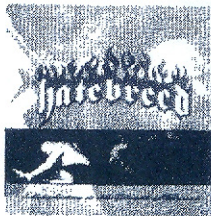


Hatebreed
Satisfaction is the Death of Desire
(Victory Records)
by David McDermott
Rating: ★★★★★



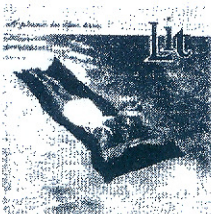
Long the purveyor of all that is hardcore, Victory Records has continually released some of the best hardcore music available. Hatebreed does not disappoint. The guitars jump at you with aggression unmatched, except for the bass and rhythmic hammering of the drums. Songs like "Empty Promises", "Before Dishonor", "Prepare for War" and "Last Breath" make your blood boil with a tenacious hatred. Hatebreed do dwell a bit on the general misery of life, but it works for them, so go with it. I think they could kick Kid Rock's tough-guy ass.

Praga Khan
Twenty First Century Skin
(Antler Subway)
Rating: ★★★★★
by David McDermott



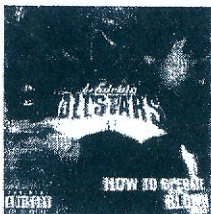
Praga Khan are very reminiscent of some of the newer New Order, or possibly even Crystal Method. Songs like "Breakfast in Vegas" and "Adult Entertainment" have very hook laden beats, while "Far Beyond the Sun" and "What's Wrong with Me" move with a very trance-like tempo. There's a few songs that are on the weak side, but not bad enough to affect enjoyment of the album.

Lit
A Place in the Sun
(Dixie Martini/RCA)
by David McDermott
Rating: ★★★★★



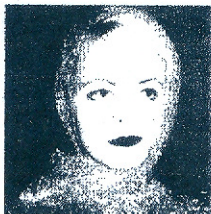
Lit's song "My Own Worst Enemy," has gotten so much airplay lately that you'd be hard pressed to find someone who hasn't heard it on the radio, or seen it on MTV. They also look a lot like a band manufactured by some big label to cram down the buying public's throat. Don't get me wrong, the song is great; but it's also the best song on the album. The problem is that there really isn't a good 'follow-up single' on the album. None of the other songs have that hooky riff, like "My Own Worst Enemy" does. "Miserable", "Quicksand", and "Happy" fall inches short. "Lovely Day" has a chance, but it's really slim. It looks like these guys will fall into the "One Hit Wonder" category, at least for the time being.

Lo Fidelity All-stars
How to Operate with a Blown Mind.
(Skint/Columbia)
by David McDermott
Rating: ★



I've heard many great things about this band; they were all lies. Their samples make no sense, and the music is a comprehensive look at what's wrong with British Techno today. *Spin Magazine* called this "...the most suggestive and provocative Brit-dance debut since Portishead's 'Dummy' or Tricky's 'Maxinquaye'". Well it didn't provoke anything in me except the desire to take it out of my CD player. "How to Operate with a Blown Mind" makes me wonder if it wouldn't sound better with blown speakers.

Marianne Nowotny
Afraid of Me
(Abaton Book Co.)
by Brett Essler
Rating: ★★★★★



Marianne Nowotny's *Afraid of Me* is not an easy album to find. You won't find it at any record stores or on your favorite on-line music site. Guarantee: It won't remain hard to uncover forever. A jarring mixture of pathos-infected purging and swirling lo-fi keyboards, Nowotny's debut CD evokes a reaction. A reaction in the sense that everyone will be drawn differently, but no less powerfully. *Afraid of Me* is a nightmare, but an attractive one. The cover artwork is striking - a pasty princess set against an aqua wall. The music - a 16-year-old New Jersey high school student tripping on acid and mimicking Lou Reed's *Berlin* as best she can without waking the neighbors - will inform your dreams and vice-versa. Not unlike David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*, where life is a game within a game, Nowotny drags the listener way farther down than they deserve. If you remember hearing PJ Harvey for the first time and it still makes you feel, well, funny, then *Afraid of Me* is for you. Never has absolute schizophrenia and intense sexual tension been so un-ironically mastered by a goth kid dressed like Moroccan royalty. Buy at your own risk, which I mean in a good way. (116 Spring Street, Newton, NJ 07860)

Mutantes
A Divina Comedia Ou Ando Meio Desligado
(Omplatten/PolyGram)
by Brett Essler
Rating: ★★★★★ 1/2



The whacked out 60's and 70's pop that emanated from Brazil has been anthologized profusely by David Byrne and plundered to great effect in commercials and movies. A twisted tale that is as much Jobim as it is Zappa or Beefheart, Mutantes eschew the sweet and funky pop - of say, Tom Zé - for a certainly more eccentric sound. To say that Beck, Stereolab (to a noticeable degree) and many of today's post-rock practitioners have lifted from Mutantes is putting it mildly. Mixing a flair for catchy melodies with a revolutionary bent - musically and politically, as members of Mutantes were politically to the left in a politically repressed time in Brazil's history - Mutantes are now experiencing a revival, thanks to reissues on PolyGram and Byrne's Luaka Bop. *A Divina Comedia Ou Ando Meio Desligado* (that's Divine Comedy, or, I Walk Disconnected to us), from 1970, is just as its title described: funny, we think, but we're not sure, and disconnected, as if on heavy cold medicine. That means, for the most part, you had to be there, because jokes are "in," the music so hallucinatory it's almost impossible to concentrate. It's on the lighter numbers ("Hey Boy," which could be easily covered by April March) that Mutantes probably sucked their audience in, before turning them off with sad, sad irony: "my refrigerator doesn't work/I tried everything," or how about "I urgently need to find a friend/to wrestle with me." This is an album which many will buy and read about and say they love. How many will actually get it remains the true test. That doesn't mean you shouldn't try.

