



JANUARY 1986

# THE ROCKET

FREE

WISHES YOU SEASONS GREETINGS

FROM RAT FINK

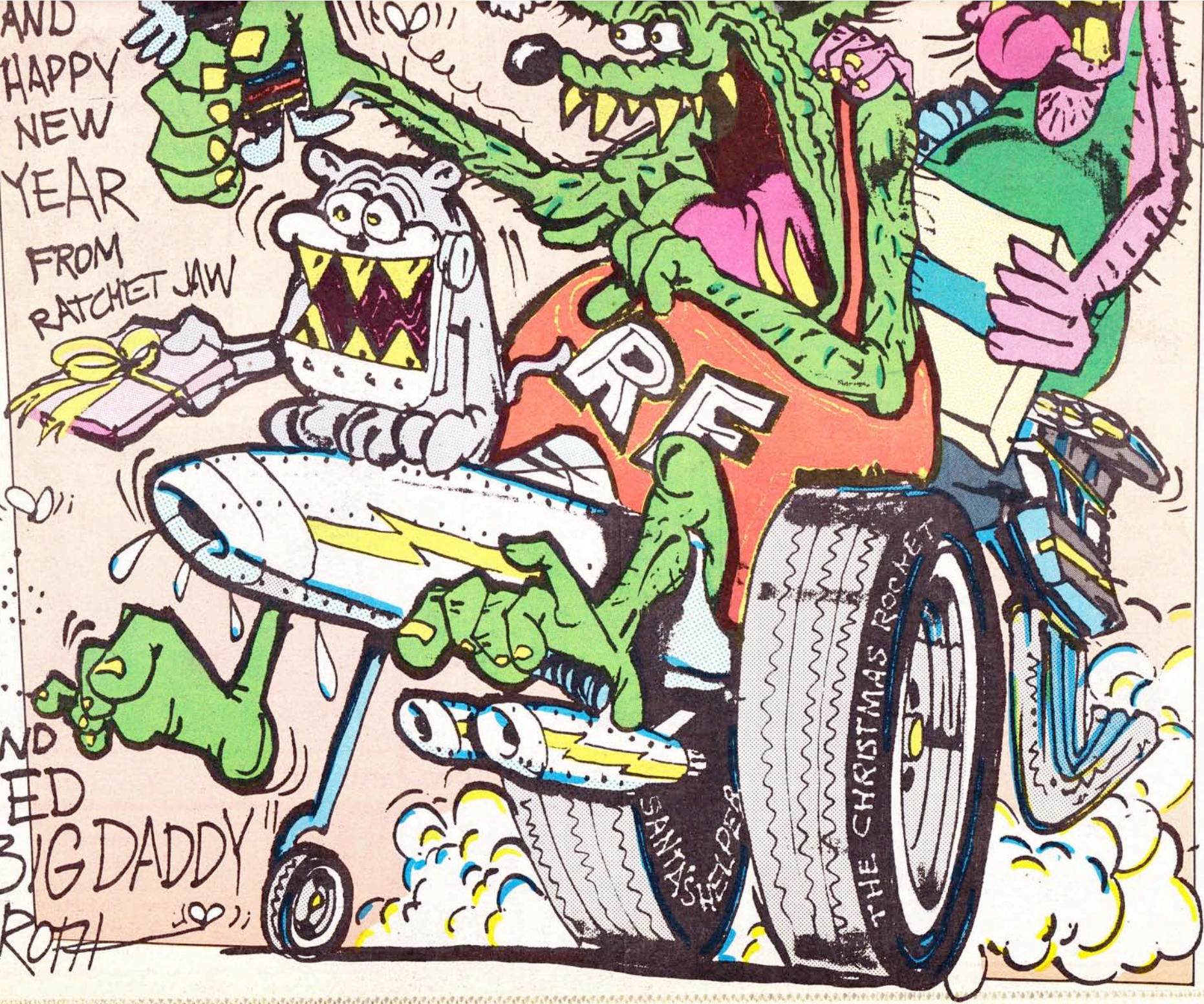
AND  
HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR

FROM  
RATCHET JAW



AND  
HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR  
FROM  
RATCHET JAW

AND  
ED  
"BIG DADDY"  
ROTH



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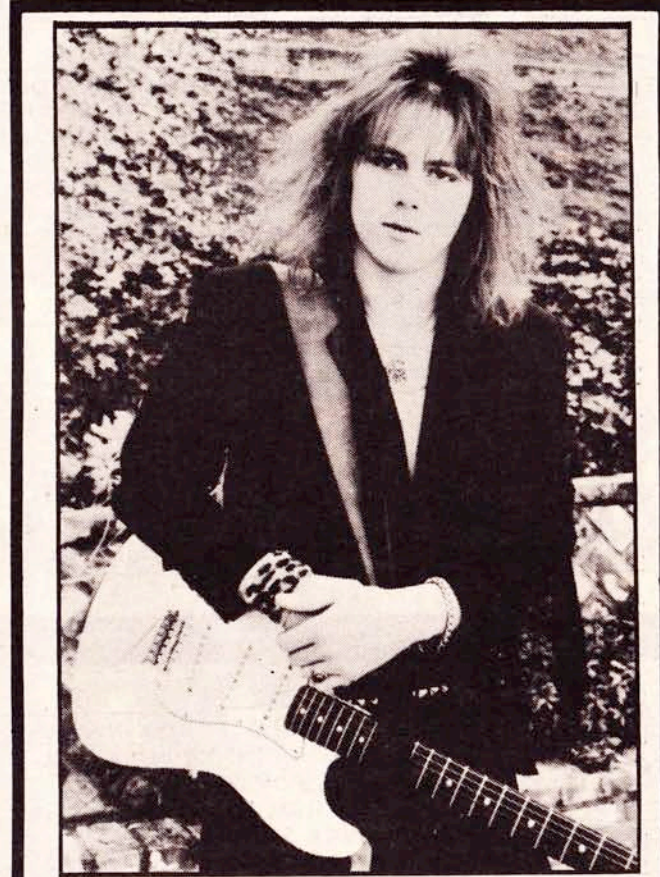
**LYNDA J. BARRY** **4**

**HOLLY TUTTLE**  
 Big Wicked City **36**

**MATT GROENING**

**MEET YNGWIE MALMSTEEN  
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**YNGWIE MALMSTEEN -- IN CONCERT!**  
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 An electric  
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 An Yngwie  
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3rd prize-  
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 Backstage passes

Contest ends  
 Thurs. Dec. 26th  
 Drawing held  
 Dec. 27th

SCHECTER guitar is not pictured in photo

# ROCK

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## COVER

Illustration by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth

**H**ELLO BELOVED READERS. WELCOME TO YET ANOTHER OF our endless "special" issues of this, the World's Greatest Magazine. This month is our semi-legendary Year in Review issue, where we give you, our loyal and dedicated friends, the definitive word on what "went down" in 1985. Art fans will no doubt be left speechless by the appearance of Cartoonist and Kar Kustomizer Ed "Big Daddy" Roth as our cover artist this month. Mr. Roth's "radical" drawings of Rat Fink & Co. were a seminal influence on **Rocket** staff members in their younger days, and he was kind enough to send us the cover drawn on a T-shirt (which Art Director "supreme" Art Chantry is now proudly sporting around town to his many book signings). Our hard-working staff has compiled huge quantities of lists of every type imaginable in our giant collector's item 1985: What It Is pages. Mr. Final Word on Film Jim Emerson lays down the cinematic law in his '85 summary, and Minister of Metal KJ Doughton destroys the assembled molten hordes with some deft slices as he delivers his State of Metal 1985 speech. Our reviews section is jam-packed with the best overlooked records of the year (Richard Peterson's *Second Album* is not included). Radiating Editor Dennis P. Eichhorn braved the isotopes of Richland one more time as he compiled yet another glowing report on the world's greatest accumulation of plutonium. Horror hostess Elvira went one-on-one with our own mistress of the pencil Gillian G. Gaar, and Roberta Penn uncovered the Vietnamese club scene in Seattle. We also have Northwest Xmas discs, Shays' Rebellion and the 1985 Sub/Pop wrap-up. And speaking of rapping, the Seattle Thunderbirds hockey team will be giving the always cagey Spokane Flyers a good rap in the mouth on **Rocket/Budget** Records & Tapes night, January 10 at 7:30pm at the Seattle Center Arena. We'll be hoping for a repeat of our last hockey night, when several over-zealous **Rocket** staff members were ejected from the stands for rooting for our beloved Thunderbirds a bit too enthusiastically. Now, that's the kind of holiday spirit we can "get behind." Later. ■

# WHITENOISE



SCHECTER guitar is not pictured in photo

**Concert!**  
**2nd prize-**  
**An Yngwie**  
**Malmsteen black**  
**satin tour jacket**  
**Tickets &**  
**Backstage passes**  
**3rd prize-**  
**Tickets &**  
**Backstage passes**  
**Contest ends**  
**Thurs. Dec. 26th**  
**Drawing held**  
**Dec. 27th**

PolyGram Records



**Yngwie's latest album**  
**"Marching Out"**  
**sale-priced at only \$5.99!**  
**album or cassette**  
**Sale ends 12/27**  
**Only at these locations:**

**YNGWIE J. MALMSTEEN'S**  
**RISING FORCE**  
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**I'LL SEE THE LIGHT TONIGHT**

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Northgate Way & Roosevelt  
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**PORT ANGELES**  
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Behind Baskin Robbins  
457-9211

**EVERETT**  
1130 SE Everett Mall Way  
Across from  
Sears Automotive  
355-0766

**LYNNWOOD**  
44th Ave. W & 200th St. SW  
775-2855

**BELLINGHAM**  
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**Budget**  
**Tapes and Records**

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Across from McDonalds  
455-5755

**REDMOND**  
16505 Redmond Way  
Cleveland St. Square  
883-6863

**RENTON**  
534 Rainier Ave. S  
Next to Skippers  
228-8298

**TACOMA**  
5915 6th Ave.  
Highland Hills  
565-0363

**PUYALLUP**  
11707 Meridian St.  
On the South Hill  
Next to Ernst  
845-2117

**FEDERAL WAY**  
320th & Pacific Hwy S  
Next to Union 76  
941-4092

**MARYSVILLE**  
1094 State St.  
653-1266



# 1985

## WHAT IT IS

- CANADA GREAT WHITE NORTH**
1. **GRAPES OF WRATH** September Bowl of Green
  2. **JERRY JERRY & THE SONG OF RHYTHM ORCHESTRA** Road Gore: The Band That Drank Too Much
  3. **K.D. LANG & THE RECLINES** A Truly Western Experience
  4. **JOLLY TAMBOURINE MAN** Apple Strudel Man (45)
  5. **PARACHUTE CLUB** Dancing at the Feet of the Moon
  6. **BRILLIANT ORANGE** Happy Man
  7. **JANE SIBERRY** Speckless Sky
  8. **NO MEANS NO** You Kill Me
  9. **THE ENIGMAS** Strangely Wild
  10. **UNDERGROWTH '85** (compilation cassette)

LANE HARTWELL

**THANKS TO:** Robert Allen, Norman Batley, Glen Boyd, Rebecca Brown, Charles R. Cross, KJ Doughton, Dennis P. Eichhorn, Jim Emerson, Gillian G. Gaar, Jeff Gilbert, Lane D. Hartwell, Rick Jost, Jon Kertzer, Herb Levy, Kip Loui, Maire M. Masco, Robert Newman, Bruce Need, Bruce Pavitt, Roberta Penn, Kevin Westenberg, Dennis White.

### AFRICAN TOP 7

**AFRICAN BROTHERS BAND INT'L** ME MAAME (AB Records — Ghana). A fixture on the Ghanaian music scene, Nana Kwame Ampadu is truly a musical wizard who improves with age. He is leader/songwriter/guitarist/vocalist for this highlife guitar band, and their rootsy style sounds better than ever.

**MALOPOETS** MALOPOETS (EMI/Enigma — U.S.). Certainly the best live African show in Seattle in '85 was by this black South African "mbaqanga" group at Bumbershoot. Their modern version of township pop sound

### GOSPEL

- NEW JERSEY MASS CHOIR** I Want to Know What Love Is 12" (Savoy)
- TRAMAINE** Fall Down (Spirit of Love) 12" (A&M)
- THE WINANS** Let My People Go 12" (Qwest)
- VANESSA BELL ARMSTRONG** Chosen LP (Onyx)
- PHILIP BAILEY** The Wonder of His Love LP (Myrrh)
- AL GREEN** He Is the Light LP (A&M)
- THE JOUBERT SINGERS** Stand on the Word 12" (Next Plateau)

### TOP 20 SINGLES

- SUN CITY** Artists United Against Apartheid
- POP LIFE** Prince and the Revolution
- JANEY DON'T YOU LOSE HEART** (B-Side) Bruce Springsteen
- DON'T WORRY BABY** Los Lobos
- ROXANNE, ROXANNE** UTFO
- MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL** Husker Du
- AND SHE WAS** Talking Heads
- WOULD I LIE TO YOU** Eurythmics
- OH SHEILA** Rready For the World
- UP THAT HILL** Kate Bush
- SMALL TOWN** John Cougar Mellencamp
- THE MEN ALL PAUSE** Klymaxx
- KING OF ROCK** Run-DMC
- WAYS TO BE WICKED** Lone Justice
- BITTERSWEET** Hoodoo Gurus
- MONEY FOR NOTHING** Dire Starits
- MY TOOT TOOT** Rockin' Sidney
- WHY NOT ME** The Judds
- FREEWAY OF LOVE** Aretha Franklin
- SUN CITY** Artists United Against Apartheid (So good you have to play it twice)

### BEST NORTHWEST CASSETTES

- BOMBARDIERS** Fight Back
- NU SHOOZ** Tha's Right
- VITAMIX** Cut Classics
- UNDERGROWTH '85**

### 5 BEST MOVIE SONGS

- "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore" TRADITIONAL (Volunteers)
- "Is That All There Is?" PEGGY LEE (After Hours)
- "Crazy" PATSY CLINE (Sweet Dreams)
- "Last Train to Clarksville" THE MONKEES
- "Chelsea Morning" JONI MITCHELL (After Hours)
- "One of the Living" TINA TURNER (Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome)

### PUBLICATIONS

- SPIN
- ROCK & ROLL CONFIDENTIAL
- WEEKLY WORLD NEWS
- FLIPSIDE
- i-D
- MATTER
- USA TODAY
- NEW TIMES (Phoenix)
- THE FACTS
- EMIGRE
- WEIRDO
- VILLAGE VOICE
- DISORDER (Vancouver, B.C.)
- OPTION
- DUPLEX PLANET
- WARNING (Alaska)
- RAW
- AARDSCHOK (Holland)
- JET
- BACKSTREETS

## BEST AND WORST

**Man of the Year**  
NELSON MANDELA

**Best Venue**  
THE FABULOUS RAINBOW

**Worst Venue**  
GORILLA GARDENS/ROCK THEATRE

**Best Radio Station**  
KCMU

**Worst Radio Station**  
KCMS/KCIS

**Best National Label**  
RHINO

**Best Northwest Label**

### ENEMIES OF FREEDOM

- ▶ Parents In Arms
- ▶ Teenage clubs ordinance
- ▶ Parents Music Resource Center
- ▶ Rock lyrics ratings
- ▶ Seattle City Councilmember George Benson's proposed anti-postering law
- ▶ Seattle City Attorney Doug Jewett's proposed teenage curfew
- ▶ Thurston County (Olympia) anti-noise ordinance
- ▶ Washington State Liquor Board's harrassment of comedy clubs for "obscenity"
- ▶ The proposed Home Audio Recording Act (bill in Congress to charge royalties on blank tapes)

## THE LIFE ELSEWHERE TEN

**BUMBITES** Bottoms Up (Vindaloo) LP. Compelling, sometimes disturbing, thoughtful music tinged with acid (the burning kind).

**COIL** Scatology (Force & Form/K.422) LP. Far more healthy than 99.9% of what the media would have us waste our time with.

**MARC RILEY WITH THE CREEPERS** Shadow Figure (In Tape) 12" EP. Even father and son relationships come under their vigilant scrutiny.

**FOLK DEVILS** Fire & Chrome (Karbon) 12" EP. Nothing and no-



Batley, Glen Boyd, Rebecca Brown, Charles R. Cross, KJ Doughton, Dennis P. Eichhorn, Jim Emerson, Gillian G. Gaar, Jeff Gilbert, Lane D. Hartwell, Rick Jost, Jon Kertzer, Herb Levy, Kip Loui, Maire M. Masco, Robert Newman, Bruce Need, Bruce Pavitt, Roberta Penn, Kevin Westenberg, Dennis White.

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**MALOPOETS** MALOPOETS (EMI/Enigma — U.S.). Certainly the best live African show in Seattle in '85 was by this black South African "mbaqanga" group at Bumbershoot. Their modern version of township pop sound gets the Martin Meissonneir treatment (the French producer who did the recent King Sunny LPs), yet it still captures the group's exuberant mbaqanga beat and rich, full vocal sound.

**AURLES MABELE** NICOLETTA, FILLE DES ANTILLES (Afro-Rythes — France). The best of the recent Parisian studio Congolese music, with those wonderful layered electric guitars that riff effortlessly over the sweet vocals. The perfect African party music.

**DOCTEUR NICO** MIKALAY (Africa New Sound — Togo). This is unfortunately one of the last recordings of Dr. Nico, who died during 1985. He was making a comeback of sorts, and this recording demonstrates why he was dubbed *Dieu de la Guitare* (God of the Guitar).

**LES WANYIKA** GREATEST HITS (Polydor — Kenya). East African pop is often overlooked, often because West African ju-ju and highlife and Congolese music are much more available here. Kenya's Les Wanyika sound somewhat Congolese, but with a lighter touch, less dense and with a more relaxed feeling.

**SOMO SOMO** SOMO SOMO (Stern's Africa — U.K.). The hottest London-based African band of 1985. Zairian guitarist Mose Se Sengo "Fan Fan" came up through Franco's group in Zaire, then played in Kenya, and made his way to London in '84 to put together a group of British musicians to play the latest soucou styles.

**SUPER RAIL BAND** NEW DIMENSIONS IN RAIL CULTURE (Globestyle/Ace — U.K.). A mainstay of the fertile Mailian popular music scene since 1970, the Rail Band's music is very different than much other African pop, as it draws upon Mandinka, the traditional music of the griots, and adapts it to electric instruments. The vocal sound in this part of West Africa is very Arabic in timbre, and the guitars play in a modal, searing soloistic manner.

JON KERTZER

# BEST AND WORST

**Man of the Year**  
NELSON MANDELA

**Best Venue**  
THE FABULOUS RAINBOW

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GORILLA GARDENS/ROCK THEATRE

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KCMU

**Worst Radio Station**  
KCMS/KCIS

**Best National Label**  
RHINO

**Best Northwest Label**  
NETTWERK

**Best Radio DJ**  
NASTY NES RODRIQUEZ

**Best Band Name**  
PLAID WEINER

**Worst Band Name**  
10 BULLS

**Best Album Cover**  
YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS *TOPSY TURVY*

**Worst Album Cover**  
UNCLE SAM

**Whitest Song**  
"FIND A WAY" AMY GRANT

**Blackest Song**  
"LET'S TALK (ABOUT SEX)" ONE WAY

**Best Northwest Video**  
"DREAM (ABOUT YOU)" GRAPES OF WRATH

**Best Videos**  
"SUN CITY" ARTISTS UNITED AGAINST APARTHEID  
"SENSORIA" CABARET VOLTAIRE  
"AND SHE WAS" TALKING HEADS

**Worst Videos**  
"WE ARE THE WORLD" USA FOR AFRICA  
"YOU SPIN ME RIGHT 'ROUND" DEAD OR ALIVE

**Biggest Rip Off**  
PARENTS IN ARMS

**Best Northwest TV**  
SOUNDPROOF (CABLE 10, VANCOUVER, B.C.)  
FLASH!

**Party of the Year**  
NEO YORK/SEATTLE COCA OPENING, APRIL 12

**Biggest Flop**  
"GIVE JUST A LITTLE"

**Best Seahawk**  
PAUL SKANSI

**Best Mariner**  
PHIL BRADLEY

**Best Husky**  
MO HILL

**A DOZEN NORTHWEST BANDS TO WATCH**

BRILLIANT ORANGE ■ MYTH ■ SHAYS' REBELLION ■ NEW AGE URBAN SQUIRRELS ■ FR AM

## ENEMIES OF FREEDOM

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**MARC RILEY WITH THE CREEPERS** Shadow Figure (In Tape) 12" EP. Even father and son relationships come under their vigilant scrutiny.

**FOLK DEVILS** Fire & Chrome (Karbon) 12" EP. Nothing and nobody comes near to the Folk Devils' venom-doused music.

**INTIMATE OBSESSIONS** Erebus To Hades (Third Mind) LP. A stunning debut. A duo that any clever major should be waving fat checks at.

**JACOBITES** Robespierre's Velvet Basement (Glass) LP. Nikki Sudden and Dave Kusworth make music that is just at the point of falling apart for the listener who has. And that's the beauty.

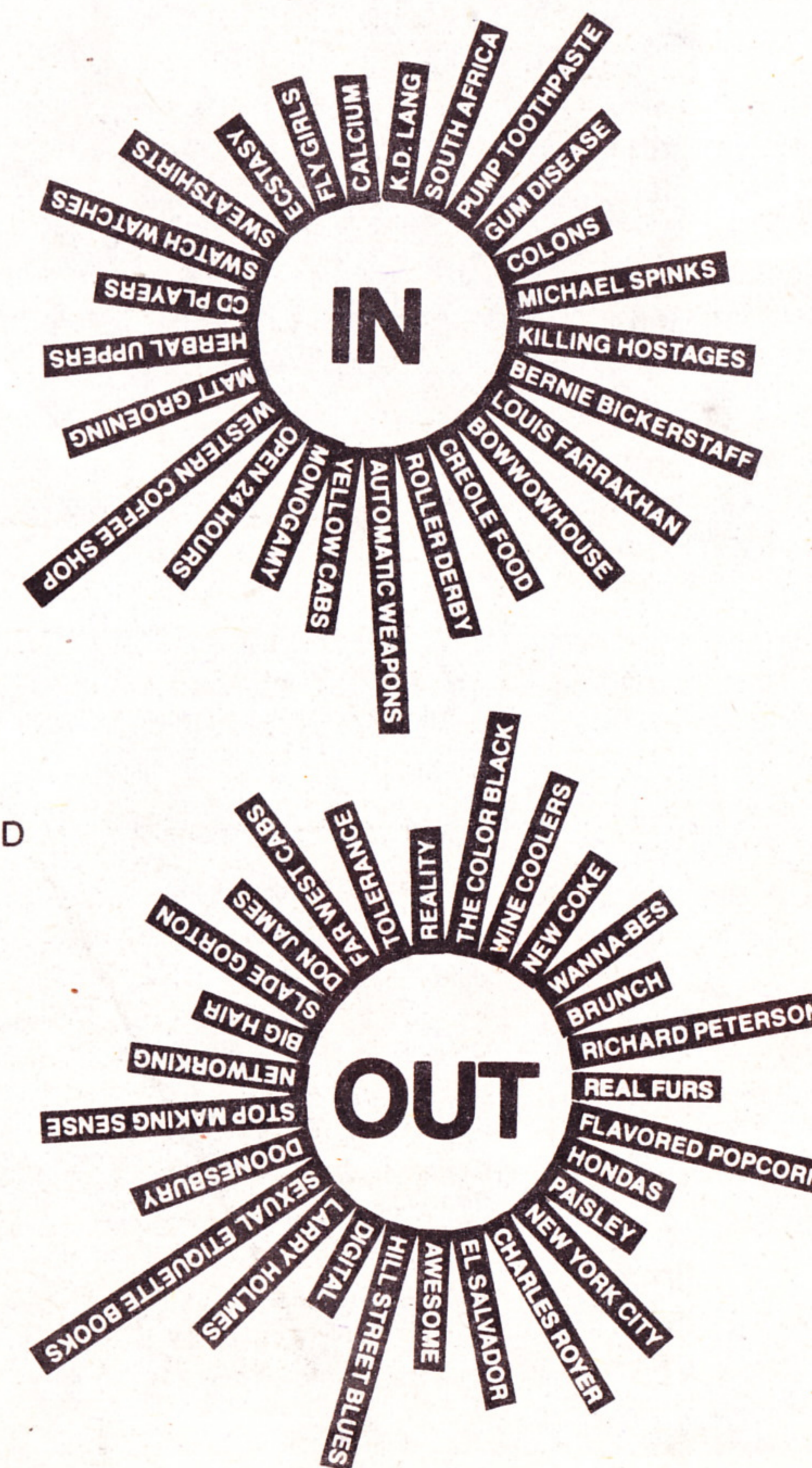
**MEL-O-TONES** Mel-O-Tones (Probe Plus) 12" EP. From Liverpool but probably a million miles from the mop tops.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** A Reflex Compilation (Reflex) LP. Any combination that features the collective genius of the Cravats aka DCL Locomotive and the Very Things must be included in a "best of" list.

**THREE JOHNS** Death of the European (Abstract) 12" EP. Quite simply an amazing record for radio, dancing or your own private Walkman world.

**TOOLS YOU CAN TRUST** Yet More Proof (Red Energy Dynamo) LP. An aptly titled record. Angry, hard, and unrelenting.

NORMAN BATLEY



## TOP BLUES, TRADITIONAL R&B, AND SOUTHERN SOUL

**1 ALBERT COLLINS, JOHNNY COPELAND AND ROBERT CRAY SHOW-DOWN** (Alligator). Three of the hottest guitarists in contemporary blues team up for an exciting mix of original and traditional sounds.

**2 LITTLE MILTON I WILL SURVIVE** (Malaco). Memphis soulman, Milton Campbell sounds more like his roots than ever.

**3 STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN SOUL TO SOUL** (Epic). Stevie Ray's vocals are sensual and his sound more southern but he's still got the power to attract young, hard rockers.

**4 PROFESSOR LONGHAIR ROCK 'N' ROLL GUMBO** (Dancing Cat). The New Orleans legend shows where rock and soul piano came from.

**5 LONNIE MACK STRIKE LIKE LIGHTNING** (Alligator). Sixties blues-rock guitarist Mack's licks are hotter than ever.

**6 ROBERT CRAY FALSE ACCUSATIONS** (High Tone). The Cray sound gets more distinctive with each release.

**7 JOHNNY WINTER SERIOUS BUSINESS** (Alligator). The original Texas blues rocker is bluesier these days but still plays a hard drivin' guitar.

**8 VARIOUS NORTHWEST BANDS LIVE AT THE ROADHOUSE** (Criminal Records). The rest of the country's whispering that the Northwest is spawning some of the best blues artists. Isaac Scott, Tom McFarland and Curtis Salgado prove it's true.

**9 OTIS CLAY SOUL MAN — LIVE IN JAPAN** (Rooster Blues). Clay's deep soul singing was popular in the South during the '60s and with Al Green's old rhythm section backing him, he does some fine R&B.

**10 SAM COOKE LIVE AT THE HARLEM CLUB** (RCA) This LP shows how Cooke could get down when he wasn't recording for white folks.

**11 KOKO TAYLOR QUEEN OF THE BLUES** (Alligator). Chicago blues royalty sings raw and gritty, with Albert Collins, James Cotton, Son Seals and Lonnie Brooks sitting in.

**12 TENOR SAW Roll Is Called** (Power House) 7". The most promising talent to emerge in ages.

**13 GREGORY ISAACS Private Beach Party** (Greensleeves/RAS) 12". The "cool ruler" at his best, again.

**14 FREDDIE MCGREGOR &**

## MINISTER OF METAL KJ DOUGHTON'S DEATH DEALING '85

1. EXODUS *Bonded By Blood* (Combat/Torrid)
2. ARMORED SAINT *Delirious Nomad* (Chrysalis)
3. MEGADEATH *Killing Is My Business* (Combat)
4. YNGWIE MALMSTEEN'S RISING FORCE *Marching Out* (Polydor)
5. SLAYER *Hell Waits* (Metal Blade/Combat)
6. AEROSMITH *Done With Mirrors* (Geffen)
7. MALICE *In the Beginning* (Atlantic)
8. IRON MAIDEN *Live After Death* (EMI)
9. AGENT STEEL *Skeptical Apocalypse* (Combat)
10. ALCATRAZZ *Disturbing the Peace* (Capitol)

VOCALIST: John Bush (Armored Saint)

GUITARIST: Yngwie Malmsteen (Rising Force)

BASSIST: Dave Ellefson (Megadeath)

DRUMMER: Dave Lombardo (Slayer)

TOP SONGS: Exodus "Piranha"  
Megadeath "Love You to Death"  
Rising Force "Disciples of Hell"

TOP 3 NEW BANDS: Agent Steel (California)  
King Diamond (Copenhagen, Denmark)  
Death Angel (San Francisco)

## TOP 20 ALBUMS

- 1 HUSKER DU *New Day Rising*
- 2 JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP *Scarecrow*
- 3 JOHN FOGERTY *Centerfield*
- 4 ARETHA FRANKLIN *Who's Zoomin' Who*
- 5 SUN CITY *Artists United Against Apartheid*
- 6 PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION *Around the World in a Day*
- 7 RUN-DMC *King of Rock*
- 8 SADE *Diamond Life*
- 9 RUBEN BLADES *Escenas*
- 10 EURYTHMICS *Be Yourself Tonight*
- 11 R.E.M. *Fables of the Reconstruction*
- 12 TALKING HEADS *Little Creatures*
- 13 RICHARD THOMPSON *Across A Crowded Room*
- 14 TOM WAITS *Rain Dogs*
- 15 STEVE ARRINGTON *Dancin' In the Key of Life*

ROBERTA PENN

Hottest Northwest Bands

- BEST CONCERTS OF 1985
- ▶ HUSKER DU (February) Gorilla Gardens
  - ▶ LOS LOBOS Hub Ballroom
  - ▶ CLARK SISTERS Bumbershoot
  - ▶ BILLY BRAGG Mountaineers
  - ▶ METALLICA Moore Theatre
  - ▶ PRINCE/SHEILA E Tacoma Dome
  - ▶ REPLACEMENTS Astor Park
  - ▶ REM Paramount
  - ▶ SCORPIONS/RATT Tacoma Dome

## THE TEN BEST FUNK SINGLES

1. ARTISTS UNITED AGAINST APARTHEID *Sun City* (Manhattan). For forcefully addressing the issue, in a feast of cultural and musical variations.
2. STEVE ARRINGTON *Dancin' in the Key of Life* (Atlantic). In which the ex-Slave driver reveals anew spiritual fire, and continues to deliver viciously funky pop.
3. RUN-DMC *King of Rock* (Profile). Rap's hottest duo shout each other down with the fire and brimstone of dueling street preachers.
4. PRINCE *Around the World in a Day* (Warner Bros). A strange move to be sure, but with interesting, often arresting results. Give the man an A for refusing to compromise.
5. ARETHA FRANKLIN *Who's Zoomin' Who* (Arista). The promise of 1982's "comeback" LP *Jump To It* is fully realized as Lady Soul reclaims her rightful position.
6. MORRIS DAY *Color of Success* (Warner Bros). The hard-edged throwdowns of the Time remain intact as Day's lyrics take a turn to the personal and, surprise, honest side.
7. MARVIN GAYE *Dream of a Lifetime* (Columbia). An uneven, occasionally embarrassing, yet ultimately eye-opening look at the late, troubled genius.
8. STEVIE WONDER *In Square Circle* (Tamla). The bottom line still remains. No one else crafts pop-funk this masterful.
9. WHITNEY HOUSTON (Arista). It's always a treat to watch the emergence of a major new talent. Her range, style, and emotional depth reveal promise beyond her years.
10. SADE *Promise* (Portrait). Put me in a smoke filled lounge, set me up with a Grand Marnier and Sade at the piano bar. Tell the boss I'll be calling in sick.

# 10

CRAZY 8'S

YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS

METAL CHURCH

UNCLE BONSAI

U-MEN

GRAPES OF WRATH

SKYLINE DRIFTERS

SIR MIX-A-LOT

HOSANNA CHOIR

NU SHOOZ

## TOP 10 NORTHWEST RECORDS

- 1 ROBERT CRAY *False Accusations* (LP)

## THE TEN BEST FUNK ALBUMS

1. RAIN FOREST Paul Hardcastle (Profile). On

singing was popular in the South during the '60s and with Al Green's old rhythm section backing him, he does some fine R&B.

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ROBERTA PENN

**E TENOR SAW** Roll Is Called (Power House) 7". The most promising talent to emerge in ages.

**A GREGORY ISAACS** Private Beach Party (Greensleeves/RAS) 12". The "cool ruler" at his best, again.

**G FREDDIE MCGREGOR & DENNIS BROWN** Raggamuffin (Greensleeves/RAS) 12". Killer harmony from reggae's most consistent talents.

**G WAYNE SMITH** Sleng Teng Mix Down remix (Greensleeves) 12". Some say the root of this year's malaise, except this is the ultimate version.

**E SOPHIA GEORGE** Girlie Girlie (Winner) 7". Humor and social comment even! Yet another example of superb styling destined to be overlooked by pop fans.

**L YABBY YOU** Fleeing From the City (Shanachie) LP. When a legend speaks you have no choice but to listen.

**A THE ROBOTICS** Man and Machine (Ariwa) LP. Neil Fraser aka The Mad Professor proves one more time that dub is his forte.

**C KEITH DOUGLAS** You Move Me (CSA) 12". Sadly overlooked lovers' gem.

**D MICHAEL BLACK** Little Did You Know (Youth Talent) 12". Lovers' style in a hard dance ball production.

**R TIPPER IRIE** Sleng Teng Finish Already (UK Bubbler) 12". A fitting way to finish from the UK's top ranking chatter.

NORMAN BATLEY

- 6 **PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION** *Around the World in a Day*
- 7 **RUN-DMC** *King of Rock*
- 8 **SADE** *Diamond Life*
- 9 **RUBEN BLADES** *Escenas*
- 10 **EURHYTHMICS** *Be Yourself Tonight*
- 11 **R.E.M.** *Fables of the Reconstruction*
- 12 **TALKING HEADS** *Little Creatures*
- 13 **RICHARD THOMPSON** *Across A Crowded Room*
- 14 **TOM WAITS** *Rain Dogs*
- 15 **STEVE ARRINGTON** *Dancin' In the Key of Life*
- 16 **HOODOO GURUS** *Mars Needs Guitars*
- 17 **KATE BUSH** *Hounds of Love*
- 18 **NILS LOFGREN** *Flip*
- 19 **SCORPIONS** *World Wide Live*
- 20 **TV THEME SONGS** *The TV Theme Song Sing-Along Album*

#### THE TOP TEN RECORDS ON THE RHINO LABEL RELEASED IN 1985

1. *Sun's Greatest Hits*
2. *The Everly Brothers Songs Our Daddy Taught Us*
3. *The Zombies Live on the BBC 1965-1967*
4. *The TV Theme Sing-Along Album*
5. *Jerry Lee Lewis Milestones*
6. *Nuggets, Volume Six: Punk, Part II*
7. *Dr. Demento The Greatest Novelty Records of All Time, Volume VI: Christmas*
8. *The Best of the Easybeats, Featuring Friday on My Mind*
9. *Wrestling Rocks, Real Rock 'n' Roll As Sung by the World's Greatest Professional Wrestlers*
10. *The Monkees The Birds, the Bees, and the Monkees*

— Charles R. Cross

- YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS
- METAL CHURCH
- UNCLE BONSAI
- U-MEN
- GRAPES OF WRATH
- SKYLINE DRIFTERS
- SIR MIX-A-LOT
- HOSANNA CHOIR
- NU SHOOZ

#### TOP 10 NORTHWEST RECORDS

- 1 **ROBERT CRAY** *False Accusations* (LP)
- 2 **U-MEN** *Stop Spinning* (LP)
- 3 **YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS** *Topsy Turvy* (LP)
- 4 **THE MOBERLYS** *Sixteen* (LP)
- 5 **GRAPES OF WRATH** *September Bowl of Green* (LP)
- 6 **NU SHOOZ** "I Can't Wait" (45)
- 7 **THE TREECLIMBERS** *The Treeclimbers* (EP)
- 8 **THE WAILERS** *Live at the Castle* (LP) reissue
- 9 **MACE** *Process of Elimination* (LP)
- 10 **RICHARD PETERSON** *Second Album* (LP)

6. **MORRIS DAY** *Color of Success* (Warner Bros). The hard-edged throwdowns of the Time remain intact as Day's lyrics take a turn to the personal and, surprise, honest side.
7. **MARVIN GAYE** *Dream of a Lifetime* (Columbia). An uneven, occasionally embarrassing, yet ultimately eye-opening look at the late, troubled genius.
8. **STEVIE WONDER** *In Square Circle* (Tamla). The bottom line still remains. No one else crafts pop-funk this masterful.
9. **WHITNEY HOUSTON** (Arista). It's always a treat to watch the emergence of a major new talent. Her range, style, and emotional depth reveal promise beyond her years.
10. **SADE** *Promise* (Portrait). Put me in a smoke filled lounge, set me up with a Grand Marnier and Sade at the piano bar. Tell the boss I'll be calling in sick.

#### THE TEN BEST FUNK ALBUMS

1. **RAIN FOREST** Paul Hardcastle (Profile). On the surface it's hip hop muzak. A further look reveals the creation of a totally new genre, jazz-hop.
2. **SUN CITY** Artists United Against Apartheid (Manhattan). Constructive engagement is Ronald Reagan's plan . . . I ain't gonna play Sun City.
3. **19** Paul Hardcastle (Chrysalis). Another groundbreaker for Hardcastle which led to a slew of "hip-hop-umentaries."
4. **KING OF ROCK** Run-DMC (Profile). "There is none HIGHER! Sucker MCs should call me SIRE!"
5. **SCREAMS OF PASSION** Family (Paisley Park/Warner Bros). Everything the Prince LP strives for, this stunning dance number achieves in just under six minutes.
6. **THE ROOF IS ON FIRE** Rock Master Scott and the Dynamic Three (Reality). The year's angriest, filthiest street rap, from the year's most innovative hip-hop label.
7. **ROXANNE, ROXANNE** UTFO (Select). Yes, I got sick of hearing it after a while too. It gets the nod here for breathing life into a genre sorely in need.
8. **ROCK ME TONIGHT** Freddie Jackson (Capitol). In what has to be considered the strongest ballad year for R&B in some time, this was the smoothest sounding of them all.
9. **I WONDER IF I TAKE YOU HOME** Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam (Columbia). The one night stand hasn't sounded this innocent, nor this inviting, since the heyday of the Ronettes.
10. **FREEWAY OF LOVE** Aretha Franklin (Arista). This has it all. A thumping '80s funk beat, great '60s Motown production values, and the Big Man blowing from a Pink Cadillac.

GLEN BOYD





## Ruben Blades' Pan-American Vision

# AMERICAN SCENES

Ruben Blades y Seis Del Solar  
*Escenas (Scenes)*  
 Elektra Records

• BY BRUCE NEED

EVERY SEVERAL YEARS OR so, some type of indigenous Third World music gets touted as the next big thing. A selected star is hyped in the rock press, tours are arranged, there is even possibly a major label signing or two. Usually, after failing to dent the American market in any significant way, the genre in question settles in a cult level: pricey records available in good stores, occasional shows in cheap clubs. This happened in the mid-'70s with reggae and in the early '80s with African music. Now it appears to be happening with Latin music in the persona of Ruben Blades.

What's interesting about these swells of hoopla is that they don't develop at a grass-roots level, but are instead whipped up by media intellectuals. Part of this has to do with access: people who score free discs through their jobs can afford to experiment with what they listen to. But unfortunately part of it also has to do with the fact that success for these genres is conceptualized in terms of making it with the mainstream white audience. This isn't too offensive in terms of, say, King Sunny Ade, who neither has an eth-

in swank New York mags to this *Rocket* lead review written by someone who knows nothing about Latin music, makes me feel a bit queasy, like I'm some culture vulture paving the way for upscale yuppies to move in and gentrify another musical genre.

But there's another side to these sudden bursts of media attention, and that is that people hear about great artists they might otherwise not come into contact with, like Bob Marley or Sunny Ade. Ruben Blades might yet be in that class. Born and raised in the barrios of Panama, he claims to have first learned English by listening to Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel." He attended law school in Panama, but left home in 1974 to come to New York and become a musician. A series of highly successful records on Fania Records made him a star throughout Latin America, and in 1984 his American major label debut, *Buscando America*, won critical hosannas. Blades recently appeared in a movie, *Crossover Dreams*, but he's also returned to law school at Harvard and intends someday to go back home and use his power as a popular entertainer to push for social change.

Given my ignorance about this type of music, my response to Blades' new disc *Escenas (Scenes)* is a pure gut level one. Supposedly, the new thing about

border beat punched up loud where it should be.

However, the big attraction is Blades' lyrics. He sings in Spanish, but the record jacket is bilingual and reveals a socially progressive artist of enormous literary gifts. Blades says that he was politicized by the Panama Canal riots of 1964, where US troops shot Panamanian protesters. In 1982, his record about US intervention in Central America, *El Tiburon (The Shark)*, was removed from record stores and earned him death threats. For all its slicked-up sound, *Buscando America* contained several excellent forthright songs about life in Central America, from the disappearances of people on their way home from work to the murder of village priests. *Escenas* is less specifically topical, but still impressive. Like Latin writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whom he publically admires, Blades has a superb knack for narrative, catching the pain, boredom, sudden joy, and sheer duration of life in a way far more literarily complex than the work of the best equivalent American rock artists like Bruce Springsteen. It's enough to make me want to learn Spanish, so as to be able to feel the full emotional weight of lyrics like "Cuentas Del Alma" ("Heart Dues") hit home powered by their musical context. All is not lost though, because Blades' singing, compassionate, subtle-



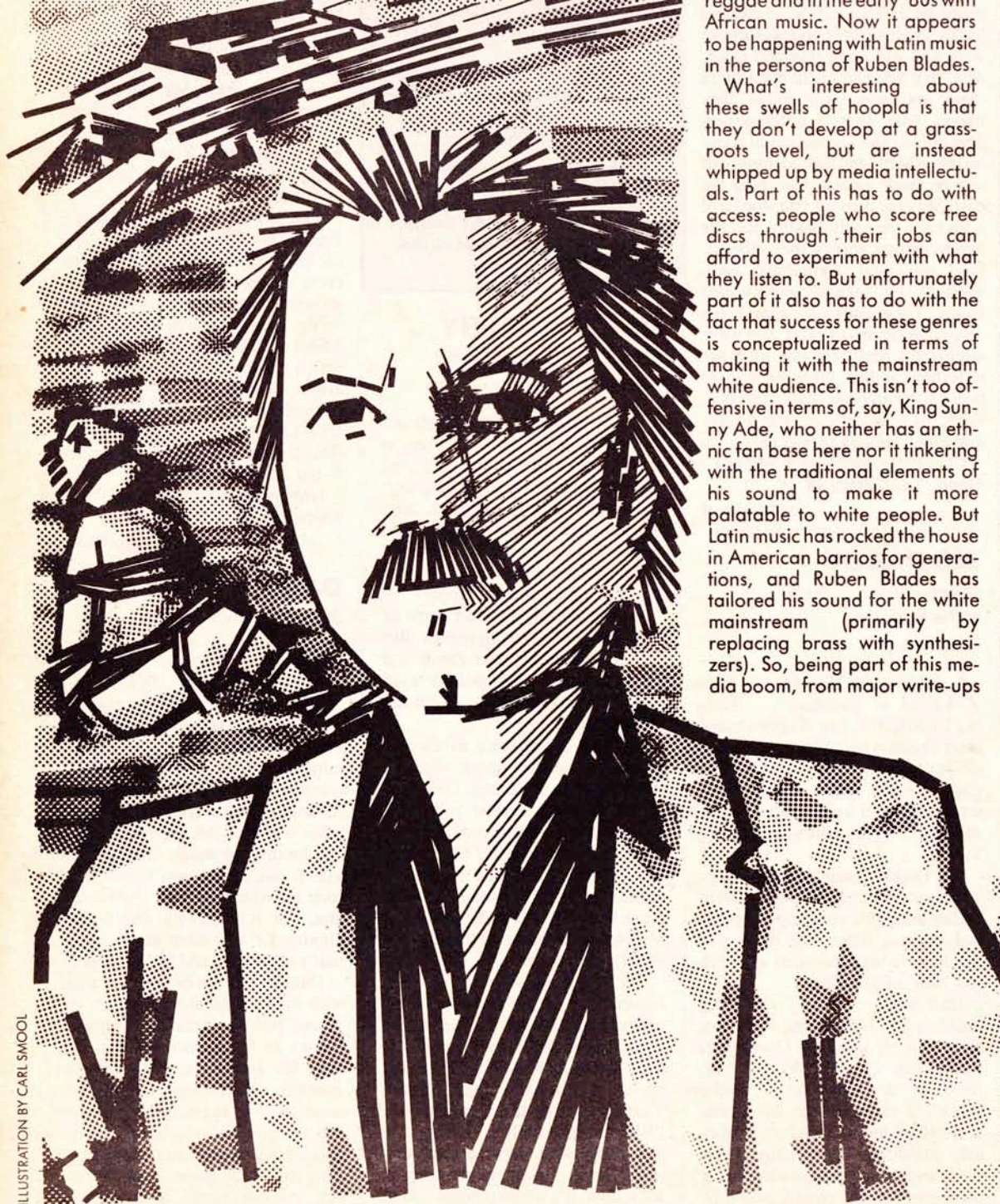


ILLUSTRATION BY CARL SMOOL

reggae and in the early '60s with African music. Now it appears to be happening with Latin music in the persona of Ruben Blades.

What's interesting about these swells of hoopla is that they don't develop at a grass-roots level, but are instead whipped up by media intellectuals. Part of this has to do with access: people who score free discs through their jobs can afford to experiment with what they listen to. But unfortunately part of it also has to do with the fact that success for these genres is conceptualized in terms of making it with the mainstream white audience. This isn't too offensive in terms of, say, King Sunny Ade, who neither has an ethnic fan base here nor is tinkering with the traditional elements of his sound to make it more palatable to white people. But Latin music has rocked the house in American barrios for generations, and Ruben Blades has tailored his sound for the white mainstream (primarily by replacing brass with synthesizers). So, being part of this media boom, from major write-ups

to come to New York and become a musician. A series of highly successful records on Fania Records made him a star throughout Latin America, and in 1984 his American major label debut, *Buscando America*, won critical hosannas. Blades recently appeared in a movie, *Crossover Dreams*, but he's also returned to law school at Harvard and intends someday to go back home and use his power as a popular entertainer to push for social change.

Given my ignorance about this type of music, my response to Blades' new disc *Escenas* (Scenes) is a pure gut level one. Supposedly, the new thing about his sound is that a double-barreled keyboard surge replaces the traditional salsa brass. For me, this works better on *Escenas* than on *Buscando America*. The early album is too fusionoid for me, too much tinkly jazz piano burying the rhythms. *Escenas* seems considerably tighter, with good synth hooks, the piano reserved for melodic effect, and that great, chunky, south-of-the-

murder or village priests. *Escenas* is less specifically topical, but still impressive. Like Latin writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whom he publically admires, Blades has a superb knack for narrative, catching the pain, boredom, sudden joy, and sheer duration of life in a way far more literarily complex than the work of the best equivalent American rock artists like Bruce Springsteen. It's enough to make me want to learn Spanish, so as to be able to feel the full emotional weight of lyrics like "Cuentas Del Alma" ("Heart Dues") hit home powered by their musical context. All is not lost though, because Blades' singing, compassionate, subtle, ironic, and deftly melodic, can be appreciated by anyone with ears. Despite Blades' lousy taste in gringos (guest stars Joe Jackson and Linda Ronstadt), there isn't a whiff of Vegas grease on this disc; and despite my ignorance of Latin music, I can tell that Blades is a class act. If you've ever dug salsa on the radio, you should pick up this disc and let it take you for a spin. ■

