



Alternative News

by Carol Schutzbank

Well, hello again, one and all. Welcome to the first column of the first issue of the first month of the new year. I hope everyone's holidays were good ones — certainly mine were! (Then again, I was in California where, with balmy and sunny 80 degree weather, it was easy to be happy). As you may have noticed when you picked up last issue — MAPPS is now on a new publishing schedule, appearing mid-month to mid-month, rather than month to month. What that means to you, my faithful readers and — especially — correspondents, is that my deadline has changed. Instead of getting me things by the 15th of the month preceding publication, you now have until the 25th. Thus, for information for my next column, I'll need materials no later than the 25th of January. For the column after that, materials should be gotten to me no later than the 25th of February. And so on and so forth. It's easy enough to follow — so make note, and keep those cards, letters and packages coming!

And now, with no further ado, let's take a look at the local offerings for this column, shall we? First up is a four-song EP from **THE VANISHING INCAS** called "**The Sun Revolution**" on independent, Philadelphia-based MELT Records. Kudos to the band for their treatment of "Dear Prudence" — a dreamy, hazy, yet edgy rendition that is as vivid in its way as the initial rendition is. The other three songs are original, taking elements of hard rock, funk and rhythm and washing them with a haze of psychedelics, at the same time imbuing them with a pop sensibility for appeal. The band's sound does owe a bit to the acid-era Beatles sound (obviously that comparison is enhanced by their choice of cover here), but it's very contemporary in its own right as well, very strong.

PAT GODWIN's CD, "**Reindeer Games**" (on Rage-N-Records) is seasonal in topicality, year-round in its enjoyability. You don't have to be celebrating the holidays to appreciate this pleasant offering. Godwin's style is easy going, amiable and appealing (not unlike, say, Huey Lewis). He incorporates a variety of influences into a charmingly crafted pop sound. A couple of the songs were a little too trite for their own good ("Christmas in the Sun" or "The 12 Days of Rehab"), but they're more than amply compensated by the stronger ones ("Thanksgiving in the Modern World", "Santa Welcome to the Modern World" and "Merry Yuppie X-Mas" to name a few). Employing a number of delivery styles — from Bobby McFerrin to Frank Sinatra — Godwin keeps things moving; while the lyrics on some of the songs are not to be missed.

Simon Tittley's sound is a throw-back to a less "trendy", more "traditional" one: hard-edged electric guitar rock with Stones/Dire Straits-like influences. On "**Broken Hearts & Shattered Dreams**" he takes the uncluttered sound of a basic guitar, bass and drums delivery and revs it up to display a full range of shading and tones, working extremely well within the framework he's set for himself. Though it does, for the most part, focus on the blues rock emphasis as embodied by the bands mentioned earlier, it's appeal also rests on the fact that each song is crafted with something a

WLL HODGSON & THE MANATEES



JANUARY

- Wednesday, 20** Myle's Blues Jam
Harleysville Hotel, 265-6224
All Players Welcome
- Friday, 22** Paoli Local
Paoli, 251-9705
- Saturday, 23** Alibis
West Chester, 436-0287
- Wednesday, 27** Binni & Flynn's
Devon, 293-0880 (Will & Randy Duo)
- Friday, 29** Doc Watson's
Philadelphia, 922-3427
- Saturday, 30** Spectator's
Phoenixville, 933-7998

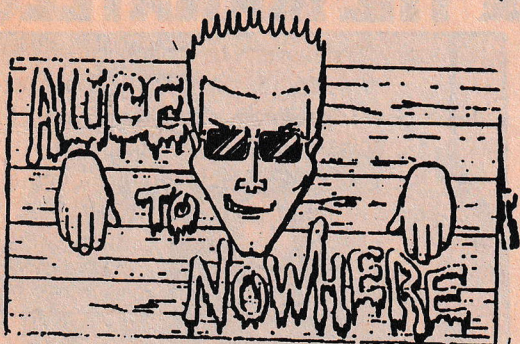
FEBRUARY

- Monday, 1** Private Party
- Wednesday, 3** Myle's Blues Jam
Harleysville Hotel, 265-6244
All Players Welcome
- Friday, 5** Packy's
Media, 891-0810
- Wednesday, 10** Myle's Blues Jam
Harleysville Hotel, 265-6244
All Players Welcome
- Thursday, 11** 23 East Cabaret
Ardmore, 896-6420
(Philly Rock Guide Showcase)
- Friday, 12** Perkioman Bridge Hotel
Collegeville, 489-3826
- Saturday, 13** Fox Bar
Malvern, 251-0207 (Valentine's Show)

For updates and news call the 24-Hour
MANATEE HOTLINE (215) 674-9193

For all Bookings Call
Fisheye Productions (215) 361-9412

ALICE TO NOWHERE



Live

**Saturday, January 9
ROCK & ROLL CAFE
Bleeker St., NYC**

**Friday, January 15
UNIVERSITY OF PA
Philadelphia**

**Friday, January 22
40th STREET UNDERGROUND
Philadelphia**

**Friday, January 29
THE BARBARY
See back page**

**Saturday, January 30
FOUNTAIN ROOM
Rt. 30, Audobon, New Jersey**

**Friday, February 5
SWEENEY'S STATION
Philmont & Bustleton
Philadelphia**

**BOOKINGS/INFO
215/332-3694**

ALTERNATIVE NEWS cont.
By: Carol Schutzbank

little more extra — a riff here or a twist there — that helps it to be distinctive.

Sam Steinig, formerly of The Shambles, takes center stage here with his own project, **MONDO TOPLESS**. Their three song cassette, "Squish" offers up material in the gritty, 60s-flavored garage pop vein. A good deal of that is due to Sam's work on the box organ, but it's also in the arrangement of the songs and — especially — in the vocal work. (P.S., nice effect of having a "B-movie" sound-bite lead into the opening song as well as close out the last one).

Why do people in the city always insist on looking outside of it for talent, disregarding what's under our noses? A perfect example of that is **KING CARCASS**, who — with their second release on No. 6 Records — kick some serious, national-attention-worthy butt. "Other Species, Other Minds" is a strong, challenging release, that finds the band defining and strengthening its sound into a darkly commanding one with a host of nuances and textures. At once grindingly busy, yet shadowy and trance-like, the material is intensely driven by surges of instrumentation and throbbing rhythm.

Some quick takes on the national front: **SUPERCHUNK** "Mover" is rowdy pop powered by an anarchic, free-spirited delivery of thick grungy guitars and punchy rhythms (Merge)... **VIC CHESTNUTT** "West of Rome" finds him once again offering up a darkly appealing, honestly raw collection of songs that touches a deep emotional chord. (Texas Hotel) ... Hooray for **ALICE DONUT** who has returned with "The Untidy Suicides of Your Degenerate Children" — a classic Donut offering finding the band in strong and commanding form. (Alternative Tentacles) ... Ultra fan alert: Island has released **JULIAN COPE AND THE TEARDROP EXPLODES** "Floored Genius: The Best of Julian Cope and the Teardrop Explodes 1979-1982." It's broken into four periods: 11/78 to 11/82 (with Teardrop Explodes); 6/83 to 3/85; 9/86 to 10/88 and 4/89 to 3/91. It's interesting to have so much of his work culled into a singular format, tracing his vision from introduction to fruition... **THE AFGHAN WHIGS** are mellow, yet coolly intense on "Uptown Avendale" — like burning coals about to be stoked (SubPop)... I wasn't too taken with **LOW POP SUICIDE**'s first release, but "On the Cross of Commerce" really zinged it for me. Stronger and more cohesive than the last release, it also has just the right elements to catch the ear of anyone with a taste for good music. (World Domination) ...

A couple of compilations worth noting: first, **VARIOUS ARTISTS**, "International Pop Underground Convention" is like a who's who of cool bands: Scrawl, Nation of Ulysses, Pastels, Melvins, L7, Spinnanes, Seaweed, Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, Kreviss, Some Velvet Sidewalk, Mecca Normal, Courtney Love, Unwound, Rose

PHILLY ALTERNATIVES

By CAROL SCHUTZBANK

through remixing of the music, but also through reproduction of the artwork. For a limited time only, Columbia records is also offering — in addition to the 12 on CD — special collectors' versions, which have fold-out J-cards with lots of new material from the archives.

Two quickies that are good for a smile are The Beatles' *Red* and *Blue* albums, known correctly as 1962-1966 and 1967-1970 which have been reissued by Capitol Records. No fancy packaging, no hoopla, just The Beatles chronologically presented for your listening enjoyment. And last, but by no means least, there's *The Complete Solo Recordings* of Led Zeppelin, Atlantic Records. Classic, as to its appealing a "stately" touch. Jimmy Page and the occasional a storage box of the CDs, but a book for color co-

Whew! I know, I know. But trust me, this is some of the cream of the crop among everything I've been getting lately — the ones that I could (and should) mention because they deserve your attention.

Meanwhile, back on the homefront... New Jersey-based **Dog Eat Dog** have released their debut EP on **Road Run-**

ner titled *Warrent*. It's a strongly-delivered release, fully realized, with the band tight as a drum. The music is straightforward thrash/hardcore powered by a heavy, pounding metal force. But what helps it to stand out from the pack is the thorough integration of street-smart rock and rap into the mix, which brings the level up a few notches.

For a change of pace (and intensity) check out the **Rival Suns** debut album on **November Records** *Feel*. The band demonstrates an uncanny ability to tap into a major pop artery and channel it into new material. The material is likable, due as much to its catchy harmonies and clever hooks, as to its appealing that are somewhat and the occasional and there of arrange- texture to things, tempering might charm with death.

Mondo Topless have really come together on their new tape. The band confidently delivers strong and consistent material, briskly paced (though on one or two songs towards the end of the release the pace was a little *too* brisk — it seemed like it was more of a race to the final note than a musical jaunt into song and melody). A listener might be forgiven on first listen for thinking the band

was a retro-rock throwback... It's all the fault of that organ, which has a tendency to take center stage with its swirls and loops, which effectively recalls music of a "hipper" age. But a closer listen yields grungy guitar meshed with bass and drums for pure, '90s garage rock music.

More well-done pop comes courtesy of **The Silence** and their new CD release. The opening song "Aquila" sets the pace for what's to come: Heartfelt power pop that's based around the guitar but not necessarily chained to it. Though they've been compared to such bands as Toad the Wet Sprocket and Ned's Atomic Dustbin, there's something in their sound that calls to mind earlier stylish pop bands as well, like The Call.

Newsbits and bites: Look for a new CD from **Redemption** (which should be out as you read this)... **Alice To Nowhere** have signed with a NYC-based management agency. The band plans to release an independent record shortly... Look for a new recording from **Sri Lanka**, which they have completed at **Third Story Records** titled *Hear...* **John Flywheel** has a new 10-song album, which they'll be releasing in both cassette and CD form... **Imbroglie** have finished work on their new release, *Watershed*, which they plan to make available on CD and cassette... Last issue I wrote about **Die Monster Die** (**Alice "the Vels" Cohen's** new project). Things are already moving along for this band — they're recording their debut album at **RPM Studios** in NYC with **Steven** (Quicksand, Pixies) **Halgler**... Bon Voyage and Happy Trails to **Jim** (**Autumn Carousel**, **Headline Fanzine**) **Slade**, who, though not on tour in the traditional "band sense" is on the road. He trucked off to Budapest, Hungary last month...

Though the band is new, one member of **Aslan's Orchard** will certainly be familiar to area music fans — **Craig Smith**, formerly of **Naked Twister**, can be found among the lineup. The group is working on a basic demo which they hope to have available by the end of this year. Another familiar face is **Rich**

scheduled to be published in February... Congrats to Discmakers' salesmeister, **Tony Van Veen**, who is now a proud papa... And, finally, belated but no less heartfelt congrats to **Rich (the Hayseeds) Kaufmann** and **Dawn Dals** who tied the knot not too long ago...

This just in: Best of luck to writer and all-around scenester **Miriam Strassberg** who has started *The Music Maven* which will be providing a variety of services to local bands...

Of kitsch and kultura: The **Folklife Center of the International House** is presenting a celebration of South American Music with *Highlands Meet Lowlands* on November 6 at 8 p.m. Unlike traditional concerts where musicians perform "scripted" material (via song lists, etc.), the spirit of this event will be more festive. The musicians brought together here will exchange songs and styles in a party-like atmosphere. For more information contact (215) 895-6537... Another promising event hosted by the Center in conjunction with **AMBASSA** is the *First Ethiopian/Rastafari Cultural Celebration*, scheduled for November 13 at 8 p.m. Honoring the Rastafari culture and its roots, the event will feature ritual songs, dancing, chanting, poetry, film, and more including a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony. For more information contact the number listed above.

The Poetry Center is offering workshops beginning in November through April of '94. The center also offers a Sunday Reading Series. Both take place at the Gershman YM & YWCA in Center City. For more information contact The Poetry Center, P.O. Box 553, Wayne, PA 19087.

And speaking of poetry and such, a new literary magazine has begun publication in the area called **Janus**. The magazine is "devoted to well-crafted poetry, short fiction and essay" and especially welcomes new writers to get in touch. It will be published twice a year. The first issue is now officially out and is being distributed throughout the area, and work has already begun on it's follow up. *Janus'* editor **Dave Livewell** encourages submissions of three to five poems and no more than two stories to the magazine. Be sure to have your name and address on each poem/page. No haiku or light verse, though — they're looking for something a little more substantial than that. For more info, or to send submissions contact: *Janus*, P.O. Box 276, Collingswood, NJ 08108.

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• \$5 adv.
ARTH
MACHINE

• \$5 adv.
GNET

• \$10 adv.
E

SHOW

Sun. Nov. 14 • 7pm • \$8 adv.
SAIGON KICK
TRIBE AFTER TRIBE

Wed. Nov. 17 • 7pm • ALL AGES
FIGHT
(W/ ROB HALFORD OF JUDAS PRIEST)

Fri. Nov. 19 • 7pm • \$7 adv.
SHUDDER TO THINK

Mon. Nov. 22 • 7pm • \$8 adv.
NORML TOUR
SACRED BEACH

From garage sludge to power pop:

A brief glimpse at five local (and unusual) bands

by Laura Koepfler

When was the last time you checked out a local band you didn't know? Maybe you've seen a band's name around that's pricked up your interest, but you've never attempted catch their act because you didn't know what to expect. This attitude is all too common.

After all, why pay the \$5 cover if turns out to be a lousy show? However, there are always new and noteworthy acts cropping up on the local horizon. So, to let you know about some different music currently being offered by local bands, I've put together a list of a few that are worth the effort (and the cover charge).

Mondo Topless is a vox-organ-charged foursome reminiscent of the Lyres and the Chesterfield Kings. Their new tape, *Buff Me, Baby*, is a good representation (apart from the highly amusing cover art) of the "garage/ sludge-a-go-go" feel they emit live. The tape's opener, "Dragstrip," does everything this genre should do, complete with harmonica solo, catchy beat and Roky Erickson-esque shrieks from vocalist/ organist Sam Steinig.

Other highlights include "Out of Luck" and "You Make My Day," which throbs along like the theme to "The Munsters." Check out a copy of their tape by writing P.O. Box 25318, Phila., PA 19119, 248-2981.

Wah-wah guitars, noise, distortion and feedback are



Strapping Field Hands:

Like '60s British pop with unlikely instrumentation.

the key elements at play in the five-song tape by Suffacox. This four-piece unit veers toward the wiggled-out and dangerous side of the garage rock spectrum, featuring J.T. of the Original Sins and former members of the Floating Dogs.

Their high-voltage music, held together by a solid rhythm section, leaves lots of room for wailing, out-there guitar work. They use this energy well within the structure of the songs, which range from the opus instrumental "Double Dot," to the more melodic and soulful "Star-caster."

To know Suffacox in the biblical sense is to catch them live. As proved by a recent Firenze show, they pull off a rip-snorting, rocking set. Write to Suffacox c/o Wayne Hamilton, 625 S. 11th St., Phila., PA 19147, 238-0846.

Imagine yourself at a point where Neil Young and the Meat Puppets merge to form a perfect right angle. This vertex might well be **Bag of Hammers**, whose original, power-driven music sustains an energy seldom seen in a three-piece lineup. Fronted by guitarist/ vocalist Bruce Langfeld, their live set is punctuated by jamming guitar improvs, held together by the running bass lines of Todd Sandler.

Drummer and ex-Scram member Craig Heim plays