

# MUSIC CONNECTION

THE WEST COAST MUSIC TRADE MAGAZINE™



## Atomic Boy

Club Lingerie  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Hipnotic Records: (714) 841-0309

□ **The Players:** Denny Lake, vocals; Strangler, guitar; Andrew Komanecky, guitar; Beth-Ami Heavenstone, bass; Jimmy Daugherty, drums.

□ **Material:** Atomic Boy jumps into the arena with a guitar rock sound, a showy lead singer and some great press surrounding their debut EP, *Love And Revolution*. Although their literature describes them as "punk-pop," Atomic Boy's music bears little relation to punk, and aligns itself more accurately to commercially acceptable college pop. There's little danger in the Atomic Boy repertoire, just snappy, close-to-the-surface songs executed with zeal.

□ **Musicianship:** Atomic Boy hums along thanks to guitarist Strangler's aggressive style, which provides the structure for the other bandmates to build upon. Komanecky's guitar is comfortably supportive, and Heavenstone is a bassist who can truly come into her own limelight once her talent matures a little. A shining star in the Atomic Boy line up is Jimmy Daugherty, who keeps a nimble beat while providing some impressive backup vocals.

□ **Performance:** Frontman Denny Lake initially comes off like some kind of lounge lizard, a character in sunglasses which are never removed throughout the show. It would be easy to write him off as a flake, but

fortunately, I gave him a chance to reveal some sincerity in his performance—especially in the poignant song "Photograph Of Love." In fact, Denny's best moments onstage were when he appeared human, with less showbiz overtones. Food for thought, eh?

□ **Summary:** Make of it what you will, Atomic Boy has its eyes on success, and they've already gotten some recognition toward that end. Lake has the potential to be a very charismatic frontman once he finds the balance between being an entertainer and being a human. Not an easy chore, but Atomic Boy has what it takes to be up to the challenge.

—James Tuverson

## Forecast

Sunset Social Club  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Jay Snyder: (818) 781-1661

□ **The Players:** K.C., harmonicas, vocals; Emry Thomas, drums; Steve Preactor, lead guitar; Jay "Big Daddy" Snyder, bass; Willie Tate, vocals, rhythm guitar.

□ **Material:** Ah, the blues. When a young band like Forecast comes along who can play the standards with sincerity and passion, as well as come up with originals that can stand proudly alongside those standards, we all breathe a collective sigh of relief that the art of the blues continues to live and grow. Forecast is tight and true, with members that combine the best in Texas and Chicago-style blues for a wide-open show.

□ **Musicianship:** These boys fit together extremely well musically, and do ample justice to covers by Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf and Willie Dixon, to name a few. Steve Preactor's licks and bends on lead guitar are making Mr. Albert King smile in heaven, and the whole band is comfortable in its competence. One highlight was K.C.'s harmonica solo on "The Sky Is Crying"—it teetered precariously between biting tension and sweet resolution.

□ **Performance:** Forecast is a bar band, and nowhere else could one enjoy them so intimately. The tight performance space of the Sunset Social Club allowed absolutely no movement, but it did little to detract from the show. Vocalist Willie Tate makes the most of the set by displaying superb vocal dynamics. Forecast as a whole growls with expres-

sion, and brings you both highs and lows in the course of the set.

□ **Summary:** The choice here is simple: Those who enjoy the blues will surely dig Forecast's style and approach to the music. The evening I spent watching them perform was one of the best I'd had out in a while. Keep your eyes out for their next show, and enjoy.

—James Tuverson



## WOOD G WITH

## MUSIC G



Flotsam and Jetsam

Cuatro  
MCA

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Producer:** Neil Kernon

□ **Top Cuts:** "Forget About Heaven," "Hypodermic Midnight Snack," "Ain't Nothing Gonna Save This World."

□ **Summary:** Flotsam and Jetsam's fourth album takes a more melodic view of thrash, while still maintaining its trademark throaty, aggressive style. More attention has been paid to writing more meaningful songs and memorable poetry, yet there's still that hard, thick visceral quality that makes this band throb. Singer Eric A.K. adds a new dimension to his vocals, utilizing more range without losing his two-listed, face-pummeling edge. These improvements in style and songwriting make *Cuatro* arguably the best Flotsam and Jetsam album yet. —James Tuverson



Stonewheat

Stonewheat  
Bearing Tree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Producer:** Jim Bailey and Stone-wheat

□ **Top Cuts:** "Sun May Shine," "Gentle Rest."

□ **Summary:** Stonewheat packs a lot of wallop in this fourteen-song collection powered by keyboard and guitar arrangements that give this album a big sound without seeming overproduced and contrived. Brian Carney's lead vocals relay emotion the same way grainy black and white photographs do, by revealing all with subtle shades of gray. An honest, intense effort by young musicians with something valuable to share with those who care to listen. And if you do, pack yourself a bag—because you might not be home tonight. —James Tuverson

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## NOVUS RECORDS Fighting For R As A Jazz

### Billy Goat

The Palace  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪

□ **Contact:** Pat Magnarella: (310) 280-4999

□ **The Players:** Mike Dillion, percussion, vocals; Earl Harvin, drums; Phil Major, guitar, vocals; Kim Pruitt, movement, prop hostess, vocals; Brandon Smith, bass, vocals; Kenny Withrow, guitars.

□ **Material:** Don't look now, it's a runaway Billy Goat! Just as Los Angelinos have their beloved Chiles, the streets of Dallas are alive with the sights and sounds of Billy Goat, a band that defies convention and celebrates sweat, energy and individuality in whatever form possible. Billy Goat's brand of sonic,tribal/p-funk/rap/shake-your-butt-or-loose-it music pulls a new rabbit out of the hat and draws the listener into a party where everyone's invited. Billy Goat is likely to become the next band everyone's talking about.

□ **Musicianship:** The key to Billy Goat's winning formula starts with frontman Mike Dillion's voracious, tribal percussion centerstage, with drummer Earl Harvin fortifying the beat into a mythmic frenzy. Dillion's strong voice and alternative/rap

rhymes make you smile, but it's the collective charisma and energy of the entire band which gets your spirit lifted! There's a little bit of something for everyone in the music which transcends African, Indian, funk, punk and rock styles without seeming contrived. Kenny Withrow slams nasty metal riffs into the mix and the solution to the world's weighty problems is answered in the tune "Clothes Off": "No heinous travesty/Strolling in the buff/When you're naked/Can't fight and shove."

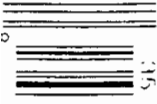
□ **Performance:** Billy Goat comes complete with an illustrious prop mistress who sways and slithers continuously, and also provides visual representation as to what Dillion's singing about. Given the lyrical content of Billy Goat's tunes, Pruitt spent her time pelting us in the mosh pit with cornflakes and Top Ramen (which was mixed with lots of spilled beer and churned up by the moshers to result in a delightful brew), as well as parading about in exotic masks and animal skins. Images of soup cans and butt cheese dances in front of our eyes, and when Winnie The Pooh was hoisted high and paid homage, I knew I had reached Valhalla.

□ **Summary:** Billy Goat, with a backdrop of solid, listenable songs and a freeballing attitude, is destined to strike a nerve in an audience who's growing tired of untouchable rock demi-gods and hypocritical hip-hopers. Billy Goat is about the freedom to be whatever, whoever, however, without worry, inhibition, or oppression. Smoke 'em if you got 'em, boogie to that driving beat and rejoice—Billy Goat accepts you for who you are. —James Tuverson

Joe Satriani

## THE COWSILLS xties Hitmakers Demand A Fair Chance In Nineties

SEP 13, 1992



GRP's A&R Director CARL GRIFFIN  
First Artists: FLAME (Giant Records)  
PolyGram Music Publishing's MICHAEL SANDOVAL

# WHERE THE INDUSTRY EATS GUIDE TO L.A.'S BEST LUNCH SPOTS

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## CLUB REVIEWS

### Mesheen

*The Roxy*  
West Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ★ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Bobby Tait: (714) 890-7551

□ **The Players:** Ted Michael Heath, vocals; Ronnie Mitchell, guitars; Joey Scott, guitars; Nicholas Anthony, bass; Bobby Tait, drums & percussion.

□ **Material:** The band Mesheen hails from Orange County and plays just the kind of melodic metal that will bring the kids over the Hill from the Valley in droves. Not to say that Mesheen plays kid stuff; this band sticks close to the standard metal formula of guitars, hair and sweat—all the right stuff for anyone who wants to let go of their inhibitions for a while.

□ **Musicianship:** Mesheen utilizes a lot of energy onstage, both to power up their instruments and to charge up the audience. Both drummer Tait and bassist Anthony really put forth the effort to make the sound huge; so huge, in fact, that I felt feathers in my groin the entire set from the vibration. Not to say that wasn't a gas, but the throbbing rhythm tended to wash out most of the guitars (more a reflection on the mixing than on musicianship). Vocalist Ted Heath avoids "metal shriek" and has a clear, steady voice which shows training and discipline. Mesheen should concentrate more on dynamics, as not every song needs to be balls-out, full-throttle in order to make an impact. I'd like to see more versatility from this talented band.

□ **Performance:** Mesheen utilizes all the trappings of a good metal show, from drum stick/microphone twirling to dense fog and choreographed guitar gymnastics. However, Mesheen still needs to connect the dots between songs, performance and showmanship in order to

**oup**

I jump to the next plateau. It was bassist Nicholas Anthony that really demonstrated the charisma that Mesheen will need to put themselves over the top. His unstoppable enthusiasm remained, even when the stamina of his bandmates began to fade somewhat.

□ **Summary:** Mesheen strikes me as a good-time metal band—you may not find true enlightenment in either the songs or the performance, but who says anyone's looking for such grandiosity anyway? I looked around as Mesheen performed and saw no less than ten post-teenage boys playing wild air-guitar riffs as the band played. Metal makes you feel loose, uncontrolled, powerful. Mesheen sticks to the basic formula, entertains its audience seeking a diversion, and everyone involved emerges victorious.

—James Tuverson

### Robby Longley

*Club Lingerie*  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ★ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Nicholas Smith: (213) 464-5792

□ **The Players:** Robby Longley, guitar; Mark Meegan, drums; Robert Helton, keyboards, flute, percussion.

□ **Material:** Robby Longley ventures down a musical avenue too seldom explored on the streets of Los Angeles: the synthesis of traditional classical guitar and contemporary arrangements. Inspired by the work of Carlos Montoya, Robby's music uses classical, Spanish and flamenco styles as its cornerstone, then adds lush keyboard arrangements and thundering drums. The result is music that has a traditional feel and evokes some wild mental imagery.

□ **Musicianship:** Robby uses ten fingers, six strings and every fret on his classical guitar to get his point across, and each note he plays for keeps. While his technical style is excellent, his personal intensity focuses not on getting the notes right, rather on getting the feeling right. Big difference, and one that more rock musicians should take to heart. Of course, it doesn't hurt to be backed up by the talented efforts of keyboardist Robert Helton, whose lively arrangements assisted my mind in conjuring up the vivid images of Spaghetti Westerns and flamenco dancers that Robby's music naturally lends itself to. Drummer Mark Meegan kept better time than a Rolex, and both he and Helton were careful not to overpower Robby's guitar work.

□ **Performance:** Longley's set was spent taking care of the business at hand—creating his fiery, provocative brand of classical guitar music. At times, however, it seemed that he forgot that he was playing to an audience. I wondered if he would prefer that we left, so he could be alone with the music. Longley possesses charisma, and he'd be wise to use more of it onstage.

□ **Summary:** Robby Longley has a brilliant talent and a long future in music, most likely in the field of film scoring and the like. He's an affable, unaffected fellow who deserves some recognition for having a skill not many guitarists in this city can boast to have. Of course, Robby Longley will not boast, just quietly and completely excel.

—James Tuverson

### The Wright Brothers

*Spice*  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ★ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Lori Behr: (310) 273-2545

□ **The Players:** Tim Brogdon, guitar and lead vocals; Bobby Levie, bass and vocals; Mark Tremalggia, lead guitar and vocals; Jeff Cuebas, drums and vocals.

□ **Material:** The Wright Brothers depart from the pursuit of Nineties alternative/grunge rock that's currently so popular in favor of a more Seventies approach to songwriting and performance, with emphasis on uncomplicated lyrics, strong vocal hooks and sturdy tried-and-true rhythms. Songwriters Brogdon and Levie have a knack for strong intros that get you ready to enjoy the music; they should continue to develop the arrangements so that the players don't lose their grasp on the common thread which holds each song together. While the songs are very listenable, tightening the bolts on the song structure could really make their tunes take off.

□ **Musicianship:** Frontman Brogdon knows the ins and outs of his Gibson Les Paul, and he extracted a variety of pleasant effects from the instrument, including singing into the pickups during "Sweet Dandelion," and some very tender arpeggios which introduced "City That Never Rains." Bassist Levie also shines as he plays a rare and wonderful Rand bass, using his fluid finger-picking style with sharp attack—perfect for the funky groove of "Promises." While guitarist Tremalggia and drummer Cuebas certainly held their own on their respective instruments, the six-song set didn't give either a chance to show me anything I haven't seen before.

□ **Performance:** Brogdon makes a charismatic and effusive frontman, injecting just enough drama into his performance to make him interesting without appearing insincere. Vocally, he seemed confident and was careful not to push his range. I loved the fact that while enthusiasm ran high, the Wright Brothers never made it look too easy. Backup vocals, so critical to making these songs work, were a little thin; however, I'm certain that strength can be developed in this area.

□ **Summary:** It all comes down to the music, and what the Wright Brothers choose to do with it. If club gigs and small-scale entertainment is the goal, then these guys are right on track. If aspirations are higher, then efforts toward tighter, more cohesive songwriting and a stronger backup vocal performance will be necessary to arouse the interests of the A&R bloodhounds. As for me, I'd cancel existing plans to see the Wright Brothers perform again, confident that the shows will just get better and better.

—James Tuverson





John Gorka: Entertaining!

**John Gorka**

*The Troubadour*  
West Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ★ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Chris Kamatani, The Press Network: (213) 466-6277

□ **The Players:** John Gorka, guitars, vocals; Michael Manring, bass.

□ **Material:** The line of folks waiting to gain entry to the John Gorka concert is buzzing with the weighty anticipation that usually accompanies much larger, world-renowned acts. From the opening chords of his performance, Gorka is worthy of that anticipation and more as he uses his acoustic guitar and voice to enrapture his audience with musical storytelling about his world—one that contains love, New Jersey and broken glass. Gorka sings about being *alive*, and anyone who shares that condition can really relate to his words and music.

□ **Musicianship:** Gorka is a self-proclaimed folk singer, but his intensity and feeling belie that adjective and demand something more (maybe "folk singer plus"). His trusty acoustic is strummed with adept skill, yet the real treasure lies in Gorka's words and the fact that his facial expressions seek to reinforce his emotions and make the songs timeless. John elicited the help of bassist Michael Manring on some numbers, whose wispy tendrils of counter-melody were simple, fresh and beautiful.

□ **Performance:** Gorka's modest humor and unpretentious attitude make him the kind of guy you'd like to call your friend, and he made

many friends the night of his show. His boyish charm really comes out as he explains how some of his songs came about, and you can't help but like him. He included a "Question & Answer" period, and even a sing-a-long. So few artists could pull something like that off, yet John did it in style.

□ **Summary:** Quite simply, John Gorka provided a marvelous evening for those who sought to be captivated by his quirky, affable personality and emotive story/songs. Much of the audience was made up of couples who clung to each other during the show; the music of John Gorka, like love itself, was something they could freely share.

—James Tuverson



Low Angels: Accessible songs.

**Low Angels**

*Club Lingerie*  
Hollywood

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ★ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

□ **Contact:** Joel Gilbert, Happy Dog Management: (818) 865-1400

□ **The Players:** Cameron Lowe, vocals; Brett White, guitar; Steve Tillery, bass; John Issac Wolf, drums.

□ **Material:** Steeped deeply in the psychedelic traditions of late Seventies rock, this group features smooth harmonies and a laid-back, rift-driven attitude to their songs. They're what I'd call "organic"—motivated by grooves and using nothing artificial, save a little reverb on the guitar.

□ **Musicianship:** Lowe sets a mood with his rich intonations that are never off key. He walks the fine line of not being too overbearing in his style or, at the other extreme, nondescript and servile to the other players. White likewise is a tasteful if not overly driven guitarist who plays surprisingly gently and seems to favor character over speed or volume. He plays well off Tillery, if loosely—but then, automated cues are not their goal. Wolf fits into their deceptively cool vibe with the casual muscle of a Marlboro Man.

□ **Performance:** No shine, no glitter, no glamour. This band just plays and seems to take a macho kind of pride in not posing for the crowd. I've got to say, though, that despite their lack of obvious rock god trappings, Lowe exudes a comfort and commanding presence much the same way Morrison-types of old would.

□ **Summary:** There is no question that at the center of this band is a solid core of musical ideals. The songs are accessible, comfortable and attractive. Yet the question is: Do they have the vision to go over the top? With the Seventies era a pervasive influence in the current pop culture, it may be a moot point. But think about it, and while you're at it, enjoy the music. —Sam Dunn

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