

**FREE
CONDOM
INSIDE**

SPIN

**BON
JOVI**

SOME GUYS
HAVE ALL THE
LUCK

**DAVID
CRONENBERG**

**MIDNIGHT
OIL**

BEATING AIDS

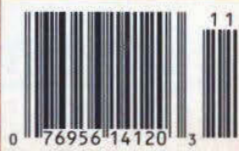
HOW A CONTROVERSIAL TREATMENT,
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SPINNS

Danzig/The Misfits, Bootsy Collins, Curtiss A, Was (Not Was), Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Richard Thompson, Diamanda Galas, Siouxsie and the Banshees, John Hiatt, Dwight Yoakam/Randy Travis, Sam Phillips, The Robert Cray Band, Metallica



The Misfits
Walk Among Us
Ruby

Danzig
Danzig
Def American

Timing is everything. Just in case you've never heard of Glen Danzig, have never known the delicious embrace of his dark vision, you're in luck. You now have a unique opportunity to hear this master of the macabre both in his original incarnation as lead singer of the Misfits (on the re-release of their classic 1982 LP) and his present embodiment as ringmaster of the hellacious Danzig, thus affording yourself a look at his roots and then catching up with what he's up to these days.

The Misfits were a Lodi, New Jersey-based hardcore outfit that managed to rise above the crowd of generic punk bands by virtue of their rigorous adherence to Danzig's worldview. Culled from the pop-schlock culture of "Plan 9 From Outer Space" and supermarket tabloid mass murderer lore, this point of view informed the lyrics of songs like "I Turned Into A Martian" and "Vampira," both of which are on *Walk Among Us*, probably the Misfits' finest moment. Blood, guts, death, mayhem—all fell into their meat grinder and emerged as gory, truly sick songs in an infectiously catchy, melodic punk style. Maybe too catchy; listen to these songs long enough and you might find yourself on the subway singing, *I want your skull/I need your skull* loud enough to elicit stares of disapproval and fear from the local citizenry. The thing is, these

songs always had tongue planted firmly in cheek; they were funny as hell, reflecting their Z-movie heritage. Who could really take you over-seriously if you sang a song called "Mommy, Can I Go Out And Kill Tonight?"

Eventually, in typical punk band style, they broke up before they really found their audience. The Misfits only gained a mass following after they had disintegrated and Glen Danzig formed Samhain out of their ashes (Only bass guitarist Eerie Von joined him from the original lineup.). Samhain (The name refers to the original Druidic name for the autumnal equinox rites that have since become known as Halloween.) reflected the changes that had taken place in the punk underground since the inception of the Misfits: hardcore became thrash—slower, less melodic, more metallic.

Since this sound was a less appropriate medium for the semi-humorous lyrical approach of the earlier years, the songs got more serious, even darker, without ever losing their unifying theme of dread and horror. And they caught on. Thrash was attracting the attention of a whole new set of potential listeners in heavy metal fans and Samhain was in the forefront of the groups making the crossover. By tapping into a rich vein of new devotees, they found the acceptance that had always eluded the Misfits, and thus became an enormously important influence to the first wave of speed metal bands. Slayer, Metallica, Venom and the like were all fans of both Samhain and the Misfits, and it became a common sight to see long-haired metalheads walking down the street wearing a T-shirt with the Misfits' trademark goofily grinning skull emblazoned on it, or even diving off the stage at a hardcore show if they really couldn't get enough of the stuff.

Glen Danzig was becoming known far and wide for his intensely charismatic voice (traces of Elvis!), his electromagnetic stage presence, the way he'd stalk those planks of wood like a wounded wildcat. And then, after three records, Samhain too broke up. Glen Danzig with the Power and Fury Orchestra had a song on Rick Rubin's *Less Than Zero* soundtrack but otherwise seemed to be in a strategic retreat to summon his forces for a renewed assault on the pop consciousness.

Which brings us, more or less, to 1988, and the release of Danzig's self-titled debut LP on Def American, produced by Rubin. It's a gorgeous album, both musically and physically. A big, black gatefold record, with the distinctive Jersey Devil caricature that's a holdover from the Samhain days on the cover, it sets right in to grab you by the jugular and not let go. The songs show an expansion, an absolutely unexpected maturity of voice and word that overflows with charisma and controlled talent. Danzig's



lyrics scout the same general parameters as always, but with insight and depth never before seen. The music more than holds up its end of the bargain as well, with Eerie Von's distinctive bass joining John Christ's guitar and Chuck Biscuits' rock-steady drumming to complete the vision. Horror business this may be, but Danzig is capable of writing some beautiful songs: "She Rides" and "Mother," among others, benefit from the slower pace and show off just how much Glen's voice has grown.

A fine beginning, overall, one that is sure to please both old fans from Misfit days and newer converts won when listeners discovered why their favorite thrash-metal performers were always wearing Samhain T-shirts. It's a compelling record and hasn't left my turntable in a week and a half. The songs have already insinuated themselves deep within my brain and still have the old Misfitian power to come forth to draw blood when least expected: while in the shower, while at work, while skating home late at night.

So go to your cash machine and get out enough money to pick up both these records the next time you go to the music store. *Walk Among Us* is so crucial that first-pressing copies have sold for up to \$250, so you would do well to avail yourself of its charms at the economy rate, while you can. And Danzig, well, this is a great look at one of the finest all-around performers to have come out of hardcore. Don't let any label scare you off. Check this out. Initiate yourself into the mysteries.

—Adam Greenfield

Bootsy Collins What's Bootsy Doin'? CBS

The once mighty Funk lay shredded 10 years after the height of its power. In splinters! Gone was the brightness of its "Flashlight." "One Nation Under a Groove" was awash in a tide-pool of disharmony.

But then a force rose through the evil, post-disco-industrial haze that covered Detroit and the world that re-

volvied around it. He raised his mighty space bass causing the clouds to break and the splinters to start coalescing. Along with old and new friends, he brought the forces behind the Funk together. And out of the recombinant pieces and modern technology, they started to tear the roof off the mother all over again. And they called their new creation *What's Bootsy Doin'?* And Bootsy listened to the digital playback and heard it was good.

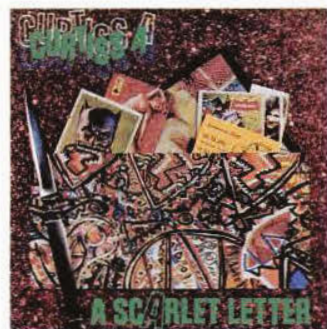
Bootsy Collins has revived a lot of what was best about the Funk and has mixed it with a lot of what's good about funk on *What's Bootsy Doin'?* The space bass shares "Shock-It-To-Me," with samples, drums, voice and little else. The "Bop Gun" has become the "Luv Gun." It has the horns; the jokes are all a part of it. And the geepee choir, the weirdly treated voices from munchkin land and trom-bassilation take sophomore ideas like "ing The 'Luv Gun'" and "1st One 2 The Egg Wins (The Human Race)" and make them so stoopid that listening to it can cause seizures of laughter.

But this is 10 years later, and a lot of sewerage has been the plant. Hip hop, the Minneapolis Mafia and other post-funk dance music has slid through the tubes and into the river. So, Bootsy works with modern funketeers like Mico Wave, tempering the old ways with radio-ready funk including "(I Wannabe) Kissin' You," taking off from the Prince of the region's syntho-electrofunk. He lifts the liege's licks from "1999" for "Leakin'." Keeping things up to date, Bootsy throws rappers, samples and scratches into the mix for "Party On Plastic," funking up licks from "Hey Jude," and revives his own monster, "Bootsilla," for good measure. But he does it with a distinctive bent that only the Funk possessed, the deadly metallic guitar lines, the big boot(s)ied bottom and Bootsy's own unique voice.



And so, out of the miasma of modern dance music and far-flung fragments of the Funk, the mighty Empire once more rears its booty to make itself heard. The roof is off the mother again. 'bout time, too.

—Hank Bordowitz



Curtiss A A Scarlet Letter Twin/Tone

Curtiss Almsted has been father figure and general inspiration to the Minneapolis rock scene longer than there's been a Minneapolis rock scene. A leather-lunged soul screecher and tearstained ballad moaner, Curt's spent his life on the X-Acto knife's edge of rock'n'roll. Nine years ago, at the legendary M-80 new-now-no wave rock festival, Curt got saddled with one of those classic critic's albatrosses: Tom Carson of *The Village Voice* opined that the Dean of Scream had "the stage presence of a Sherman Tank." Which would make you think there's no stopping the guy, and in the finest sense of the phrase, it's true.

Maybe *A Scarlet Letter* is the record Curt should've made then, when the national spotlight glowed down his rawhide throat, but there's no way anybody could've sliced this piece of life in those days. The first thing you see when you open *A Scarlet Letter* is the blood in the envelope and the first thing you hear is the wail of the adolescent locked inside the adult. Or maybe it's the other way around.

For the first time on record, Curt's sound and vision blasts through the trax with the straight ahead assurance of a man who's ironed out the kinks in his groove and taken a lot of heat doing it. The quirky chord changes are still there, but the sense of synchronization has been internalized to the point of uncanny intuition. Curtiss A's a man in love (and hate and love-hate) with rock and love itself and *A Scarlet Letter* snakes through a helluva lot more dark curves than *Tunnel of Love*. Unlike the Boss, Curtiss A's maturation process has no buffer zone, and when Curt moves from the crying chair to the exuberation sector of "Blow To Know" or the phallicentric self-effacement of "I've Got a Bone," you know it's in the marrow. "(I Feel Just Like George Jones When He Was A) Heel To Tammy," Curt twangs, in a perfect rural Mannesoda yah-sure backwoods polyglot and you sense he's only halfway joking. Time wounds all heels and Mr. A's felt the stiletto of love in his psyche.