

What the F*CK Happened to Sparks?

If you've ever seen Sparks before you might be asking that simple question. I have a simple answer. I changed it. Its now a "one page", mostly one-man zine. Occassionally I'll put in outside contributors, but mostly what you'll find here is creative junk to jack into. Expect to find reviews of music, books, and zines; fiction, poetry, rants, scraps of cultural irony, and everything else that doesn't fit. A flea market of the soul, if you will.

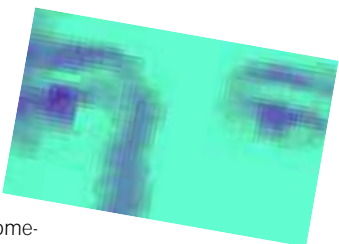
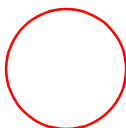
Here's the scoop: I want to make a zine that people will read. To do this, I need something small, something folks can read in one sitting, a short sitting, a very short squatting kind of sitting.

I need something easily distributable. A one-page zine is easily photocopied, easily downloaded, easily passed along. The hope is that you, the kind and compassionate reader, will help distribute this sucker. So go ahead, photocopy a batch for free at your favorite workplace and plant Sparks at your local cafe, barbershop, bookstore, record emporium, library, grocery store, waiting rooms. And when you're done reading, pass Sparks along to a friend.

A word on submissions.

Yes, I'm still considering submissions of original content: art, writing, whatever -- but there will be fewer acceptances. Please send me your review requests. We'll review MP3 files, CDs we get in the mail, books, zines, websites, you name it. Can't guarantee everything will get reviewed, but we'll come close.

Illustration:
*The Gaping Hole
of Nothingness!*



Frodoe

2 song demo

Frodoe's 2 song demo tape has lots of spikey, jerky jump to it -- like a revved up garage punk version of the Kinks. I especially appreciate the keep-it-simple-stupid rhythm section. Ryan H's bass guitar locks into the root note and bum-bum-bum-bum on the 8th notes, and Mark L's drums follow suit. It's a quick shot of tight, indie newwave-influenced poprock, and it computes. Goes down the throat like a swig of Tequila. They leave you wanting more. It looks like this band is ready to play out, so contact them if you want to add some youthful charge to your venue.

- j. esch

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REVIEWS

G.America

Fake Love

Some times an album lures your senses with its originality and inventiveness. This is one of those albums. G.America is primarily the brainchild of Grant Olsen, who has concocted a unique brand of alternative pop like nothing I've quite heard before. Maybe it's the straining, Dylanesque, soaring acrobatics of Olsen's lead vocals, maybe it's the inventive arrangements based primarily around tasty electric piano lines, maybe it's the strong textured accompaniment of cello, drums, bass and guitars. I just don't know what to pinpoint other than to say G.America's songs express simple, poetic, pebble-shaped truths, and the atmosphere created is by turns travelling carnivalshow, American saloonhall, gently trippy pop themepark. It's all contributes to the mood -- the same kind of mood you'd find on one of those forgotten Beach Boys albums recorded in Brian Wilson's home studio, or in a wincing Jerry Garcia vocal take, or a Captain Beefheart art project. Whatever it is, Fake Love weaves some kind of magic from its diverse threads.

- j. esch

Coming In Second Records
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cominginsecond@geocities.com

BLISTER

moment

Billed as progressive punk, this North Carolina band Blister harks back to the sound late 70's NYC punk -- a little dab of Patti Smith, Ramones, as seen through 90's Cobain prescription sunglasses -- you get the picture. Loud and tight, dropping out for the spewed vocal rants. The cut Bleed has some emotive screeching vocals, which take the best of the Cobain style and make it work. Birth Cage is more a grunge exercise, and not terribly memorable. Hand Me Down shoots down the crunchin', drivin' groove. Some of the tracks are, for lack of a better term, fuzzy, but the lyrics are intense, by turns bitter, sardonic, angry, spitting from the heart. The band throws a mild changeup with the slowdown rock of Drive, which again gives me refried visions of Nirvana. But frankly, I don't hear the "progressive" in this punk -- it's more of a familiar grunge-punk sound. See you in the mosh pit.

- j. esch

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