOGS Border Drive-In Theatre (Atco)

Two new American bands from opposite ends of the musical spectrum but who're getting the big push from companies and critics alike.

Chicago's Smashing Pumpkins debut with a brand of organic metal that's obviously aiming to be intensely and personally anarchic but ends up sounding positively archaic mainstream. On salvos like 'I Am One' and 'Fristessa' Billy Corgan's and James Iha's mesh on riffs too reminiscent of 70s cliches to be regarded as innovative excitement twenty years later. The best of the grunge is 'Snail' which shows an appreciation of guitar dynmaics, and of the quieter stuff on

offer, 'Rhinceros' and the fragile 'Daydream' come closest to being reasonable tunes. Otherwise there's very little danger here.

Raindogs are a different kettle of pumpkins. From Boston, various music mags have tried to pass them off as Celtic-Cajun r'n'b mournful hounds. That's where their roots may lie but writer/vocalist Mark Cutler with his Joe Camilleri/Tom Petty drawl makes sure that the band doesn't stray too far from an authentic weathered rock basis that assimilates the odd violin.

And Cutler can write: 'Some Fun' immediately grabs your throat with its hunger for fun and 'Carry Your Cross' and 'Stop Shakin' Me Down' reveal their sturdy r'n'b roots. 'I'll Take Care Of You' is one of these worldly, tough ballads that spits out a chorus line that's hardly sentimental — "And in some alley when there's nobody looking/you can be sure that I'll take care of you". But the killer track has to be 'Dance of the Freaks' with a spoken intro by Iggy Pop and a tune and arrangement with insane hooks and back up "ooh-wahs".

In the credits the Raindogs have thanked Warren Zevon and the Waterboys amongst a thousand others — but these two names give you some idea as to where their music's from. Origins aside, *Border Drive-In Theatre* is well worth the price of admission.  
GEORGE KAY

## FREAK THE SHEEP NZ Music Compilation (Flying Nun)

As any habitual gig goer who lives in Auckland knows, BFM's *Freak The Sheep* NZ music show is essential Monday night listening. For two hours host Lisa Van Der Aarde plays tracks from unsolicited demo tapes, conducts "live" interviews and culls her playlist from the best that's gone before. Anyway, this is Volume One of a projected compilation series showcasing some of the best stuff to have come her way in the last year or so. The bands here are amongst those who made the most impact on such taste barometers as the BFM Top Ten. So, if you didn't get to see any of these bands about which you've no doubt heard so much, here's your chance to sample their output. *Volume One* features the Malchicks, Watershed, Nemesis Dub Systems, Second Child, Plaster Saints, Lee Harvey, Compulsory Joy, Freak Power, Hallelujah Picassos, Nixons, Drill and Spermbank Five. A dandy assortment.  
DONNA YUZWALK



Smashing Pumpkins

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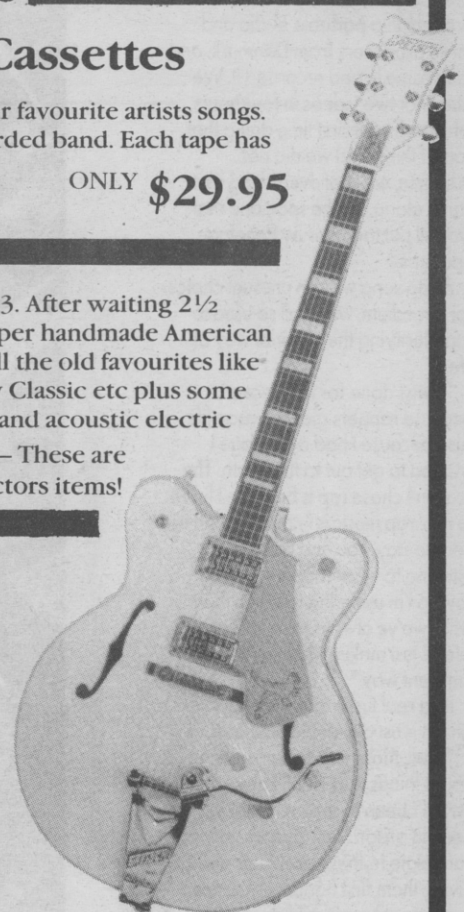
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