

DRIVE DRAG
RTX
LIVE MUSIC

- Fri, 24 **SECRET SIX**
Dharma Bums
- Sat, 25 **SENDERS**
Human Drama
- Tue 27 **Call Club**
- Wed 28 **TAILGATORS**
Special Guests
- Thur, 29 **THE ZONE**
Rock Child
- Fri, 31 **SKANK**
Special Guests
- Fri, 7 **NICK FERRARI**
Special Guests
- Sat, 8 **DA DA CURVE**
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Wednesdays
Ladies Night
Free Draw Beer 8-10
Thursdays
75¢ Shiner Night 7-11
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Serving Tex Mex Food in
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On Vinyl

PRINCE
PURPLE RAIN
(Warner Bros.)

So this is the one that finally puts him over the top, huh? Well, good for him, he's been working awfully hard, but what with writing, arranging, producing, directing artwork, performing... it's enough to tire a man out. How's he do it? Let's see, mix rock and funk riffs with quirky studio effects, a versatile voice singing about the sexual trials and tribulations preceding the coming apocalypse, nail it down with a thundering electronic backbeat, squeeze 'em all into grandiose arrangements and Voila! A number one single! MTV exposure! A feature film release! Amazingly simple, isn't it? What's next? Lunch boxes? Board games? Phallus shaped candy bars? The possibilities are endless, right? I doubt it. Prince isn't exactly your run-of-the-mill Jacksonian-era androgynous black pop star. Michael Jackson may be sexy, but you wouldn't be surprised to find him next door playing with cuddly lil' rabbits; Prince, on the other hand, is *sexual*, he's got a whole 'nother kind of bunny on his mind. While Jackson's image recalls that of Jackie Wilson — cool, sophisticated, socially acceptable — Prince's is closer to that of Little Richard — flashy, a little dangerous, and cocksure. (It takes at least as much ego as talent to gain the sort of artistic control Prince has.) M.J. may own the hearts and minds of young America, but Prince has got the crotch, and we all know which is more fun, and trouble, to listen to. If they can sell that to middle America, I wish 'em luck.

Back in the 1960s, rock critics used to drool over Sly Stone and his attempts at fusing black and white pop music forms. They'd rattle on and claim that songs like "Everybody is a Star" and "Everyday People" were examples of the democratizing process at work in America at the time. All I ever saw was a bunch of white middle-class kids ripping off and selling black culture while dressed in work clothing, but what do I know? I can't even stay on the subject at hand. At any rate, no one would be fool enough to claim that Prince's music is making America more democratic today, but essentially we've got the same phenomenon, except he sings "Baby I'm a Star," presumably encouraging audience identification. Instead of rock stars seeking to place themselves at the level of the masses, they exhort us to make the climb and join them at the top. Just perfect for the self-obsessed generation. It's a good thing that Sly, and Prince too, understood the mechanics of movement — i.e. knew how to groove — or nobody would have listened at all and they wouldn't have had the chance to bestow their profound ideology upon us. Oh well, with thoughts like "You say you want a leader/But you can't make up your mind/I think you better close it/And let me guide you to the purple rain" we're not missing much. I like my fascism in heavy metal music where it belongs, thank you. So why do I feel cheated when the best I can say about this record is "It's got a good beat, I can dance to it, I'll give it an 85?" — Brent Crulke

ROBERT GORL
Night Full of Tension
(Elektra)

Among the universe of possible David Bowies, Robert Gorl is the one who plays up throaty theatrical vocal quavers, reductive edgy synthesizers, cold Darwinian sexuality and narcissism. Gorl renders all four very, very well, with just the right amount of tongue in cheek to reveal just the right amount of artistic self-hate. Annie Lennox contributes backup vocals.

Give yourself over enough to this gray and telegraphic Mobius strip of synthetic German cauterization (so profitably translated into English), and you will, indeed, begin to feel as if you've been packed away in refrigerated emotional suet. How... effective. — Michael Saenz

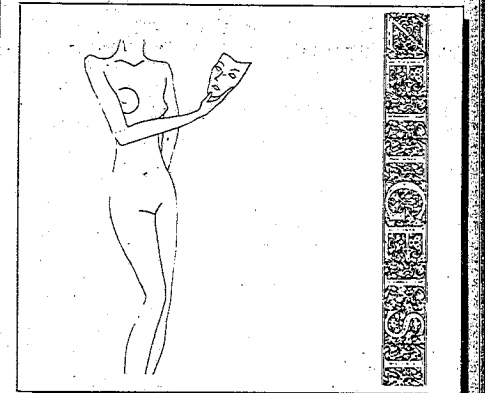
MAUREEN TUCKER
PLAYING POSSUM
(Trash Records)

This record really smells, but it does have some redeeming social value. After all, this is Maureen Tucker, the original drummer for the Velvet Underground, and besides, anybody who claims to be able to sing as well as play everything from the alto sax to the guitar to the claves — no, I don't what they are either — and do everything from "Louie, Louie" to Vivaldi's "Concerto in D Major" to "Heroin," all on her first solo album, which she produced and arranged herself, is certainly no ordinary pickup musician, and no ordinary human being.

My interest was first piqued by Glenn O'Brien's remark in *Interview* a few months ago that "'Slippin' and Slidin'" sounds like the Shags on eight Percodans" and by his favorable disposition toward "Bo Diddley" and "Ellas," an original composition dedicated to Bo, and I finally found the album the day after I'd been to a Bo Diddley concert in April. I might confess that I've grown to love her bludgeoning of Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight," but with a straight face I'd have to say that each cut sounds more wretched than the one before.

Still, Tucker's efforts deserve particular attention in the light of the recent releases of former Velvet members Lou Reed and John Cale and the emergence of a number of bands who bear the undeniable influence of the VU. Ironically, Dan Stuart, leader of Green on Red, told me that Cale often spent time held up in Tucson and that Cale actually came to hear them play at some dive there, back when they were just starting out; Cale sidled up after the show, hissed, "You stink!" and then spat on the ground. Stuart's story made me wonder about Maureen Tucker living just up the pike in Phoenix and whether John Cale ever drives over to see her. If she's ever playing in public somewhere, and Cale just happens to drop by

one night, it's anyone's guess as to what will happen. I would like to have the film rights, though. — Lee Joffe



ZEITGEIST
wherehaus jamb/freight train rain b/w electra
(Kickwood Records)

Acid and mushrooms are available again; make way for the latest trend in Austin music, psychedelia, now in full flower. Following the lead of the L.A. bands, Austin musicians are re-working '60s garage punk sounds and grafting them to an '80s sensibility that stems from the late '70s punk explosion, itself a predecessor of '60s sound. What goes around comes around.

Many trips ago bands like the legendary 13th Floor Elevators simultaneously lifted and reduced Texas audience's consciousness with hard, twisted, and danceable music that's fondly remembered today. Texas is considered to have spawned some of the best music of that era, and anyone who listens to the countless reissues currently filling the record bins — Pebbles, Boulders, and Mindrockers series, French Eva pressings et al. — will have a hard time disputing it. Corresponding to the new market for these records is an abundance of new groups that were too young to have experienced the first round of druggy euphoria, but have found the records of that time an inspiration to their own musical sensibilities, and an alternative to the dead-end existentialism offered by most post-punk music today. For many hardcore bands the initial anger turns to cynicism and nihilism, macho chest-pounding that all-too self-consciously tries to refute its past. The psychedelic bands openly acknowledge their roots, and because of their passion for the earlier music, and because they are products of a different time and culture, experiencing '60s music from the viewpoint of historians, they create their own voice, an extension, not merely a re-hash, of a musical and social tradition.

When the 13th Floor Elevators regrouped earlier this summer I was aware of how stale and uninspired they seemed compared to the bands now following in their wake. For the people who saw them who'd seen them in their heyday, this was an exercise in nostalgia; for those who'd never seen them, it was an homage to mentors. It was not, however, a dialogue between performer and audience.

The new breed of bands have real fans, and their music isn't used solely as an attempt to romantically reclaim a lost time. The best of them — The Dharma Bums, Texas Instruments, Room City, Doctor's Mob, to name just a few — are as unique and relevant as anyone I've seen, certainly no less talented than the "great" '60s garage bands. If they make it to vinyl, time will doubtless look back on them favorably; in the meantime they'll have a rough time gaining respect — or gigs.

But of all the fine bands now playing with reverb units, the best in Austin is Zeitgeist. Partly because they are less easily pigeon-holed than the others, and have a greater depth of style, partly because they write better songs, and partly because they've had the opportunity to play more than the rest, Zeitgeist stands head and shoulders above. With the release of their first single, they show some of the things that make them such a good band. For one thing, they have wonderful, fully realized songs — and songs are the essence of rock 'n' roll — and they perform them tightly, with assurance. No long feedback forays for them. With Garret Williams' powerful, propulsive drumming, the songs are nailed together firmly, allowing the intricate harmonies of John Croslin and Kim Longacre to organically mesh in a way that shouldn't work technically, but somehow does. Croslin's low monotone and Longacre's soaring pitch-perfect voice synch in a way that defies logic. The songs convey a whole range of emotions that ring true with each performance of them; they don't just go through the motions. They're able to be tender without being wimpy, a problem with too many tie-dye disciples, like the Rain Parade.

I've never been able to make out exactly what the lyrics are to most of the songs — though this 45 has some of them printed on the sleeve, but it's never mattered — what I have caught have been stream-of-consciousness, vague, and evocative of nothing in specific, and therefore anything that I might imagine, and they sing them like they mean something profound.

At a price that's below what most records will cost you, at your favorite independent record store, this first single is a fine representation of the band. Simply recorded and produced, it showcases three of the band's songs, each emphasizing a different aspect of the band's sound. One is an instrumental practice jamb or jam, one a pretty acoustic folk-rock styled rocker, the last an all-out up-beat rocker, a love song. All are fine. They could benefit from a little, and I mean *little* fuller production, but I'm quibbling. They have songs that I like even more still to record, and I've no doubt that one day I'll hear them. If they don't get passed over, declared trend-mongers (which they surely aren't) and if the certain-to-come Velvets comparisons don't haunt them — Croslin even *looks* like a young Lou Reed — they should be making fine music for a long time to come. I'll be paying close attention. — Brent Crulke