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the world is
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with the Reclusive
Director of *Pulp Fiction***

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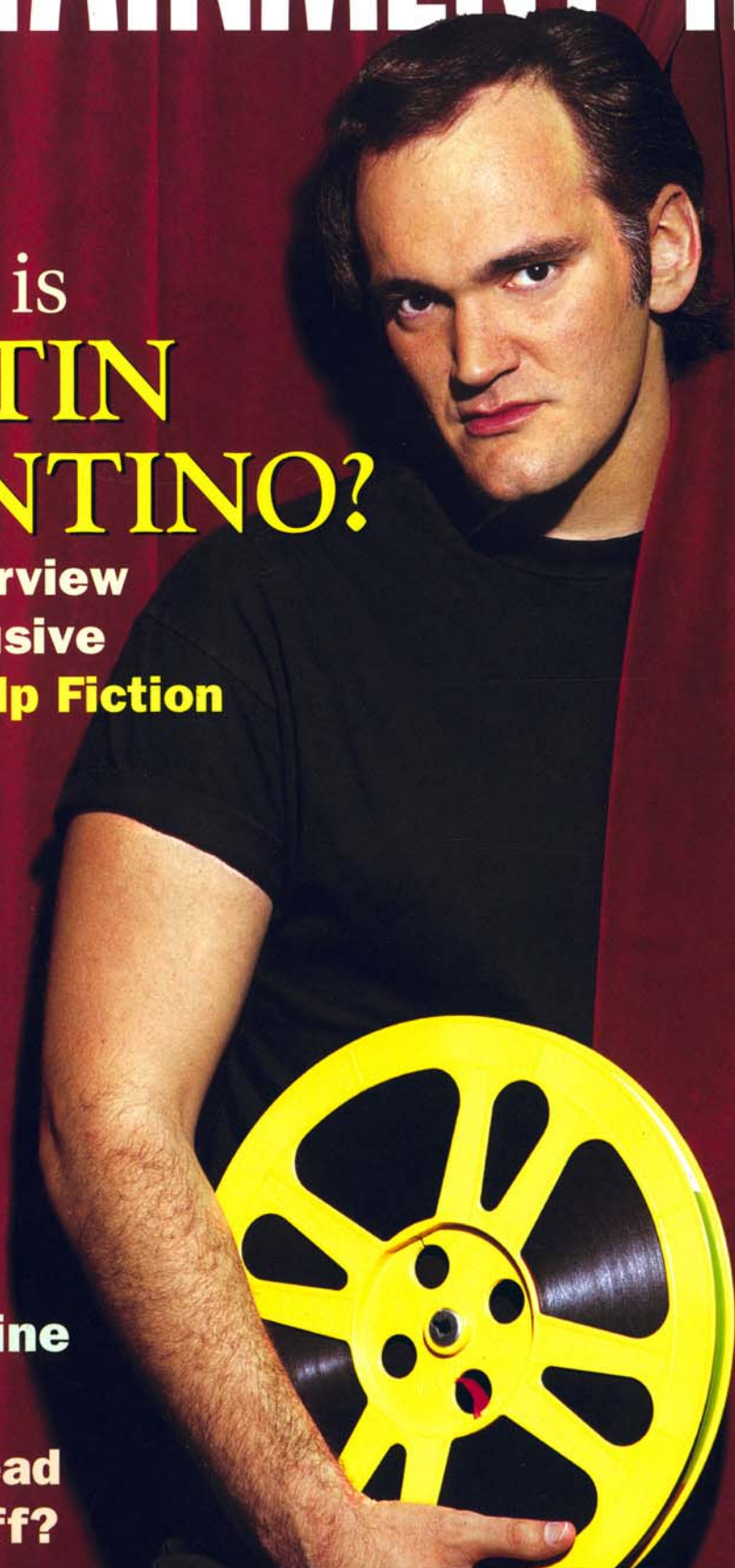
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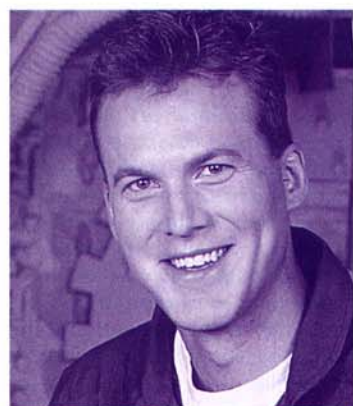
Michael Toscano, Under the Dome

Michael Toscano is a Washington, D.C.-based television producer, writer, and director. Formerly the "voice" of C-SPAN, he has narrated political coverage and guided viewers for many years. He has worked for *Entertainment Tonight* and ESPN, and contributed to *ABC News Weekend Report*, *All Things Considered* on NPR, *The MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour*, and *Good Morning America*. Toscano's extensive background as a journalist makes him an especially insightful columnist for E@H's "Under the Dome."



Chris Nickson, Music Writer

Nickson moved to Seattle 11 years ago, before it became a boomtown, which means he's either ahead of the trends, or just good at guessing. Amazingly, he hasn't been thrown out yet, although he never drinks coffee. Instead, he keeps a low profile with his wife and son, listening to music from all over the globe, penning the occasional book, and being a loudly unrepentant Leeds United fan. At least having been born and raised there, he has a right to wear the colors. Now he just hopes they'll win the League and Cup double in his lifetime. Or his son's.



Michael J. Nelson, Satellite Surfer

Nelson is the host and head writer for the award-winning, Emmy-nominated show *Mystery Science Theater 3000* on the Sci-Fi Channel. In addition to appearing as various characters on *MTS 3000*, including Morrisey and Mothra the giant Japanese moth, he is also a monthly columnist for *Home Theater* magazine.

ENTERTAINMENT@HOME

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To Tell the Truth

Secrets & Lies •
20th Century Fox
@ @ @ @ @

Rife with rawness and vulnerability, director Mike Leigh's (*Naked*, *Life Is Sweet*) *Secrets & Lies* dives so deeply into the hearts of its characters that you are left with no choice but to feel. Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste) is an unassuming optometrist who



Hortense comes over to her new family's house, there is a scene so beautifully blatant and understated that we can almost feel the hearts and souls of the clan bursting at the seams. The intense performances that Blethyn and Jean-Baptiste deliver offer a study in

The two are connected by little; not class, not temperament, not even skin color. It is pathos alone that serves as their bond.

repression and need; the two actors have been rightly graced with numerous accolades. The one thing that symbolizes both the pity and kindness Cynthia feels so strongly is the word "sweetheart," wailed on the verge of tears throughout the movie. It is in her phrasing of this word that the complexity and pain of *Secrets & Lies* beautifully converge.

—Rebecca Kraus

seeks out her birth mother, Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn). Cynthia is a dejected London factory worker whose life bleeds with self-pity and shame. The two are connected by little; not class, not temperament, not even skin color. It is pathos alone that serves as their bond. Cynthia's family, one of heartbreaking repression and dysfunction, provides the framework upon which the secrets and lies of all their lives unravel. When

Kingdom for a Ransom

Ransom • Touchstone
@ @ @

Ransom grabs you in the first few minutes and never lets go. Mel Gibson plays an airline tycoon whose son is kidnapped. At first, he plays the game, willing to pay a ransom. When he realizes the kidnappers are going to kill his son, he reverses himself and decides to offer a reward for the kidnappers' heads. Renée Russo plays his wife, Kate, who is horrified to learn of her hubby's desperate plans on television. When you see their son, Sean, (played by Nick Nolte's 10-year-old offspring, Brawley) with his eyes taped up and handcuffed to a bed, your heart will sink. The kidnappers include a renegade cop (Gary Sinese), his girlfriend (Lili Taylor), and accomplice Cubby. For the role of Cubby, director Ron Howard chose former New Kid on the Block Donnie Wahlberg, who shows surprisingly broad range. Another real standout is Lonnie Hawkins as the lead FBI agent. *Ransom* is not the best Howard has offered, but for a rental that takes you on an action-packed, emotional roller-coaster ride, you can't go wrong.

—Michael Castner

Ransom is a film that takes you on an action-packed, emotional roller-coaster ride.



10 TOP TEN



VIDEO RENTALS

Phenomenon
Touchstone Home Video

A Time To Kill
Warner Home Video

The Fan
Columbia/TriStar Home Video

Kingpin
MGM/UA Home Video

Escape from L.A.
Paramount Home Video

Jack
Buena Vista Home Video

The Rock
Buena Vista Home Video

Fargo
PolyGram Video

Trainspotting
Miramax Home Entertainment

Tin Cup
Warner Home Video

Source: BPI Communications Inc. Week ending February 28, 1997

VIDEO SALES

Bambi
Walt Disney Home Video

Riverdance—The Show
Columbia/TriStar Home Video

Casino
MCA/Universal Home Video

Fly Away Home
Columbia/TriStar Home Video

Independence Day
20th Century Fox

Ab Fab: The Last Shout
PolyGram Video

12 Monkeys
MCA/Universal Home Video

Matilda
Columbia/TriStar Home Video

D3: The Mighty Ducks
Walt Disney Home Video

Toy Story
Walt Disney Home Video

Source: BPI Communications Inc. Week ending February 28, 1997

Southern Comfort

Lone Star • Columbia/TriStar



Writer/director John Sayles blends a murder mystery with Greek tragedy, tosses in romance and social commentary, then sprinkles the entire enchilada with humor. The resulting complexity of this Oscar-nominated screenplay can't easily be shaken off. Past promises and long-buried secrets threaten to agitate a prickly tug-of-war between Anglo and Mexican cultures along the Texas border. Sam Deeds (Chris Cooper), digging into a long-dormant crime, discovers tarnished truths about both his town and his legendary father, played by then hot-shot-du-jour Matthew McConaughey. Kris Kristofferson also appears as the vicious sheriff. Bringing his craft to a new level, Sayles seduces us with detailed flashbacks that slide into the present as his camera caresses the intriguing faces of the cast. The intensity and pain of the film's startling resolution are so evenly balanced with honesty and compassion that you'll want to rewind and start all over again.

—Rochelle O'Gorman Flynn

Bringing his craft to a new level, Sayles seduces us with flashbacks.

No Cruise Control

Swingers •

Miramax • VHS & Laserdisc



You don't have to be single to get *Swingers*; you just have to have done the dating/mating dance at some point in life. In this road movie for the cocktail nation, boy (Mike) has already lost girl, his tragically hip friend (Vince) tries to help him forget girl, and the rest of the dudes-in-training juggle the desire to meet "beautiful babies" with the need to maintain their beloved "just one of the boys" status. *Swingers*—an homage to flirting and cruising—is hilariously self-deprecating while it cavorts around the swingingest digs of L.A.'s underappreciated nightlife. With all the nuances of a low-



budget film, including some crisp and gutsy dialogue, this effort revels in its own ridicule and exploits some of its own inspirations. From paying tribute to Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, to spending some time at L.A.'s illustrious lounge, the Dresden Room,

—Rebecca Kraus



Looking for Answers

Looking for Richard • 20th Century Fox



Shakespeare may well be regarded as one of the Western world's greatest cultural barometers. A society that embraces the bard and his works is somehow a society ennobled and saved. Conversely, ignorance of Shakespeare is tantamount to social decline. In *Looking for Richard*, Al Pacino is on a virtual crusade to encourage everyone to dip their cup into the great soul of Shakespeare and drink in his wisdom. He chooses as his vessel *Richard III*, a difficult, unwieldy, and bloody history that probably never made your high school's required reading list. Pacino's choice of the problematic play was deliberate. He seeks to uncover the very complexities of relationships, plots, and subplots in this unstructured documentary that challenges actors, scholars, and people walking the streets of New York City to probe such questions as: Why was Richard so embittered? Why did the Queen agree to marry Richard after he killed



"Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York"—what does it mean, anyway?

her husband, the King? How did Richard justify having the two young heirs murdered? And that elegant but mysterious opening line, Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York—what does it mean, anyway? Pacino is relentless, and occasionally overwrought, in his quest for these answers. But his histrionics are bolstered by the enthusiasm of the stage and screen actors who join his cause; Alec Baldwin, Winona Ryder, Kevin Spacey, Aidan Quinn, and Estelle Parsons all tackle parts of the play, while Shakespearean masters Kenneth Branagh, Sir Derek Jacobi, and Sir John Gielgud offer some commentary.

—Marianne Cotter

Eclectic Emoting

TRIP-POP FOR THE MASSES, A FRENCH CLASSIC, COMPILATIONS, AND SOME ESPAÑOL

X-Tra Danceable

Sneaker Pimps • *Becoming X* (Virgin)



From the opening electronic hiccups of this album, the “trip-hop” tag may jump out of your little book of musical categories, but *Becoming X*, an ambiguous title hinting at the difficulties within, doesn’t just tag along to the sinuous sounds flowing our way from

Britain; it sets new precedents. The Sneaker Pimps’ debut is laced with sarcasm sung in girlish tones, mischievous grooves, and deliciously cynical slants, thanks to the sum of its parts: Kelli Dayton’s vocals, Chris Corner’s guitar work, and Liam Howe’s stylistic keyboards. The album is a divine array of contrasts; usually naughty, and often danceable. Taking their cue from the dank skies of England, the Pimps offer unsettling anecdotes of pathos, prophecy, and paranoia.

The first track, “Low Place Like Home,” sets the tone: “read your future in a magazine/tells you what to lose/hope you find yourself.” Here, frustration manifests itself in a gorgeous backbeat and compact riff. The album’s most com-

PELLING TRACK, “6 Underground,” is a figurative tale about being buried alive. By teasing with duality not unlike that

of Garbage’s Shirley Manson, this song shines. (Ace producer Nellee Hooper took note, remixing it for a deeper rendition.) With

buzz abounding, the Sneaker Pimps will surely benefit from

the Trickys and Moorcheebas who came before,

but with this infectious premiere, they prove

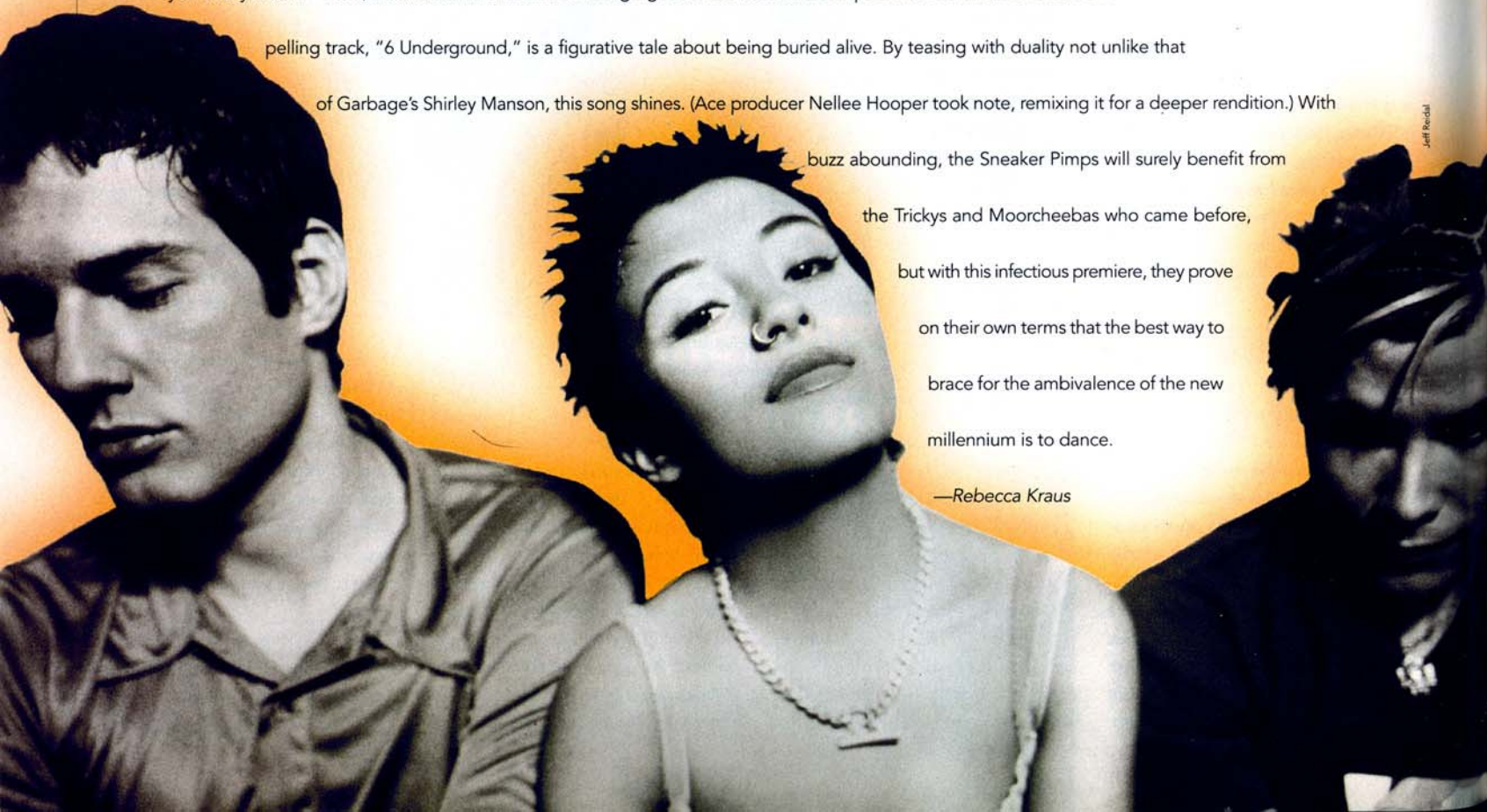
on their own terms that the best way to

brace for the ambivalence of the new

millennium is to dance.

—Rebecca Kraus

The best way
to brace for
the ambivalence of
the new millennium
is to dance.



Dunked on Drugs

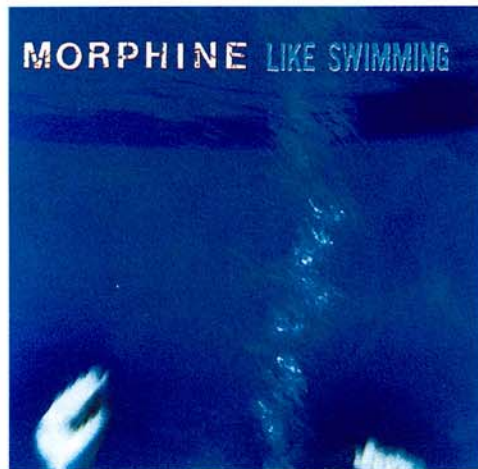
Morphine • *Like Swimming* (DreamWorks)



"Half in the shadows/Half in the husky moonlight," croons Mark Sandman in the refrain of "Empty Box" from *Like Swimming*, Morphine's fourth full-length album (and first for DreamWorks). More than just an image in a single song, the couplet evokes the moody melodrama that envelops the album's 12 slices of night. Whether championing the pleasures of nocturnal pursuits in words ("Early to Bed" and "Eleven O'Clock") or fashioning an atmosphere of tenebrous foreboding in music (pick any song), *Like Swimming* is an album made by, and for, nighthawks.

In "Murder for the Money," a jazzy shuffle breaks into a blitzkrieg of hellhounds-on-my-trail blues riffing. "Eleven O'Clock" is an eight-word mantra in front of a grind-core backdrop. White-hot Bernie Worrell-like synth squawks offset the no-frills backbeat of "Early to Bed." And the dreamy crawl of "French Fries with Pepper" is punctuated by the narrator's transistor-radio vocal recitation of an idyllic wish for the coming millennium: "In 9/9/99, I hope I'm sittin' on the back porch, drinking red wine."

For all its noirish underpinnings, *Like Swimming* is never gloomily sensational in the manner of, say, Nick Cave or The Cure. And that's because singer/two-



For all its noirish underpinnings, *Like Swimming* is never gloomily sensational, in the manner of, say, *The Cure*.

string slide bassist Sandman and company—saxophonist Dana Colley and drummer Billy Conway—are far more interested in stark grooves, stylish textures, and good times than morbid fascination or maudlin self-pity.

—Greg Siegel

Play L Loud

The Caulfields • *L* (A&M)



From the moment the Caulfields' first track "Figure It Out" explodes from *L*, you're hooked: hooked on the instruments that mesh like the threads of an intricately woven tapestry; on lyrics that entwine plots of disappointment and cynicism in up-tempo rhythms; on clean vocals and broad harmonies that ride along-



side the music rather than over it.

This sophomore release by the Delaware natives is a veritable hit factory, spinning out tunes that explore familial misunderstandings, unfulfilled dreams, and relationships. Yet, for all their deep subject matter, the tunes are so inviting, you willingly dive into this pool of melodies.

Standouts are aplenty: "President of Nothing," recalling some of R.E.M.'s best work, but with smoother vocals; "Waiting to Cry," all boffo guitars and floating pianos; the ethereal "Once Upon a Time" with fine guitar bends and big-sounding piano. And the sure thing, "All Things to All People," reminiscent of the catchy title tune from last year's music flick, *That Thing You Do*. No fluff here; *L* delivers.

—Adrienne Stone

Rarely Seen But Often Heard

Various Artists • *KCRW: Rare on Air, Volume 3* (Mammoth)



Never mind that National Public Radio's flagship station, KCRW-FM, a community service of Santa Monica College, California, is a much beloved institution of independence. Forget that all the proceeds from this compilation, with 14 previously unreleased tracks, benefit the subscriber-based bastion of originality and taste. All you need to know is: it's the music, stupid, and the quality sounds here could fend off a bevy of Bush fans. Behind the buzz cuts and unpluggeds, KCRW's live in-studio performances continue to serve as tastemakers, not trend-followers, and the station's enviable access to artistes, not just acts, endows this album with depth and precision. Chris Douridas, disc jockey for music lovers, culls sounds from the formidable talents that grace KCRW's studio weekly. Recorded in the basement of the station, *Vol. 3* crackles with sincerity and emotion. Patti Smith gives a heartening rendition of "Dancing Barefoot" alongside Ben Folds Five's elegant "Alice Childress." Fiona Apple emotes beyond her years, while James Taylor wears his in his voice. The Wallflowers and Cowboy Junkies also make appearances. The album may suffer from a bit too much somberness and quiet, but it still aches with musicality. Don't buy it because it's a good cause. Buy it because it's a good listen, over and over again.

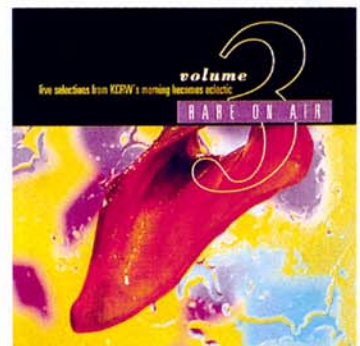
—Rebecca Kraus

10 TOP TEN ALBUM SALES

- 1 *Unchained Melody/The Early Years*, LeAnn Rimes Curb
- 2 *Baduizm*, Erykah Badu Kedar
- 3 *Tragic Kingdom*, No Doubt Trauma
- 4 *Pieces Of You*, Jewel Atlantic
- 5 *Secrets*, Toni Braxton LaFace
- 6 *Spice, Spice Girls* Virgin
- 7 *Falling Into You*, Celine Dion 550 Music
- 8 *Soundtrack to Evita* Warner Bros.
- 9 *Soundtrack to Romeo + Juliet* Capitol
- 10 *Blue*, LeAnn Rimes Curb



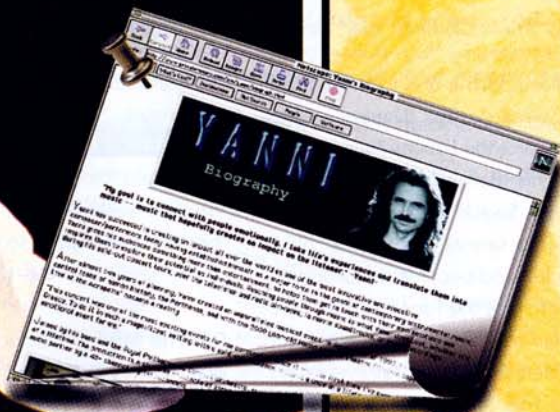
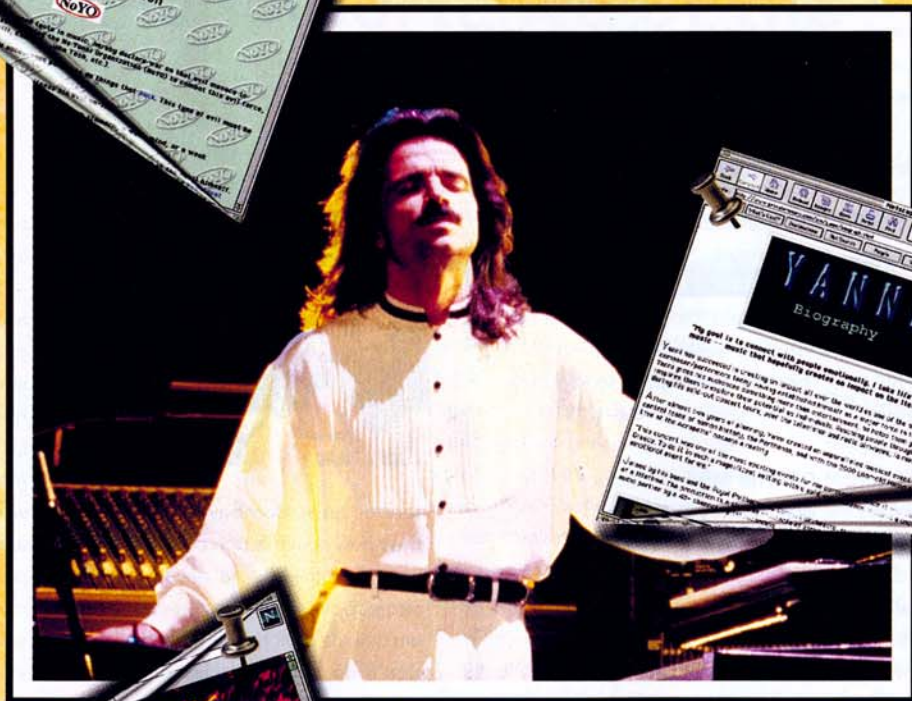
Source: Billboard Publications Inc. Week ending February 21, 1997



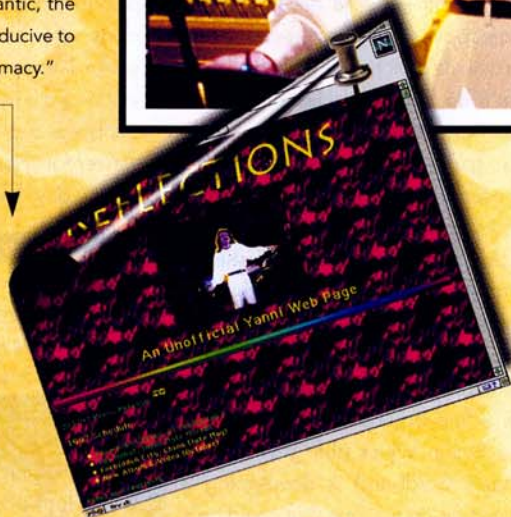
An unofficial website called *Reflections* (www.members.aol.com/greg17/reflect.html), gives the Yannomamo man a chance to reflect on the sources of his emotional inspiration. On the auxiliary *Yanni's Little Bird Lounge*, learn about the time Yannika sat in a crowded tavern with a gorgeous woman who had "a desire to kiss me." Unfortunately for the incurable egomaniac, er, romantic, the setting was "not conducive to the sweet sins of intimacy."



Then, there's also the *No Yanni Organization* (www.peoples.net:80/~maxs/noyo.html), which professes that "Yanni is evil," and "Yanni should be shot," while goading visitors to "Dismember Yanni with a spoon." Here, anti-New Agey folks plea for his demise: "Email the President and ask him to deport the long-haired, mustache-wearing, piano-playing freak." Once you're done here, you can check out the site of all sites: Yanni and John. Tesh, that is. Together, at last.



The official Yanni website (www.private-music.com/) boasts dissertations on why keyboards are more valuable than symphonies, punctuated by such pithy pronouncements as, "Imagination is more powerful than anything. When we create, we become more than the sum of our parts." For the real fans.



Yanni Sitings

Beyond the Acropolis, the Taj Mahal, and the Forbidden City in China, Yanni, that mustached Greek icon of New Age electronica, has materialized in yet another cultural milieu—the World Wide Web. With over 2,000 websites dedicated to the Yannster, there is truly something for everyone—behold his tumbling locks, download clips of him in all his linen-clad splendor, peruse his visionary musical philosophy, or indulge your morbid curiosity about what some say represents the demise of popular music in the 20th century.

—Rebecca Kraus, with research by Emily Rich