

BULL TONGUE

By Byron Coley
and Thurston Moore

Exploring the voids of all known undergrounds since 2002

Of all the fucked up, nasty ass, deliriously damaged rock bands in the recent history of the American underground wonderland (particularly Texas), none come close to the squirm and hellacious sqwunk of Rusted Shut. From the incinerated skum of Houston weirdness improv outfit Grinding Teeth arose **Rusted Shut** in 1986. Their shows were a notorious mess, drunken and fueled by cheap-jack acid. After years of slovenly survival they've been somewhat rescued from universal distaste by the current noise legions. The Emperor Jones label released the Rehab CD in 2003 and AA Records did a sick lathe ("Bring Out Your Dead") last year and their notorious "Fuckin'" track off the 2006 End Times Festival live comp is still the only loop that matters (check their myspace page for that one). It was with some apprehension of being held up by knife point that we unzipped their new **Hot Sex** EP (Dull Knife). But goddamn if this is not a great goddamned beast of a record. The **core duo of Don Walsh and Sybil Chance** (the original still alive members of Grinding Teeth) and Domokos (on drums and 'earthscreamer') just lay it out in an unctious smear of rawk n roll decimating any obvious pretence of hardcore, black metal, death metal, sludge, punk, avant improv goop etc.—shit is the REAL amerika full on. Salute and die.

Nigel Cross's British label, Shagrat, only releases extraordinary material. He doesn't bother with anything else. That means it's always a label to watch and their newsy release, the **Mariachi Riff Live and Free Music LP by Formerly Fat Harry**, is a case in point. FFH were an ostensible Country Joe offshoot band, based in England, who recorded a lone laid-back, country-fried

album for UK Harvest. It never struck us as wildly interesting, but Brits who saw the band live were always blowing spit-bubbles about how psychedelic they were. Some of that material finally surfaced on the **Hux CD, Goodbye for Good**, but this LP has the essential jewel—a 25-minute West Coast jam pinnacle that can match any ballroom band for sheer acid flash. An amazing record! The flip has two free-form pieces the band recorded earlier and they too are mind-blowers. If this material had surfaced while the band was still extant, they'd be legendary. As it was, they were so arcane only a few true believers like Pete Frame, Colin Hill (who wrote the fantastic liner notes) and Nigel had any idea that there even was a grail to seek. Easily the best archival find of the year, and an incredible record by any standard.

Really fine new book of poems by **Jasmine Dreame Wagner** (who also records as Cabinet of Natural Curiosities). It's called **Charcoal** (For Arbors) and while it looks at first blush as though it'll be a bit academic, she continually slams our heads with powerful words and images. "Blessed are the ego mules, for they are shod with their own lead." Indeed! Similarly choice are the **two new books by P. Shaw, Strings 02008CE** and **Strings Executive Toddler Edition**. Shaw's visual work is moving ever further from his ratty origins, with some of the pages achieving an oddly elfin mandala quality. The stories (esp. *Ex Toddler*) are actually sicker than ever, but their surface is a charming distraction.

Dunno if the band's from Clifton NJ (where one of us b-tonguers worked as a caddie for several years), but we must give some localist props to **RSO's**

Row LP (RSO). They create a vibe in the tradition of the Bay Area's Pet Rock groups: Flipper, Wounds, Lassie Come Home, Toiling Midgets, et al. Fine fine fine post-core guitar sludge with he-man vocals. From California itself come the **Nothing People**, and their long-awaited, eponymous debut LP (S-S Records) is the blast we'd hoped. All the noted just-pre-punk-weirdo elements are in place (Debris, Chrome, etc.) and the space-punk knob has rarely been yanked this hard since the demise of the Twinkeyz. Looking due East, we see the eponymous debut vinyl by a North Carolina duo, **Waumiss** (Little Ramona). Their sound lacks some of the cough-syrup-confusion



above:
Charcoal

right:
P. Shaw's Strings

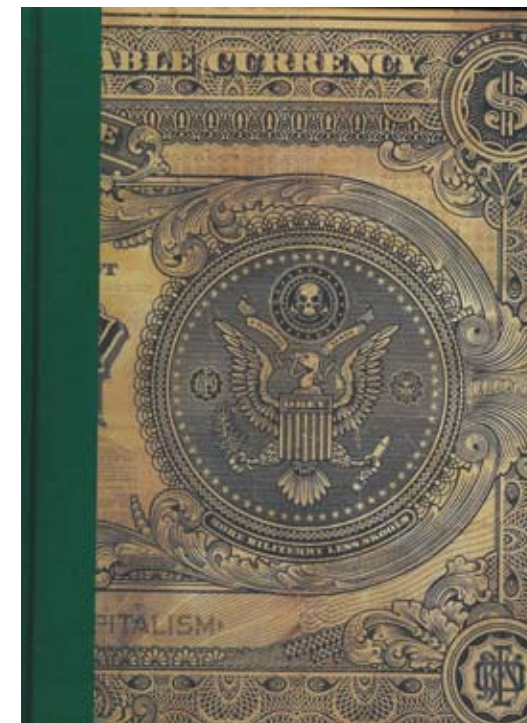


of our favorite Southern artists, but it has a light and graceful weirdom all its own. Mixing concrete collage action with dub texture and the raw power of Christian pop (without the Christianity), Waumiss make days a little sunnier whether you like it or not.

Breakdance the Dawn is a cool name for a label, gotta admit. And it's from Australia and by dint of its cassing (yeah!) release "no one" by half OZ half Kiwi **4tet Mysteries Of Love** we look forward to revisiting this equatorial wonderland. Faraway percussion and reverberoided coyote/human vox fusion make this an almost down under Pocahautilized listening experience. Fantastic utilization of quiet-style feedback lines.

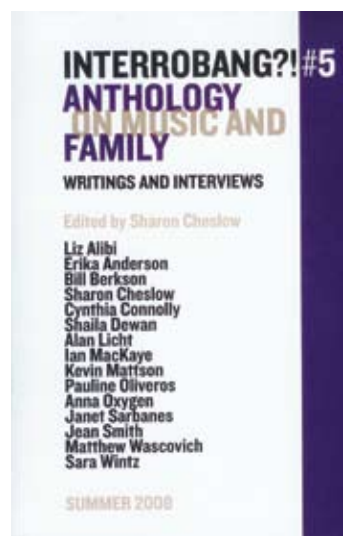
Not sure how we missed it exactly, but **Punk Magazine** is back, still under the editorial watch of **John Holmstrom**. It's a tad slicker than it was during its first incarnation, but Holmstrom's chops are still in place (as editor, writer and illustrator) and the gestalt's excellent. There's some space given to new punk bands, but the bulk deals with people who were on the scene in the '70s, and it reads as well as ever. As does the new issue of **Sharon Cheslow's** splendid occasional, **Interrobang?!** (Decomposition). This issue is printed in trade paperback format and has interviews and writings about the interface between family and music during childhood and beyond. Most of the pieces (by Alan Licht, Bill Berkson, Paulie Oliveros, etc.) are excellent, but our fave is the interview with Ian Mackaye. Sharon goes back to the earliest days of the DC hardcore scene and really manages to get some wonderful and very personal stories from Ian. Maxist.

Turpentine Brothers are a trio from Boston and their second LP, *Turpentine Brothers* (Alien Snatch!) is a pretty good, small band recreation of the Fleshtones at the height of their early '80s power. Very Battle of the Garages, but in a good way. On the absolute other end of Boston's vomona, we find **Twodeadsluts Onegoodfuck**, whose great CDR from



top row left to right:
Carouse, 2Stories, Charcoal

bottom row, from left and right:
Interrobang, Deep Suburbia



last year has been vinylized by Apop. Really nice use of fairly harsh (but not off-putting) feedback sonnets and gruel-spattered vocal sputts. Pleasant to own in this format. Meanwhile, former sometime Bostonian, **Chris Brokaw**, has had his 2005 CD, **Incredible Love**, reissued on vinyl (I and Ear). The album is not one of Chris's guitar demonstration efforts, rather it's a generally quiet singer/songwriter effort, originally released by Gerard Cosloy's 12XU label. And, especially on the acoustic numbers, it has textures as deep as anything you'd hear on Village Thing. Been listening to it a lot lately. You will too. Another Beantown expat is improvising violinist **Katt Hernandez**, whose debut solo LP *Unlovely* (no label) is seriously boss. A student of Joe Manieri, Katt plays in a style that flies through the valley separating new music and free jazz, like a hive of cunning bees. Great inventions.

Anathema Sound has a clutch of new heavy noise tapes out that are worth it not only for the caliber of the artists but the unified design of the cassettes them-

selves. **Buffalo Altar** by **Oklahoman/Digitalis Industries honcho Brad Rose** and pal **Nathan Young's Ajilvsga** project is a headrush synth-storm played as cranial dirtstorm. **The Light of Life** by **Wereju**, the solo sound-world of **Ireland's Cathal Rodgers**, is next in the continuing trend past prototypical drone into full-on murk expression. **All Of The Witches** by **Husere Grav** is amazing in its grey-zone harsh vocab: a lonesome fusion of early '90s Helvete comradie and Italiano industrial sick sadness. Not sure who this cat is but judging by this release and the previous split with Robedoor on Not Not Fun a while back he/she/it is one to beware of. Each of these tapes comes packaged in full color hyper-sense BEAUTIFUL fold-over sleeves with cool inserts and labels all designed by Matt Yacoub.

Arabesque II (Shivastan Press) is a new xerox lit mag from Woodstock's **Shiv Mirabito**, printing new work, old work & everything inbetween. Contributors revolve around the Shivastan core group

(Ira Cohen, etc.) and it looks to be an ongoing project. New issue of the excellent Canadian lit mag, **Carousel**, is out. This one is largely turned over to poetry and illustrations, done by folks who are new to us, but of very high quality. This is issue 23, and *Carousel* has evolved into one of the most solid oddball-lit mags around. Another extremely solid way to fry yr eyes is with the Chicago based Mule. Issue 5 has Linda Perhacs, Jennifer Herrema and lots of words and images related to finding things. Highly recommended. Also hep is **Deep Suburbia** by **Marissa Magic**, former member of Olympia's Punks. She's down in the Bay Area now and this personal 'zine, musing on *Blondie*, *Free Kitten*, noise boys and other topics is a genius move inside the genre of personal 'zines.

The latest **Directing Hands LP Songs From the Red House** (Singing Knives) is a mutha. Alex Nielson has been using this moniker to further his deep UK folk investigation and he has here co-conspired with Vinnie Blackwall. Blackwall's femme vocals swoop and swail through glorious avant garde trails whilst stroking note plenitude from cellos, harps and harmonium. A striking affair and one of the most interestingly modern perusals of folk forms to date.

Aldebaran Record Farm has released an awesome cassette called **Full Frontal Nudity** by **Face Plant**, the solo nom de plume of Aaron Coyes (Unborn Unicorn, Rahdunes, Peaking Lights). Coyes creates raw sonics from a hook up of vintage stereo components and hand-cut vinyl with a nasty-ass needle scraping thru. With his sense of rhythmic goop control and space organ jammering this is some sweet brutality.

Malcolm Duffy's new comic book, 2 Stories, may be his best yet. The way

he crafts his narratives, with simple evolving black & white illustrations, mutating slowly and quietly, has a wonderful way of simultaneously dampening and highlighting the weirdness of his tales. Good one. Which is not to diminish the value of his two other new ones—*4th Bridge* and *The Heroic Mosh of Mary's Son* (all *Missing Twin*), both of which mine some of the same basic technical ideas with fluid grace. We just prefer the new one. Okay? Another massive gouge in the eye comes from **E Pluribus Venom** (Gingko Press), a hardcover catalogue derived from the massive Shepard Fairey retrospective in New York last year. To many folks, Fairey is still known primarily as the creator of the whole OBEY Andre the Giant schtick, but his work has evolved in all kinds of directions. His basic orientation has rejected neither public art nor political art as a touchstone, but his paintings and large works are complex meditations on the implications of those original image bursts. A very swank volume, sure to please several tough nuts on your Xmas list.

There's something definitely cool about bands who release music on cassette that stands up to anything they do on CD or LP, regardless of which label its on. Case in point is **Deathroes** who, after annihilating any listener who came near their No Fun/Misanthropic Agenda LP *Final Expense* have unleashed a sick-ass beast of a tape on the IDES label called *An Infinite Blaze*. Deathroes is Gerrit from Misanthropic Agenda and the primordial existence of he who is known as Sixes. The shit is massive swaths of crushing, flowing rivers of sound sex.

Also guilty of the crime of cassette godliness is the Excitebike t*pe label (or EXBX) which is overseen by Dan Dlugosielski of the consistently ruling Uneven Universe