

## Indie band makes waves Tuscadero has impressed fans with imaginative records

By Will Keible  
Contributing Reviewer

From out of the shadows of Washington D.C.'s quickly emerging indie-rock circuit comes a band with more pizzazz, punch and potential than any new group has displayed in a long while. Since its birth on Halloween of 1993, Tuscadero has torn up the underground D.C. scene and is not letting up.

Their success has been nothing short of phenomenal and the story behind their ascent will no doubt be legendary someday. For starters, they opened up for underground sensations Eggs and Edsel on their first gig. They blew the bands away and were subsequently signed by their current label, Teenbeat Records.

Seven months later Tuscadero found themselves playing in front of thousands at the massive WHFStival in D.C. Their performance even earned them an interview on MTV.

Tuscadero features the dueling vocals and guitars of Melissa Fariss and Margaret McCartney. Drummer Jack Hornady and bassist Phil Satloff round out the quartet, providing superior backing to the band. The formula of the band draws comparisons to bands such as the Breeders and Veruca Salt.

However, upon listening to their first album, all comparisons will be set aside as they plow through a miraculous collection of sure-fire masterpieces. *The Pink Album* is every bit as girlish and juvenile as it sounds.

Each song is a peek into a young girl's diary which hides the deepest, darkest secrets of adolescence. Laced with candy sweet riffs and vocals to match, *The Pink Album* conjures up memories for everybody on what it was once like to be thirteen.

The album's opening track, "Heat Lightnin'," is a power-packed pleaser that sets the tone for the rest of the album with its wailing vocals and devastating guitar. "Candy Song" and "Game Song" highlight Tuscadero's lyrical ability as they both express the feelings of a lovesick teenage girl.

"Mt. Pleasant", which is easily the album's most memorable track, is a catchy number and a wise choice as the band's first single.



Courtesy of Teenbeat Records

**Tuscadero, featuring Jack Hornady, Phil Satloff, Melissa Fariss and Margaret McCartney has stormed onto the underground music scene and is looking to breakthrough to a wider audience.**

Cynical and uplifting at the same time, it describes the band's hometown as a neighborhood littered with broken 40s and losing lottery tickets but irreplaceable all the same.

Other notables include "Nancy Drew," "Lovesick," "Hollywood Handsome" and practically every other track on the album. Each song is pleasing to the ear, making *The Pink Album* worthy of heavy rotation in your five-disc changer.

However, Tuscadero did not stop there as they have recently released an eight song EP, titled *Step Into my Wiggle Room*. This is an interesting EP as it consists of a song written and played entirely by each member of the band as well as four collectively written songs.

"Posterboy" and "Holidays R Hell" are the albums premier tracks on the EP which would put Veruca Salt to shame.

Tuscadero has also been on the prowl of

late, touring the U.S. and Canada. They played the last show of their tour before a packed house in Chapel Hill Oct. 15. Major Labels have been licking their chops at the prospect of signing Tuscadero.

When faced with the prospect of going to a major, a scary subject for many bands these days, Hornady said he doesn't see any problem with it.

"As long as as we don't change our music I don't see the harm in it. ... Hell, to get paid playing music that you feel good about, that's a great thing. We are very excited right now and we just want to get our music out there. If a major helps us with that, that's cool," he said.

With their future looking as bright as their outlook on the world of corporate rock, the band continues to play and hone its skills. With the right attitude and amazing music to match, success seems to be on its way.

## Menagerie explores individuals' reality

By Kurt Shickman  
Contributing Reviewer

The university theatre will perform Tennessee Williams' classic play, *Glass Menagerie*, in the Ring Theatre Dec. 4-6. *Glass Menagerie* takes place in a big city during the late 1930s. The story centers around Amanda Wingfield, a mother whose life is fraught with unfulfilled expectations.

Her daughter, Laura, is excruciatingly shy due to her disabled legs. This keeps her from having the stream of gentleman callers that her mother claims to have had at her age. Tom, Amanda's son and the narrator of the story, reminds Amanda of her missing husband with his aloof, indolent nature and dead-end warehouse job.

The action takes off when Tom brings home Jim for dinner. Jim just happens to be the only person Laura remembers from high school. Jim becomes the first, and the only, possible suitor for Laura.

But, like every other character, Jim does not meet Amanda's high standards. The loss of reality in the Wingfield household comes to a head during the final confrontation between Tom and Amanda.

According to junior Craig Joseph, the director of *Glass Menagerie*, there is a deeper story within the play, a story of individual worlds of reality. Each character has his or her own universe filled with aspirations and dreams. These fantasies keep the characters from truly relating to one another.

Amanda is trapped in her old southern roots. She dreams of reliving her childhood, filled with gentlemen callers, through her daughter.

While she genuinely wants the best for her family, she is not sensitive enough to the unique situation her daughter is in.

Laura's life revolves around the sparkling figurines that reside on the living room bureau. She feels that her crippled legs keep her from experiencing what life has to offer.

Tom yearns to escape his tedious factory life for a world of adventure. As for the gentleman caller, he resides in a world of his own ego.

Despite their best efforts to actualize their fantasies, no character is successful.

Sophomore Jim Frazier, who plays Tom Wingfield, said, "*Glass Menagerie* is filled with energy, but it springs from an inner source and does not manifest itself physically in the play."

Technically, *Glass Menagerie* is a difficult play to perform. For example, there are three different versions of the script in circulation. It became a challenge to choose the script that best suited the vision of the director and the cast.

It was finally decided that a hybrid of the three versions would be used, which was no small task. To further complicate matters were the inherent staging difficulties caused by the Ring Theatre. The major problem, according to Joseph, was blocking and scene design with an audience on all four sides.

"Characters can't just sit there on a couch and converse, they have to be moving around so everyone can see them and they have to be doing this realistically," he said.

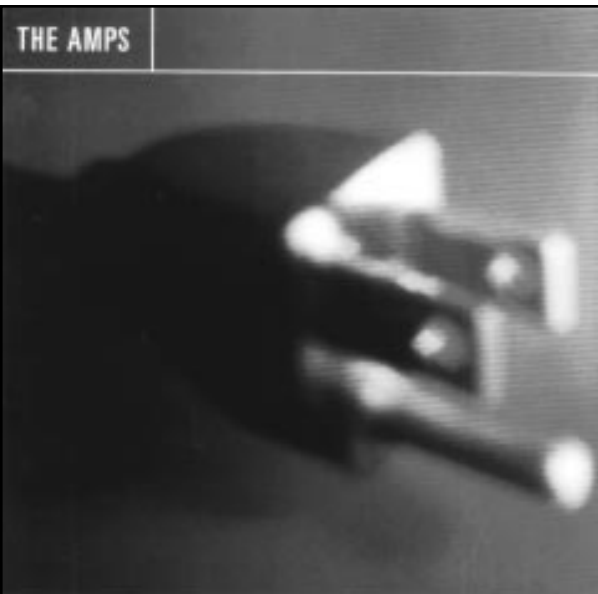
Freshman Megan Cramer, who plays Amanda Wingfield, said, "Sometimes the blocking chosen was not the most realistic choice but it was necessitated by the Ring Theatre's design."

Since no backdrops or walls could be used due to the obstruction of view, there were also problems for the setting design. To overcome this obstacle, Joseph and his cast decided to use the furniture of a particular room to form its boundaries.

Acting with an audience on all four sides can be a very daunting experience. "It can be distracting having the audience so close to you, especially if you have to stare off into the distance and pretend they aren't there," Cramer said. "You can't hide from the audience."

However, the cast also sees great opportunities with a theater like the Ring. One advantage of the arena design is the intimacy it creates between the audience and the cast members. According to Frazier, *Glass Menagerie* is the kind of internally driven play that is tailor-made for this close environment.

Both artistically and technically, *Glass Menagerie* promises to be an excellent show. All performances will be at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$3 for students and \$5 for adults.



### The Amps *Pacer* (4AD/Electra)

By Gray Crawford  
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

With bassist Josephine Wings in love in England and guitarist Kelley Deal in rehab for heroin, the future for the Breeders looks bleak. The legions of Kim Deal worshippers need not fret, though, for she has resurfaced with the Amps.

Having broken ground for female bands like Veruca Salt and Tuscadero, Kim is now surrounded by males. Breeder drummer Jim McPherson returns and the ensemble is completed by two guys from Dayton, Ohio.

*Pacer* is a departure from the brilliance of *Last Splash* and *Safari*, marking a return to the lo-fi sound of *Pod*. In many ways it's a disappointment; unlike *Last Splash*, this is not a truly great album. Every song is not amazing; in fact, a few should have been used as B-sides. The stripped down songs are not as charming as they once were, since we now know the heights Kim is capable of reaching.

But *Pacer* is still a worthy purchase. If for nothing else, there's still Kim's voice, a voice which has launched a thousand crushes. *Pacer* was recorded at the now legendary Easley Studios in Memphis, Tenn. (Pavement, Sonic Youth, Guided By Voices, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, and the Grifters have all recorded there). Kim's voice sounds like it's been filtered through all sorts of contraptions, making it similar to a fourth instrument.

Every song has some bizarre element to it, even though most of the melodies are simple. All sorts of sounds are employed, as well as numerous tempo changes.

A number of the songs are up to past Breeders standards such as "Pacer," "Tipp City," "Bragging Party" and "She's a Girl." Others sound like B-sides; "Hoverin'" was, in fact, a Breeder B-side.

Most of Kim's melodies on *Pacer* are soft and lush. Although there are a number of rockin' drum beats (Kim learned to play the drums), "Tipp City" is the only rocker.

The Breeders may or may not be over, but the Amps seem to be Kim's hope to get away from the spotlight of "Cannonball" and starting anew. *Pacer* sounds like a first album, something that would be released on Teenbeat Records. It's not what you'd expect after the magnificence of *Last Splash*. Hopefully the next Amps release will match what Kim is capable of producing.



### The Flaming Lips *Clouds Taste Metallic* (Warner Brothers)

By Michael Janssen  
Senior Reviewer

Riding on the tails of their hit single "She Don't Use Jelly" and appearances on MTV and (of all shows) *Beverly Hills 90210*, the Oklahoma quartet The Flaming Lips are poised at the brink of success.

Yet considering their past, it wouldn't be surprising if they remain indie-rock's best-kept secret.

Long the underdog champs of infectiously ingratiating pop, the Lips' unorthodox approach to music may be just too dang weird for mainstream America. After six stunning albums which just got better and better, their seventh, *Clouds Taste Metallic*, follows the trend exponentially.

Imagine the Beatles, Pink Floyd and Neil Young's larynx tossed in a pot with a heapin' of pounding distortion, bells, toy xylophone and enigmatic lyrics, and you're about halfway to approximating the Lips' musical approach. *Clouds* is full of inventive songwriting and surprising instrumentation.

The album's baker's dozen (12 new songs and "Bad Days," a tune off of last year's *Providing Needles For Your Balloons* EP, remixed and recycled) is a dizzying ride through the band's collective brain.

The group's ace in the hole is Wayne Coyne's singing. His endearing raspy drawl gives lines which may seem absurd coming out of, say, Eddie Vedder's mouth, a glowing warmth. In "Lightning Strikes the Postman," Coyne tenderly sings, "It's hard to read the writing through the flames."

And in "Bad Days," a peppy paean to drowsy escapism, reminiscent of the Beatles' "I'm Only Sleeping," we learn "You hate your boss at your job/Well in your dreams you can blow his head off/In your dreams, show no mercy."

So join up with the Flaming Lips' traveling circus and purchase *Clouds Taste Metallic*, or, even better, make a pilgrimage to their show at the Cat's Cradle Dec. 13. Sure, it's in the middle of exam week, but a little prioritizing should make your decision crystal clear.



### Boss Hog *Boss Hog* (Geffen)

By Kyle Forst  
Old Gold and Black Reviewer

The fabulous, most groovy bluesman in the world is back. And this time he's got his wife with him. Jon Spencer, the guitar playin' head-howler of his group the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, teamed with his wife Cristina Martinez to form Boss Hog, on its self-titled major label debut.

Co-produced by Spencer, Martinez and noted noise-maker Steve Fisk (Soundgarden, Screaming Trees, Skin Yard), Boss Hog sizzles with a deep-fried punk attitude that hits below the belt.

The husband-wife duo also gets help from fellow Blues Explosion cronies Judah Baur and Russell Simins, who operate under the aliases of Jens Jurgensen and Hollis Queens.

The album rocks from the very beginning, bringing Spencer's heavy, buzzing guitars, fat with reverb, together with Martinez's gravelly, piercing voice.

A bit more experimentation is found here than on a Blues Explosion album, with two songs featuring orchestration and guitars that are played and plucked as violins.

A number of songs on the album hit the revved-up blues/punk extreme on the money. "Ski Bunny," "Green Shirt," "What the F@!S" and "White Sand" all are up-tempo punk jams that are soaked with a dirty, blues spirit that drenches most of Spencer's songs. Martinez's vocals, with her husband often backing her, are reminiscent of something similar to 7 Year Bitch or Raleigh's own Picasso Trigger.

Other songs are much more rhythmic and smoother, especially apparent on "Walk In," "I Dig You," Ike Turner's "I Idolize You" and "Strawberry." Martinez's voice is sweet and luscious on these tunes, complemented by a gentler tone and a lazy bassline.

The big difference between Boss Hog and JSBE is Boss Hog's songs are streamlined and straight ahead, focusing on the blues-tinged punk sound more than the amusing antics and chants of "Blues Explosion!" that are found on a JSBE album.

*Boss Hog* is as good as the Blues Explosion's last album, *Orange*. In this marriage, the lady can definitely rock as hard as the man.



### Green Day *Insomniac* (Reprise)

By Chris Grezlak  
Contributing Reviewer

Though far from the standards of popular music fans, Green Day's brand new release *Insomniac* is no sleeper. While not as massively appealing as *Dookie*, their 1994 breakthrough release, *Insomniac* represents a refreshing break from the band's traditional arsenal of three-chord teenage love songs.

Armed with harsh social criticism, bleak pessimism, and insightful lyrics, Green Day's fourth release is a diverse and, at times, extremely dark venture. A mixture of hard rock and the punk-influenced pop that made the band popular, *Insomniac* is Green Day's most mature record, and arguably their best to date.

The album contains many songs similar to the gems of *Dookie*, such as "Armitage Shanks," a tale of psychosis and paranoia.

Its best, yet most demented tune, "Brat," describes a teenager's wish for his parents' deaths, so that he may receive an inheritance.

Sharp social criticism is prevalent in many songs. "Stuck With Me" is an attack of selfish and inclusive cliques. "I'm not a part of your elite, I'm just all right/Class structure waving colors, bleeding from my throat."

The minute-and-a-half long instrumental intro of "Panic Song," dominated by bassist Mike Dirnt and drummer Tre Cool, is followed by pessimistic social comments like, "The world is a sick machine."

The album's diversity is best exemplified by guitarist and vocalist Billie Joe Armstrong, as he rips through "Geek Stink Breath," a fast and heavy number, delivers inspired vocals on the nostalgic "86," and later slows down for the dark and eerie "Brain Stew."

A solid and diverse record, *Insomniac* embodies both Green Day's musical progression and a confusion with their newfound fame. While they retain their sense of humor and live antics, Green Day has matured musically.

Just as much of the California punk scene abandoned Green Day with the arrival of *Dookie*, the band may now lose its popularity among top 40 listeners.

However, *Insomniac* should ultimately prove that for good music with a message, there will always be a following.