

THE REPLACEMENTS



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Brats in Babylon

THE REPLACEMENTS

By Ralph Heibutzki

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Saturday, January 18, 1986: After a trying time with the people of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, Replacements guitarist Bob Stinson decides to cut loose and make himself at home in his New York City hotel room.

"We got there at the [Omni] Berkshire [Hotel], and all our rooms got flowers and fruit—it's like, 'bad move, guys,'" he says recalling the accident.

By the time Stinson finishes making himself at home, it costs \$1,000 to replace a broken window, door and phone. The carnage isn't major, but doesn't endear the Replacements to *Saturday Night* producer Lorne Michaels, who vows, "No band from Warner Brothers is playing on my show again unless you guys pay for it." Warner Brothers antes up without fuss.

"We were a troublesome bunch," says Stinson. "They picked us up in the stock limousine. They knew we were going to immediately start drinking, which we did. And they wouldn't let us off the floor — 'Anything you need, let us know' - and it's like, 'Okay, gimme about four (studio) pages and I'll feel better.' Yeah, we were totally abusive of their privileges."

Later that night, Stinson and company—his bassist/brother, Tommy, singer/guitarist, Paul Westerberg; and drummer Chris Mars—throw timing and tuning aside during "Bastards Of Young" and "Kiss Me On The Bus" in a classic clip reflecting a long day of mismatched sensibilities and mutual hostility.

"Yeah, they didn't like us too much down there. Nobody did," Bob Stinson says with a laugh. "They pretty much ignored us, thinking we would probably crumble—when, in fact, it was quite the opposite. By then, we were flat out used to it. They put their noses up at us, and we spit up their nosehole."

Such were the joys in Rockstarland then; you could smash it up and not worry about who paid for it.

How far we've come since is best illustrated by Nirvana's own *Saturday Night Live* appearance last year, when the Seattle boys actually asked for permission to smash their instruments.

The notion boggles Stinson's mind. "That's kind of ridiculous," he scoffs. "Maybe they were warned about it, whereas we were unpredictable. Us ask permission? We'll take permission, that's what we'll do."

For slightly more than a decade, the Replacements — or the 'Mats (short for replacements) as fans tagged them - took permission with the gusto of a commando torching an enemy hideout. They broke every mold and kicked down every door, needless of what ever lay on the other side. Not for nothing did a weary Paul Westerberg warn his audience years later, "One foot in that door, the other in the gutter/The sweet smell they adore/The one we'd like to smother" ("I Don't Know").

You name the rule, the Replacements broke it. Instead of hailing from a major city like Los Angeles, or New York, the original trio of Bob and Tommy Stinson and

Chris Mars came from Minneapolis, Minnesota, best known as the home of one Prince Rogers Nelson, in 1979.

More than anyone, the Replacements' music and attitude personified the "Minneapolis sound." While their peers clung to carbon copy punk formats of two fast droning chords and overt politics, Paul Westerberg's songwriting defiantly staked out its own personal territory.

The Replacements were uncanny stylistic chameleons who had nothing in common but the lack of a high school diploma. They could rock you to the wall, stun you with a pure pop chorus, or confront your own weariness in such ballads as "Unsatisfied," "16 Blue" and "Here Comes A Regular"- all on one record, or even one night.

Best of all, the Replacements honed their craft without a net, or even a mast extending that attitude to abandoning set lists, and, careening through unrehearsed covers of "classic rock" oldies for unsuspecting crowds. They pursued their craft with an honesty few other bands ever mustered.

The journey to "fuck you" begins with a single step; for many, the Replacements' footprints were way ahead of most. Today's brats in Babylon owe them a major debt; it's high time to acknowledge that debt.

From Impediments To Replacements: 1979 – 1981

In the beginning, there were two: Bob Stinson and Peter Jesperson.

Both came from a Minneapolis scene seeking something wild, raw and different, as young men jammed in basements and formed bands such as Husker Du and Suicide Commandos to find that something.

Bob Stinson was among them. His earliest influences were unlikely ones, and included Yes, Ted Nugent and Golden Earring. "What I sound like and what I listen to are two different things," he notes.

Their story starts in 1979, when Stinson sold an amplifier and bass to his 11 year old brother, Tommy, and taught him how to play. A girlfriend invited Chris Mars to the Stinson home, where the trio began jamming.

"Actually, there was no singer; we'd just get together, and just jam, and see what we could play," says Stinson, who periodically attempted to sing if nobody else was brave enough.

Finally, however, the boys decided they needed a singer, so Chris Mars suggested a 19-year-old guitarist in a nearby band who'd never sung before. His name was Paul Westerberg.

"When I went over and heard him play, he was way too mainstream," says Stinson. He was doing Tom Petty shit, Bad Company, whereas we were just freelancing fuckin' around, and comin' up with stuff all our own, which probably lured him a little bit. We didn't have a format."

One thing led to another, Bob recalls playing guitar alongside Westerberg on the Dave Edmunds song "Trouble Boys." Something clicked in my brain and we got Paul to come over and play with us. And he [Paul] goes, 'Where's the bass player?' And I go, 'He's [Tommy] sitting right there,'" says Stinson.

The quartet tore through a Westerberg song- "Lookin' For You," on Hootenanny (1983) and the 'Mats were born. "Once we got going, it was pretty much obvious it had to happen," says Stinson, who cracks: "Paul gave us a chance. We could concentrate on our beer bottles."

For Chris Mars, the band was a chance to break out: "It was one of those things where you asked, 'What do you do to keep yourself out of trouble, and away from the factories?' We didn't really have any aspirations, because we wanted to do it, and it just went from there."

That point wasn't lost on Tommy Stinson, either: "It was fun, it was better than school. I still don't think of it [music] as a career. It's a conflict of terms, basically."

Peter Jespersen's introduction to the band - which floated between the names Dogbreath and the Impediments- was equally auspicious.

Originally a Top 40 DJ, Jespersen tired of that ("I couldn't play anything but certified gold") and began working at the Oarfold-jokeopus record store, known for its left-of-the-dial stock. While working there, Jespersen started Twin Tone Records to record the emerging scenes, and also worked as a DJ at the Longhorn, where major punk/new wave acts played.

On that association, Paul Westerberg, an Oarfolk regular, slipped Peter Jespersen a tape in hopes of securing an opening slot at the Longhorn. While catching up on some paperwork one night, Jespersen grabbed a stack of tapes and began listening, with the usual minimal expectations ("there was a real glut of Stooges soundsalikes at that time"), until he heard Westerberg's efforts.

Stunned by what he heard, Jespersen rewound the first song — "Raised In The City," which went on the Replacements' debut, *Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash* — several times. He even invited over his three best musical friends, who seconded his instincts. "It wasn't just a bunch of loud guitars with somebody shouting slogans over the top, which everybody was doing at the time," he says now. (The other three songs were "Shut Up," from *Sorry, Ma*, and two unreleased efforts: "Shape Up: and "Don't Turn Me Down.")

"And it turns out the moment I was actually listening to the tape in the office, he [Westerberg's] was actually eavesdropping outside. He heard his tape come on, and made a run for it, because he was so nervous!" says Jespersen.

So began Peter Jespersen's giddy ride as the Replacements' manger and confidant from 1980 to 1986. When that ride began, by May/June 1980, the Impediments' name was already history.

Jespersen recalls going to see them in an ironic setting, a "chemical free" coffeehouse occurring in a church, only to find the gig had already been canceled. "And then the guy who ran the coffeehouse made some really grandiose statement: 'I'll make sure you guys never play in this town again,' so they just changed their name to the Replacements. The name was just a cocky Westerberg sort of thing," he says.

How cocky? According to Jespersen, when an interviewer asked whom the group hoped to replace, Westerberg replied, "Everybody."

Jespersen soothed his proteges' feelings on the coffeehouse fiasco by arranging an opening slot at the Longhorn on July 2, 1980, which saw them debut as the Replacements. A mere three weeks later, the new band cut its first demos at Blackberry Way Stadium, near the University of Minnesota.

Things were moving fast, though the Replacements' arrival on the local scene provoked an avalanche of resentment, says Bob Stinson: "Everybody at the Longhorn hated us, because we were real snotty, and played a lot. These other people played this really slow rock stuff, and we'd come up there, and just wail. I can honestly say we changed what was happening. Now everybody sounds like us."

Nor could anyone miss the ragtag energy so central to the 'Mats' appeal. Its visual counterpoint came in Tommy Stinson's leaps and scissors kicks, which prompts a peculiar memory from Jespersen today.

"At one point, I walked into the dressing room, and I said, 'What in the world are you doing?' He [Tommy] said, 'Well, I'm putting these on so when I take 'em off before we go on stage, I'll feel lighter than air, and I can jump higher.' It was just a totally 13-year-old sort of comment," he said.

Tommy would also scream "Fuck", into the microphone between songs, "because it was so cool to hear his voice coming out of this big system saying a swear word," says Jespersen.

Nor was Tommy's older sibling slow in the outrage department. Inspired by Damned bassist Captain Sensible's penchant for "nurses' uniforms-and dresses-Bob Stinson began wearing black, green, pink and white tutus; at times, he even played naked. "I think it all started over a lampshade, and it just carried on from one joke to the next," he says. "Paul won't admit it, but I think it backfired on him, because I started getting a lot of attention. We had two sides. It's like watching Alfred Hitchcock with the cartoons on. We're both playing the same song, but you just don't see it that way."

The antics only reinforced the Replacements' outlook as a unit of four separate people, to Jespersen: "Paul just had this look in his eye, like he knew more than he was letting on. Tommy was a real excited kid learning to play the bass guitar, going to play nightclubs at the age of 13. Bob sort of played guitar for most of his life, and loved playing loud and fast. Chris was always the nicer young guy. He was probably as wild as any of the guys, but he also really had a lot on the ball."

This carnival of personalities only made Jespersen eager to record them in their natural raw state, as he'd already done on the July 20, 1980 demos (which included "Careless"/"Otto"/"Shiftless When Idle"/"More Cigarettes"/"I Hate Music"/"Shut Up," and are quite dissimilar to the *Sorry Ma* album). After attempts at First Avenue and the Longhorn didn't click, Jespersen and his Twin Tone partner, Paul Stark, set up shop at Blackberry Way Studios, where the band knocked out 15 songs in record time, leading to thoughts of an album.

However, as most independent labels know, recording music is one thing; getting money to release it is another. For those reasons, the Replacements' first offering—the single, "I'm In Trouble"/"If Only You Were Lonely (TTR 8120), and the *Sorry Ma* debut LP (TTR 8123) - didn't see the light of day until September 1981. "In those days, recording was probably done in the early part of the year, and it took us six months to get the record out," says Jespersen.

The Replacements' single kicked off Twin Tone's history in a major way. Guitarist Bruce Allen of the Suburbs (another key early Twin Tone signing) designed the label's logo. An accomplished graphic artist, Allen also pitched in with cover art for both debut Replacements releases.

According to Jespersen, the band opted for "I'm In Trouble" as the "most 45-ish" candidate for the A-side. However, when it came down to choosing a B-side, he recalls that Paul wavered over the issue.

"He was doing original songs acoustically that were really interesting," says Jespersen, "so I said, 'Paul, we ought to think about one of your acoustic songs for the B-side,' and he was uncomfortable with that: 'Well, gee, it's not the whole band.' I said, 'Look at the "White Album." If you look at the song "I Will," it says the Beatles, but it's just Paul McCartney.'"

Upon picking up Westerberg for a session, Jespersen heard a tape for the new B-side, "If Only You Were Lonely," whose inspired solo performance kicked off a grand tradition of them on Replacements albums. It's an early display of Westerberg's knack for mixing sweet lines ("Somewhere there's a drink with my name on it") with sour ("20 pushups this morning, that was half of my goal/Tonight I'll be doing pushups in the toilet bowl"). It only needed one or two takes.

The "I'm In Trouble"/"If Only You Were Lonely" single is among the rarest Replacements items. According to Paul Stark, Twin Tone sold about half its 2,000-copy pressing, which was never repeated.

The band's *Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out The Trash* album served further notice of the Replacements' wayward brilliance, which saw no point in copying anyone, as Jespersen observes: "A lot of punk rock was trying to copy the English kids on the dole. Paul's stuff was lot more teenage."

Sorry Ma crams no less than 18 songs into its grooves, many of which bear such cheery titles as "Shut Up," "I Bought A Headache," "Shiftless When Idle" and "Kick Your Door Down," which introduced another tradition of us-against-the-world themes ("Your radio's playin' rather loud/That don't sound like me"), while proudly flaunting the band's will to succeed ("Gonna keep on knocking/ keep on pounding").

Other songs have more casual intentions, such as "I Hate Music," whose chorus ("I hate music/It's got too many notes") was inspired by a phrase of Tommy's says Jespersen. "Somethin' To Do," meanwhile, was an extended in-joke, and was meant as "a tip of the hat to their main competitor at the time, which was Husker Du," he elaborates.

Overall, *Sorry Ma* struck a ruggedly individualistic path for the Replacements, whose most rough-hewn moments retained a melodic edge, powered by the band's secret weapon, Bob Stinson whose metallic-tinged Morse-code lead guitar is outstanding throughout. (The original 1,800-copy pressing has since sold 72,000 copies to date.)

However, it was *Sorry Ma's* key song, "Johnny's Gonna Die," that provided the best clue to the band's future. Framed in a soft, bluesy, ballad setting, this song's inspiration came from former New York Dolls guitarist Johnny Thunders ("Johnny always takes more than he needs/Blows a couple chords, blows a couple leads"). Its bleak sketch of a declining personality ("There's one sure way, Johnny, you can leave your mark") would be borne out by Thunder's eventual death by drug overdose in April 1992.

"That was obviously the odd one on that album, but Thunders had just come through town, and I'd gone to the show," says Jespersen, "and I knew exactly what he [Paul] was referring to. It was the kind of thing I'd have expected out of a band a year or two down the road."

Bob Stinson also fondly remembers *Sorry Ma's* 18-song binge, declaring, "Every damn one of 'em" is notable. "We actually worked as a band on that. There's no clinkers, not that I'm aware of. We had it done in no time. But we were very well-rehearsed for that one."

The Replacements were equally prolific live. One of the earliest known audience tapes (Zoogie's Bar, Minneapolis, 1981) sees them blast through 34 (!) songs, including frantic covers of "Substitute" (the Who), "All Day And All Of The Night" (The Kinks), and the song that started things, "Trouble Boys," along with such unreleased gems as "Temptation Eyes" and "Junior's Got A Gun." If nothing else, "the boys didn't let the grass grow under their feet.

While Westerberg seemed like the leader from day one, the actual picture was subtler. "We were very democratic. We'd just sit and chew shit sometimes, try different [song] lineups, which one to start with," says Bob Stinson.

"It was 'all for one, and one for all' at that point," Jespersen remembers. "I don't think he [Westerberg] was in charge. I suppose, in practice, he was probably coming up with original ideas, but a lot of that stuff resulted from jams, and they'd find a good hook, and flesh it out, and Paul would come up with the words."

With *Sorry Ma's* momentum on their side, the Replacements closed 1981 with their first out-of-town date in December, opening for the Suburbs in a Duluth, Minnesota skating rink. "I remember it very clearly. It was the first time we got out of town," says Jespersen. "We felt like, 'Jeez, we're goin' somewhere.' The Suburbs were the big band of the time, and we rode on their coattails, to some degree."

From Chicago to Warner Brothers: 1982 – 1984

Not long after the Duluth show, the replacements began taking plenty of road trips, starting with a long-defunct Chicago Club, O'Banion's, in January 1982. There, the band unveiled the next in a line of authentic bashers, "Kids Don't Follow," which takes authority figures to task in stark terms ("Kids won't stand still/Kids won't shut up/Kids won't do it if you talk to 'em now"), powered by Bob Stinson's crisp, stinging leads.

The taped results, which Jespersen heard driving back from Chicago in the van, convinced him to record "Kids Don't Follow" immediately, though the result wasn't without strain on his Twin Tone partners: "Trying [to release] two records a year apart was hard enough. Trying to do records six months apart made it even harder, because they weren't the only group on the label." Finally, Jespersen's partners agreed to find the recording if he'd pay for the record jackets, and hand-stamp them, too.

The resulting EP, *Stink* (TTR 8228) (originally called *Too Poor To Tour*), flew in banzai fashion, says Jespersen: "We recorded everything on a Saturday, mixed a couple songs on Sunday, mixed the rest the following Thursday, and everything was done, Three days."

Released in March, 1982, *Stink* has been dismissed as something of a one-note joke in the Replacements' camp. Not least in that camp is Westerberg, who told *Musician* in 1990: "They [old fans] still want damn *Stink*. The whole point was, we changed right off the bat. We had acoustic songs on the first record! And I think it's up to us to keep changing."

Stink was indeed an important transition for the Replacements, from the band's breathless attack (steering comfortably clear of hardcore punk/metal blather) of "God Damn Job," "Fuck School" and "Dope Smokin' Moron," to the hard-driving boogie of "White And Lazy," while only the most blinkered listener could have missed the haunting ballad, "Go." Like it or not, the Replacements were maturing at an astonishing rate. Six months after its release, *Stink* sold 4,500 copies; sales have since hit 60,000, according to Paul Stark.

No key 'Mats track lacks an anecdote. The warnings prefacing "Kids Don't Follow" (Hello, this is the Minneapolis police, the party is over") were taped at a rent party by soundman Terry Katzman ("T.K." on the jacket) where the Replacements "came out and played so incredibly loud, the police came and shut the party down," says Jespersen. The background screaming belongs to Dave Pirner, who found his own notoriety with Soul Asylum).

When it came time for engineer Steve Fjelstad and the band to mix down the warnings and studio track together, "We were just falling off chairs and screaming. It sounded so funny, 'cause it really sounded like the real thing, almost," says Jespersen, who sees more value in *Stink* than most.

The EP's other notable cuts, to him, include "White And Lazy" ("it showed there was another side of them; I thought, 'I'm lazy, I'm white, and ashamed of nothing was a cool thing to say"); "Fuck School" has one of his favorite lyrics ("The teacher's got a butt like a mule," which rhymed with "school"). "I remember kids saying things like that when I was in school!" He laughs. And for those who didn't know, "Gimme Noise" took a swipe at the Suburbs ("I'll give you my jacket if you'll give me your glamour; don't gimme that racket, gimme that clamor!"), since "they were more of a slick, party dance band" Jespersen recalls.

Stink's significant departure, "Go," slows down for a look at love taking a turn left, and down and getting lost. Its chorus advises, "Go, while you can," followed by its clincher: "Don't mistake the feeling" (Inaudible on the EP). "They were kind of smug about the fact they had these songs I knew, but had one I hadn't even heard yet," says Jespersen. "I was so excited; there again, it was such a departure from anything they'd done before."

Stink also marked the Replacements' first significant national press, thanks to such independent music magazines as *Trouser Press*, *New York Rocker*, and *Boston Rock*. "It was all part of the deal. You paid attention to the other records that people were doing shoestring budgets, and they paid attention to yours," says Jespersen.

The burgeoning interest paid off for the Replacements, too. Bob Stinson recalls playing O'Banion's after *Stink's* release: "Right then, I knew what I'd be doing for the rest of my life. I remember just that feeling: 'This is how it's gonna be from now on,' and it was like that, everyday."

The Replacements' road trips began getting just a little longer on their first U.S. tour, which began April 13, 1983 in New York City, at Gerde's Folk City. Its management, expected bands to "turn down their amplifiers, which, of course, the Replacements didn't do," says Jespersen. "I remember there were people pissed that the 'Mats just went on and played their 120-decibel high volume stuff." The soundboard operator eased her distaste by walking out on the show, he remembers.

Tommy Stinson: "A lot of people came out of curiosity and responded to what they'd heard. There definitely was a certain element of curiosity in watching four guys making fools of themselves!"

On the other hand, not everyone knew the 'Mats name, as the band found in Worcester, Massachusetts, where, "There must have been maybe four people in the room," says Jespersen. "The band decided to turn some stuff down and do a quiet set, and it was really cool."

Jespersen sums up the band's behavior on the road in two words: "They didn't." Even so, the Replacements' growing reputation as hellraisers didn't stop writers from trying to see what made them tick. At this time, the *Village Voice's* R.J. Smith joined them for a week on the road, playing Scrabble in the van with Chris Mars, Bob Stinson, and Peter Jespersen. The result was a piece which the band later publicly disowned.

Nobody seems upset about the episode anymore. "To me, it sounds like he [Smith] caught us in that mood and decided that was our life story. We were never one to hide how we felt if we were down, or if something was wrong," Bob Stinson explains in hindsight.

I just thought, 'Does this guy have any idea what he's getting into?' I was really afraid for the man," says Jespersen. "As it turned out, everybody got along really well. He apparently had the right amount of irreverence that the band didn't think he was some sort of conservative rock journalist."

Irreverence was right; it was Smith who likened the Replacements LP, *Hootenanny* - for which Jespersen was already reviewing test pressing on the road - to "taking a warm beer shit." That was preferable to *Rolling Stone's* failure to review the album; Jespersen recalls Kurt Loder explaining that by shrugging, "Well, nobody around here liked it." Color the band depressed.

With *Hootenanny* (TTR 8332), the Replacements entered a new era. The rough edge remained in the rocker like "Heyday," "Color Me Impressed" and "Run It," while Westerberg's writing expanded to arty productions ("Willpower"), ballads ("Within Your Reach") and further in-jokes ("Treatment Bound," the title song). Husker Du collectors, take note: the art is credited to Fake Name Graphics, the alter ego of Husker drummer Grant Hart, according to Jespersen.

"Color Me Impressed," whose lyrics summarize the individual's endless battle against tacky trendinistas ("And everybody at your party, they don't look depressed/Everybody's dressin' funny, color me impressed"), was the next anthem, "This great, structured pop tune that was real inspiring to hear the first time," says Jespersen. (The title is also a catch phrase in the movie *Heather*, whose scriptwriter was apparently a major 'Mats fan; the story's action even occurs at Westerberg High!) "Heyday" knocks those same trendinistas to size with a whipsaw performance and a searing hook: "Sittin' at home, and I'm so excited/Going' to the party and we weren't invited."

"Within Your Reach" - which Bob Stinson remembers lobbying to keep off the album, "because it didn't represent the band" - was salvaged from an aborted session that Westerberg had booked without the band's participation, which didn't mean he had solo dreams, says Jespersen. The session, whose secret leaked out when Chris Mars happened to bump into the duo, simply occurred because "he [Westerberg] was not the person that would have compiled, or saved songs, by any means," says Jespersen.

Convinced to finish it, Westerberg played flanged guitar and bass over a DR-550 rhythm machine. An icy synthesizer ("borrowed" from the Suburbs) is the capstone to a confession of loneliness: "I can live within your touch/but I can die within your reach." It's a memorable climax to harrowed lyrics which imagine no way out of an emotional corner ("I never seen no mountain/Never seem no sea/City got me drownin'/I guess it's up to me"). It's a powerful and impressive moment.

The band's silly side came out, too "Treatment Bound" mocks the band's inability to "break" ("The label wants a hit/And we don't give a shit"), while "Hootenanny" was made up on the spot after a dispute with Paul Stark, the album's co-producer. Chris Mars and Tommy Stinson played lead and rhythm guitars, respectively, while Bob Stinson banged a bass and Westerberg sang over the chaos.

"We're just kidding, and he [Stark] ended up thinking that was a real track, and so then Westerberg just went, 'First song, side one,'" Jespersen laughs. "We just left it on and it was really not even supposed to be a thing at that time." The song became a trademark encore, in which the group would swap instruments in suitably burlesque fashion.

Bob Stinson is less appreciative of *Hootenanny*, dismissing it as “just a raucous mess,” though he enjoyed playing it live: “It sounds more like Paul just went in the bathroom came up with some chords and came out, and we played em’.”

It was at this time, Jespersen recalls, that Westerberg wrote more songs than the group (particularly Bob Stinson) could appreciate, citing the 1983 live staple, “You’re Getting Married,” as a good example. Originally destined for *Hootenanny*, it was shelved when Bob didn’t like it, he says. The strain of producing material to suit the group’s tastes would only grow over time (though Stinson doesn’t personally remember the incident).

Hootenanny originally sold 38,000 copies, and has since gone on to sell 60 - 70,000, according to Paul Stark.

The group bided its time between *Hootenanny* and the next album, *Let It Be* (TTR 8441), issuing a 12-inch, “I Will Dare” / “Hey Good Lookin’” / “20th Century Boy” (TTR 8440), in July 1984. The A-side, “I Will Dare,” prefaced another pop twist for the Replacements; the non-LP B-sides paid a sly tribute to T. Rex and Hank Williams.

The “I Will Dare” 12-inch pressed in a 5,000-copy limited edition, which wasn’t repeated, came between the *Let It Be* sessions. Of the B-sides, Jespersen notes: “They were really good with the T. Rex songs they did’; “Hey Good Lookin’” (recorded in Madison, Wisconsin) is remarkable in that, “Bob Stinson’s guitar solo sounded like he was playing a completely different song, and it had nothing to do with what the rest of the band was doing,” he says.

I clearly remember driving back from Madison that night, and we put that tape in, and played the solo, and we were howling with laughter to the point where the van was practically rocking off its wheels, “ says Jespersen. “What Paul ended up doing was rewinding the solo constantly, and driving Bob crazy with it, and Bob was trying to get at the tape deck to take it out!”

Stinson responds: “I think he [Paul] might have said, ‘Don’t play the lead right, just mess it all up.’ I don’t know if it was his attempt to make me look bad, or if he really thought it was funny, but needless to say half the time I got more shit for playing it right than I did for playing it wrong.

One final touch Replacements fans should know: Since the 12-inch had been mastered over a “miscellaneous tunes” cassette the band played in its van, careful listeners can discern the first notes of “Feel,” the first song on the Big Star’s debut LP. Big Star’s guiding light, Alex Chilton - himself a major influence on Paul Westerberg - heard the fadeout at a friend’s house. It was this lucky accident which forged the earliest link between both bands’ names and fortunes.

That shimmering, propulsive A-side, “I Will Dare,” became *Let It Be*’s keynote song. Jespersen recalls Westerberg lobbying him to release it only a week after *Hootenanny* had been on store shelves: He labels it “the hit that never was.”

To Jespersen, *Let It Be* proves the Replacements were maybe too far ahead of their time: “Everybody has *Let It Be*. It’s the college rock album of all time. At the time, we were doing okay, but it was not like they [the ‘Mats] were accepted to anywhere near the degree they are now. Those records became famous long after they were done.”

Paul Stark’s figures seem to bear that assertion out; *Let It Be* sold 12,000 copies initially; its total sales are now at 120,000.

How far ahead were the Replacements? Listen to *Let It Be* and count the ways: “Seen Your Video” started life as “Adult” (“your look like an adult, you act like an adult, who taught you that?”), until Westerberg changed the lyrics: “Seen your video,

that phony rock 'n roll, we don't wanna know!" The band's camera-shy attitude later translated into hilarious effect in their "Bastards of Young" video, which showed a pumping speaker instead of their faces; Bob Stinson recalls Westerberg remarking, "It [the contract] doesn't say we actually have to be in our videos").

Other notable songs include "Unsatisfied," whose shimmering acoustic guitars belie its bitter sentiments ("Look me in the eye and tell me that I'm satisfied"); "16 Blue," premiered at a Boston soundcheck, and written about Tommy Stinson ("Drive yourself right up the wall/No one hears, and no one calls"); "Androgynous," which Jespersen calls "the boldest thing that Paul had pulled out of his bag of songs in a long time," played on a \$14,000 grand piano for company ("Here comes Dick, he's wearing a skirt/Here come Jane, you know she's sportin' a chain"; the chorus concludes, "And they love each other, so/Androgynous"); and the solo "Answering Machine," whose rumbling guitars drove a lyric of frustration and loneliness ("How do you say 'I miss you' to an answering machine?"). Its final repetitive line - "Oh, I hate your answering machine" - closed the album on a powerful note.

The familiar 'Mats playfulness had its day, too; the band paid tribute to KISS with a psychotically sloppy cover of "Black Diamond." The song's author, fire-breathing bassist Gene Simmons, apparently thought otherwise at a Replacements show in New York City, where he walked out as soon as the band began playing it, Jespersen recalls.

The band's seat-of-the-pants attitude also yielded an intriguing bunch of out takes which have since "sneaked out" (in Jespersen's words) on bootleg. Those include an alternate mix of "16 Blue," along with a poppy live staple of this period ("Temptation Eyes"), and some truly blistering workouts ("Who's Gonna Take Us Alive," two takes of "Street Girl").

Let It Be's titles itself poked fun at Jespersen's early passion, the Beatles. "You can copyright lyrics and melodies, but you can't copyright a title, so anything's game, and we thought that was a scream." Had the joke continued, Jespersen swears the next album would have been titled after the Rolling Stones' famous opus, *Let It Bleed*.

For Bob Stinson, *Let It Be* marked a new era that he didn't savor: "Again, that sounds like we're trying to come up with something cool in the studio," he says, citing "Unsatisfied" as "another half-assed attempt to make a good song. If we'd put another five minutes worth of time into it, it would have sounded 50 times better.

Put in perspective, the art of segueing between bar 27-28 didn't cut ice with the Replacements' urgency, nor Bob Stinson's "close your eyes and floor it" guitar approach. Tommy Stinson agrees: "We didn't sit around and fuck around with songs 100 times. We were never into shoving something over and over into the ground. I think that's how we helped keep things fresh.

At this time, two major forces conspired to change the 'Mats' course: Alex Chilton and their December 1984 major label signing with Warner Brothers Records.

Both neatly coincided at New York City's Irving Plaza. Chilton had long been out of circulation after his experiences in Big Star, whose trio of early 70s LPs had minted good reviews, and little else. According to Jespersen, Chilton put on a sousing show, which the Replacements followed with their own "circus/spectacle thing," as Chris Mars had called it.

If anything's written about this period, it invariably centers around the 'Mats' penchant for shambling their way through hastily-performed "classic rock" covers. Typical of the breed is a bootleg, *Live And Drunk*, in which the band careens through an improbable array of covers: "If I Only Had A Brain," from *The Wizard of Oz*; Sonny and Cher's "I Got You, Babe,"; Hank William's "Hey, Good Lookin'"; and TV themes from

Gilligan's Island and *The Beverly Hillbillies*. If you own any Replacements bootlegs, this is probably the one. For those in the know, *Live and Drunk* was recorded at New York City's CBGB in October 1984, where the band played as Gary and the Boners (after their own song, "Gary's Got A Boner").

Even now, that "circus/spectacle thing" elicits some markedly different reactions among the former Replacements.

Bob Stinson: "We seemed to go on forever. We used to play three-hour sets. What else were you gonna do, go drink and go back to the hotel? That didn't appeal to you, anyway."

Chris Mars: "I think it did get a little bit old where it got to where we couldn't get it together on stage. The early years were like a 'frat boy' stage, and you have to move out of the frat house, sooner or later.

He further laments the band's lack of personal closeness, which grew more pronounced in later years: "When I look back on it, we were more like drinking buddies than friends. I don't think we every really knew each other as friends. Our emotional attitude was on the level of a high school kegger."

Peter Jespersen: "I saw more value in a lot of their shows than [other] people did. And there certainly were their share of shows where people would be so physically inebriated that they couldn't finish a song, but they really did go out there to play and have a good time."

Sire Records man Seymour Stein — who's signed the Ramones, Talking Heads, Madonna, and the Pretenders — viewed the "circus/spectacle" rather differently when the band played Irving Plaza in December 1984. "He had little sheets of paper in his pocket, where he'd written down song titles that he thought would be appropriate covers for them to do because he thought it was so funny that they were butchering all these classic oldies," Jespersen remembers. The band was signed before it left New York.

With a contract in hand, everything seemed to be moving quickly for the Replacements. For Paul Westerberg, the highlight was meeting his idol, Alex Chilton, in New York City at St. Mark's Place, which sparked his tribute song of the same name three years later, on *Pleased to Meet Me*. For Peter Jespersen, it was getting Chilton to produce demos for what would become the Replacements' next album, and major label debut: *Tim* (Sire 25330).

From Frying Pan to Fire: 1985-87

The minute that Alex Chilton agreed to work with the Replacements over lunch at an East Indian restaurant in New York, Jespersen sprang to a pay phone and booked studio time for January in Minneapolis ("he slept on my own couch for a week,").

Like *Let It Be*, the early *Tim* sessions yielded absorbing curiosities, including an alternate take of "Left Of The Dial," which made the album. "Nowhere Is My Home," noteworthy for its bleary-eyed sentiments ("I ain't deserted/just feel so disconcerted"), saw release on the U.K.-only *Boink!* compilation (Glass 016) in 1985, nestled among goodies from *Stink* and *Hootenanny* (Jespersen: "I thought that was just a killer song; it was just another song about life on the road"). The sessions also yielded aborted acoustic and electric takes of "Can't Hardly Wait" (infinitely superior to the one they ended up doing on *Pleased To Meet Me*, " says Jespersen.

By the time "Can't Hardly Wait," the logical follow-up to "I Will Dare," to Jespersen, appeared on the *Pleased To Meet Me* album (1987), the old circle had closed

for good; the lyric and arrangement were different, too. For three years, the song had been like a puzzle without an answer the 'Mats' failure to record it sooner has been held up as an example of their need to shed the rowdier image for a more mature model.

But Jespersen sees the truth differently; "Can't Hardly Wait" didn't make it on *Tim* for lack of trying, he asserts, especially since the electric take is close to its cousin on the cassette-only *Shit Hits The Fans* (TTC 8443). The acoustic take, cut in a ventilation shaft at Nicollet Studios (Minneapolis), is more relaxed, with Westerberg on acoustic guitar, and Mars on snare drum, brushes and a little "ooh-ooh-oohing." However, both versions "never felt right" to the band, says Jespersen, who grabbed the cassette before they could erase either of them.

On top of all that, Alex Chilton didn't wind up producing *Tim*; the preliminary three bootlegged tracks remain his lone studio association with the Replacements, leading fans to ponder "what might have been."

Instead, the unenviable job of producing the Replacements fell to Tommy Erdelyi (nee Tommy Ramone), drummer of New York punk godfathers, the Ramones. Jespersen doesn't remember Warner Brothers lobbying against Alex Chilton; he suspects that Erdelyi's name simply carried more weight in the industry.

Bob Stinson offers a different explanation: "that [Chilton] was probably Paul's icon, more than anybody. Tommy didn't know who he was. I was no big fan of his, or anything like that, which probably helped. He was just a normal guy, like the rest of us."

The Replacements sealed their Warner Brothers contract in the spring of 1985, leaving fans to wonder how they'd survive the inevitable "indie band goes major" tussle (long before David Geftan realized Nirvana wasn't a state of Buddhist bliss). Even the Replacements' nearest cross-town rivals, Husker Du, didn't sign to Warner Brothers until a year later, in 1986.

That shone a spotlight on the 'Mats not to fumble the ball, as Westerberg confided to *Musician* in April 1985: "We're a little more concerned about living to next week. That [reputation] is getting to be an albatross around our neck. We can go up there straight as an arrow, and if someone stumbles one inch, then it's 'Oh, the Replacements, they're drunk again.'"

Still that trademark 'Mats ambivalence was never far from Westerberg's mind: "We don't worry about the music end of the deal so much as keeping the spirit up. The people that like us are wise enough not to pay their money to see us hit the right chords."

For proof, check out audience tapes of two different shows — The Pop Shop, Cleveland, Ohio, February 2, 1984, and Minneapolis's 7th Street Entry, October 17, 1985 — and note the remarkable quality gap between both. The Cleveland show is truly horrific, with excruciating between-song pauses, and blown notes all over the place. The Minneapolis tape, however, is noisy, but brisk, from start to finish, and equally notable in that only four songs from *Tim* are played. Taken back to back, the tapes are vivid reminders of how uneven and moody the band could be.

On this much, Bob and Tommy Stinson agree: the Warner Brothers deal didn't change the band's operating methods. Tommy: "people get the feeling you're no longer their little secret. They want you to be special to them, and they're afraid you'll be transformed into this Bon Jovi-esque thing. People thought we did, but that was their own misconception."

Bob Stinson: "How did it [the signing] affect the band? I don't think it really did. We never had to pat each other on the back. We'd just grab a beer, and [say], 'Gimme

my guitar, let's go play some songs.' I think we carried that attitude out of the basement straight onto the stage.

While the intra-band storm clouds gathered, there were still plenty of good times rolling. The replacements waved goodbye to Twin Tone with their *Shit Hits The Fans* cassette-only release, which was limited to a scarce 10,000 copies, and features some wicked Chris Mars cover art of Bob Stinson as a demonic barber holding a beer in one hand, clippers in the other; next to him a sign reads: "Asylum Cut \$20... or lines."

Its birth came in typically haphazard Replacements fashion, having been surreptitiously recorded by a zealous fan in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where the band played a converted church (the Bowery). It was the last night of a long tour, and the boys wanted to cancel, says Jespersen; it was a Sunday in Oklahoma, after all.

The band's spirits perked up considerably, however, after a fan flung the door open, shouting, "The Replacements are here — my favorite band in the whole world! *Let It Be's* the best album of 1984!" Jespersen: "We're going, 'Holy shit, they knew who the band was!' This is still when we'd pull up at a club and the owner would treat us like shit, and wouldn't give us any free beer, and the band would get pissed off and break things.

The result "made for quite a show," says Jespersen, who recalls holding up the phone so his girlfriend in Minneapolis could hear—the performance! The results speak for themselves; besides the perennial single, "Can't Hardly Wail," the band unveils such obscurities as "I Hear You Been To College," and inevitable oldies demolitions, including Led Zeppelin's "Misty Mountain Hop". Black Sabbath's "Iron Man," and Bad Company's "Can't Get Enough." "That was as friendly to his audience as I ever saw Paul get," Jespersen muses.

And there's plenty more shows where that one came from, according to Bob Stinson: "It got to the point where we were just sick of playing our own songs, let alone finishing one, to begin with. But that's what we did."

Once more, the band had a surprise on the ride home; soundman Bill Mack popped in a tape which sounded suspiciously familiar, until they realized it was the performance they'd just given, says Jespersen. Had Mack not found a tape recorder lying unattended in the balcony, *The Shit Hits The Fans* might never have happened, he says.

"Somebody came back and was very surprised to see their tape missing, I would guess," says Jespersen. "And we just went, 'This is great!' And Westerberg just went, 'Let's put this fucker out!' He was good with those sort of quips [titles]."

Work began on *Tim* (Sire 25330) in June/July 1985, with still another anthem in the chain, "Bastards of Young," which salutes prisoners of rock 'n roll everywhere, in biting line after biting line: "God, what a mess, on the ladder of success/You take one step and miss the whole first rung," is just the start. Westerberg snarls ambivalence throughout: "It beats picking cotton, waiting to be forgiven". "The ones who love us least are the ones we're trying to please." By the end, as if in a self-fulfilling prophecy, the song's mid temp romp collapses into white noise anarchy.

For Bob Stinson and Peter Jespersen, however, the work began to seem like work in the worst sense. While many Replacements fans cite *Tim* as the band's high-water mark ("It rocks in the best way, of all the records," notes Tommy Stinson), both men feel differently about the album.

Jespersen cites "Bastards Of Young," "Left of the Dial," "Swinging Party," "Waitress In The Sky," and "Here Comes A Regular" as *Tim's* pick hits, noting, "It's a harder record for me to listen to. By that time, the band was getting more and more

frustrated with things, and though they should have been further along than they were, I was the scapegoat at that point of their career, so that was where things started to get sticky for me, personally”.

Jespersion’s distaste for *Tim* extends to its Robert Longo cover: “I think the package is the worst cover on any Replacements record ever — not to say Robert Longo’s artwork wasn’t cool, but it didn’t make any sense. They could have put it into a context, in a package that made it look better.”

Much of the tense atmosphere came in clashes pitting the Replacements against producer Erdelyi, whose job was “not to let the band do crazy lunatic things like they’d done on their first four records,” says Jespersen, recalling an idea Westerberg had for his galloping rocker, “Dose of Thunder.”

Westerberg suggested having everyone stick tacks in their heels and stomp on a concrete floor, with the idea of miking it for a marching feel. But when mixing time came, Westerberg pushed the stomping up; Erdelyi pushed it back down.

Finally, the exasperated Erdelyi said, “Cut it down, or it’ll sound like a Slade song.” Retorted Westerberg: “That’s what it’s supposed to sound like.”

Bob Stinson’s evaluations are blunter: “We heard the playback, and I’d go, ‘These are out takes.’ And they’d go, ‘This is good.’” Blame should be distributed between those two fuckers, [engineer] Steve [Fjelstad] and Tom Erdelyi. They did not listen to us at all”

Had he been allowed more say in the matter, “Half the songs on there wouldn’t have gone on there,” Stinson avers.

An even further complication was that Bob Stinson and Paul Westerberg no longer got along. “It could have gone all kinds of different ways,” Stinson says. “We were all tired of each other. I assure you of one thing — Paul was not tired of me. There were a few times when we’d go to rehearsals, and he goes, ‘Just play this.’ That was completely unacceptable. It was on the spot or nothing, just like it was always in the beginning. I was a little irritated, but you get what you wait for.”

Personal memories aside, *Tim* still stands out as a remarkable record, by any measure. As already noted, the band’s boisterous spirit stood tall in “Bastards of Young,” “Dose of Thunder,” and “Left of the Dial,” whose swipe at music business politics (“Read about you band in some local page/it didn’t mention you name”) came from hearing a friend’s song fading out on his radio: “And if I don’t see you, babe, I’ll know why/I tried to find you, left of the dial” (the unlucky friend was guitarist Lynn Blakely, who’d toured with Lets Active.)

Insecurity also abounded from the opening bell of "Hold My Life" ("Time for a decision to be made/crack up in the sun, or lose it in the shade"), to the narrator desperate for someone's attention ("Kiss Me On The Bus"), and a marvelous ballad, "Swingin' Party" ("If being afraid is a crime, we hang side by side/At the swingin' party down the line"), whose mock lounge ending is a perfect musical complement to every dreary social gathering imaginable.

And no one could have prepared for the closer, "Here Comes A Regular." Armed with just an acoustic guitar, Westerberg lets down his defenses, searching for that elusive Replacements feeling, peace of mind: "When a drinking buddy that's bound to another town/And once the police made you go away/And even if you're in the arms of someone's baby now/I'll take a great big whiskey to you anyway." The climax is unforgettable: "And everybody wants to be someone here/Someone's gonna show up, never fear/Here comes a regular/Call out your name/Here comes a regular/Am I the only one/who feels ashamed?"

To Jespersen, "Here Comes A Regular" was *Tim's* transcendent moment. Westerberg would only record the song if nobody could see him playing it in the studio. "There's grown men in the control booth with lumps in their throats the size of bowling balls, afraid he's gonna finish the take and see everybody in tears," says Jespersen. "There wasn't anybody in punk rock or alternative music doing that kind of thing. I wonder if you trace back this [MTV] *Unplugged* phenomenon, you might find Paul at the very top of it.

When all was said and done, *Tim's* chart performance fell short of its critical acclaim. It debuted at #192 on *Billboard's* Top 200 for February 1, 1986 and peaked at #183 two weeks later (February 15) for a seven-week run. With rumors of Bob Stinson's increasing failure to perform adequately and Jespersen's own performance coming under tighter scrutiny, the stage was set for a major changing of the guard in mid-1986, right before the Replacements' first European tour.

Jespersen got the axe first. His firing, he remembers, came during an intensely difficult period, starting with Warner Brothers' feeling that the group lacked "some proper New York Management." Since he'd never been an organized business person, Jespersen agreed ("there was a lot of stuff I was not equipped for"), but the group's growing tensions and ardent desire to clean house dictated a different outcome.

"It just got to the point where Paul said to me, 'I'm really unhappy with a lot of things, and I'm to the point when I get mad, I want to start swingin', and I don't want you in the way, catching any punches,'" says Jespersen, who emphasizes time has since mended his relationship with the boys.

Plenty of mud has flown over Bob Stinson's exit from the Replacements, which followed shortly after the band played two nights at the Ritz in New York City (May 20-21, 1986). The official story holds that the group couldn't continue with its errant guitarist, whose alcohol problems were ruining his playing; it's also been said the new album's direction wasn't a district Stinson cared to visit.

To Westerberg, his earlier pact of musical co-existence with Bob Stinson was no longer an option. "It got to the point where I couldn't grow and write the kind of songs I wanted to with basically a punk/metal guitar player wailing his ass off on every song," he told *Musician* in June 1987. "I always like writing songs I thought the band could get off on; that they could shine on. I ran out of ideas that Bob could shine on."

While the replacements were moving in new, lower-key areas — as seen in "Swingin' Party" and "Here Comes A Regular" — "it wasn't like Bob could have done it," says Jespersen. "He certainly is not stupid, and he may have been too screwed up

to handle the finesse of those songs. There were many moments where Bob would take that crazy “Bob” approach, and it didn’t fit. There was a number of situations where people would sit and smile and nod, and when it all came out in the wash, his track wasn’t very usable in the mix.”

Bob Stinson asserts he was never fired he remembers a phone call from Westerberg saying “I don’t want to work with you anymore.” He agreed, and hung up. The band’s personal conflicts were only half the story, he said.

“We just had to weed out the barn, and take a good long time away from each other. I never hung out with Tommy. I was always on my own, doing my own shit, getting myself into trouble. Whereas Tommy and Paul felt like they had to be together to do it themselves. They had to do that cool, “We hang out together” type of thing, where I never did,” Stinson asserts.

When the axe fell on Stinson (“the noose was pulled tight enough so it just suffocated, anyway”), the band had begun working on its next album, *Pleased To Meet Me*. He says tapes exist with his playing, which has also been confirmed by Jespersen and Stinson’s “replacement,” Bob “Slim” Dunlap. However, by the time work on them continued, Stinson was out of the picture for good.

“It was just a mess with each other,” he says. “We didn’t see eye-to-eye on anything, mainly me and Paul. The songs we did — they dumped probably half of ‘em — but the ones we were going to do were better than the ones that ended up on there [*Pleased To Meet Me*].”

Had those songs been released in their original form, Stinson figures, “that would have been our second wind.” Credited on bootlegs as being from August 1986, they include early takes of “Valentine” and “Red Red Wine,” which went on *Pleased To Meet Me*; and some wonderful unreleased curiosities (“Bundle Up,” which is apparently a mislabeling of a surf-rock chestnut, “Bongo Rock”; “Empty Is Your Heart,” also credited as “Put An Ad In The Paper”; and “Time Is Killing Us”). The sound is ragged, but the spirit is intact, raising more questions on “what might have been.” (Jespersen doesn’t specifically recall “Empty Is Your Heart,” but remains certain that Bob Stinson’s on the other tracks.)

With Stinson’s departure, the Replacements’ original “one for all” image fell by the wayside, a fact the former guitarist isn’t slow to point out: “He [Paul] started to shuffle things around, [and] get somebody else to play Bob’s part, but he never took into account no one could take my place. All four of us were the Replacements, and I don’t think he saw that. I don’t think any of us did. There was no big difference. Things come and go; nothing lasts forever, I knew that all along.”

For Chris Mars, “It was never quite the same” after Stinson’s departure: “There’s a chemistry that comes together, and Bob had such a presence on stage, but when he was gone, I felt that emptiness from behind the drums.” While he rates *Pleased To Meet Me* highly (“we were still trying to capture the spirit of the band”), Mars feels that emptiness “really showed up on the last two records, *Don’t Tell A Soul* and *All Shook Down*.”

Would a monster hit early in the band’s career have changed the picture? Jespersen has often pondered that question: “I always think there’s a parallel universe where ‘I Will Dare’ was a smash hit, and ‘Can’t Hardly Wait’ was the follow-up, and the Replacements got famous in this parallel universe at that point. To me, it’s like something really went wrong. Had we done things a little differently, or had we pushed in one direction more on ‘I Will Dare,’ that very thing could have happened.”

With *Pleased To Meet Me* (Sire 25557), the Replacements entered a new era, recording it as a trio in Memphis with help from famed producer Jim Dickinson, who'd done many of the classic Stax/Volt Southern-fried rock-soul records (including the Boxtops' "The Letter," featuring none other than Alex Chilton). Westerberg played the lead guitar parts, and some of the keyboards, too, but the 'Mats didn't remain a threesome for long, as they sought some additional, low-key help from their new guitarist, Bob "Slim" Dunlap, who adopted the nickname to avoid confusion with his departed predecessor.

Dunlap describes himself as a "journeyman side musician — been in 100 bands, none of 'em worth a damn," he chuckles. "You can join bands that are successful; with me, it's always been the tunes. That's what appealed to me about playing with Paul, because his songwriting's just so damn good."

The Replacements' difficulties weren't a well-kept secret. Dunlap knew how Westerberg, in particular, felt about the future. "The band could not continue walking there and be awful. Sooner or later, people are going to think, 'Maybe they are just bad,'" he says.

Dunlap wasn't interested in the vacant guitar slot, but signed aboard one night after a casual jam with the Replacements, who'd bumped into him at a session. "They were not the most career-conscious people I've ever known. There was no master plan with the Replacements; it just kind of happened," he says.

While fans argue over who fit the band better, Dunlap didn't worry about "replacing" Bob Stinson: "It wasn't something that I constantly thought about: 'How can I be better than Bob?' 'How can I be more outlandish than Bob?' I personally don't feel too comfortable walking around in a dress, so that was completely out of the question!"

Instead, Dunlap took the approach of being "Paul's confidante that he could be bad in front of, and not worry about it," he says.

There was only one problem. By the time the Replacements brought him aboard, Dunlap had little to do, as *Pleased to Meet Me* was nearly done. Dunlap, whose main suggestions, he recalls, was in persuading Paul to leave "Valentine" on the record, didn't mind: "Sometimes, when you hear something, and it's done, a lot of musicians put something on their anyway, so they can be on it [a track], and sometimes, it's unnecessary. That little thing you add might fuckin' wreck it."

After all the drama of initiating a new guitarist, and the inevitable "will they have a hit single?" question, fans could have been forgiven for wondering how the Replacements would rise to the occasion.

"We did just them (records)," says Tommy Stinson. "We didn't consider anyone's praises or lashings when we did. I think, in the end, it made people appreciate the scenario of us having no direction. They (Warner Brothers) just said, 'You do what you wanna do, and we'll just sell you the best we can.' They did what they could for us."

From its opener, "IOU," whose thunderous guitars easily backed up by its bold sentiments, and improvised chorus ("Want it in writing/IOU nothing"), *Pleased To Meet Me* answered those questions affirmatively, and broadened the band's four-to-the-floor attack with extra keyboards, horns, and even a choir of strings for the reworked "Can't Hardly Wait."

The album effectively pleads the band's case in a more straightforward context than previous efforts, without sacrificing an ounce of energy. Paul's balladeering abilities reached new heights with the solo "Skyway," and even headed to the lounge

for “Nightclub Jitters.” In the case of “I Don’t Know,” he takes on the band’s critics (“Did you make a fortune? / I don’t know / Or don’t you wanna tell?”), while a horn section shivers underneath in agreement.

In addition to “IOU,” the group pulled off a trio whiplash rockers: the self-explanatory “Shootin’ Dirty Pool”; “Valentine,” which included some of Westerberg’s tenderest sentiments (“Tonight makes love to all your kind / Tomorrow’s thinking / Valentines”); and Red Red Wine,” whose lyrics are among his silliest (“As long as it is red / set ‘em up until we’re dead”).

And nobody could accuse Westerberg of backing off sensitive subjects, “The Ledge” takes a minor-key journey through a would-be suicide’s mind (I’m the boy they can’t ignore / For the first time in my life, I’m sure”), but leaves no doubt, and no hope (“Policeman reaches from the sill / Watch him try and do his best / There’ll be no medal pinned to his chest”).

While it remained an outstanding live moment in concert, “The Ledges’s” video didn’t win any hearts and minds at MTV, which banned it on the dubious grounds that it would encourage suicide (!). How the omnipotent cable music channel gathered that from the video — which featured the band in a room, and not much else — is anyone’s guess, but MTV’s reaction was enough to prod Warner Brothers to produce commercials defending the song, in which Westerberg outlined his intentions. He hadn’t meant to jump on any topical bandwagon, he said; “The Ledge” was his way of saying, “I know what it’s like to feel that way.” (Another Minneapolis alumnus Husker Du’s drummer, Grant Hart, had no better luck with his “All Of My Senses” clip in 1989. Citing federal laws against destroying U.S. government property, MTV refused to show the video because Hart’s shown burning a dollar bill!)

“Slim” Dunlap cites “The Ledge” as a prime example of Westerberg’s fearless writing: “I thought that was a really good thing for a songwriter to take on. Teenage suicide isn’t funny, and it doesn’t have the makings of a big commercial hit. He’s [Paul] a fearless person in many ways, fearful in other ways, but Paul has guts and courage. The Replacements have a lot of respect. We didn’t buckle under to be rich and famous.”

Of natural interest to Replacements fan is “Alex Chilton,” an exuberant, midtempo, three-chord rocker waving tribute to the idol who couldn’t assist them on *Tim*. The lyrics specifically recall what Westerberg and Jespersen did on the afternoon in 1984, when they first met Chilton, who’d been out of sight for some time.

“I remember leaving, getting up, all excited that morning to meet Alex,” says Jespersen now, “and as I was leaving, we had some press to do. I didn’t want Paul to sneak out on me while I was gone, so I went into this room just to say I was leaving, and for him not to disappear.”

The moment Jespersen said where he was going, “He [Paul] shot out of bed like a bullet and said, ‘Can I come along?’ That fannish sort of thing was not a typical Paul trait. So anyway,” the former manager adds, “we jumped in a taxi and went down to St. Mark’s [Place], and that’s what became the substance of ‘Alex Chilton’ lyric.”

The album closes with the reworked “Can’t Hardly Wait,” which floats on top of reminiscent of the ‘60s Memphis soul sound slicked up for the ‘80s radio. Westerberg sings with gusto amid the intrusive extra production. Jespersen ranks *Pleased To Meet Me* among his favorite Replacements LPs, but isn’t keen on the revamped “Can’t Hardly Wait”: I think it’s a really, really lame version.” He declines comment on the lyric, which was originally tied to a specific subject in the group’s life.

Whatever the “suits” may have thought about the group’s lack of master plans, *Pleased To Meet Me* significantly bettered the Replacements’ chart track record. Upon its

May 30, 1997 release, it debuted at #18 on the *Billboard* Top 200 chart, reaching a peak of #131 by August 22, for a total of 19 weeks.

The new era marked another change, as well. While *Time* had only yielded one promotional goodie - a double-sided 12-inch of "Kiss Me On The Bus" (Sire PRO-2412) - *Pleased To Meet Me* produced no less than five. Among the more notable items are "An Interview With Paul Westerberg" (Sire WBMS-148), two remixes of "Can't Hardly Wait" (one by Jimmy Iovine), and a double 12-inch of "Alex Chilton" (Sire PRO-2761, featuring a photo of the song's subject and blurbs about the band.

However, the net result didn't improve the overall picture, according to Dunlap; though the Replacements had no public desires to become a Top 40 property, Warner's expectations dictated otherwise for the next album.

"Paul is a difficult guy to produce," he says. "I've watched him trip up many a producer. He does have an anarchistic attitude. A producer's role is somewhat authoritarian to other situations, and that did not ever fly with the Replacements."

However, the group's combustive chemistry didn't give producers or Warner Brothers' "suits" pause in trying to impose their own agendas on the group, says Dunlap: "They (Warner Brothers) never really knew what they had. They thought they could work it into something different."

To Warner Brothers, that "something" was a hit single. Their desire for one affected the Replacements' final four years drastically; in that time, the group would release just two more albums (with notable two-year gaps between them), and complete a final tour with only two surviving founders - Tommy Stinson and Paul Westerberg.

From The Ledge To The Last: 1987-1991

For nearly a decade, the Replacements had thrived on reckless instinct and their who-gives-a-shit approach, baffling writers looking for a secret behind the attitude. Their reactions were natural in the trend-hungry world on '80s rock 'n roll, in which such minor outfits as the Outfield and the Unforgiven won their five minutes as the "next big thing".

In reality, the Replacements' sole secret was their glaring lack of one; their agenda wasn't so much a smokescreen as a blank screen, a quality not lost on Bob Dunlap when he joined.

"Sometimes, if you want to be rich and famous," he says, "you have to gear your music around that. The great thing about the Replacements is they never really took it seriously, never planned on being wealthy. I was proud to be in a band like that."

With Dunlap in the guitar saddle, the band became a more consistent live entity, though sets varied tremendously from night to night, as proven by tapes from the Rivera Theatre (Chicago, Illinois, November 14, 1987) and Maxwell's (Hoboken, New Jersey, April 1987).

However, by Dunlap's admission, the lack of master plans didn't always assure the smoothest-working band: "A lot of the decisions they made, I paid the price right along with them. If you really felt strongly about something, you wanted them to do this or do that, you didn't in your wildest dreams expect they would."

However, in Warner Brothers' view, the Replacements' lack of business foresight appeared ripe for change, starting with the new album, *Don't Tell A Soul* (Sire 25831) (1989). Inherent in that change was the drive to create a hit single, which tested the band's resolve to no end; the choice of producer Matt Wallace (Faith No More, the New Monkees) also appeared to signal a decisive change in strategy.

The Replacements' two-year layoff produced no shortage of new songs to rehearse, as Dunlap recalls. But the label's hunger for a hit threw an extra spanner into the works, which Dunlap summarizes as, "It was either, 'Having a fucking hit, or goodbye, Jack'. It was down to that."

He recalls that Warner Brothers even sent Paul Westerberg home during *Don't Tell A Soul's* creation "just to come up to a couple more singles. They wanted that one packed with singles."

Ironically, the plan backfired in classic fashion, says Dunlap: "Paul was determined to come up with something that was a hit, and he wrote a bunch of songs that everyone was saying, 'We have one or two of 'em that's a hit for sure,' but no one could agree on which one or two they were!"

For Chris Mars, that ever-elusive hit and the accompanying musical changes - including the use of click tracks, horns and strings - were too much to swallow: "Things got more homogenous, with producers telling you what to do, I think that started with *Don't Tell A Soul*. The producers on the last record were telling you what you can and can't play. That kind of thing can take all the fun out of it."

While Mars empathized with Westerberg's desire to steer into new territory, he recalls being less than enamored with the results: "I think Paul was consciously trying to get away from the punk image. I [the atmosphere] got so closed-minded to the point where I'd say my opinion, but it didn't matter. I didn't like the tempos, or the way the songs were done. Laid-back songs are fine, but not a whole album of 'em."

Depending on how fans looked at it, *Don't Tell A Soul* was either a breathtaking and inevitable leap into the mainstream, or a forced attempt at snagging the elusive hit. Its best tracks - "Talent Show," "Achin' To Be," "We'll Inherit The Earth," "I'll Be You," "Asking Me Lies" - recalled the old glories in a glossier format, which added keyboards, layered harmony vocals and acoustic guitars to the stew. Even such minor songs as "Back To Back" or "They're Blind" offered notable production and lyrical twists to keep the old edge; whether you wanted that trend to continue depended on your personal taste. Ironically, in typical Replacements fashion, the album splits diehards down the middle; they either like it or they don't.

The *Trouser Press Record Guide's* fourth edition (1991) conceded as much. Reviewers Ira Robbins and Elizabeth Phillips agree *Don't Tell A Soul's* "better qualities have emerged over time," but decide "the 'Mats' previous glories tinge the record with disappointment," especially coming on the coattails of *Pleased To Meet Me*. They conclude, "rather than the previous album's reach-out-and-grab-someone impact, *Don't Tell A Soul* is merely an uneven collection of songs."

Dunlap himself calls *Don't Tell A Soul* "almost a parody record of a hit record. It's Paul sly use of the tools of a commercially successful hit record. Some of them are hit songs, but with one little thing missing."

Not all the changes were musical this time around. Westerberg had begun shifting from the 'Mats-versus-the-world themes on previous albums in favor of more private passions. The old attitude worked to glorious effect on "Talent Show" ("We ain't much to look at, so/Close you eyes, here we go/We're playin' at the talent show") and "They're Blind" ("They hold you close to the light/And I see what they only might/If they learn/But they're lettin' you burn/'cause they're blind"). However, the obligatory ballad, "Rock 'n Roll Ghost," and the midtempo, countryish "Achin' To Be" ("Well, I saw one of your pictures/There was nothing that I could see/If one's on you canvas, I'm achin' to be") seemed the best clues to his future priorities.

Seemingly eager to burn previous rhetorical bridges behind him, Westerberg laid down those priorities in *Musician's* February 1989 cover story: "This time more than any, the songs aren't about the Replacements." Declaring that, "There are other things to write about," he acknowledged, "It's been hard for me to do, but I've come to grips with the fact that I'm an artist. For years I pretended I wasn't."

Implicit in that pretense, Westerberg admitted, was an equal one, whether hit records mattered: "It's almost embarrassing not to have had one by now. It's like you start out and you want as big a hit record as the Beatles. And then you realize that ain't cool, you don't want to have hits. Well, now I do. We should have a hit."

Such comments were fighting words for older fans, but *Don't Tell A Soul* performed well enough by Replacements standards. It debuted at #150 on *Billboard's* Top 200 chart (February 18, 1989), and rose to a peak of #57 less than a month later (March 1), for 19 weeks. That tripled Tim's chart residency, and equaled *Pleased To Meet Me's* own 19-week run.

The "I'll Be You" / "Date To Church" single (Sire/Reprise) didn't fare badly, either, scoring a solid #1 on *Billboard's* Album Rock singles chart (March 25, 1989; figures based on airplay). While its angst didn't make "The Ledge" a commercial proposition, "I'll Be You's" more personal brand ("Lonely, I guess that's where I'm from") came remarkably close. Westerberg's knack for mixing sweet and sour ("If this is just a lull/Why am I bored right out of my skull?") is used to truly imaginative effect, down to a call-and-response vocal trick ("Hurry up, hurry up") which wouldn't disgrace any Top 40 writer. The B-side, a funky gospel collaboration with Tom Waits, preserved the group's penchant for offbeat experimentation.

The big push didn't end there; Warner Brothers also tried double-sided 12-inch records of "I'll Be You" (Sire/Reprise PRO-3419) and "Achin' To Be" (Sire/Reprise PRO-3606), and a CD-only one for "Back To Back" (Sire/Reprise PRO-3496). Further augmenting those efforts was a CD-only radio sampler, *Inconcerated Live*, which Sire has recently indicated an interest in releasing legitimately, due to its rapidly-bootlegged status. Recorded live in Madison, Wisconsin (June 1989), it features blistering takes on "Here Comes A Regular," "Talent Show," "Answering Machine," and the Only Ones' "Another Girl, Another Planet," and is a worthwhile addition to any fan's shelf.

All these moves should have hoisted the Replacements toward the brass ring. Typically, they backfired, just when the band needed the luck most. The most dramatic evidence came during the summer of 1989, when Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers sought the Replacements' services as an opener on their headlining tour, which lasted from June to August.

From the start, the Petty slot, which expected the 'Mats to summarize their story in barely 45 minutes, was a dispirited grind, "doomed from the get-go," says Bob Dunlap, since the call came "when we'd been on the road already too long."

"It was just kind of a weird atmosphere," he recalls. "We'd never really played to an audience of cold people that didn't know who we were. It wasn't a good idea - the band was tired, anyway. I think it showed us what happens if you do become successful. 'Cause Tom Petty was just a museum, and we just watched them go through this completely sterile, bad show every night. And we just had to react the opposite way."

Those reaction, says Dunlap, ironically took root in resurrecting the old Replacements devil-take-the-hindmost attitude toward live performance, especially if the crowd was a bad one: "Sometimes, they cheered for 'I'll Be You.' Some of the girls knew the words to 'I'll Be You,' but they [crowds] just didn't know the words to any of our stuff."

On such nights, says Dunlap, "the shows were actually fun as shit, 'cause when crowds hated the Replacements, it was 'Oh, boy, here we go!'" (Dunlap's comments are confirmed by recently discovered bootleg videos of that tour, in which the audience just sits on its hands during the 'Mats' slot!)

While the Heartbreakers appreciated that attitude, their star employer did not, as Dunlap recalls: "He [Petty] tried desperately to get us all in line, and he just was not the person capable of doing that, so we got kind of angry. There was a little damage that occurred, perfectly innocent rock 'n roll type damage. Tom Petty just treated it like it was a big, terrible room in his career!"

For better or worse, Dunlap squeezed a song out of it, "The Ballad Of The Opening Band," which appears on his solo album, *The Old New Me* (MCR 89231-2) (1993). Westerberg himself cites the tour's crushing disappointment, which doused ice water on anyone's thought of hits, as a critical moment toward the band's demise.

The tour's traumas splintered the Replacements' spirits, driving an open wedge into their already-fractured relationships. While they'd never enjoyed anything in common - beyond that mythical lack of high school diploma - the Replacements had at least remained safe behind a united attitude, which had spurred on their best and worst performances. Even if nobody admitted to being close friends, there were good times and good songs aplenty.

But with the masses apparently more indifferent than ever to the 'Mats' charms, sloppy or polished, there seemed nowhere left to go, especially in light of each member's growing desire to do their own thing.

Chris Mars began delving into four-track recording at this time, which prefaced his two solo albums, *Horseshoes And Hand Grenades* (Smash 513198) (1992), and *75% Less Fat* (Smash 888 004) (1992). "Things were falling apart. It was my reaction to the lack of us being together," he says now, while Tommy Stinson quietly continued learning the guitar, though he wasn't completely in the songwriting derby ("I left that up to Paul").

When the Replacements resurfaced for air in 1990, and began working on *All Shook Down* (Sire, 26298), it was in a radically different working atmosphere. Gone was any pretense of a group effort, such as on *Pleased To Meet Me*, where Dunlap, Mars, and Stinson were credited for arranging Westerberg's songs; even *Don't Tell A Soul's* closer, 'Darlin' One,' had been credited to the Replacements collectively.

Instead, the new prevailing work ethic meant "replacing" time with such sessioners as drummer Charlie Drayton and Tom Petty keyboardist Benmont Tench. The surviving 'Mats played in varied combinations on each track, and worked together on just one, "Attitude," which Mars remembers as their final studio effort. Such steps begged the obvious: the Replacements existed in name only.

Ironically, *All Shook Down* began as Westerberg's solo debut, until Warner Brothers imposed a different agenda, says Dunlap, Mars and Tommy Stinson.

Regardless of its beginnings, or creation, Tommy Stinson thinks *All Shook Down* had the best writing of any Replacements album. "He [Paul] wanted it to be a solo album," Stinson recalls, "but they [Warner Brothers] said we should do one more record because we'd built up this great fan base with *Don't Tell A Soul*, and they thought it'd be a better way for setting us up for solo things. They'd thought it'd be more lucrative for us to do one [final Replacements record]. Whether or not it was, nobody knows."

Mars has no doubts: "Paul had started recording it [*All Shook Down*] without telling anybody. I think Tommy was the first to find out - Tommy got all huffy and wanted to fly to New York where Paul was. Then me and Slim found out. We didn't have much to do with it. It was just weird to me - but we'd toured with Tom Petty. He

was doing the same thing with *Full Moon Fever*, and that's where he [Paul] got the bee in his bonnet from."

However, when Westerberg resigned himself to waving the 'Mats' banner one final time, Warner Brothers wasn't overjoyed by the results, as Dunlap remembers: "I think the actual indication was that *Don't Tell A Soul* had been somewhat successful by their standards, and they wanted #2." But he encouraged Westerberg to pursue his own vision, regardless of what the label expected, which was middle-period album of non-stop rockers.

"I don't think Warner Brothers really knew what was going on," he adds. "It was pretty obvious that everyone had grown apart. Tommy and Chris were frustrated solo artists in their own right. That record is seen as an example of the record you shouldn't make, and I think that's so sad, because it's a really great record, and a really brave record."

Indeed, nobody could accuse Westerberg of backing down creatively; *All Shook Down* remains an intriguing collection of songs that seems somewhat watered down the extra musical cast. *Trouser Press Record Guide* reviewers Elizabeth Phillips and Ira Robbins slammed the album as "stultifying," with "lightweight songs that resemble the Replacements," but truthfully, that's only half the story.

It's also Westerberg's least compromising work; the album wanders all over the map, from rockers ("Happy Town," "Bent Out Of Shape," "Merry Go Round," the latter enough to merit release as a single) to pensive tranquillity ("Sadly Beautiful," an ode to Marianne Faithfull featuring John Cale's viola), and the mandatory intra-group bulletins ("Someone Take The Wheel"). For those still keeping score, the scorching duet with Concrete Blonde bassist Johnette Napolitano ("My Little Problem") came closest to recapturing the old glories, sound wise and image-wise.

Still, the album's dominant mood was dark and claustrophobic. Its titles ("All Shook Down," "Torture," "Nobody," and "Where It Began") hinted at someone battling their insecurities, who doubted the intentions of those around them. Not since Pete Townsend's true confessions on *The Who By Numbers* album (1975) had a songwriter opened his closet with such reckless abandon (even if *All Shook Down's* pace lacked the former album's venom).

Just in case nobody got the point, the album's closer is "The Last," a piano-based ode to sobriety ("It's too early to run tomorrow / It's too late to run like hell") which sums up the group's myth in three minutes ("This one's your last chance / to make this last one really the last"); its closing question is well in keeping with the group's spirit (Are you too proud to ask / Is it such a big task / Remember, last one was your last"). *All Shook Down* may not have been the record Warner Brothers or the fans wanted, but its honesty was what they needed.

Sales-wise, the fans responded; *All Shook Down* opened at #109 in *Billboard's* Top 200 chart (October 13, 1990) and hit a respectable #69 one week later, It stuck around for 14 weeks. For those who couldn't get enough, there was one final promotional item, the *Don't Buy Or Sell It's Crap* EP (Sire/Reprise PRO-4632) (1991). It contains two unique *All Shook Down* out takes (Tommy Stinson's "Satellite" and "Kissin' In Action"), one from *Don't Tell A Soul* (the rather ordinary "Ought To Get Love"), and a ramshackle Bob Dylan parody of "Like A Rolling Stone," retitled "Like A Rolling Pin," which Dylan allegedly caught the 'Mats recording, since both were sharing studios at the time. Judging by the wobbly results, Dylan's own reaction can easily be imagined! To Dunlap, depression's in the eye of the beholder, especially since "a lot of the songs, at first listen appeared to be centered more around his [Paul's] situation, where other [records] had been about the band."

You couldn't call a song 'The Last' without it being a bittersweet look back," he asserts. "When It Began's" like that. 'When It Began' [whose chorus asserts 'It's nothing like/when it began'] is such a happy, great single, and the words do sum up the feeling of someone looking back on the old days. His songs have such a great emotional climax point, where it turns on a heart sleeve."

Mars acknowledged Westerberg had been struggling for a long time, on how he could carry the band's weight, when the old image of raw youth was harder to maintain: "It became more of a spectacle, and a circus. I think Paul was struggling with it, too. That's why he got more and more serious on songs like 'Rock 'n Roll Ghost.' The more personal songs were Paul's. He was thinking about the future and where he wanted to go."

However, Mars has fewer fond memories of *All Shook Down*; the proliferation of session men and the new direction forced him to hand in his cards in November 1990. "From that point on, we were working less and less as a band. We'd tour, and then would part our ways," he says.

Caught by *Musician* in December 1990 Westerberg left no doubt where things stood: "It was taking a real attitude of 'The band is over, I don't care what happens, I'm just gonna write some songs.'"

His feelings also meant lack of interest flying the 'Mats flag: "There is a band called the Replacements, but that doesn't mean Slim can't go play with someone else and Tommy can't make a demo on his own," he noted. "No one was fired, nobody quit." Westerberg also defended his method ("Chris is the perfect drummer for the Replacements circa 1985. And it's 1990." his will to succeed ("I still would like this band to be successful. But I won't go down with the ship"), and handling the fan's expectations ("Being in the 'Mats for so long and *wallowing* in the Replacements' attitude had grown stale as anything"). For himself, Mars begs to differ: "If there was any lack of chops, it was producers trying to tell you what to do, and that took all the fun out of it."

After Mars quit, the Replacements filled his seat with Steve Foley (who turned up in Tommy Stinson's Bash & Pop), and began another tour. To fans, it seemed like business as usual, with the band rolling up its sleeves and going back to work. But the story was much different on the inside, as everyone remembers now.

Nobody, least of all Westerberg, state the end was inevitable, says Dunlap, who acknowledges "failure was kind of a sick joke in our band." To him, those sentiments were subtle, but obvious: "Basically, continuing to put out albums as the Replacements meant going back on the road and playing the Replacements' songs again, and that's what was getting old. That's the horrible part of having a hit; you get saddled with the sucker forever."

While Westerberg has dismissed the *All Shook Down* tour as "a traveling wake for 90 people," Dunlap enjoyed the proceedings; since it was the last Replacements outing, there was no pressure anymore, he says. For those who want proof, bootleggers preserved a remarkable show on video from Rotterdam (April 10, 1991), which opens with such rarely-heard songs as "Nightclub Jitters," features Tommy singing his own "Satellite," and radically reworks mid period fare like "Never Mind" and "The Ledge." It remains one compelling reminder of how good a night out the Replacements were, even at the end. The *Don't Tell A Soul* and *All Shook Down* material fared much better live, too, as shown by any number of audience tapes from that tour (including The Warfield, San Francisco, California, 1/16/91; The Orpheum, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2/6/91; Portland Oregon, 6/27/91).

"I remember that night with 90 people in Holland," says Dunlap. "That's just the way it goes. The band walked from a gig going, 'What a nightmare,' but Paul had a hard time. He had to face the critical acclaim of *All Shook Down* more than we did, and he had to face the nagging questions of 'Would he go solo?' So a lot of things got wrapped into that tour. I don't think the actual tour went all that bad."

For Tommy Stinson, the end wasn't long in coming, "because we'd known we were getting bored," he says. "We'd gotten to a point where we'd seen it, played it, and had done the 'Mats thing, and it was time for us to try things on our own, which were the most challenging for us to do."

Paul Westerberg, *Rolling Stone*, June 1993: "We weren't clicking as a group. The only time we did things together were destructive things from the early days. It was 'All for one and all for all, let's break this table.' We ran out of things that we do well together."

However, even in the tour's twilight days, which ended after a July 4, 1991 show in Chicago's Lincoln Park, the group could still slug it out with anyone on a live stage, as tapes of the widely-bootlegged FM broadcast show. The group burns rubber in all four gears through its *All Shook Down* material, and reaches its climax in raucous last call versions of "I'll Be You," "Within Your Reach," "Can't Hardly Wait," and "Hootenanny."

For one last time, the group put its differences on hold, and kept the flying wedge moving; somehow, to the end, the Replacements were still the Replacements. However, with four solo careers in the making, and the group's name effectively cast by the wayside, nothing would ever be the same.

From Replacements to Free Agents: 1991-1993

With the Replacements' demise a reality, critics far and wide rushed to claim discovery rights, while fans awaited for the inevitable solo careers. In both camps' minds was a nagging question: Who'd had the creative vision, and who'd spoiled the party?

To Bob Stinson, now in the Bleeding Hearts, recording their debut CD, the interest in his old band seems ironic, if not long overdue: "Everybody keeps pouring gasoline on the fire. They've got to realize it isn't us anymore, it's just the ghosts that everybody seems to see."

As the solo projects proved, those ghosts had plenty of creative life left in them.

Paul Westerberg had already broken the solo taboo with his "Backlash" duet with Joan Jett (#7, *Billboard* Modern Rock Singles Chart for September 1991). His next move, writing two songs for Cameron Crowe's much-ballyhooed film on "twenty something" angst, *Singles*, didn't yield major answers to anyone's questions. Still, the frothy "Dyslexic Heart," which employed a nagging "na-na-na-na" chorus to drive its point, and the more uptempo, "Waiting For Somebody," were truer to the film's spirit and made welcome counterpoint to the soundtrack LP's more "obvious" Seattle fare, which also include Pearl Jam, Mother Love Bone and Soundgarden (Epic 52476), and landed in the Top 10.

Meanwhile, Westerberg's former rhythm partners in crime teamed up on separate solo efforts to steal his thunder in 1992.

Chris Mars neatly shook off his former job description ("hey, there goes the ex-Replacements drummer") with a nifty solo debut, *Horseshoes And Hand Grenades* (Smash 513 198), which won breathless press, as well as a few raised eyebrows over song titles

("Popular Creeps," "Don't You See It" being two examples) that appeared to air the replacements' dirty linen. The album broke new ground for Mars in several ways—it marked the first time he wrote and sang every song; it utilized his graphic art abilities for the cover; and it neatly showcased his previously-unheard talents on guitar, bass and keyboards.

While Mar's rough vocals didn't make Frank Sinatra lose any sleep, *Horseshoes And Hand Grenades* served notice of his talent, and seemed to indicate the Replacements hadn't been a one-man effort. As if that weren't enough, Mars followed up with an intriguing side project, the '70s tribute band Golden Smog. Its alumni included members of Minneapolis's best and brightest (the Jayhawks, Run Westy Run, Soul Asylum). The band played in Minneapolis and issued a lone CD, *On Golden Smog* (Crackpot 1219, on which Mars appears.

Mars's second solo outing, *75% Less Fat* (Smash 888 004) (1993), picked up where Horseshoes left off, emphasizing punchy rock tunes that seemed strongly influenced by '60s era Kinks (Most notably "Public Opinion"), and starkly autobiographical material, too ("Skipping School," "Candy Liquor"). For the introspective, there was fine ballad — "Whining Horse" — and a red-eyed instrumental, appropriately titled "Nightcap." Neither Golden Smog's efforts nor the two albums made the charts. However, they all made a convincing case for talents of a man billed by writer Bob Surowicz as "rock's least likely hero."

Not to be outdone, Tommy Stinson swapped his bass for a guitar, and teamed with drummer Steve Foley for Bash & Pop's all-out rocking debut, *Friday Night Is Killing Me* (Sire/Reprise 45133), which came closest to recapturing the knockabout "Mats spirit. It made an appealing showcase for Stinson's own songwriting talents, particularly in its mix of high-energy bashers ("Never Aim To Please," "Hangups," "Loose Ends," "Fast 'n' Hard") and intense ballads ("Nothing," "First Step" and the title track). Most remarkable of all, Stinson sang them in a style strongly reminiscent of the Faces' Ronnie Lane. The infectious fun carried over to the accompanying video for "Loose Ends," in which Tommy wore — you guessed it — a dress. Bash & Pop didn't ignite the charts, thought the redoubtable Stinson promised at the time of his album's Spring release to press ahead with a second one, and keep his show on the road, joking: "If they cut off my tour support, then I'll come home!"

"Slim" Dunlap also weighed in with his solo debut, *The Old New Me* (Twin Tone/Medium Cool Records; MCR 89231-2), which came off as an accurate reflection of his low-key, dryly humorous persona (especially in such titles as "Ain't Exactly Good," "Just For The Hell Of It," and "Busted Up"). Dunlap's pedal stayed firmly on the floor, dishing up a good mix of Stone-ish barroom rock, along with the laid-back funk of 'Isn't It,' and more reflective efforts such as "Partners In Crime," and "Taken On (The Chin)." Dunlap's sarcasm reaches a peak in "The Ballad Of The Opening Band," his wicked memory of the 'Mats' disastrous Tom Petty slot ("You were gonna be the singer of the hit parade/'Stead, you're just the singer warmin' up the stage"). The album didn't chart, but Dunlap put his own middle-finger twist on things to Jon Bream of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (August 8): "I think fame in many ways is a prison. And I ain't going to prison." In typical barroom style, Dunlap got on with the job; first, he toured with ex-Georgia Satellite guitarist Dan Baird, no mean 'Mats fan himself, and barnstormed for *The Old New Me* on a fall tour with Dramarama.

Of course, for the diehards, nothing less would suffice than seeing Westerberg's long-awaited debut solo album, *14 Songs* (Sire/Reprise 45133), knock the likes of Michael

Bolton and Whitney Houston off the charts — and cause Michael Jackson to contemplate premature retirement).

That didn't happen, but *14 Songs* didn't perform badly, selling 26,000 copies in its first week (Soundscan figures), and made #44 in *Billboard's* Top 200 (week ending 7/3/93). It dropped to #109 two weeks later, while the vituperative "World Class Fad" / "Seein' Her" single hit a #4 position on *Billboard's* Modern Rock Singles Chart (7/24/93).

For those listening more deeply, *14 Songs* was a textbook primer of Paul Westerberg's best and worst writing tendencies. Those weaned on the Replacements' brand of slop-rock could enjoy "Something Is Me," "Knockin' On Mine," and "A Few Minutes Of Silence," while such ballads as "Runaway Wind," and "First Glimmer" ranked alongside his best efforts ever. Still other songs, such as the punchy pop of "Mannequin Shop," explored Westerberg's concerns about surface behind the image (an old 'Mats theme); others seemed sketchy, or indifferently executed ("Things," "Dice Behind Your Shades"). The album made an uneven ride, but reminded listeners that Westerberg wasn't junking his take-it-or-leave-it attitude.

The resulting 30-plus-date club tour, accompanied by Neighborhoods guitarist David Minehan, and former Raindog bassist Darren Hill, proved to be a sold-out success, and gave critics plenty of opportunity to muse on the 'Mats' legacy, amid suitably reckless covers of Wreckless Eric's "Whole Wide World," the Monkees' "Daydream Believer," and the obligatory "Another Girl, Another Planet."

The *Boston Globe's* Kim Sullivan addressed the issue in an August 13 review of Westerberg's show there: "This may not be the Replacement reincarnated, but it ain't the Twins of 1993 either. There's a reason to believe."

Where do those reasons to believe originate? To the ex-Replacements, that answer has predictable different connotations. While everyone agrees the band's devil-may-care spirit is an important element, nobody's ready to say it's the only element, most notably Peter Jesperson.

"Nothing was sacred, and nothing was uncool, either. Paul could do a cover of [the Jackson Five's] 'I'll Be There' that could bring tears to my eyes. A lot of times that was just a goof-off song. Other times, he would sing fairly straight, and it was amazing. I don't think they were ever afraid to do exactly what they wanted," he says. "They came in with that punk rock sort of scene. They gradually became less afraid to do some of the more honest, more straightforward stuff."

Bob "Slim" Dunlap notes that Westerberg still has a knack for polarizing writers down the middle, citing a hometown reviewer who blasted the song "A Few Minutes Of Silence" as being "three minutes of filler."

"No one ever has been middling about the Replacements," he says. "They either love the band, or really hate the band, and that's a good thing for bands to learn. "You're not too bad, you're not too good, that's the kiss of death. But when something's either completely detestable, or you're completely loved, that's what you're shooting for. I think that's what you're shooting for. I think that's the Replacements' example, the legacy of the band is plenty obvious. People are still in awe. People are still curious."

More pointedly, Dunlap feels all past and present 'Mats can look back on their efforts with pride. "There has to be a way for the business to absorb artists like Paul Westerberg," he asserts. "We've got enough Bon Jovis, and people like — we need some artists. I don't look upon the band as a failure. The daring attitude of 'fuck you,'

and 'I don't care if you like me or not' — that helped a band like Nirvana be more acceptable.

Chris Mars wryly observes the strangeness of "when you go into a mall and see the 'grunge look,' when it's been normal wear in Minnesota for years and years!

"I think it's good to see it with those bands, though, especially Nirvana," he allows. "It's kind of good to see it exploding all over the mainstream. It calls attention to stuff that's not mainstream stuff. That can only help people that fall in that vein."

Like the Replacements, for instance? While the band got "a lot of college radio play" in their prime, says Mars, "all these different little alternative stations just didn't exist.

"I think we've influenced other people more than we expected to. It's one of those things where you turn on the radio and you say, 'Is that an out take that I forgot about?'" he says.

To Mars, the group's legacy rests on its live performances, "that whole 'spectacle/circus thing.' At home, it was maybe more serious on the records. I think I'd probably go more with the live thing because that's what we were known for."

Bob and Tommy Stinson are characteristically irreverent and serious Replacements' legacy, and what it means today.

When asked if he'd change anything about the group, Tommy jokes: "The rhythm section! I think Chris and I were a lousy rhythm section. I think it was more him than me because bass is as important as the snare and the kick, which you hear on every fucking song these days!"

To Bob Stinson, the Replacements' unlikely chemistry made the band run in the way not everyone understood: "Tommy would always be jumping around on the right, I'd have the dresses, Paul would be standing there trying to sing a really pretty song, and it was just a total distraction, all the way around. Four things that were together, but [would] just completely have nothing to do with each other."

From start to finish, Bob Stinson asserts the Replacements were their own entity. "We didn't set out to make it like we were changing the format for a good record: "We like the mistakes, we like the weak sound, we like the bad chords.' We never made any attempt to change ourselves for anybody."

As far as Stinson's concerned, the 'Mats corrosive chemistry isn't being jump-started in solo bands ("I don't know what the deal is, it's like some of us are playing king of the hill," he muses), nor in any reformations.

"Real bands don't get back together. It'd be funny to get us all in a room together 'cause we'd probably immediately drink and drink. Which song would we play? Ours, Chris's Paul's or Tommy's?" he wonders.

The detractors may not have the Replacements to kick around anymore, but if Jespersion gets his way, their legacy may run a few more innings. He compares his own evaluation of that legacy to artists like Dylan, who hit a remarkable streak from *Highway 61* to *Blonde On Blonde* or the Rolling Stones, whose string ran from *Beggar's Banquet* through *Exile On Main Street*.

"The Replacements, to me, really peaked at the point of 'I Will Dare' and 'Can't Hardly Wait,'" says Jespersion. "Not that they got worse after that, but that's where they hit this incredible height, that I thought they were, head and shoulders, better than anybody else in the world.

Replacements fans may some day have a chance to see if they agree with Jespersion's analogies; he still has literally "hundreds and hundreds of hours' of studio

out takes and live tapes which haven't seen the light of day, nor the bootleggers' ever-vigilant eyes.

"Some of it's utter crap, and some of it is really, really good stuff, and I think people would get a big bang out of hearing it," avers Jespersen, who'd like to release a compilation of the unreleased songs with Westerberg's participation. "There's songs that were big, huge songs in their career that never came out on records, things they'd do live for two or three months, these blistering songs like 'Junior's Got A Gun,' or 'Street Girl,'" he notes.

Still other out takes are solo Westerberg performances, recorded in his parents' house or Jespersen's living room. Titles include "It's Hard To Wave In Handcuffs," "You Hold Me In Suspension," "I'm A Bad Worker" (whose telling line is: "I'm a bad worker, my father would be ashamed, I give you minimum effort for a minimum wage"), and lighter songs like "Gas Station Attendant" ("You were fixin' your hair while I was checkin' your air").

While Twin Tone could compile the songs tomorrow, Jespersen's content to wait until Westerberg gives his permission. "I wouldn't want to do it until Paul would be involve, somehow, and I don't think he's ready to look back at the Replacements yet," he says. "I think he's just walking away from it at this point." (At deadline, it was learned Twin Tone has just secured the right to release *Sorry Ma, Stink* and *Let It Be* for the first time in Japan, through its affiliation with Restless Records.)

That's preferable to re-releasing the group's first four albums, which though it's under discussion, isn't nearly as exciting as unreleased out takes, Jespersen acknowledges: "It might be something we could put out, and sell a chunk of it initially, but it doesn't seem like a very interesting thing to do. I'd rather do something more interesting than that."

But until that permission's forthcoming from Westerberg, fans will just have to wait. "We do have the rights to compile some of that stuff, but I don't want to do that without his blessing," says Jespersen. "I would rather have it be at a time when he could look back fondly at it."

On that note, let the final word go to Bob Stinson, who's still unsure of what pulled the band apart, but isn't ready to summarize his experience from the safe perch of hindsight: "We'd have ended up like Slade, or the Ramones — they were together, and are still together, what a frightening thought. They don't even know that they've been together for 20 years!"

You just gotta keep going on — I'm a firm believer in the moment," he vows. "I still play, will always play, that's the only thing I know how to do. There's never really one moment you remember. In the end, if you asked me, 'Was it all worth it?' I'd have to say, 'I don't know, you tell me.' That's what I'd say to any fan. "I'm not the one to decide if it was worth it. It's about the best way I can describe it. It ain't over yet."

Indeed, the Replacements' story may never be over, judging by all of the current interest group. The Replacements were rock 'n roll's brats in Babylon, who broke every rule, kicked down every door, and knocked a hole in every fence imaginable. Only the Clash, the Sex Pistols or the Ramones rival them for sheer impact and long-lasting influence; and, like such peers as the Velvet Underground, their influence far exceeds their actual record sales.

Whether it's their single-minded stage shows, sheer will to succeed or unerringly honest song writing, the Replacements, as the former members observe, remain an endearing reference point for today's generation. They were the ultimate survivors, and the ultimate casualties, whose voices boom wryly and reproachfully from college forms'

CD players and cassette decks. In song after song, today's listener can plug in their own experiences and make a connection with the group's feeling at the time. More than any other band of their era, the Replacements opened their closet, and let the world look inside.

Such acts are brave indeed, and require their creator to go the distance for their art. In this sense, the Replacements tower over the hitbound bands slapping nothing but creative handcuffs on themselves. In a world saturated by MTV and Top 40 agendas, the Replacements threw away the mold and cast their own, for others to follow — often at great cost to themselves.

So here's to the Replacements, individually or collectively; things just wouldn't have been the same without them.

The author wishes to thank the following cast for their insight and support: the former Replacements themselves: Bob Stinson, Tommy Stinson, Chris Mars and Bob "Slim" Dunlap; Peter Jesperson; Sire's publicity staff, for trying to get Paul Westerberg's participation (his touring commitments prevented him from participating in this article); Jon Vlautin, Island Media Relations; Silvio Pietroluongo, *Billboard's* archives research supervisor; David Liebowitz, for compiling this discography; and Neal Umphred, *Goldmine's* #1 troubleshooter, for double-checking things. It wouldn't have been the same piece without any of you.

Mat's Virtual Tour

Most of these photographs taken by Brady Hegberg on 7/5/00.
If you have any suggestions for places to add please send them... bradyh@bitstream.net



2215 Bryant. Bob and Tommy's house - one of the early places the Mats practiced.

Here's the same house on the cover of "Let It Be".



Another view this time a painting found hanging in a Cheapo Records. The painting is about 6 feet wide. I'm not sure who painted it.





The record store where Paul Westerberg gave the Replacement's demo tape to Pete Jespersion.

Right across the street is the CC Club. The Mat's home away from home and the inspiration for "Here Comes a Regular".





The former site of various bars the Mats and their fans hung out in. Oh but isn't it much nicer as a parking lot? <sigh>

Here's what that block looked like prior to becoming a parking lot.





Where they performed so many times over the years.

Another place they performed alot. Bob and Tommy's mom worked here for many years.





Somewhere around here is where the famous photograph of the Mats on the traintracks was taken.

"Up in the skyway/
high above the busy
little one-way" And
BTW - a block up on
the left is where Mary
Tyler Moor threw her
beret in the air at the
beginning of her show.





Bob Stinson's memorial bench. At least I think so. It hasn't been dedicated yet but somebody scratched the word "BOB" into the back of the bench.

Twintone records...where it all happened. Well most of it anyway. Except this isn't really where it happened because they only moved into this building a few years ago. Their former office was about three blocks away where a Vietnamese restaurant is now.





A poster of the Replacements on the wall of Garage D'or in Minneapolis. A few of these posters were created for the appearance on SNL. I believe this particular one was grabbed off the SNL set by Pete Jespersion.

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Known recorded performances by The Replacements

Special thanks to the Skyway website, and the following individuals who contributed:

John Loughney <loughney@NTCGEN01ES.ntc.nokia.com>

Updated by:

Date: Wed, 28 Apr 1999 21:41:25 -0700

From: Pee Brain Sorce <psorce@webworldinc.com>

Updated by:

Date: Sun, 04 Feb 2001

From: Patrick Timlin <ptimlin@yahoo.com>

Longhorn Bar, MPLS 07/17/80 25 VG++ SBD

(I Wanna Be Loved / More Cigarettes / Hey Little Girl / Careless / So Long / Get Off the Telephone / Get on the Stick / I Hate Music / All Day, and All of the Night / All By Myself)

Longhorn Bar, MPLS 12/6/80 30 VG SBD

(More Cigarettes / Drugs / Hangin' Downtown / Slow Down / Off Your Pants / Get Lost / Don't Ask Why / Like You / Been So Long / Careless / Toe Needs a Shoe)

NOTE: Fill is Ace of Spades and You're Getting Married.

7th Street Entry, MPLS 01/30/81 80 EX- FM

(Careless / Taking A Ride / Trouble Boys / Hanging Downtown / Like You / Hands Up / Get Lost / Excuse Me, Use Me / I Wanna Be Loved / I Made A Mistake / This is Your Town / Shiftless When Idle / Oh Baby! / I'm in trouble / Johnny's Gonna Die / More Cigarettes / Otto / Don't Ask Why / Slow Down / Something to Du / Love You til Friday / Raised in the City / Rattlesnake / All Day and All of the Nite / I Hate Music / Shut Up)

NOTE: Lookin for ya and Color me Impressed are attached as filler.

Zoogies, MPLS 04/23/81

(Don't Turn Me Down / Get Lost / Otto / Watch Me Cry / Shiftless When Idle / I Wanna Be Loved / Customer / Rattlesnake / Slowdown / Substitute / Raised in the City / Shup Up / All Day and All of the Night / Love You 'til Friday / I Hate Music / - Temptation Eyes -- / Takin' a Ride / Careless / Trouble Boys / More Cigarettes / Off Your Pants / Don't Ask Why -b- Like You / Something To Du / ?? / I Made a Mistake / Junior's Got a Gun / Thinking of You / My Town / I'm In Trouble -- / Kick Your Door Down / Hanging Downtown / Johnny's Gonna Die / All By Myself)

NOTE: -- indicates a break in the tape.

Zoogies, MPLS 04/23/81 - alternate setlist floating around

(Don't Turn Me Down / Get Set / Otto / Watch Me Cry / Shiftless When Idle / I Wanna Be Loved / Customer / Rattlesnake / Slowdown / Substitute / Raised in the City / Shup Up / All Day and All of the Night / Love You 'til Friday / I Hate Music / Temptation Eyes / Takin' a Ride / Careless / Trouble Boys / More Cigarettes / Off Yer Pants / Don't Ask Why / Black Girl / Something To Do / Shouldn't Let It Bother Me / Just The Other Day / She's Got a Gun / Take A Turn / This Is My Town / I'm In Trouble / Kick Your Door Down / Hanging Downtown / Johnny's Gonna Die

NOTE: -- The first 15 tracks of both Zoogies '81 are circulating as "Unknown 82" as well.

Saint's Roller Rink, Duluth 07/??/82

(Fuck School / Don't Ask Why / Takin' a Ride / Kick Your Door Down / Lookin' For Ya / Ace of Spades / I'm Crying / Johnny's Gonna Die / Color Me Impressed / Kids Don't Follow / I Hate Music / Ain't No Crime / Love You 'Til Friday / Shut Up / Goddamn Job)

Merlyn's, Madison, WI ??/??/82 45 VG+ SBD

(Lookin' For Ya / White and Lazy / Takin' a Ride / Stuck in the Middle / Shoot Me, Kill Me / You Lose / Love You 'Til Friday / Don't Ask Why / Fuck School / Goddamn Job / Kids Don't Follow / Customer / Take Me Down to the Hospital / I Hate Music / Hootenany ---- Shiftless When Idle / Buck Hill / I Wanna Be Loved By You / Dope Smoking Moron / Staples In Her Stomache / ? Don't Tell Me How / Hey Good Lookin' / Kick Your Door Down / Trouble Boys / Otto)

NOTE: Shoot Me, Kill Me is also known as Sex with a Goat, or I Got Steel. After Hootenany, the rest of the tape could be from a different show, or set.

Merlyns, Madison WI 10/31/82

(Kid's Don't Follow / I Wanna Be Loved / Kick Your Door Down / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Rock Around the Clock / Color Me Impressed / Fuck School / Shoot Me, Kill Me / Run It / Takin' a Ride / Ain't No Crime / Otto / Johnny's Gonna Die / Slow Down / Willpower -- Treatment Bound / You Lose / Lovelines / Mr. Whirly / Your Town / Staples in Her Stomach / Ace of Spades / Don't Ask Why / Stuck in the Middle / Goddamn Job / I'm In Trouble / Hangin' Downtown / Love You 'Til Friday / I Hate Music / Gimme Noise / Substitutue / Trouble Boys / Customer)

Replacements Folk City, NYC 04/13/83 60 VG AUD

Navy Island, St. Paul 05/21/83 45 VG+ AUD

(I'm In Trouble / Fuck School / Stuck In The Middle / Color Me Impressed / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Ace of Spades / Goddamn Job / Love You 'Til Friday / Heyday / Favorite Thing / Lookin' For Ya / Buck Hill / Run It / Kids Don't Follow / Customer / Gimme Noise)

Club de Wash, Madison WI 06/08/83

(I Will Dare / Color Me Impressed / Goddamn Job / 18 / Music Is My Life / Ace of Spades / Rock Around the Clock)

7th Street Entry, Minneapolis 06/24/83 aka "Stop Encouraging Us"

Hayday / Stuck in the Middle / Takin' a Ride / Favorite Thing / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Love You Till Friday / I Wanna Be Loved / Job Country (country version of God Damn Job) / Color Me Impressed / Mrs. Brown You've Got a Lovely Daughter / Lookin' for Ya / You Look Like an Adult (Seen Your Video with different lyrics) / Fuck School / Hey, Good Lookin' / Why Flop / White and Lazy / I'm in Trouble / Run it / Will Power / Ace of Spades / You Lose / Temptation Eyes / Buck Hill / Punk Poop (1977) / I Will Dare / Mr. Whirly / Gimme Noise / I Hate Music / I'm Eighteen / Kids Don't Follow

Toad's Place, New Haven CT 07/17/83

(Heyday / I'm In Trouble / You Lose / Color Me Impressed / Will Power / Johnny's Gonna Die / Goddamn Job / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Favorite Thing / Fuck School / Mr. Whirly / I Will Dare / Kids Don't Follow)

The Pier, Raleigh, NC 07/25/83 45 min

(Heyday / I'm In Trouble / Favorite Thing / Will Power / Johnny's Gonna Die / Goddamn Job / Run It / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Color Me Impressed / Dope Smoking Moron / Fuck School / I Will Dare / Temptation Eyes / Kids Don't Follow / Don't Ask Why / Go (cut))

Fitzgeralds, Houston 08/01/83

(Wipe Out / Hayday / Love You 'Til Friday / Lookin' For Ya / Rock Around The Clock / Johnny's Gonna Die / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Favorite Thing / Never Been To College / Trouble Boys / I Will Dare / Goddamn Job / Sixteen Blue / White & Lazy / Color Me Impressed / Kick Your Door Down / Move It On Over / I Hate You / Hey Good Lookin' / Sweet Home Alabama / Mr. Whirly / Johnny B. Goode / Jailhouse Rock / I'll Be There / Did You No Wrong / Mrs. Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter / Gimme Noise / I Walk The Line / I Hate Music / Some Hardcore Shit That Falls Apart Rather Quickly / Willpower/Go)

VFW, Kansas City, MO 08/05/83

(Favorite Thing / Rattlesnake / I Think I'm Going Out of My Head / Fuck School / 16 Blue / Willpower / Goddamn Job / Lawdy Miss Clawdy / I Will Dare / Color Me Impressed)

Folk City, NYC 08/13/83

(Heyday / Takin' a Ride / Godamn Job / Fuck School / Hey Good Lookin' / Run it / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Kids Don't Follow / Johnny's Gonna Die / I'm In Trouble / You Lose / Lookin' For Ya / Willpower / Stuck in the Middle / Temptation Eyes -b- Street Girl / 1977 / 18 / Mr. Whirly / Otto / Rock Around the Clock / Lawdy Miss Clawdy / Gimme Noise / Ace of Spades)

The Palms, Milwaukee 10/19/83

(Goddamn Job / Heyday / Favorite Thing / Lookin' For Ya / 20th Century Boy / I Will Dare / 16 Blue / White and Lazy / Color Me Impressed / Temptation Eyes / Take Me Down to the Hospital / We're Comin' Out / Hey Good Lookin' / I'll Be There / I'm Trouble / Kids Don't Follow)

On Broadway, San Francisco 11/26/83 40 min

(Heyday / I'm In Trouble / Wipe Out / Kids Don't Follow / Goddamn Job / Color Me Impressed / Go / We're Coming Out / Johnny's Gonna Die / Lookin' For Ya / Rattlesnake / Sixteen Blue / Gimme Noise)

CBGB's, NYC ??/??/83 40 VG+ AUD

7th Street Entry, MPLS 01/08/84

(Unsatisfied / 16 Blue / 20th Century Boy / Lovelines / Perfectly Lethal (often listed as Stranger Than Fiction) / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Color Me Impressed / I Will Dare / White and Lazy / Don't Ask Why / (Paul & Bob fight) Hey Good Lookin' / Willpower / Take Me Down to the Hospital / I'll Be There / Shiftless When Idle / Rebel Rebel / (Paul & Bob fight) / Roundabout / Kids Don't Follow / Baby Blue (snippet) / Did You No Wrong)

GS Vigs, Madison WI 01/18/84

(I Will Dare / Unsatisfied / Walk On The Wild Side / Gary's Got a Boner / Black Diamond / Lookin' For Ya / Trouble Boys / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Within Your Reach / Favorite Thing / Color Me Impressed / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Don't Ask Why / Takin' a Ride / Run It / Hey Good Lookin' / Substitute / Johnny's Gonna Die / Careless / 20th Century Boy / Trouble / Kids Don't Follow / Goddamn Job / White and Lazy / 18 / You Lose / Kansas City Star / 16 Blue / If I Only Had A Brain / Love Grows / I Wanna Destroy You / Yummy Yummy Yummy / Another Girl. Another Planet / Borstal Breakout)

Pop Shop, Cleveland, OH 02/02/84

(Marine Corps Hymn / Black Diamond / Stuck in the Middle / Gimme Noise / Johnny's Gonna Die / 20th Century Boy / Heyday / Take Me Down to the Hospital / I Will Dare / 16 Blue / Unsatisfied / Hey Good Lookin' / Color Me Impressed / 1977? / Willpower / My Town? / Roundabout / Maybellene / Heartbeat / Ain't That Lovin' You Baby / Kansas City Star / I'm The Leader Of The Gang, I Am)

Replacements Michigan Theatre, Ann Arbor 09/06/84 45 VG AUD

Replacements Variety Theatre, Cleveland 09/09/84 45 VG+ AUD

Friendship Station DC 09/22/84

(Lookin' For Ya / Billion Dollar Babies / Can't Hardly Wait / Substitute / Start Me Up / Color Me Impressed / Maybellene / Chuck Berry-Sounding Shit / Unsatisfied / Yeah! / Walk On The Wild Side / Takin' A Ride / Music Is My Life / I Will Dare / Baby Strange / Within Your Reach / Ace Of Spades / Hey Good Lookin' / Help Me Rhonda / Little GTO / Gary's Got A Boner / Shotgun / Mr. Whirly / I'm Sick Of You? / Hootenanny)

CBGB's, NYC 10/02/84 60 EX- SBD

Gary's Got a Boner / Run It / Color Me Impressed / White and Lazy / Takin' a Ride / I Will Dare / Unsatisfied / Johnny's Gonna Die / Favorite Thing / 20th Century Boy / Go / I'll Be There / Kids Don't Follow / Black Diamond / Kansas City Star

Lingerie Club, CA 10/26/84 aka "Live At The Lingerie"

(Hayday / Color Me Impressed / Baby Strange / Unsatisfied / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Can't Hardly Wait / I Will Dare / Black Diamond / Goddamn Job / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Johnny's Gonna Die / Yeah! / Never Been To College / Hitchin' A Ride / Answering Machine / Run It / We're Coming Out / Customer)

Replacements Bowery, Oklahoma City 11/11/84 aka "The Shit Hits The Fans"

(Lawdy Miss Clawdy / Sleeping Nights Of Jesus / Lovelines / I'll Be There / Sixteen Blue / Can't Hardly Wait / I Will Dare / Hear You Been To College / Saturday Night Special / Iron Man / Misty Mountain Hop / Heartbreaker / Can't Get Enough / Jailbreak / Breakdown / No More The Moon Shines On Loreena / Mirror Go Round / Left Here In The Dark / Takin' Care Of Business / I Will Follow / Jumpin' Jack Flask / Radio Free Europe / The New World / Let It Be)

Replacements Pastimes 12/04/84 90 VG AUD

The Rat, Boston 12/07/84 45 VG+ AUD

(Ride / unknown / Sixteen Blue / Unsatisfied / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Johnny's Gonna Die / Can't Hardly Wait / September Girls / We're Coming Out / Tommy Gets His Tounsils Out)

WNYU-FM NYC interview with Paul 15 min

CBGB's, NYC 12/9/84 aka "Live & Drunk"

(Lovelines? / Hear You Been To College / Easier Said Than Done / Color Me Impressed / Music Is My Life / Jolene / Rock, Rock? / Walk On The Wild Side / Hippy Hippy Shake / Can't Get Enough / Substitute / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Do It For Money? / Iron Man / Little GTO / The New World / It's Alright / I Got You Babe / I Will Follow (Kids Don't Follow) / Let It Be (Fuck School) / Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds / Temptation Eyes (Hey Good Lookin') / Last Train To Clarksville(Trouble) / September Gurls (Customer) / Best Friend's Girl / Layla / One Of The Boys / Take A Letter, Maria / Slip Away / Green Acres / If I Only Had A Brain / Gilligan's Island / Be My Lover / Start Me Up / I'll Be There / Black Diamond / Beverly Hillbillies)

1st Ave, MPLS 12/26/84

(I'm In Trouble / Fav Thing / Color Me Imp / Nowhere is My Home / I Will Dare / Can't Hardly Wait / 16 Blue / Lookin' For Ya / Takin' a Ride / Willpower / Heyday / Baby Strange / Take Me Down To the Hospital / Johnny's Gonna Die / Black Diamond / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Bang A Gong / Unsatisfied / Gary's Got A Boner / Answer Machine / Goddamn Job / Hitchin' A Ride / ?? / Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah / ?? / If Only I Had A Brain)

NOTE: Baby Strange and Bang a Gong are T Rex songs, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah is an Elvis song, and If I Only Had A Brain is from the Wizard of Oz.

Uptown Bar, Mpls (*w/ Alex Chilton) 01/19/85

(Nowhere Is My Home / Heard You Been To College / Color Me Impressed / I'm In Love With A Girl / Can't Hardly Wait / I Will Dare / Favorite Thing / Polly Wolly Doodle / Waltzing Matilda / September Gurls / I Can't Turn You Loose / Baby Strange / Black Diamond / Lookin For Ya / Some Song By Slade / Heart Of Stone / Left Here

In The Dark / Answering Machine / Left Of The Dial / Gary's Got A Boner / If I Only Had A Brain / Kansas City Star / Yeah!* / Takin' Care Of Business* / Help Me Rhonda* / Little GTO* / Can't Get Enough* / I'll Be There* / Hitchin' A Ride*)

Replacements Duke Ellington Ballroom, NIU Dekalb 04/05/85 100 VG AUD
Replacements The Palace, LA 04/11/85 80 EX- AUD

Al's Bar, LA 04/23/85

(Color Me Impressed / Raised in the City / This is Your Town / Favorite Thing / On the Bus / Can't Hardly Wait / 16 Blue / Take Me Down to the Hospital / Hitchin' a Ride / Love You 'Til Friday / Move it on Over / I'm In Trouble / I Will Dare --b-- Kick Your Door Down / Baby Strange / Black Diamond / Yeah, Yeah, Yeah / Help Me Rhonda / Mr. Whirly / Sugar, Sugar / My GTO / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Amen / Kumbaya / Gary's Got A Boner)

7th Street Entry, MPLS 07/01/85 aka "Simple Unacceptable"

(Never Been to College / Bastards of Young / Gary's Got A Boner / Color Me Impressed / I'll Buy/Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Unsatisfied / 1977 / Jean Genie / Can't Hardly Wait / Dose of Thunder / Unknown / I Wanna Destroy You / I Will Dare / Little Mascara / Left Of The Dial / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Takin' A Ride / Trouble / Rattlesnake / Hitchin' A Ride / Customer / Kids Don't Follow)

Scorgie's, Rochester, NY - 08/12/85 - 85 min.

(This Is My Town / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Bastards of Young / Answering Machine / Left Of The Dial / Lay It Down Clown / Goddamn Job / Color Me Impressed / I Will Dare / Black Diamond / Yummy Yummy / Go / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Johnny's Gonna Die / Can't Hardly Wait / Gary's Got A Boner / Kids Don't Follow / Dose of Thunder / Takin' A Ride / 20th Century Boy / Unsatisfied / Hear You Been To College / Indian Giver / I'm In Trouble / September Girls / (cover attempts) / Customer / Yeah Yeah / Gimme Noise)

City Gardens, Trenton NJ 08/18/85 aka "The Late Bob Show"

(Love You Til Friday / Kiss Me On the Bus / Unsatisfied / I Will Dare (Bob shows up 1/2 thru) / Bastards of Young / Trouble / Goddamn Job / Color Me Impressed / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Takin' A Ride / Dose Of Thunder / If Only You Were Lonely / I'll Buy / Favorite Thing / Can't Hardly Wait / Lay It Down Clown / Left Of The Dial / Answering Machine / Black Diamond / Take Me Down To The Hospital/Go / Johnny's Gonna Die / Kids Don't Follow)

7th Street Entry, MPLS 10/16/85 90 VG+ AUD

Jimmy's, New Orleans - 11/12/85 - AUD

(I'm In Trouble / Dose of Thunder / Color Me Impressed / Favorite Thing / Kiss Me on the Bus / Unsatisfied / I Will Dare / Easier Said than Done / Go / Answering Machine / Lay It Down Clown / Left of the Dial / Kids Don't Follow / 20th Century / September Gurls / Time is Tight / Bastards of Young / Gary's Got a Boner / Black Diamond / Raised in the City / Goddamn Job / Takin a Ride / Lookin For Ya / Ace of Spades / Willpower / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Hayday / Hootenanny / You Really Got Me

Gabe's Oasis, Iowa City (Amelia's?) 11/15/85

(Bastards Of Young / Answering Machine / Left Of The Dial / Lay It Down Clown / I Will Dare / Can't Hardly Wait / Wreck Of The Edmund Fitzgerald / Substitute / Kiss Me On The Bus / Dose Of Thunder / I Hate Music / Johnny's Gonna Die / Unsatisfied / Black Diamond / Baby Strange / Color Me Impressed / Hitchin' A Ride / Love Grows / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Walk On The Wild Side / I Wanna Be Loved / Yeah! / Takin' Care Of Business / Trouble / Go / Favorite Thing / Hey Day / Summer of '69 / Mr. Whirly / Help Me Rhonda / Little GTO / If I Only Had a Brain / 1970? / Hootenanny?)

Commodore Ballroom, Vancouver 12/04/85 90 VG+ AUD

(Color Me Impressed / Can't Hardly Wait / Gary' Got a Boner / Favorite Thing / Tommy Gets His Tounsils Out / Unsatisfied / Bastards of Young / Dose of Thunder / I Will Dare / Left of the Dial / Answering Machine / Takin' A Ride / unknown / White and Lazy / *Takin' Care of Buisness / Hold My Life / Kids Don't Follow / Go / Black Diamond / Heart Beat, Love Beat / I'm In Trouble / I'll Buy / Stuck in the Middle / Nowhere Man / Unknown / Take me Down to the Hospital / Customer)

Replacements Pine Street Theatre, Seattle 12/06/85 90 EX- AUD

I-Beam, San Francisco 12/08/85 (12/09/85 ?)

(Hayday / 20th Century Boy / Color Me Impressed / Love You Til Friday / Can't Hardly Wait / Dose Of Thunder / Kiss Me On The Bus / Sixteen Blue / Favorite Thing / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Unsatisfied / I Will Dare / Bastards Of Young / Johnny's Gonna Die / Lay It Down Clown / Left Of The Dial / Answering Machine / Lovelines / Hold My Life / Yeah! / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Takin' Care Of Business / White & Lazy / Yummy Yummy Yummy / Nowhere Man / Black Diamond / Borstal Breakout)

Replacements Fenders, Long Beach 12/13/85 80 EX- AUD

Replacements Roxy, LA 12/16/85 90 EX- AUD

Roxy, LA 12/17/85 90 VG+ AUD

(Love you till Friday / Bastards of Young / Color me Impressed / Hayday / Left of the Dial / Nowhere Man / Can't Hardly Wait / Swinging Party / I'm in Trouble / We're coming out / I Will Dare / My Favorite Thing / Kiss me On the Bus / Baby Strange / *Rock around the Clock / Be My Lover / Don't Ask Why / Tommy Gets his Tounsils Out / Johnny's Gonna Die / All by myself / go / Answering Machine / Waitress in the Sky / Kids Don't Follow / Takin' care of Buisness / Black Diamond / Unsatisfies / Hitchin' a Ride / Take me Down to the Hospital / Run It / Borstal Breakout)

Cab Metro, Chicago 01/16/86

(Gary's Got A Boner / Love You 'Til Friday / Bastards Of Young / Can't Hardly Wait / Answering Machine / Little Mascara / Color Me Impressed / Kiss Me On the Bus / Favorite Thing / Mr. Whirly / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / I Will Dare / Johnny's Gonna Die / Dose Of Thunder / Takin' A Ride / Hitchin' A Ride / Trouble Boys / Unsatisfied / Black Diamond / Jumpin' Jack Flash / Customer / Borstal Breakout / Take Me Down to The Hospital / Nowhere Man / The Crusher / Trouble / Go)

Saturday Night Live 01/18/86

(Bastards Of Young / Kiss Me On The Bus)

Replacements Ritz, NYC 02/01/86 100 VG AUD

Hoboken, NJ, Maxwells 02/04/86

(Hayday / Color Me Impressed / Dose Of Thunder / Fox On The Run / Hold My Life / I Will Dare / Favorite Thing / Unsatisfied / Can't Hardly Wait / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Takin' A Ride / Bastards Of Young / Kiss Me On The Bus / Black Diamond / Johnny's Gonna Die / Otto / Trouble / Left Of The Dial / Goddamn Job / Answering Machine / Waitress In The Sky / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Gary's Got A Boner / If Only You Were Lonely / Baby Strange / Hitchin' A Ride / Nowhere Man / Go / Fuck School)

Replacements Concert Hall, Toronto 04/06/86 90 VG+ AUD

Replacements Dingwall's, London 05/16/86 90 VG+ AUD

The Ritz, NYC (Bob's last show) 06/21/86

(Walk This Way / Mama Kin / Color Me Impressed / Take Me Home, Country Roads / Can't Hardly Wait / Hold My Life / Waitress In The Sky / Hootenanny / Mississippi Queen / Bastards Of Young / Dose Of Thunder / New Rose / Come Together / Go / Unsatisfied / I Will Dare / Left Of The Dial / Answering Machine / Yeah! / Jumpin' Jack Flash / The Last Time / Batman / Kids Don't Follow / Lawdy Miss Clawdy / Sweet little Sixteen / Fun, Fun, Fun / Help Me Rhonda / Little GTO / Kiss Me On The Bus / Another Girl, Another Planet / 18 / September Girls / Maybelline / Rock'n'Roll All Nite / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Raw Ramp / Walk This Way / My Fist Your Face / Bring It On Home)

Replacements VPRO Broadcast 06/??/86 10 EX- FM

Replacements Oyster Bay, Long Island 06/19/86 90 EX- AUD

Replacements The Ritz, NYC (Bob's last show) 06/21/86 90 VG+ AUD

Replacements Einstein A-Go-Go, Jacksonville 04/22/87 90 VG AUD

Replacements First Ave, MPLS 05/13/87 80 VG AUD

1st Ave, MPLS (05/26/87?) 05/27/87

(Hello Dolly / Wayward Wind / Tossin' & Turnin' / Born In The USA / Dedicated To The One I Love / Amen Amen / I Don't Give A Damn / I Don't Know / Waitress In The Sky / Takin' A Ride / Hold My Life / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / Androgynous / Never Mind / Valentine / Unsatisfied / I Will Dare / Little Mascara / Alex Chilton / Left Of The Dial / Can't Hardly Wait / Hello Dolly / I.O.U. / If Only You Were Lonely)

Club Vera, Groningen Holland 06/02/87

(Left Of The Dial / Alex Chilton / Little Mascara / I Don't Give A Damn / Favorite Thing / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / Dedicated To The One I Love / Gary's Got A Boner / Hello Dolly / Kiss Me On The Bus / Help Me Rhonda / Bastards Of Young / Unsatisfied / Never Mind / I.O.U. / Waitress In The Sky / Color Me Impressed / Kids

Don't Follow / The Pot Blues / Red Red Wine / If Only You Were Lonely / I Wanna Be Your Dog / I Will Dare / Take Me Down To The Hospital)

Replacements Country Club, Reseda CA 07/07/87 60 VG AUD

Replacements Providence, RI (4/21?) 07/21/87 90 VG AUD

The Living Room, Providence, RI 07/21/87

(Hold My Life / Favorite Thing / Kiss Me On The Bus / Another Girl, Another Planet / IOU / Never Mind / I Will Dare / Can't Hardly Wait / ? / Little Mascara / Answering Machine / Nightclub Jitters / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / Waitress In The Sky / California Sun / Whipping Post / Unsatisfied / Takin A Ride / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Bastards Of Young / Left Of The Dial / Alex Chilton)

NOTE: Another Girl... is by the Only Ones. Whipping Post is by the Alman Brothers.

Beacon Theater, NYC 07/23/87

(Hold My Life / Sweet Home Chicago / Bastards Of Young / Nightclub Jitters / The Ledge / Waitress In The Sky / Kiss Me On The Bus / Another Planet / I Will Dare / Within Your Reach / Can't Hardly Wait / Never Mind / Born In The USA / Little Mascara / Honky Tonk Women / California Sun / September Gurls / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / I Can Help / Black Diamond / Gary's Got A Boner / If Only You Were Lonely / Love Grows / Rebel Rebel / Whipping Post)

The Ritz, New York - 07/27/87 aka "Puttin' On The Ritz"

(I.O.U. / Nevermind / Hold My Life / I Will Dare / Lovelines / Can't Hardly Wait / Little Mascara / Swinging Party / Bastards Of Young / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / Waitress In The Sky / Sweet Home Chicago / Favorite Thing / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / Unsatisfied / Go / Nightclub Jitters / California Sun / Another Girl, Another Planet / Kiss Me On The Bus / Skyway / If Only I Was Lonely / Color Me Impressed

Bayou, Washington DC 7/29/87

(Hold My Life / Treatment Bound / Waitress In The Sky / Black Diamond / Nightclub Jitters / Hello Dolly / Battleship Chains / Swinging Party / Walk On the Wild Side / Never Mind / Another Girl, Another Planet / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / Unsatisfied / Can't Hardly Wait / I Will Dare / Sweet Home Chicago / California Sun / Bastards Of Young / Girl From Ipanema / Skyway / Be My Lover / Left Of The Dial / Alex Chilton / Gimme Shelter / Color Me Impressed / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out / I.O.U.)

Riviera Theatre, Chicago 11/14/87

(IOU / Nevermind / Can't Hardly Wait / *If You See Me Coming ...* / On the Bus / Another Girl, Another Planet / Nightclub Jitters / Little Mascara / Answering Machine / Within Your Reach / the Ledge / Favorite Thing / I Could Never Take The Place of Your Man / Unsatisfied / Color Me Impressed / Look Of Love (?) / Gary's Got a Boner / Lovelines / I Will Dare / Waitress in the Sky / ?? / 20th Century Boys / Alex Chilton / I Don't Know / Gimme Shelter / Bastards of the Young)

Replacements St. Andrew's Hall, Detroit 11/16/87 90 VG+ AUD

Replacements Beacon Theater, NYC 11/20/87 80 EX- AUD

Replacements Brendan Byrne Arena, NJ 12/17/88 40 VG AUD
Replacements 1st Ave, MPLS (Rehearsal) 12/??/88 25 VG+ SBD
Replacements Bushnell Hall, Hartford CT 03/25/89 90 VG+ AUD

Beacon Theatre, NYC 03/31/89 (* With Johnny Thunders)

(Trouble / Color Me Impressed / Hold My Life / Talent Show / Anywhere's Better Than Here / Favorite Thing / Back To Back / Kiss Me On The Bus / Achin' To Be / Darlin' One / The Ledge / I Will Dare / Askin' Me Lies / Answering Machine / Little Mascara / Another Girl, Another Planet / Nightclub Jitters / Cruella De Ville / Can't Hardly Wait / Unsatisfied / Alex Chilton / Round; Round* / Born To Lose * / Bastards Of Young

NOTE: * With Johnny Thunders

Cook College, NJ 04/08/89 early

(Color Me Impressed / Talent Show / I Don't Know / Nevermind / Anywhere's Better Than Here / My Favorite Thing / Back To Back / Achin' To Be / Nightclub Jitters / The Ledge / Asking Me Lies / Little Mascara / Waitress in the Sky / On The Bus / I'll Be You / I Won't / Left of the Dial / Alex Chilton / Unsatisfied / Bastards of the Young)

Cook College, NJ 04/08/89 late

(Talent Show / Color Me Impressed / Anywhere's Better than Here / Shooting Dirty Pool / Nevermind / Sadly Beautiful / Back to Back / Achin' To Be / Darlin' One / Another Girl, Another Planet / I Will Dare --b-- Hello Dolly / Cruella deVille / Waitress in the Sky / Round and Round / Little Mascara / Answering Machine / Can't Hardly Wait / Favorite Thing / Asking Me Lies / I'll Be You / We'll Inherit the Earth / Valentine / Go / Alex Chilton / Left of the Dial)

Beacham Theater, Orlando, Fl - 4/18/89

(IOU / Anywhere's Better Than Here / Color Me Impressed / Back TO Back / Achin To Be / The Ledge / Darlin One / Hold My Life / I Will Dare / Nightclub Jitters / Talent Show / Asking Me Lies / I'll Be You / Waitress In The sky / Kiss Me On The Bus / Answering Machine / Little Mascara / Another Girl, Another Planet / We'll Inherit The Earth / Can't Hardly Wait)

NOTE: Another Girl... is by the Only Ones.

San Francisco 04/26/89 90 VG+ AUD

(Alex Chilton / Talent Show / I Don't Know / Back to Back / Achin' to Be / Anywhere's Better Than Here / Sadly Beautiful / The Ledge / Nightclub Jitters / Cruella deVille / Asking Me Lies / I Wanna Destroy You / Talent Show / Answering Machine --b-- / Within Your Reach / Little Mascara / I'll Be You / Color Me Impressed / I Will Dare / Another Girl, Another Planet / Can't Hardly Wait / Darlin' One / Unsatisfied / I Won't / Bastards of the Young / Another Girl Another Planet / Here Comes a Regular)

The Arena, Orlando 07/08/89

(Talent Show / Alex Chilton / Can't Hardly Wait / The Ledge / Treatment Bound / Born To Lose / Achin' To Be / 18 / I'll Be You / Color Me Impressed / Sadly Beautiful)

NOTE: Opening for Tom Petty. Born To Lose is a Johnny Thunders' song. 18 is by Alice Cooper.

Country Club, Reseda CA 07/30/89

(? She's a Goer / Bastards of the Young / Nightclub Jitters / Alex Chilton / Left of the Dial / Anywhere's Better than Here / Achin' to Be / ? Woman / The Ledge)

Pine Knob Amp, Detroit 08/07/89

(IOU / Nevermind / Alex Chilton / ??? / Achin' To Be / Happy / Valentine / Nightclub Jitters / Another Girl, Another Planet / Can't Hardly Wait / Darlin' One / I'll Be You / / Color Me Impressed)

NOTE: Opening for Tom Petty. Happy is by the Rolling Stones. Another Girl... is by the Only Ones. Color Me Impressed may or may not be from the same concert.

Replacements Garden State Arts Center, Homdell NJ 08/20/89 40 VG+ AUD

Replacements Great Woods, MA (part of "Shit, Shower, & Shave) 08/28/89 30 EX+ SBD

Lake Compounce, Bristol CT 08/31/89 45

(Talent Show / Round and Round / The Ledge / Can't Hardly Wait / September Gurls / Another Girl, Another Planet / Within Your Reach / Left of the Dial / Alex Chilton / Nightclub Jitters / I'll Be You / Bastards of the Young)

Kingswood Music, Toronto, Canada Theatre, 09/02/89

(Color Me Impressed / [unknown song] / [unknown song; Susan?] / Sadly Beautiful / She's A Go'er / Another Girl, Another Planet / Here Comes A Regular / Waitress in the Sky / Go / Nightclub Jitters / I'll Be You

Note: Benmont Tench on piano

Replacements UC Davis, Davis CA 01/15/91 90 VG+ AUD

Replacements Warfield, San Francisco 01/19/91 10 VG+ AUD

(I Don't Know / I Will Dare / Cruella deVille / Achin' to Be / Bent Out of Shape / Torture / Merry Go Round / Satelite / Hapyy Town / Swinging Party / Waitress in the Sky / One Wink at a Time / Skyway / When It Began / Raw Ramp / Talent Show / Can't Hardly Wait / Nobody / Attitude / Asking Me Lies / I'll Be You / Nevermind / Someone Take the Wheel / It's Alright (?) / Left of the Dial / Within Your Reach)

Replacements Phoenix, AZ 01/21/91 95 VG+ AUD

Replacements Memorial Auditorium, Dallas 01/24/91 95 VG+ AUD

Minneapolis, Orpheum 02/06/91 90 VG+ AUD

(I Don't Know / I Will Dare / Achin' To Be / Bent Out of Shape / Merry Go Round / Satellite / Happy Town / Swingin' Party / One Wink at a Time / Waitress in the Sky / Skyway / When it Began / Someone Take the Wheel / Talent Show / Can't Hardly wait / (T-REX tune) / Kiss me on the Bus / If only you were Lonely / Asking Me Lies / I'll Be You / Nobody / Within Your Reach / I.O.U.)

King Tuts Wah Wah Hall, Glasgow 4/18/91

(I Will Dare / Achin' To Be / Bastards of the Young / I Don't Know / Another Girl, Another Planet / Satelite / Merry Go Round / Swingin' Party / One Wink At A Time / Waitress in the Sky / Skyway / When It Began / Nightclub Jitters / Someone Take the Wheel / Talent Show --b-- Asking Me Lies / Nobody / Like a Rolling Stone / Here Comes a Regular / Can't Hardly Wait / If Only You Where Lonely / Within' Your Reach / Love Lost / Left of the Dial / Alex Chilton / Answering Machine / Little Mascara / Color Me Impressed / I'll Be You)

Replacements Washington DC 05/03/91 90 VG+ AUD

Center Stage, Atlanta 05/21/91 100 VG+ AUD

(I Will Dare / Achin' to Be / Bent Out of Shape / Merry Go Round / Satellite / Happy Town / Swinging Party / Waitress in the Sky / Skyway / When it Began / Nightclub Jitters / Torture / *Talent Show / Asking Me Lies / Another Girl, Another Planet / Hey Good Lookin' / Nobody / Here Comes a Regular / Can't Hardly Wait / Within Your Reach / The Ledge / I'll Be You / Androgynous / Color Me Impressed / Kiss Me on the Bus / Little Mascara / Alex Chilton)

Replacements Nautica Stage, Cleveland 06/12/91 40 VG+ AUD

Replacements Columbia, MD 06/16/91 45 VG- AUD

Replacements Paramount Theatre, Seattle WA 06/26/91 90 VG+ AUD

Replacements Fox Theatre, Portland 06/27/91 80 VG+ AUD

Replacements Summerfest, Milwaukee 07/01/91 90 VG+ AUD

Grant Park, Chicago 07/04/91 75 EX- FM

(I will Dare / Bent Out of Shape / Achin' to Be / Merry Go Round / Happy Town / Swinging Party / One Wink at a Time / Waitress in the Sky / When It Began / Someone Take The Wheel / Talent show: Send in the Clowns / Nobody / Another Girl, Another Planet / Hey Good Looking / I'll Be You / I Don't Know / Within Your Reach / Can't Hardly Wait / Hootnanny)

THE STORY OF THE SHIT HITS THE FANS

The following was posted to the alt.music.replacements newsgroup by a person who claimed to be Bil "Mack" MacLeslie, a roadie for The Replacements. Mack was purportedly the person who confiscated the still-recording tape from a would-be bootlegger at a Replacements show in November 1984 in Oklahoma City that became the Twin/Tone release, The Shit Hits The Fans. At this point in time, the out-of-print live album has only been officially released on cassette, although bootleg CD versions exist.

Some spelling and formatting corrections have been made for readability.

I really would be surprised if Twin/Tone actually made 10,000 copies of SHTF [Shit Hits The Fans]. The figure of 2000 is more realistic and also strikes a strong chord in my memory. You must remember that the 'Mats were not a large money making venture for Twin/Tone and during late 1984 when the SHTF tape was released, Twin/Tone was somewhat reluctant to put any more dollars into the 'Mats during that (fiscal) year. I won't quote exactly how many SHTF tapes were made because I wasn't involved in that part of the process (and besides, I don't know).

All this talk about CHW [Can't Hardly Wait] made me go get the MASTER (YES the MASTER of The Shits Hits The Fans, it's on a Maxell XL II-S) out of storage and listen to it again just so I could be clear on the facts.

(BTW, a few months ago, I had a person ask around here about the desire for SHTF CD's. There wasn't enough demand to justify the running of a few hundred CD's. If there is a new interest, let me know. Remember, this is the ORIGINAL cassette the tape was made on!)

For the live version of CHW, Paul and I had serious contention about the echo that was to happen during the two stops. Paul wanted the echo to do this: Capital letters are echoes, lowercase are sung words.

...and i can't hardly wait.WAIT

He wanted an eighth note slap back echo. I disagreed with the placement of the echo against the streaming guitars which had always been there. I suggested a quarternote and placed a quiet quarternote slap on his voice throughout the song. Paul's point is driven home when he can be heard cussing me out at the end of the last stop saying "Mack!"

Oops! I fucked up again! He didn't hear his eighth note and I was in trouble. In either case, every version I had ever heard live before the song was recorded ALWAYS had

the guitars streaming thru the stops. Bob played the streaming guitar exactly as Paul requested. It worked that way and I was sorely disappointed when the recorded version turned out so vastly different from the live version.

BTW, before the cut of CHW on SHTF, Paul can be heard saying: "Guys wanna move up closer? Don't gotta, but, man..."

This was because there were about 25 people in the Bowery [in Oklahoma City, OK]. This place is about as large as First Avenue (Sorry for those who haven't been to either place.)

Before the cut of Sixteen Blue on SHTF, Paul can be heard saying: "Give me some echo Mr. Mack." This song was a strong contender for my favourite and I mixed the hell out of this song. I remember having tears come to my eyes in Columbus, OH while Pete Buck squeaked out a mandolin solo and Paul seared his soul on a microphone before his guitar solo. I have many memories of Columbus and one is when X and the Mats shared a stage in a club that can't recall the name of. (anyone?)

There is another tidbit about the SHTF tape that I can share. During 'I Hear You Been To College', a break in the recording can be heard. This is Paul listening to the cassette on a Walkman and him accidentally pressing record. The fuck! I shoulda never given him the tape. Listening closely, he says "Stop, 's'enough"

I remember hearing the dropout and nearly crying. This was the best live bootleg tape I had ever heard. (I was only 20 at the time) I had confiscated tapes at the 611 in Atlanta, at CBGB's in NYC and the Disney College of Art and Design in California. None were like this one.

Now you may all be asking how I may come about this knowledge. Am I just talking out my lower windpipe? Nope. Sorry. For those who haven't caught on yet, I am the very roadie that Charles Robinson is talking about in his recent posts. During late 1983 and 1984 I was the Replacements soundman. The story goes like this (while there is a little coloration for flavor, the facts remain the same):

While sitting at home playing Lode Runner on my Apple II plus one evening I received a call from a friend who was at the time the manager of Duffy's. Duffy's was a fantastic place to see bands in Mpls primarily because of the excellent booking agent but also because of the welcome atmosphere that the band felt, most who played there had done GREAT shows there. The results of this phone call were to get me off of my couch and earn a few bucks (\$20.00 maybe?) for an evenings work. I didn't even ask who the band was, I just knew I would be doing sound for a local band that night and asked a friend to drive me down to the gig.

I arrived and being the cocky 19 year old that I was, I attempted to be cool. For the individuals who have known me for a long time, they knew I was a crazy daredevil who would try anything but had one odd 'fault'. I had never been high or drunk. Period. This is still the case and I often wonder where my life would be if I had gone down a different path.

So here I am, at the loudest beer drinking rock bar in Mpls and I don't drink. (First Ave is loud and alcohol gets consumed in mass quantities, but Duffy's was a like a college bar that was kicked off campus for being too far gone too many times.) The band gets onstage and starts the evening festivities. I am lucky to keep up with them. They are pushing the system to the limit and I struggle to keep my head on straight during the following two hours.

Luckily, I already knew Peter Jesperson and he stood by my side, guiding me through the necessary changes and solos. The show was a huge success and I went home feeling happy and \$20.00 richer.

After the show I got a ride home from some friend of a friend of a friend. Peter was in the car and asked if I could do another show for the Replacements in two days. I said sure, what the heck. I needed the money. Peter asked if I could drive. "Yeah, I don't have a car, but I love to drive". He said, "Okay, we leave at 9:00 am, I'll pick you up at your place, you can drive from there on". "Where?" I asked. "Madison", he said.

This was the beginning of a very satisfying time in my life.

Now, the story of the SHTF tape.

It goes like this, let there be no more LIES about the origins of the tape!

At the Bowery, there were about 25-35 people at the end of the night. It was a COLD November evening (for Oklahoma) and most of the students who usually hung out at the Bowery were home for Thanksgiving. There was a balcony and directly above my mixing position was where the famous tape deck was.

As usual, I wandered during the show to hear how the system sounded around the club and staggered upstairs to hear how bad it sounded up there. Up to this moment, the band had been imbibing more and more and was getting louder and louder. Being curious as to how the sound was up on the balcony, I walked over to the front edge and saw this tape deck and a man standing nearby gives me a smile and nod. I walk up and listen at the spot he was recording from.

It sounded absolutely fucking GREAT! I walked over to the deck and opened it. I took the tape out. The way you hear it end on the distributed release (and many bootlegs), is how it ended in real life. I cut the taping during Let it Be. Synchronicity had struck. I put the tape in my pocket and walked away. The guy was flabbergasted. I knew he had no permission to tape the show. He may have known who I was, he may not have. I told him bluntly that the taping of Replacements shows was not permitted and I was confiscating the tape. Period.

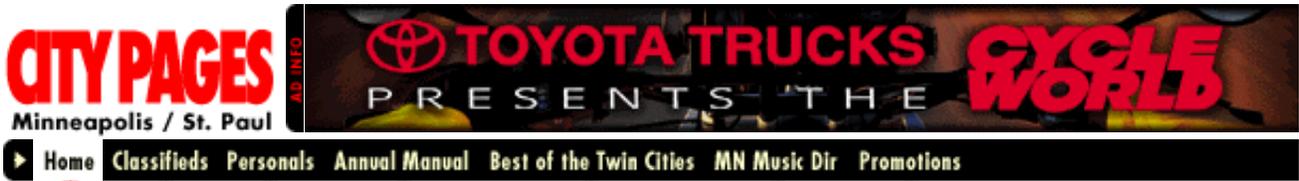
I had confiscated many tapes during that tour. None had come close to this tape. I would like to hear the Live at the Lingerie, if it's in the right time period. Anyone know?

That's it. There's nothing more to it. No fist fights, no bribes, (that's another tour) no pleading, (no more than the usual). The following morning we got up and I started driving. I recall being told to PULL OVER!, we gotta make a stop. I pulled over and the

band and Peter hopped out. A camera came out and the picture of IOWA was shot. [the picture Bill Sullivan and the band in the inside cover of the tape]

The rest is history. Someday I would like to meet the person who made this tape. I would like to thank him and I'd even pay the \$3.95 to him myself.

Bil



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T W E N T I E T H A N N I V E R S A R Y I S S U E **CP20**

LOVELINES The Original Lyrics?

For fans of the Replacements discovering the true meaning of the nuggets Paul Westerberg and Co. buried in the songs is half the fun. Remember lyrics like "Lyndale, Garfield, here comes Knox, hey let's run it" (from "Run It", on *Hootenanny*)? Which way were they driving, anyway?

City Pages made the mix back in the day. Seems "Lovelines" transformed from its original title "Lookin' for Ya" by means of our October 13, 1982 classifieds section. We love our readers...especially Paul!

What we want to know is...Ellen, do you know who the hell Mark is?



CITY PAGES
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 79
Wednesday, October 13th, 1982

LOVELINES
FROM *HOOTENANNY*
by The Replacements

Slightly overweight and so called unattractive girls need sex also. Send note with your desires, and means of contact to PO Box 8941, Mpls., MN 55408. Photo if possible.

info: B
WM 3
eyes. B
warm :
29594.

Slightly overweight girls need sex also
Send your note and desires
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from 5 generation Master Gin Foon Mark

Hey Ellen
Mark says hi
Tom what else can I say

my J.D.: If you need a fishing partner, please

can s to y u. I love you very much I'm glad we're together miss you a lot Love kitten

Visitors welcome. Instruction from 5 generation Master Gin Foon Mark. Call 338-1382, 338-6000 nights.

Tom, what else can I say, I love you very much and I'm glad we're together. Miss ya alot. Luv Kitten.

Lurking lizards lying under lake Tanners door 306, awaiting for the return of the crawling kingsnake!

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FANTASYPHONE 415-346-3233 CALL MONA VISA MC

SWINGER'S HOTLINE FOR INFORMATION: Send stamped self-addressed envelope to Box 798 Mpls., MN 55440 Attn: Pam

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED



I love you very much I'm glad we're together miss you a lot Love kitten

Ooh yeah ooh yeah Kitten Ooh yeah ooh yeah

Lurkin' lizards lyin' under Lake Tanners door 306 awaiting for the return of the crawling kingsnake John Lee

okay grin & bear it

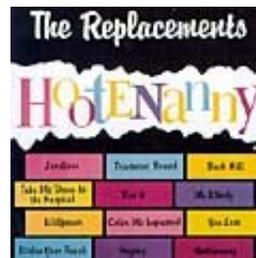
Fantasy Phone Swingers' Hotline Pure silk, pure seduction G-strings in petal pink Hell

Attract some women scientific formulated spray the conductive male hormone work turn the lights off

ooh baby, let's turn a page

Person-to-person And it's all a bunch of shit

Wednesday, October 13th, 1982 volume 4, number 79



Listen to Hootenanny on Twin/Tone Records' Web site.

Al... will... are... stati... PO... Som... divoi... thro... ed un... expr... each... THE I... couple

Go's
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PURE SEDUCTION
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20th Anniversary Issue
 August 4, 1999
CP20
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New Set Of Old Replacements Marks 20th Anniversary

From Addicted To Noise website circa 2000

By Colin Devenish

It's been almost 20 years since the Replacements first gathered in a basement in their Minneapolis hometown to create the cleverly sloppy and uneven rock songs that would make them one of the pioneers of '80s rock.

With that anniversary a little more than a year away, the group's surviving members -- singer/guitarist Paul Westerberg, bassist Tommy Stinson and drummer Chris Mars (founding lead guitarist Bob Stinson died of a drug overdose [sic] in 1995) -- are proceeding with plans to release a multi-disc compilation that will focus on live performances, rehearsal material and outtakes of the Replacements' early work.

"I talked to Paul, Tommy and Chris and so far we've agreed we don't want to do anything until the fall of '99 at the earliest," said Peter Jespersen, founder of the Twin/Tone label that signed the Replacements to their first record deal. "One of the reasons for that is I thought it would be poetic to have a Replacements anthology of the early years as a century closer and Paul agreed with that and said it would be 20 years since they first got together in Ma Stinson's basement."

At this point, an estimated 25 of 150 cassettes have been transferred to DAT, and Jespersen said there will be a minimum of three discs in this anthology. Specifically, he cited the B-side "If Only You Were Lonely" as one of the tracks sure to land on the disc, along with some material that fans of the band's early work might not be expecting.

"All the time the public was hearing songs like 'Fuck School' and 'God Damn Job,' Westerberg was slipping me these private tapes he was making that he wasn't even playing for the band," Jespersen said. "They were him just playing solo acoustic things, solo piano things. He was doing these amazing ballads. It was a funny dichotomy."

With its emphasis on the band's early period, the new compilation will cover a time period not included in last year's Replacements set issued by Reprise, *All For Nothing/Nothing For All*. That compilation included a disc of outtakes and rarities from the group's later period and a second disc that was, for the most part, a greatest-hits set drawn from the Replacements' final four albums.

Jespersen said at the time of that release that he was disappointed he had not been contacted by Reprise to work on a comprehensive retrospective, and that without the Twin/Tone material there was a "gaping" hole in the

collection. The Twin/Tone era includes the album's Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out The Trash, The Replacements Stink, Hootenanny and Let It Be -- which featured the tracks "Androgynous" (RealAudio excerpt) and "Answering Machine" (RealAudio excerpt).

Kathy Shine of Boston, webmaster of Paul's Page, which pays homage to all things related to Westerberg and the Replacements, wrote in an e-mail that she's looking forward to the upcoming compilation and listed several of the tracks on her wish list for inclusion.

"Without a doubt, the compilation has to include the original, acoustic, melancholy version of 'Can't Hardly Wait,' " Shine said. "This is one of Paul Westerberg's finest songs and it's a shame it isn't readily available. Other things I'd love to see included are 'If Only You Were Lonely,' 'Nowhere Is My Home' and some of the great covers from the Let It Be era -- 'Twentieth Century Boy,' 'Hey, Good Lookin,' and (my favorite) 'Temptation Eyes.'"

Additional material that Jesperson pegged as likely to get picked for the album includes "Shape Up" and "Don't Turn Me Down" from the quartet's original four-song demo that helped convince him to sign the band. The group released eight full-length albums in its more than decade-long career.

Jesperson said the majority of the material that he's unearthed thus far revolves around the time that the band was recording its third and most diverse LP, Hootenanny. "There's more unreleased songs from Hootenanny than any other," he said. "I remember somebody hearing an advance of it when it came out and they said 'Man, it sounds like a compilation album, but it's all by the same artist.'"

INTERVIEW WITH PAUL

BLUR issue 4, Sept 3 1982)

Paul Westerberg, guitarist for the Replacements, was interviewed by Mike in the alley behind OTWH after their July 22 performance.

Mike Blur: How did the band form?

Paul Westerberg: Bob, Tom and Chris used to play together in this band. I used to hide in the bushes by their house and listen to them play. Eventually, they invited me in to play guitar. I told 'em I could sing, I managed to fool them and become the singer.

M: When was this?

P: '79 or '80, I guess the winter of '80.

M: Did you start with any set ideas in mind?

P: Not really...we like each other more than we had any real ideas for the band, it was friendship, we had fun together, we had good times, and it sorta came out of that.

M: All of a sudden you hit it big...

P: (laughs) Not really, we probably lost \$50 coming down here.

M: How much studio time did you spend on the album?

P: Not a whole lot, four sessions of recording and a week of mixing, but it was spread over three months, like we record one day, then wait three weeks, then record another day.

M: The album sounds kind of live to me.

P: Yeah, that's what we're trying to make it sound like.

M: Were there any overdubs?

P: A few dubs, not many, like half the vocals are original, we overdubbed one or two vocals and leads.

M: You said "Johnny's Gonna Die" is about Johnny Thunders, right?

P: Yeah.

M: What made you write that? You're the main songwriter, right?

P: Sort of...when Johnny was playing, it looked like he was walking dead, it was pitiful, like watching a guy in a cage, it was like he didn't want to be up there, he was playing for pay...

M: Is there any other songs with special meanings..."I Hate Music", that kind of confuses me.

P: It's a frustration song. One of the standing jokes in the band is that we're not musicians, and we're sorta proud of that in that we don't

wanna be. It's like, we can try to play music and try to play it tight, but we just don't have any fun, and then one day Chris said " I hate fuckin' music, it's fuckin' crap"...

M: Was the song improvised in the studio?

P: In the basement, we recorded it in the studio, but it was just like that--Chris said "let's do a song called I Hate Music", and Tommy went dadadada on the bass, and we all came in, and it was done in five minutes.

M: How far have you toured?

P: Not very far, this is the farthest we've been. We've been to Chicago, and Madison, dinky towns. We're supposed to go out east soon, but I dunno...

M: Are you familiar with other Minneapolis bands like Husker Du?

P: Oh yeah, they're real cool. They're in LA now. They're going over real big out there. They're doing an album, it's called "Let the Buyer Beware", 'cept it's in Latin.

M: Any other plans for recording other than the EP?

P: We're thinking about it, we might go back into the studio soon, to keep some ideas fresh...

M: What's the main idea that you wanna get across to yer listeners?

P: We're having fun, there's no message, the message is right there in the title of the song, if there is one...we're a rock and roll band, that's the way it should be, we're not into this political bullshit...

M: So you write songs that are you...

P: Basically, we don't do songs that we don't like. That's like the first criteria that we have to...it has to be real for us, we don't do something just cause it sounds good, it has to be something that's fun for us to do.

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The Replacements: Getting No Place?

from Matter magazine (Vol. 1, No. 6) December 1983

by David Ayers

Chris Mars isn't real good with his kickfoot, so his hit 'n' miss bass drum doesn't provide much of a base at all. You're not likely to notice though, since he's one of the flash-quickest snare bangers around., Chris also likes to draw monsters.

Bob Stinson does a sick turn on metal guitar heroics, taking noisy leads that always manage to get somewhere, but never quite where you'd expect. And he's a blockish type who's never figured out the coolest way to hold his guitar, so he sort of resembles a wrestler cradling a newborn kid. Bob looks best in a dress.

Tommy Stinson is now, always was, and forever will he 16 years old. He plays bass with more guts than just about anyone twice his age, but being 16 and all, he's prone to bouts of fashion-consciousness and stage histrionics. The girls seem to like Tommy best.

Stuck in the middle of this whirling trio is Paul Westerberg. Yes, legend has it that Paul writes songs more often than most people go to the bathroom (merely 40 songs on vinyl in just two years and there are scores more on tape), but he's been known to show up onstage drunk now and again and even when he's sober he can be a little difficult. Make Paul's a whiskey, please. So what makes this ragged Replacements crew so special? Why have their records caused such a fuss in indie circles coast to coast? Why have the likes of R.E.M., Individual Glenn Morrow and X borrowed their material? Chalk it up to their guts, their humor, their attitude, their youth. The Replacements are what rock 'n' roll is all about.

Their three Twin/Tone records speak for themselves—the breakneck audacity of Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash, the hoodoo blues and yuk yuk hardcore of the Replacements Stink, and the far-flung boldness of Hootenanny.

But their live shows have always begged for a little tolerance. Most of their songs don't have clean endings, they're frequently out of tune, they're often inclined to bicker. Still, there's something precious about watching a band teeter on the brink of disaster, relying only on heart and the thrill of the moment to pull them through. Unprofessional? Sure. Thrilling? You bet. There isn't another band going that you could see 20 nights in a row and be moved every time for a completely different reason.

And oh, yeah, those songs. Westerberg's got a million of 'em, and they run a fearless musical course, from the shiftless blues of the unreleased "I'm a Bad Worker," to the amphetamine ride of "Run It." Much of his material conveys an emotional intensity and lyrical dexterity which sometimes gets lost behind the Replacements' addiction to volume. Have patience; he's just getting started.—David Ayers

Matter: First off, let's talk about *Hootenanny*. What do you think of it?

Westerberg: I like it. It's sort of a breakaway from the other stuff. I think it's the first album that sounds just like us. The other albums you can sorta hear the Ramones influence, and the thrashy type stuff on *Stink*. This is the first one, I think, that is our style.

Matter: I know in the past sometimes you've been coiled a hardcore band. Does that piss you off?

Westerberg: We're not a hardcore band. We write songs rather than riffs with statements. Ours are just simple songs. We tried our hand at...y'know, "Dope Smokin' Moron"... you can tell that doesn't quite jfit as hardcore, but that was definitely our attempt. It just doesn't suit us. Basically, it's all just rock 'n' roll. We play a style of music that we like, and maybe it isn't as popular, but it's like blues or something. It's not in the mainstream, but there's always going to be blues bands. And there's always going to be rock 'n' roll bands.

Matter: With the latest album, I guess you recorded 17 songs. How do you feel track to track?

Westerberg: I think "Hootenanny," I don't know if it's my favorite . . . in a way it is, 'cause its all of us sort of fucking off, which is like the key to what makes us click. If you knew Paul Stark, the whole deal of the producer saying "do this and do that," he's real apathetic about what we do; he's into more of a slick production-type deal. We recorded a few songs that he didn't really care for. We went back and just fucked around, and switched instruments and after the song was done, he didn't even know it was a joke. He took it seriously.

Matter: That attitude seems to prevail over everything you guys do.

Westerberg: That's good. I hope' we never lose that, because if we do, I don't think our talent is our strong suit. I think, I don't know how to put it, it's our spirit if anything.

Matter: Do you think you drive some people off because of it?

Westerberg: Oh yeah. I dunno . . . some fake punks will expect us to thrash. The smart people get it, not to pot anybody on the back, but I think that intelligent people like us because they understand it's kind of a joke on the whole thing. It's not taken seriously. And the other people that don't quite get it, that don't understand why we don't thrash more, or why we don't play more standard type of material

Matter: Between song patter isn't exactly Las Vegas style.

Westerberg: It just doesn't work for us. We really don't care if they don't like us. We like to treat it just kinda loosely, the impression that nobody really came to witness something special, they just came out because there was nothing better to do. Just sort of treat it like a party.

Matter: Back to the album tracks.

Westerberg: "You Lose" is probably the best one in the style of the other two albums, guitar rockers. "Heyday" is a good song, but it was one where we'd written it and played it maybe twice before recording it. We still don't quite have a handle on it. "Color Me Impressed" I like a lot, too.

Matter: That's a bit poppier.

Westerberg: We tried it a couple of different ways. We tried it slow, really slow. Then we tried to rave it up and do it fast. We tried finesse and work with that, we tried a 12-string Rickenbacker. We'd just look at each other, and it's obvious that it's uncomfortable.

Matter: How about the two that stick out in my mind, “Willpower” and “Within Your Reach”?

Westerberg: Hmm...Bob’s favorites. Yeah, well...I like “Within Your Reach.” That’s a little embarrassing for me. I can listen to it alone and kind a enjoy it, but I cringe a little.

Matter: You’re embarrassed at a song like that?

Westerberg: Kinda, yeah. I dunno, the lyrics, I think a few of the lines are kinda hokey, the John Denver-y mountain ones. It’s so weird. When you write it at the time, it’s like, “Yeah! This is great!”

Matter: And then two days later, it’s “Oh my God...”

Westerberg: Fucking right. And it’s on tape and you can’t hide from it.

Matter: Are you afraid of being serious like that?

Westerberg: Oh yeah. If you’re going to do something seriously, to me, it has to be good. We’re taking the easy route of taking it non-seriously, so if we fuck something up or something doesn't really mean anything, we can kinda slough it off. But its kinda scary to do something really seriously like that.

Matter: Are you moving away from the loud, fast stuff?

Westerberg: Definitely. We've been playing it for three years. We enjoy it still, but to keep writing songs like that—and when you play it's like 15 songs that are like whom, wham, wham—it's nice to throw more subtle things in there. Plus, it's funny, we're starting to get jazzy, not that we play jazz, but a lot of times at practice . . . slower things, improvised things and stuff.

Matter: Do you find that songs like those two are maybe embarrassing because they do come from further down inside you?

Westerberg: Yeah, you hit the nail right on the head—the things that are hard to say. To say them in a song is one thing, but to actually say them is impossible or people laugh at you. Whereas, you say “taking a ride” or “let's get drunk,” you say that all the time. You make that into a song, it's nothing below the surface; it's just a catch phrase.

Matter: Is there going to be more of that stuff down the line'?

Westerberg: You never can tell. One thing, whenever we do something like that, something with sort of a meaning, we always feel it's fun to get back and do a totally stupid one. Like “Within Your Reach,” or something like that. When I write one like that I feel like, “Well, that was fun, but let's try a real dumb ‘Goddamn Job’ one.”

Matter: How did the band get together?

Westerberg: I was coming home from work. I was working as a janitor, and I heard them, loud as fuck, playing in their basement. I used to sit by the bushes and listen down there.

Matter: Did you know any of them?

Westerberg: I did, but I didn't know that was them. I knew Chris, the drummer. They knew I played guitar. I’d played in a couple of basement bands. Then one day Chris called me up out of the blue, and said, “Come on over.” Lo and behold this was the house I'd listened to and thought, “Oh God, if I could only play there.”

Matter: Was it mostly covers then?

Westerberg: Yeah. They did “Roundabout,” believe it or not, with no vocals—180-mile-an-hour version at full volume. They did a couple Ted Nugents and Aerosmiths. They were playing very, very fast. They didn't even know what punk was. They didn't like punk. Chris had hair down to his shoulders. I came and played a coupla songs, and they were going, “fucking punk rock,” y’know.

Matter: Why were they playing so fast?

Westerberg: They took a lot of drugs, they all did, a lot of speed. We used to take six white crosses on a Saturday afternoon, drink a bottle of whiskey, and 1-2-3-4.

Matter: What changed that?

Westerberg: Chris cut his hair. I dunno exactly, I think we were pretty directionless at the time. They weren't really a band. . . just the fun of having the instrument and being able to make noise with somebody else in the room.

Matter: When did you first start playing guitar?

Westerberg: I was 14 ... 1974.

Matter: What inspired it?

Westerberg: Seeing the Raspberries on "Rock Concert." I remember I just got my guitar, and learned my first three chords—G, C, D—and there's Eric Carmen playing the same chords, "Go All the Way." I don't know if it sounds right to say the Beatles, but I got on older sister who's 32. She was like 14 when the Beatles hit in 1964 and stuff. So I grew up with all the Beatles and Stones, and Motown stuff. I remember a lot of that, like "Mickey's Monkey," and shit. The Miracles, the Temptations, Rod Stewart, watching like "Help" on TV. My cousins were over, I can remember seeing it. That might've planted the seed, although it sounds dumb . . . the screaming girls, probably. Creedence Clearwater . . .

Matter: How did it come to the point with the Replacements where you were doing a large percentage of the songwriting and singing?

Westerberg: When I first met them they didn't have a singer and they had another guitar player. Then they got a singer, who was really shit—a hippie who had like a sheet, sat down, and read the lyrics. Then I just started yelling into the mike and stuff. Bob didn't like that. Bob wanted to get another singer. We tried another guy and they all liked him, and I sorta told him "Their band doesn't like you. I think you're great, but the band says you're out."

Matter: Had you been writing songs yourself before that?

Westerberg: About two songs. "Looking for Ya," in fact, was written about six months before I joined the band. That was just sort of a George Thorogood rip at the time. My brother had a lot of blues records. We used to play down in the basement. The band I had been playing in didn't want to write originals. They thought to make money you had to play other people's songs. So that's why I wanted to find a band that would play original songs. I knew I was on my way. I could tell this . . . magic. Tommy was so little. He came up to like half the size of his amp. I'll never forget it.

Matter: How old are you now?

Westerberg: 23

Matter: I hear you're still living at home. Does that bother you?

Westerberg: It ... yeah . . . not as much as you'd think. It's basically because I can't afford anything. I'd have to get a job. When I joined the band I was still working as a janitor. Then we started getting gigs, so I had to quit, 'cause I worked in the afternoon and evening. That was the main inspiration for getting the band going. I don't wanna get a job. And this is the easiest thing I've come across so far.

Matter: Do you think there's an essence to which maybe if you had to live on your own, that would help you as a songwriter, being more desperate and all that?

Westerberg: Yeah, I think about it all the time. It that was the case, I almost think I'd go solo. I did one thing and I could get a lot better money for one man. I played by myself

at First Avenue. But that scares the living hell outta me. I've never been so scared in my life as when I did that.

Matter: Why does that scare you?

Westerberg: Oh, you're so naked up there. It's like you're a stand-up comedian and you have like prop—your guitar. Plus, it's not loud. You have no noise to hide behind. Just bare...shit. People staring at you. No one dancing. They're just sitting there staring at you. You hear people clinking their glasses.

Matter: What about the solo stuff? Do you see getting more into that in the future?

Westerberg: Ummmm

Matter: Is that a problem within the context of the band?

Westerberg: I think that's my...I don't know what I'd call it—not an ace in the hole. But if the band broke up, or if I was thrown out of the house I would do it to survive. A lot of the songs are written that way. They're written on acoustic guitar as sort of folk songs. And I figure, well, we're going to speed it up, we're going to rock it up, and Bob is going to throw this in there. If you just ripped down the chord changes and all that, they're pretty simple. They could be folk songs.

Matter: Are many of these the type that wouldn't go well for the band?

Westerberg: Yeah, they are. It's to the point where I'm a little afraid and edgy about bringing songs now because each guy has his own tastes. If it doesn't rock enough. Bob will scoff at it, and if it isn't catchy enough, Chris won't like it, and if it isn't modern enough, Tommy won't like it.

Matter: How much stuff do you write that maybe isn't suitable for the Replacements?

Westerberg: About half of it.

Matter: What do you usually do with them?

Westerberg: Usually forget 'em. I don't even have a tape recorder now, so for like every one I write for the band, I'll write another one that I'll immediately realize won't do.

Matter: How would you describe this "folkier" side?

Westerberg: It's usually pretty honest. With honesty, it can get real hokey, kinda ... a lot of desperation, sort of. Not as much as if, like you say, I were out on the street, scraping. But there's still frustration, anger. We're going really nowhere. Like one gig was two weeks ago. We have two weeks to wait.

Matter: Is it mostly like real personal stuff, fictional stuff?

Westerberg: Usually I try to mix it. A lot of it will seem fictional, but really there's the personal stuff in there that no one's going to know but me.

Matter: Tell me about some of them. How about "It's Hard to Wave in Handcuffs?"

Westerberg: Yeah, that was a real . . . gem. (clears throat). That one wasn't too hot. That was a thing on piano. A lot of them don't have titles, they're just meanderings on piano and stuff. You heard the story about "Run It," with Chris and I on his motorcycle. It was sort of an after effect of that, when I was sitting in the police car with handcuffs, and Chris was riding by.

Matter: I know one of the songs you recorded for the album was called "You're Getting Married." Why didn't that make it on the album?

Westerberg: The band didn't like it.

Matter: Did you like it?

Westerberg: Yeah. But it got to the point where, y'know . . .

Matter: What inspired that particular song?

Westerberg: I'd rather not say.

Matter: Uh-oh. Fiction or non-fiction?

Westerberg: That was a true one,

Matter: I guess at one time there was talk that you were gonno do a solo album, to be simultaneously released with *Hootenanny*.

Westerberg: That was kind of a drunken thought. We both thought, "Yeah, great," and later we realized that it could hurt the bond.

Matter: Down the line, is that a possibility?

Wetterberg: I think so ... when I go a little deafer.

Matter: You're not going to be 40 years old and playing in the Replacements?

Westerberg: Ah no, I don't know about 24. No, we go a while yet, but one day.

Matter: There's a simplicity to your stuff that sounds kinda ultra-serious but y'know, words that don't necessarily look good sitting on paper, that wouldn't be considered poetry, that aren't veiled in all sorts of images. It's all very direct,

Westerberg: That's always the kind of stuff I like. Anything where you have to think twice about, I was never ... I mean, if you have time to sit down and listen to it, and figure it out, that's fine, but I usually don't. That's not my favorite thing. It's just the overall energy and feeling.

Matter: I've had people dismiss my own writing as confessional. People could say the same things about your stuff

Westerberg: Let's write a song . . . No, most bands are afraid of doing something like that. It gets a little sappy if you're bombarded with it, but it's hard to get away from it, because I don't even know if I'm a songwriter. I can put down a few ideas of what happened and stuff, and put it to music. If that's a songwriter then, y'know, I can do that better than trying to sit down and write about something that never happened.

Matter: Is it kinda scary sometimes to maybe be too honest?

Weiterberg: Yeah, it is. I worry about that more than anything. I worry that people will just get sick of some guy spilling their guts, that they'd rather he do something more universal. I worry sometimes our songs get too "I'm doing this, and I'm tired of this ..." It's too much centered toward one person.

Matter: Comparing a song like "Willpower" or "Within Your Reach" to something like "Customer"—it's just like opposite ends of the spectrum. One song could be like a very lonely song, and the other is like Friday night, driving fast . . .

Westerberg: No one's lonely all the time, and it's not a consistent party. You sit around enough, and you write them when you're in different moods a lot of times. The rockers ore usually written when I'm in an up mood, playing electric guitar. A lot of it's because I don't have a guitar at home. My brother brings his over and I play that, and if he doesn't I'm stuck with the piano, and I end up with something like "Within Your Reach," a slow one, 'cause I can't play fast.

Matter: Do you find one mood happening more than the others?

Weiterberg: The lonely mood happens often. I'm alone when I write them. We used to try and write them together, and we still do sometimes, but those turn out more as jokes. It goes around and around and never gets resolved. So I tend to keep to myself when I write them. And, of course, being alone you tend to get a bit ... introspective. And then you bring it to them and it just doesn't fit.

Matter: Do you consider yourself a lonely person?

Westerberg: Yeah, I'd say so.

Matter: Why do you think that is?

Westerberg: I dunno ... I feel lonely in a crowd. I feel frightened in a crowd, if you wanna know. A big part of our stage thing is fear. I mean I'm afraid of the people when I'm up there.

Matter: Do you find that these days you'd rather be out fucking around, or would you rather be home alone?

Westerberg: All the time when we started we used to go out every night, we all used to go out and rave up, drink and everything. I think I'm going out of it a bit. We still do, but it's definitely curtailed, where I stay home much more now. I don't like going out. I feel unsafe in crowds. I hate to even say that I'm maturing, but I think I am.

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GOING DOWN WITH THE REPLACEMENTS

(Not a Bunch of Loads)

By RJ Smith
from *The Village Voice* (Volume 29, No. 50) December 11, 1984

"Go ahead RJ, get out the notebook," Tommy cackles. A bubble of beer hangs from his chin, but he doesn't know about it. Four nights into the Replacements' road trip and already things are getting ugly.

The Replacements, four miscreants from Minneapolis, are setting up their equipment in a cafeteria at the University of Windsor. Ill-humored after a protracted shakedown at the border and feeling confrontational, they can't get past the soundcheck before a guy with "student patrol" on his T-shirt complains about the volume. The alcohol the promoter foolishly left for them in the dressing room *before* the soundcheck only fortifies their hostility.

With me making eight (for a week) in their seats-six-comfortably Econoline, the Replacements are worming their way around the Midwest, out east, south to Georgia, and eventually to California, promoting their new album *Let It Be*. They figure they'll come home broke as they left.

The ride from the cafeteria to the hotel is a crusade—we get lost and then turn around only to get lost some more. Everybody's babbling, everybody's experiencing preshow panic: how can we get away with it tonight? The manifold sprang a leak first night out of Minneapolis, and it fills up the van with a carbon monoxide cloud. But the band's already addled, so it's no big deal.

Guitarist Bob Stinson has hidden the scotch on singer Paul Westerberg. Not that there's more than a trickle left to conceal. "You're not going down on us tonight, are you?" shouts drummer Chris Mars, the only one keeping sober this trip, as he grabs Paul around the neck. "I am going down tonight without you if I have to," Paul says, sounding a little sad at the prospect. "But it would be nice if we went down together."

That night, Paul finds security in numbers. Almost everyone in the band is crooked by the time the show starts. After putting on lipstick and eyeliner, vase-lining back their hair, and donning hippie overalls, they open with a heavy metal version of "The Marine's Hymn" and close by passing around instruments to one another and more or less anybody who's interested. Somewhere in between Paul says, "Fuck this rock shit, we're a jazz band from now on," and the band grinds out a few minutes of Holiday Inn lounge fusion. All this to a stupefied crowd, half of which has already split. After the show Westerberg is rueful that the Replacements hadn't flopped more profoundly—if only they'd tried a little *harder*. That's later on that night, though. Back in the van, still trying to find the crummy little hotel, Paul spite into the footwell of the van. In his laconic, cartoon voice that seems to merge the sound of those two great Norsemen, Walter Mondale and Lars the Janitor, he says, "I feel like I'm in another country." He also seems ready to pass out.

They like Hydrox better than Oreos, but good people won't hold it against them. On a great night or oh a shitty one (but not inbetween), the Replacements are the most exciting, soul-searching *out there* band around. Their newest record, *Let It Be*, encompasses hot-blooded country and rockabilly, Randy Newman pop and the all-out white noise that was always hardcore's deepest (and sometimes only) text. They're as giddy as kids standing up in the front car of a roller-coaster; and yes, they toss their cookies routinely, getting down to disclosures—not just of bad nights on their knees, but of why they do this to themselves in the first place. And why anyone would do such miserable things. All of this told in the plainspeak of a high school dropout afraid he might die, or simply disappear, before he knew what to do with his life.

There's no hurricane's eye with the Replacements, just four forces pulling in different directions. Bassist Tommy Stinson, 18, has an "I Love ET" sticker on his amp, proudly calls himself a John Waite fan, and is the only band member who passes for cute—Gaunt, mob-headed—he tries to JApktAK^AfrftiK^tfa'iaa, why he's so lovable is that pretty soon he just looks like he's hurting, as if he knows that posing for pictures isn't going to save him from anything. He really is a kid growing up in a band, and when he screws up, the group's usually paternal. In contrast to Tommy, his big brother Bob, 24, is pudgy and cheerfully nonplussed most of the time. If he were a cartoon, his eyes might be asterisks; if a moose fell into his TV dinner, he'd just ask for another one.

Most of what I learned about 23-year-old drummer Chris Mars was from watching him work. Behind the drums he looks terrorized, teeth bared and eyes enlarged as if he were getting electroahock. He says even less than Bob, but his quiet isn't puzzling—he's clean-cut, almost invisible. And then there's singer Paul Westerberg, at 24 the most ambitious member of the band and the skinniest (there are fatter breadsticks around). "You should have seen him when I first met him," his girlfriend says. "I thought he was going to die." If Paul instigates a lot of the rabble-raising, he doesn't seem to enjoy it as much as his cohorts—he plays the sourpuss *and* the fool. Like the others, he never finished high school.

"Yeah, I went to Catholic school all the way—all the way and nowhere," he says. "I was constantly 'drunk' and stoned, just messed up with drugs and stuff. I did that all through high school, that's why I think I have a real bitter attitude toward it now. It was the worst four years of my life.

"It was also bad because they would send kids from [alcohol/drug] treatment there, supposedly getting a good atmosphere. So you would have like half these goody-goody rich kids and the other half were these fucking loads from the inner city. I mean, being drunk every day in typing class and by the time you get your paper out the drill's over."

Part of the thrill of any Replacement show is that at any moment they may fall apart—fall on their face, fall off the stage, fall as they try to fly. They have no idea what success might be like, or how to crawl away from what they don't like about their lives. And they know a plan doesn't mean much by itself, not the way the pop marketplace is currently organized. So most of all they caterwaul for all the stuff they don't have and proclaim themselves the kind of wrecks that denial produces in the end. In short, the Replacements are always making spectacles of themselves. Bob

appreciates a good tutu, or a go-go skirt with a paisley top as much as the next man. When the band played an all-ages show in Minneapolis to kick off their tour, he honored the them by wearing just a diaper, which kept coming undone as he walked around Minneapolis after the concert.

Why this is affecting, and why it's a pisser, is that the Replacements never look more like themselves than when they're trying to look like someone else. Painfully regular guys, they take the stage and totter in the direction of their idea of pop stars. The Replacements' role models are the marginal refuse of late '60s and early '70s rock—acts reacting against rock's newly arrived-at art status (T. Rex, Alice Cooper) or bands so naturally disposable (the Sweet, the Grass Roots) they went nowhere critically. Paul, the band's principal writer, says watching the Raspberries on *Rock Concert* in 1974 made him want to play music in the first place. With nothing original to say—and knowing it—the Raspberries wanted to be big anyway. They weren't going to lie about it, so they sang about like wanting a hit and feeling confused about their lives, and like how great all those bands in the '60s were. The Replacements weren't the only fans to catch a dose of catscratch fever from Don Kirschner, but they're one of the few bands who aren't embarrassed about it. There's another difference, too—Paul writes better than Eric Carmen.

But the Replacements' love of '70s grunge is veined with something more complicated, something less pleasant to think about, than fond remembrances. In the van the morning after a show featuring scads of covers, roadie Bill Sullivan mused, "Those people last night, they didn't understand. They thought you were making fun of them." To which Westerberg said, "Well, we kinda are." True, but only inasmuch as the Replacements were making fun of themselves. Doing a soundcheck in Kent, Ohio, the band lashed into a vicious version of Golden Earring's "Radar Love," and after it broke apart Tommy leaned over to manager Peter Jespersen and said happily (not smugly as some might suppose), "That was when dogshit was real dog-shit."

Denying that there's more than dogshit in such a song, or in themselves, is a constant. I got on the van with the Replacements wanting to know how a band with no money provides for itself, and how this affects their attitude and performances. What I came away with—hellit's blatant every show, and it fills up the van faster than the carbon monoxide— was a penetrating sense of obstruction, of being blocked, that made them willing to gouge into themselves to remove what makes them feel like things. I learned to judge a Replacements show like a scary movie—chart the splatter.

And there's plenty of splatter, because these guys naturally act like they've been barfed out of a particle accelerator. They are within the tradition of troublemakers like Wynonie Harris or Jerry Lee Lewis, musicians who might flop or might instigate a riot and who do both for the same reason—to wipe the features off your face. The Replacements are balled-up boluses of high hopea and low feelings, wildcat growls and boredom, longings they try to beat down with a stick but never quite can. It's an unstable mix, and sometimes it pulls a show together, when it's not pulling their lives apart.

In 1979, the Stinson brothers were jamming with drummer Chris Mars at home—neighborhood kids, blammied and wailing on tunes by Ted Nugent and Aerosmith. (Tastes that haven't disappeared by any means. Witness this exchange in

the van, somewhere between Boston and Providence. Bill Mack, driver/soundman, smirking while Elvis's *Sun Sessions* blares from the box: "Aw, what is this shit?" Bob, "Yeah, turn it off. I've got this Johnny Winter tape.") Paul Westerberg, a janitor at the time, would hear them through the basement window on his way back from work and hide in the bushes.

Before Paul, the band was happy with the singer it had—truth is, sometimes they say they'd be happier if they *still* had him. Paul was enlisted strictly as a guitar player "I went in and I was the lead guitar player, Bob was the rhythm and we had another singer that they all wanted to keep," Paul recalls. "He was a friend of mine, and I told him that J loved him but the band hated him." A few pep talks like this and the singer left. "To this day, I don't think he knows," Paul says.

The band started as the Impediments, and gig number one was in a halfway house for alcoholics. They came to the show pilled up and plowed and got thrown out. They were told they wouldn't play again. The next day they became the Replacements.

They issued the splendidly entitled *Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the The Trash* in 1981, and though it's brutal enough to harpoon a seaful of Moby Jacks (punk cut with Johnny Thunders's Heartbreakers), it also reveals Paul's knack for pop vernacular. "Shiftless When Idle," if they'd taken the time, might have turned a few heads as a single, and the accompanying 45, the gruesomely blue "If Only You Were Lonely," is as moving a honky-tonk tune as this decade has produced. A year later, there was *The Replacements Stink*, an appeal to hardcore's troops; gratifying blare, it's also the least of their records. And while last year's all-u-can-eat genre-smashing *Hootenanny* was mightily confusing at first, its pastiche of folk hokum, blues, and thrash-a-go-go serves both as a provocation to their fans and as an homage to the music the band likes.

After an all-night drive to Columbus, the Replacements are tired and jittery for their first show on the road. Stache's, the club they're playing, is tiny and covered with the green carpeting usually found on putt-putt courses. Westerberg discovered not too long ago that he had pleurisy, and tonight it's dogging him, causing his chest muscles to burn up like wire cables. Before the soundcheck, he calls his girlfriend—"I told her everything was fine, that we're all okay," he says. "Already lying to her," Tommy responds.

Halfway through the show, when they lace into *Let It Be's* material "16 Blue," and Paul is so excited he pushes Tommy out of the way to turn up his amp, the song crashes away. Soon they shred "Take Me Down to the Hospital," about that first pleurisy attack, and it's obvious everybody in the club is either a true believer or another candidate for the emergency room. Some nights the band won't connect, and people stand around like they're waiting for a pizza, and if you think about the R.E.M. song where the rank and file of clubdom are compared to pilgrims you'd laugh a black guffaw. But there's no laughter tonight, unless you count the fun Tommy's having shouting along on "Hospital." There's a shocked sound rolling around the four walls as the set ends. Nobody feels like a stranger.

After the show, there's time for another drink while the money is counted and the equipment gets put in the van. Tommy's made a friend he'll have contempt for in the morning. Bill Sullivan's got an electric cord in one hand, the other in a woman's

ass pocket. Paul's nursing a carton of milk and just wants to get to sleep. Somebody passes out a fanzine, and somebody says the bar is closing.

And always pressing some flesh, maybe in the back of his mind counting the drinks everybody's having, is manager Peter Jesperson. The band's relationship with their label, Twin/Tone, and with Jesperson, has evolved from accidental beginnings. Trying to get a gig at a Minneapolis club, Paul took a tape to Jesperson, the club's hooker who was also part owner of Twin/Tone, a local company the band had never heard of. After playing the demo, Jesperson offered to record them. He became their manager at their second show, Paul says, "because we didn't want to talk to the asshole at the bar."

Late one night on the tour, outside a gyro joint. Bob complains about Jesperson. He's unhappy about how little the band makes, about Jesperson's co-production on the new album. He says, "I just don't know why he's here." "Because he liked us when nobody else did," Paul replies.

The support's been important, but the band's antsy for change. They have what Jesperson describes as a "loose but perpetual" contract with Twin/Tone (he refuses to say whether they have a written agreement). By the band's account, they haven't seen any money from their records. "You know, none of us are whizzes at math or anything," Paul says. "And they say to us, 'You're welcome any time you want to come look at the books.'" Well, Christ, I don't want to see a page full of figures. We say, "Where's our money?" Twin/Tone doesn't spend enough money to make money. They spend enough to get it out, the smallest amount necessary. It's all they have, they say. I don't know where the money is."

Everyone on the tour collects a per diem, usually \$15, though either a packed house or an empty one the night before can alter that. Twin/Tone fronted the group \$500 to get out of town, which, along with the take from each show, is what the Replacements are rolling on. A band like the Replacements can expect to make anywhere from \$200 to \$1250 a gig. Once in a while—a single time in the week I traveled—Jesperson sends money home, to pay off the studio time, the pressing and mastering of the record, the van. But after springing for hotel rooms (this is the first tour the Replacements have not depended on the kindness of strangers for lodging) and gas and instrument and van repairs, there isn't much scratch left. What they save up from their per diem is what the band members will take home. Out of this ia born various strategies for economizing. Bob will politely ask anyone to buy him a drink. Paul sometimes eats about three bites a day. Occasionally there's a splurge—a band buy of food, say, or a case—which comes out of what Jesperson's been holding.

Which isn't to say that the Replacements don't make things hard for themselves. First, there's the volume to consider, a prime reason some clubs decline to book them. Besides being one of the few acts to bring the cups to Maxwell's for disturbing Hoboken's nappytime, the Replacements have had a number of club managers yank the plug on them. Once in Oshkosh they were playing at 128 decibals, over the legal limit and as loud as the sound board could register, when an amp gave up with a column of smoke. The show ended, and they got extended applause. "The guy there keeps calling us to play there again," Jesperson says with an amused look. Not always is the management so sensitive. At a Minneapolis show a manager came up to the front of the stage with a bouncer and shouted at

Paul to either turn it down or get off. "Do we still get paid if we leave?" he asked, as the purple hose in the manager's forehead throbbed a little more, and the band launched into "Shut Up," only with Westerberg shouting, "Fuck you."

Other tales of terror: the Cleveland jinx thrown out of two clubs, one because Hub pissed on stage); a show in Virginia, where a crowd of hardcore kids, mad because the band delivered their patented "pussy" set (country covers and slow stuff served up to knee-jerk thrashers), took it out on the van; an Ann Arbor date, er, performance art piece, consisting basically of tuning up, falling down, and starting maybe 20 songs without completing a one.

The point in running down this bad behavior isn't in the details. I had heard many of these stories before, but it wasn't until I was on the road with the Replacements that I began to see how depressing their untenable heap of ambitions and energy can get. *Hootennay* sold only about 6000 copies, and they're deep in the hole financing *Let It Be*. The record industry isn't going to look at this band and see a slack of Krugerrands. When the Replacements came to New York and played for some a&r people at CBGB, they flopped. To me it seemed meaningful.

New York was where they figured they'd be beard by some big label representatives—Warner Bros.' Michael Hill was coming out and, because he was a fan he had set up a meeting with the band once they got to town. According to Paul, nothing in particular happened. "I wasn't expecting to sign a deal or nothing, at all. basically we're talking 'in a few years.' He didn't say anything specific at all. He just wanted to know if we had half a brain or if we were a bunch of loads. At this point he'd be embarrassed, it would be too much of a risk to bring some bigwig down and see these guys who could possibly fall on their face.

"Last night [at CBGB] ,was a classic example. We went up there, we did what we wanted to do, and they [the record industry] wanted us to play our best songs as best we could. And we didn't feel like it. And so they figure, "They're a small-time bunch of amateurs.' That's one way to look at it, and that's partly true. But I think it's also the spirit that makes rock exciting and immediate."

But if Paul and Jespersion say there were no big hopes for the meeting, I remember the argument outside the gyro restaurant. Bob was complaining about the size of Twin/Tone's operation. And I remember Paul saying, "Well, just wait until we get to New York. We're going to talk to somebody from Warner Bros. there." He wasn't just placating an angry Bob. And then there was the show the night of the meeting with Hill. Shortly into the set Paul babbled, "You may have guessed tonight that we don't want to play any of our own songs." This was big-league self-abuse: not the rocket ride that can make their covers go bang, more like an extended submarine fart. The audience was howling at them, and the band couldn't come up with anything to shout back. Finally, they stumbled into the Stones' "Start Me Up," with shit-eating grins I would swear were slapped over some raw feelings. And then Paul said into the mike, "Do we get a record contract now?" No, but Hill did say he had tried to get Rod Stewart to cover "16 Blue."

In the end, to be honest, the Replacements have to distinguish what they want from what they *want*. They have folks on their side like R.E.M. and X, bands who talk them up in interviews. The last time the Replacements opened for X, the headliner added part of their own take to the Replacements' cut. There *is* support for the band,

and in their calmer moments they think they just have to find a way to stick together and keep on sucking carbon mono before they start generating cash from it all. Except that there's a song on *Let It Be* called "Unsatisfied" that questions what success will mean. When Paul sings "Everything you ever dream of, it's right in front of you," he's not even teenage-miserable. He feels cleaned out like a fish, worrying that fans or money or some such shit won't make him feel any better about himself—that' his depression will last a long time, maybe until the permanent vacation.

Still, the Replacements deserve every consumer good they can cram down their cakehole, and it will be a more just world which will give them merely some of that. And an even juster one that will ease the vacancy that bunches up their chest muscles. But for now they have to contend with the fear of defeat that one way or another works its way to the surface of any great Replacements show and that sometimes gets broken in their effort.

And sometimes that fear just lays low, nibbles away at the band until they feel there's nothing to do but get fucked up. That's the way it was for the great trek through Canada. Driving from Windsor to Rochester through Ontario was the longest time I spent in the van with them. Fortified with more alcoholic Canadian beer, they were mostly wrecked. There was tag team wrestling in the back—when we got to Rochester the proper response belonged to Bob, who lobbed a smoke bomb into the van and might have burned it down.

It was fun. But better than fun was the larger-than-life wrestling with boredom that went down a few nights before in Kent, Ohio. We were at JB's, a large, hops-soaked basement where, the band was told, Alice Cooper had played 15 years earlier. There was no sign for the place outside. The show wobbled at first, the band playing material from *Let It Be* not particularly well. Then something like the hootch and something like panic began to lay a finger on them. Songs started crumbling after a few bars; there was no agreementw about what to play. "Hey, let's pick a chord guys," Paul said. Nobody did. And then, to Bob, "Hey, you're the guitar player," trying to make him pick a song. So they tuned up for a few minutes instead.

Plink, plink. "We'd talk to you between songs, but we're not any good at it" And then Paul cackled out of the side of his mouth, "Bob will start this next one for you right now. Watch him. Now ..." The audience had long ago stopped laughing at the patter. Now they're yelling things like "Bark my hole" and "Fuck you." Finally Chris kicked into the drum intro to "Billion Dollar Babies," which made it nearly to the part where the vocal was supposed to come in before everybody in the band started cracking up too much to play. Plink. "We can do this all night," Paul hooted. No shit.

There was an empty dance floor in front of the band. And suddenly the rest of the place was thinning out, too. What Paul once said on another stage roust be running through his mind: "I can see some of you are still here. That means our work is not finished." What followed, at a glance, was family-sized loathing—for themselves and for the audience, need it be said. But as they fell down the cistern, something pretty strange was also happening. The band essayed Bad Company's "Can't Get Enough," and the crowd wasn't articulating too much anymore, they were making crueller animal-like sounds. Next up was "Taking Care of Business," only the real joke was it was a monster, and all at once the band wasn't laughing exactly. They

were ... smiling. Hell, beaming. This was suddenly, unexpectedly, really fun.

And for as long as they kept officious-ness at bay, they were not even precisely the Replacements, they were just fans. When they took on "Roundabout," Bob was smiling as much as he had the whole week, and he glowed throughout the Jose Feliciano, the DeFranco Family. I think they may have played some of their own stuff here, oh, and "Walk on the Wild Side." Greil Marcus writes approvingly about Sonic Youth making rock so crude it was almost noise, but at JB's the Replacements made Sonic Youth sound like the Dillards. This was gap-toothed noise laughing at music. It had been a while since the people who had thrown lit cigarettes and cans of soup and toilet paper, had left, and everybody else now was either just tired, or, I think, subtly pacified. And happy, too.

"My Sharona" came then, and when I looked over, I saw the bartender shaking a tambourine and bopping from one end of the bar to the other. Eventually they got to "Breakdown," and Jespersen sang every word from the back of the room. And then, pretty quickly, they found a way back, maybe found a new way to being Replacements once again. And when they wailed on "Johnny's Gonna Die," it was maybe more fucked and more moving, than ever. A friend in Ann Arbor a night later would tell me the Replacements were great because they had so many "objective correlatives" poking out of every song, like shrapnel in some Vili nail fetish, and maybe here was the biggest example of all. Westerbrp at 20 writing about role model Johnny Thunders, how his update of Hank Williams's life was appealing, and terminal. Built on the chords to "So You Want To Be a Rock and Roll Star," "Johnny" is a kid meditating on what's not a kid's theme: that what he loves—and it's not really junk, it's speed, wide eyed and no pauses—may kill him. The Replacements are crucial because they proclaim their hunger, and they don't shut up. From the mournful din of "Johnny" to *Let It Be's* expansive, calamitous variety, they have been even smarter than they have been stoopid.

Nobody else left once things got interesting, but the band was getting tired. Still, the set never really "ended." Somebody left the stage, Tommy and Bob sat down on the edge, and roadie Bill Sullivan took the mike to say, "Once again we'd like to thank you for that big Ohio welcome." It cleared out briskly after that.

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Long and Winding Road

Spin Magazine (May 1985)

By Chuck Reese

The Fuegos and the Replacements were the wildest, loudest drunkest bar bands in their home towns. Now the wonderful sub-slime hope to be sublime...but in different ways.

Paul Westerberg, the lead singer, songwriter and de facto leader of the Replacements--four bad boys from Minneapolis--hates like hell to admit his deep concern for the band's future, but he can't hide it. He and I are walking down the front hallway of the 688 Club in Atlanta about three hours before showtime when he sees Bob Stinson, the band's addled but affable lead guitarist, involved in what looks like a shady deal with a stranger.

"No, Bob," he says sternly under his breath. "No!"

Westerberg wants the show to cook tonight. He'd rather spare Atlanta, a town that has been pretty good to his band, one of those patented Replacements debacles that once provoked a critic to call them "almost invariably awful live."

The opinion that the Replacements are awful live is dead wrong. When Westerberg, Stinson, Stinson's brother, bassist Tommy, and drummer Chris Mars manage to tumble together into a good groove, the Replacements can raise a crowd straight into ecstasy.

"Usually it's spontaneous." Westerberg says. "It just happens onstage. Usually, when we try to plan the next move that'll work, it just doesn't fly. It's best when it happens by accident, because that's when it's the most fun. It's exciting for us. You've got nothing to lose, and it could go over big or everything could just crumble, right? You shoot for something, and if it doesn't make it, well..."

Well, you go down together. The Replacements' magic and their mishaps are predicated on the volatile friendship among Westerberg, Mars and the Stinsons.

"The playing--doing the songs, worrying about who's gonna catch on to it and how big and what's gonna happen next, that stuff--it's scary, and we just don't want to think about it," Westerberg says. "We don't do all that because we'd probably flip out. I think we've got the right attitude, and probably not the one that's gonna take us as far as we possibly could go, but it's probably the one that's gonna keep us together the longest."

POST-PUNK ROCK REBELS THRIVE IN MINNEAPOLIS

The New York Times (October 27, 1985)

By JON PARELES

Something about Minneapolis breeds rock rebels. The city's best-known performer, Prince, bends genres and breaks taboos without batting a mascaraed eyelash. Less showmanlike, but no less rebellious, are Minneapolis's two leading post-punk bands, Husker Du and the Replacements. These two bands stand in open opposition to the upscale verities of 1980's rock - they defy the docile, well-groomed, reassuring, high-image and low-content rock mainstream. In fact, they have mapped out a new kind of American malaise; they see nothing ahead but dead ends, and they hurtle toward them with a black-humored rage.

Both the three-piece Husker Du (which means "do you remember?" in Danish and Norwegian) and the four-piece Replacements have had prolific independent recording careers. Since 1981, Husker Du has released three EP's, an LP and, in 1984-85 alone, a double album and two single LP's for the SST label (P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, Calif. 90260; also available on cassette), of which the latest is "Flip Your Wig"; a typical side of a Husker Du record includes seven songs. The Replacements have made an album a year since 1981; the first four were for Twin-Tone Records (445 Oliver Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55405; only 1984's "Let It Be" is available as a cassette), while the new one, "Tim," is on a major label, the Sire subsidiary of Warner Bros.

Over the years the musicians have, as it were, mellowed. They started as punk-rock bands, blasting power chords and playing at such fast tempos that Husker Du's first EP, "Land Speed Record," crammed 17 songs into 26 minutes; the Replacements' 1981 "Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash" had 18 songs in 36 minutes. Since then, the Replacements have gone eclectic, reclaiming all styles of melodic pop without succumbing to overly neat professionalism; Husker Du has slowed its tempos just a bit, while maintaining and burnishing the roar of Bob Mould's guitar. By now, the Replacements and Husker Du share only a hometown, mutual admiration and a determination not to be complacent.

The battering-ram guitar chords of early punk-rock, as perfected by the Ramones, suggested aggression that was comic, threatening and grimly joyful. It's a sound that Husker Du loves; Mr. Mould and the bassist Greg Norton crank up the volume until their chords clang and echo like carillons. But on their 1985 albums, "New Day Rising" and especially "Flip Your Wig," Husker Du wants to extend the connotations of that guitar sound. While Mr. Mould continues to write explosive, enraged lyrics - one paranoia-filled song shouts, "I expect I won't be heard / Because my silence is assured / Never a discouraging word / They divide and conquer" - the drummer Grant Hart also wants to sing, of all things, love songs.

Surprisingly, the sound takes only a little bit of adjustment. With a hint of electronic phasing, Mr. Mould's guitar begins to suggest a more powerful version of Roger McGuinn's electric 12-string guitar in the Byrds, one of the warmest tones in rock. (Before entering its current phase, Husker Du released its own version of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High.") Since Husker Du has held onto its massive-sounding mixes and fast tempos, it can't be accused of going commercial.

Yet love is a tricky subject to write about; there are clichés in every direction. It's easy to imagine the likes of Paul Young crooning Mr. Hart's "Green Eyes" - in, of course, a radically different arrangement, one that didn't go barreling along with blaring guitars. On "Flip Your Wig," Husker Du balances punkish defiance and lovestruck hopefulness. The band itself is well aware that such a balance is precarious; it closes the album with two instrumentals - one stomping and screeching and laced with feedback, one using tape-reversed guitar and cymbals (recorded and then played backwards) to create a sense of meditative calm. The closing title: "Don't Know Yet." But if Husker Du continues to record at its current rate, we'll find out in a few months.

The Replacements have reached a different kind of crossroads. After half a decade as an independent-label band with a fond and growing cult, they have signed with a major label - a paradox for a band that is anything but careerist. The Replacements keep things loose; true to old-fashioned rock esthetics, they are determined to stay spontaneous and unpretentious (without getting pretentious about it). On "Sorry Ma . . .," the liner notes included such explanations as "Written 20 mins. after we recorded it," "Make up your own words. I did," and, for the song "Shiftless When Idle," "Title: Good. Song: Kinda." The Replacements have always pointed a sarcastic finger at authority figures, phonies and the overly hip, but they reserve most of their venom for themselves. In his songs, Paul Westerberg portrays himself as a red-blooded adolescent who can't help messing things up - a more realistic vision than one finds on Bryan Adams records or in such movies as "Back to the Future." They sing: "Spend my cash/Waste my time/take out the trash/not this time/You won't ever say that it's so You're in love and I'm in trouble." In a way, the Replacements are the Beatles of nihilism.

A band that stays together for five years can't help improving, and by the time they recorded "Let It Be," the Replacements could play music that was pretty as well as rough. Their lyrics were still unruly - "One more chance to get it wrong," one song taunted - and both band and singer didn't mind sounding out-of-tune if they conveyed raw-throated feeling. Yet no one could miss the conciseness and catchiness of Replacements songs; it was only a matter of time before the mainstream music business began to pay attention.

"Time for decision to be made," Mr. Westerberg sings in the opening song of "Tim" - and the Replacements have decided to hang tough. "Tim" was produced by Tommy Erdelyi, formerly the drummer for the Ramones; it cleans up the band's attack just a little, while bringing Mr. Westerberg's voice forward. It also shows how well they use Beatles-flavored pop and rockabilly ("Kiss Me on the Bus"), skiffle ("Waitress in the Sky") and folk-pop ("Here Comes a Regular").

There's something missing, though - humor. The Replacements always had a streak of

wild-eyed, tolerant slapstick, in such songs as "Androgynous" (about consenting adults) or "Take Me Down to the Hospital." On "Tim," however, they concentrate a little too hard on making a statement, defining themselves in one song as "Bastards of Young" and asking in another for a "Dose of Thunder." For some reason, their put-downs are also addressed exclusively to women for the first time.

Doubtless the band felt some pressure. "Tim" is the first Replacements album many people will ever hear - and those that do are likely to be impressed by the ingenuity that goes into such heartfelt songs as "Lay It Down Clown" or "Kiss Me on the Bus." But it's worth searching for the albums "Let It Be" or "Hootenanny," with a different style in every track; they offer a far better sampling of one of America's most cantankerous bands.

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"That strong feeling is what binds us together. Like if one gut can't cut it, and you know you're hot that night, just the fact that he's going down--well, then I'm going down with him. It's a bond. It's something you can't get anywhere else. It's a real good feeling, even when you go down."

Deliverance and laughs--with a dark twinkle in the eye--are what you get from the Replacements--if you're lucky. They mix brazen hilarity and pointed confession so effectively that you become immersed in their pain, but come up laughing. Last winter's *Let It Be* album, a critical success and college radio favorite, is the best showcase yet for the band's trashy sound and commonplace wisdom. "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out," is an account of 18-year-old bassist's operation, from the doctor's point of view. "Let's get this over with/I'll be home in an hour/My Cadillac's running/Rip rip! Gonna Rip 'em out now!" Then turn the album over and listen to "Answering Machine," a lament over blocked communication between lovers: "Can't reach her heart, only her answering machine." Over a churning and slashing guitar riff, he wails darkly, "How do you say I'm lonely to an answering machine?/How do you say I love you to an answering machine?/Ooooh, I hate your answering machine." Emotions like that weigh heavy on the Replacements, making it hard for the the band to be just smiling entertainers.

"I say a lot more in a song than I do to the band," Westerberg admits. "We're close and all, but we don't sit around and talk about deep feelings or anything. It's difficult to show them a song--the lyrics are like me talking to them, which is something I never do. That's why it's difficult sometimes to have people cheering and shit when I'm doing 'Answering Machine.' There ain't no way I could be happy and smiling when I'm doing that. It's a whirlwind of different feelings."

Westerberg writes good hooks; his band could have more hits. Westerberg wants to write more soul-blaring and humorous tunes and produce records that are more sophisticated than the Replacements first four discs on an independent Minneapolis label. But the message is in his every word: they are always the Replacements. they could run headlong at 90 mph into the brick wall of the Big Record Business and explode.

"Then again," Westerberg asks with a grin, "would you like to see us turn to stone and crumble? If we go, we're gonna go down in flames. Then we'll come back with, like, suits and chick singers..."

Replacements on national TV, but not locally

Star Tribune 1/17/1986

By Jon Bream

The good news is that the Replacements, the critically acclaimed rock quartet from Minneapolis, will get a big break this weekend with a performance on "NBC's Saturday Night Live." The bad news is that WUSA (Channel 11), the local NBC affiliate, will not broadcast the program live because of a previous commitment to carry a syndicated telethon for cerebral palsy.

"It's one of those things," Art Ludwig, WUSA program director, said Tuesday. "We've had the telethon scheduled for over a year. We didn't know a local band was on it ('Saturday Night Live'). It didn't come to our attention until two days ago."

Channel 11 has made arrangements to broadcast a tape of the "Saturday Night Live" installment shortly after midnight Sunday.

Actually, the Replacements didn't find out about their national TV debut until Monday night.

"It's pretty cool," said the band's manager, Peter Jespersen. "We had talked about it in California when we were talking to Warner Bros.' video guy." That record-company official, the director of creative marketing, wrote a letter to the producer of "Saturday Night Live" in early January pitching the Replacements. After checking with several sources in the music industry, "SNL" invited the group on the show.

"I don't usually book bands that way," said Michele Galfas, "SNL" music talent executive, by telephone from her New York office. "I usually see them myself. But they (Replacements) got a great reputation in L.A. (after their performances there Dec. 16 and 17). Their album is No. 6 on the college charts, and the college charts mean a lot to me.

"They (Replacements) came out of nowhere. I wasn't aware of them until the middle of December. I think it's exciting and fun to have new bands on the show instead of consistently booking (hitmakers) from the charts."

The Replacements are essentially an underground phenomenon. The punk-influenced quartet has been together 5 1/2 years and has recorded four albums for Twin/Tone Records, a small Minneapolis-based company. Those discs established the band as a favorite among critics nationwide, which helped lead to a contract last year with Sire Records, a Warner affiliate.

Non-mainstream bands such as the Replacements, Dream Academy and Queen Ida & the Bon Temps Zydeco Band have been the rule rather than the exception this season on "Saturday Night Live," which in previous years favored established performers (the Rolling Stones, Grateful Dead) and hot hitmakers (Power Station, Billy Ocean).

Appearances on the program in front of millions of viewers has meant immediate career boosts for veteran performers and especially for rising artists, including Elvis Costello and Sheila E.

"This could be the galvanizing event for the Replacements," said Bob Merlis, Warner's vice president for publicity. "I don't think you can quantify it in terms of record sales unless they sell 100,000 records on Monday. It's more of a buzz kind of thing. It might lead to additional radio exposure, which ultimately causes records to be purchased."

Warner Bros. released the Replacements' album "Tim" in October. The record received many glowing reviews around the country; a panel of critics of the Los Angeles Times voted it No. 1 album of 1985.

"The record came out at a time when it was difficult to mobilize the (marketing) troops," said Merlis. Furthermore, Warner did not release a single, a traditional vehicle for promoting a band on radio, and the Replacements refused to make a video clip to promote the band on television. However, during a December meeting in Los Angeles the band members agreed to perform live on TV, and then the Warner wheels began turning after the holidays.

This month the record company will release the song "Kiss Me on the Bus" as a single. The band is scheduled to sing that and "Bastards of Young" on "SNL." Because of the latter title, Jespersen said he had to read the lyrics of the song to Galfas over the phone so she could get approval from NBC's department of standards and practices.

Ludwig reported that WUSA received a few dozen complaints from fans of the band, and Wednesday he arranged with NBC to broadcast the show on a delayed basis. He said interested viewers can catch the program live via NBC affiliates in Rochester, Alexandria and Duluth, Minn.

After the Replacements appear on "SNL" they will return for performances Tuesday and Wednesday at First Avenue in Minneapolis. A brief concert tour on the East Coast is scheduled for early February, followed by performances in England, the Netherlands and France. Meanwhile, Twin/Tone Records plans to release a compilation album of early Replacements songs, "England Schmengland," for distribution in Great Britain.

THE REPLACEMENTS, A LIVELY NIGHT AT THE RITZ

The New York Times, June 23, 1986

By Jon Pareles

ROCK often flirts with anarchy, puncturing pop-song structures with improvisation and noise. But few bands revel in anarchy like the Replacements, whose Saturday night show at the Ritz was a free-for-all on both sides of the spotlight.

Paul Westerberg, the Minneapolis-based Replacements' singer and songwriter, often writes about seething adolescent energy and confusion, about feeling frustrated and wild. "God - what a mess - on the ladder of success," goes one lyric, "you take one step and miss the whole first rung." His songs are tuneful, with more than a hint of the Beatles, but the band laces them with adrenaline. Saturday, spurred by the crowd and the band's own mood, the balance tilted toward gleeful disorder.

To open the set, the guitarist Bob Stinson asked for boos. And with the band's first song, the area near the stage of the Ritz became a slam-dancing pit where people happily flailed and collided; every few minutes, someone would be heaved up to the stage, usually to somersault back into the crowd and continue dancing. In one song, Mr. Westerberg himself leaped into the crowd between verses. Meanwhile, beer cans flew through the air.

Band members traded instruments; songs were left unfinished; the Replacements tossed off an assortment of other peoples' songs, from the Beach Boys to Alice Cooper to John Denver to the "Batman" theme. They also knocked out some rough-edged, urgent versions of their own songs, among them "Unsatisfied" and "Take Me Down to the Hospital."

It was more a theatrical event -raw performance art - than a musical one; the band has played far better concerts. But where most so-called rock rebels won't tolerate genuine audience rowdiness, the Replacements don't mind a bit.

Green on Red, from Los Angeles, opened the concert to a more conventional reception. They are disciples of Neil Young's country-rock. They write plain-faced, three-chord songs that are sung in a nasal twang by Dan Stuart; the lyrics address hard times with stubborn pugnacity. There's not much new in their music, but their directness and underdog sympathies are welcome.

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Drinking (And Drinking Lots More) With The Replacements

Creem (9/86)

By Bill Holdship

So "Who's Hot?"

It you believe the image of Michael J. Fox standing behind a crystal ball on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, the Replacements are one of "The New Stars In Your Future"—and that almost makes 'em legitimate and respectable. But *Rolling Stone* was hardly the first to sing the praises of the Replacements. There's been a big critical buzz ever since the band cut their first hardcore-meets-roots-rock records for (their hometown) Minneapolis's Twin/Tone label five years ago. Critics placed the band at the forefront of their "American Rock Renaissance" hype, and voted two of the band's LPs number four and number two respectively in the 1984 and '65 Village Voice national rock critics' poll. The Voice thought so much of the Replacements that it put the band's picture on its cover and had RJ Smith write a major feature on them before they even signed with Warner Brothers.

Almost every Replacements article makes them sound too "good" to ring true. In fact, like the Ramones before them, the Replacements would make a terrific cartoon show or comic strip—sorta like an '80s punk version of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* (even though Fat Freddie is probably upwardly mobile and buying designer drugs and cats in the '80s). They're street punks. They're amateurs who can't really play their instruments. They like to get drunk. They're stoopid and obnoxious. And some would call them "the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world."

Yet if you've ever seen them live opening for, say, X or sandwiched between R.E.M. and the Three O'Clock—you may wonder about this claim. The band is loud, obnoxious and occasionally funny onstage. They trade instruments right in the middle of a song, while other numbers reach total entropy. But it often sounds like they're purposely trying to sound bad. You may see flashes of brilliance in their covers of, say, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" and "Black Diamond" (which you always hated by Kiss but they make sound great) or a familiar song from one of their latter LPs—"greatest rock band in the world"? Nah. The joke is already getting old by the third time you see them.

And yet their last two LPs, *Let It Be* and *TIM*, were classic rock 'n' roll records, deserving to place as high as they did in the polls. The playing illustrates and induces excitement. Singer Paul Westerberg writes wonderful songs. And anyone who can write lyrics as poignant as those in "Bastards Of Young" or as humorous as those in "Answering Machine"—well, he's definitely not stoopid. Can it be that, the Replacements are *trying* to be the punk band for those who missed "punk" the first time around? Could it be that they're a bit *contrived*?

On our way into the band's dressing room, J. Kordosh and I pass lead guitarist Bob Stinson in the hall. He looks like a cartoon character (really!), his eyes already like cherries in a vat of buttermilk at 6 p.m. We greet him, he grunts-and

I realize he also looks like a character you'd be afraid to meet in a dark alley late at night. Inside, Westerberg offers Kordosh a beer, and bassist Tommy Stinson gives me his "special favorite"--100 proof vodka on ice. Let it be said at the onset that Westerberg impressed me as one of the most charming guys I've ever interviewed--honest, frank, funny and definitely not stoopid. Stinson is OK, too, and far from dumb. But being 19 years old, he seems to feel he has an "image" to uphold--and almost appears schizophrenic in how he reacts to us as the interview progresses. But what the hell they give us lots to drink, and, before long we're having one helluva good time!

We discuss a lot of the typical things: heavy metal (PW: "Well, I can take it as a joke, but It seems the bands that do it don't see It as a joke. They take themselves seriously") and rock 'n' roll music In general. Their finances (PW: "We're making money, but we don't see it because you got like lawyers and accountants and fuckheads."). And life on a major label...

PW: They see it as there's a hundred bands like us who would die for our chance, who are starving hungry and would do whatever they're told. And they don't understand that we want to go as far as we can, but we don't want to be like A-Ha and shit. We're not like the Cult. We don't have a strong, hip image that's going to sell right now, and they don't know What to do with us.

TS: They think we're trying to pin them off, but we're just being ourselves. This isn't like a job. Or a big thing to make us popular and pick up chicks. We just like doing this--it's fun. They just sit there and go, "You guys are just trying piss us off. You want to be the bad kids of the rock business."

They discuss their hard drinking image...

PW: We drink heavily, not all the time, though.

TS: We're such outsiders to say this again, but we get onstage, all our amps are far behind us, and you got a crowd that's real far in front of you, and you feel weird because you're standing there in the middle of nowhere with a guitar In your hand. You don't know what to do with it. Still, to this day, and we've been like in the band for five or six years. And you can't get up there and be nervous.

BH: So, do you get drunk before you play?

PW: No, we've never been drunk before we play. *Ever.*

BH: That's the image that's been painted.

TS: Sometimes it takes a drink to loosen up, to just be able to say "OK this feels weird, but..."

PW: And if it's a small crowd, it sometimes helps because you see double--and then you can fill the joint.

And songwriting...

BH: So you just decided songs and then did it?

PW: Sure. Honestly, I couldn't sing anyone else's. I have a terrible voice. I have no range. We tried to do covers, and I could never do them. We do covers now, but we do them like Jerry Lee Lewis does them—we make them ours. We used to try to do shit note-for-note.

TS: It's been more of an honest thing since then.

PW: I mean, Christ, they tried to make me sing 'Roundabout'!

TS: Except it was real fast.

They talk about critics...

TS: When I was a kid, most of the kids didn't even read magazines about bands...

PW: I did. See, that's where you're too young. He's 19, and I'm 26. I grew up like reading *Rolling Stone* and *CREEM*.

BH: Does it matter to you personally? Do you really care what the critics think?

PW: I'll be honest. It does. I won't lie and say it means nothing. Not that we think we're great or anything. We know exactly what we are. We get a giggle out of it but it makes you feel good.

TS: When it's someone big and they say we're good, it makes you feel good but I never really read any of that stuff about us. Unless someone's got something bad to say and it's funny or clever. I got a kick out of someone saying we suck because we're arrogant little pricks.

PW: You do until they single it out and say you look like a fucking fake rock star. You can take the general bullshit but...

TS: I can take it all.

PW: Yeah, until they say something ... you know what I'm saying.

TS: I know what you're saying.

And they discuss their amateurish "bad" shows and stoopid image...

JK: I think you're giving us a little shuck and jive here. A band doesn't get signed to a major label without having some drive and ambition. And you guys are trying to project a total image of drunkenness...

PW: You saw through it. Would you like to manage us?

BH: Your shows seem contrived, like you're trying to be "bad."

PW: You saw us in some weird circumstances when you open for a bigger band, you're sort of treated like baggage, and it's almost like, "Well, you're damn lucky to be on this bill." And we don't like being told what to do. So in those events, we would rather blow a show completely to flip them the bird than play the game. We'll come out and give them a circus...

TS: And we could make the pussiest record ever, but we're still a loud, obnoxious rock band in a live environment. We couldn't play pussy live.

BH: Well, the other thing is that your songs are really fucking great.

JK: Are they just "great" or "fucking great"?

BH: Some are "fucking great" and some are just "great."

PW: You guys are fucking unbelievable. OK, go ahead.

BH: And it's like onstage, you try to act stupider than you really are.

PW: Uh, huh. There's a fear of not being able to reproduce something we did in the studio. In the studio, we can say this is good, and then we get up there and go, "Huh?" And if can't make it that good, we don't want to look stupid trying to, because then we're just gonna come off like every other band. If we feel it's in our grasp, we'll go for it. But if we feel like this ain't gonna fly tonight, we'll take a more casual attitude towards it.

TS: We're afraid of looking too good.

JK: Do you guys have massive stage fright or what?

PW: Yeah. We're unprofessional. I'm still as scared as I ever was.

TS: And the hype and all the bullshit that goes along with it, that's scary.

BH: It puts pressure on you?

TS: We try to ignore it just so we won't get consumed by it.

PW: Lately, we've been trying to go get a happy medium. We got a lot at people coining now to see us for the image shit. And it's not something we contrive, it's what we are. But we'll try to play some of the songs good. It's like we won't try to purposely mess up. But there are some songs we'll just wing ... And sometimes we're going for like a big kamikaze thing. I'd rather have them hating our guts in some circumstances, so they can at least go "Who the fuck was that band?"

TS: But the people are here to see us tonight. The fucking Replacements. The fucking Mats.

JK: Let's see how many "fucks" we can get in this sentence.

TS: You should have a couple more beers. You're starting to sound good. (To BH) How about you? Let's see you slur a few. C'mon fuckers, we can really talk now!

They discuss "punk" rock...

PW: We were heavily influenced by that. We weren't punks. We tried to be, but we realized that ... It's the attitude, We're as rooted in that as the Beatles were in Chuck Berry. We can't shake it if we tried. I mean, we were punks. We weren't *punk rockers*, but we'll never be...

TS: We're assholes.

PW: ... anything slick or show bizzy. And that's what punk rock was. It was amateurism, for yourself, for fun. That's what we were. And then we heard punk rock and said, "Yeah, this is cool. This is easy."

And we drink a lot more—and seem to make Tommy angry...

TS: A musical instrument is like our drinking prop. No, no, no.

PW: "No, no, no"? That ain't gonna fly "No. no, no." Too late now.

TS: We're gonna dig ourselves in, man. This bottle of 100 proof vodka is almost gone. What can we do? (To JK) You're wearing a polyester jacket...

JK: Well, you got a problem or what?

TS: No, I like it. I was just looking at your clothes. You can tell that this guy (BH), he's got a little extra money, he likes looking at his clothes and thinks he's all tough. But you just put on whatever's in your closet.

BH: Just In the last year, though. I used to dress just like you guys do.

TS: We think we're all fucking tough.

JK: You guys are some bad looking dudes!

TS: (*smashes bottle against the wall*)

JK: Aiieeeee!

BH: You're not going to scare us. This guy once asked Blackie Lawless if he was a "homo."

TS: (*laughing, picks up recorder*) Ever see us break a fucking tape recorder?

PW: Ah, that's old hat.

JK: Why do you guys have such a self-deprecating attitude?

TS: Because we can't live down anything that's been said. We can't live down the fact that...

PW: We're assholes.

TS: We've tried to run from the articles about how drunk we were this night, and how lousy we were. It's just pointless to try to live that down, though. If I read about a bunch of drunks in a rock band that I hated, I wouldn't want to ... oh, forget it. (*laughter*) I just realized that I better shut up for awhile. It's about that time.

BH: Nah.

TS: Yeah, you fuckers.

BH: We're not out to do a hatchet job on you guys.

TS: Ah, you fuckers don't know how many writers we've had say that to us. You guys are great guys, you remind me of Siskel & Ebert, but I still don't trust you worth a...

BH: Oh, c'mon!

JK: You slime! That's it, man!

TS: You can't trust writers, I swear to God! We had RJ Smith pal around with us for a week, and we thought he was our friend. Then he turns around and writes all the bad things about us and makes us look like a bunch of fuck-ups.

JK: We don't think you're fuck-ups.

TS: We are fuck-ups!

JK: Well, I bet I can drink as much as you guys. In fact, I know I can.

TS: Wanna try?

PW: No, let's not.

BH: Did you see that Dave Marsh recently did a hatchet job on you in *Rock & Roll Confidential*?

PW: I didn't have the pleasure, no.

TS: That's why I don't read...

PW: Dave Marsh sucks. He thinks the Who are the greatest band of all time.

BH: (Begins reading the *RRC* item in which Marsh takes Westerberg to task for saying he likes Reagan for "looking good.")

PW: Mmmm, hmmm. I read that. It proves the point that rock 'n' roll has nothing to do with politics. Bands that try to ... I mean, fuck them. It's like rock 'n' roll has nothing to do with the President or someone starving in China. In my opinion. Dave Marsh can blow it out of his ass.

JK: Well, see, what we've got here is a writer who actually wants something from you. He wants you to be what he wants you to be.

TS: Well, what are you going to write? If you hadn't talked to us...

PW: These fuckers don't care. Don't you know that yet?

JK: I don't care. I got three kids to take care of. You guys can take care of yourselves.

TS: You guys actually look like you don't give a damn.

At this point in the interview, Tommy abruptly leaves the room, without a word to any of us.

BH: Are we making him mad?

No. He's probably going to- look for

PW: girl. It's been half an hour,

Paul introduces us to drummer Chris Mars. Mars is a mild and quiet type of guy. When he exits, we discuss an assortment of topics, including whether or not Paul considers himself a splendid lyricist ("I try not #6 it" about It 'cause it's like thinking about how you look in the mirror. If you don't like It You can't change it") and mutual favorite movies. *Old Yeller* is passionately being discussed when Tommy re-enters the room.

TS: Fuck. Shit. Ass. Hell. Fuck. Hole. Shit.

PW: You're back?

TS: I'm back. I'm not saying a fucking word. I think we're fucking god-like.

JK: I think you can be described as Dionysian.

TS: How would you describe our band? And, then we'll tell you how screwed you &M.,

PW: I think they've already got the we of "asshole."

TS: if you guys &*the kind of guys you, claim to be, then youll! write a 09 YOU can tell what we're Mo. I'm skeptical of any writer.

JK: Look, Bill's gonna write it, and he's not a mean writer. I'd-be more inclined to do a hatchet job job. Not on you guys, though, because you've given me so many beers without bitchign ching about it.

TS: We'll give any writer an extra beer if he says the truth.

JK: Well, it's hard to know what the truth really *is* here, you know?

TS: We told you the truth.

JK: OK, then we'll print it.

BH: Well, that thing RJ wrote in the *Voice*...

TS: It wasn't altogether bad. There were things he said that he didn't need to. Things that made us look bad...

PW: I wasn't upset because I understood he had to use the angle he took to get the story printed. He wrote the bad stuff. But he took the sympathetic angle, and I can see that.

TS: But se, it's people like that who create a bad image for us that we have to try to live down. Or just say "fuck it" and don't even try to live it down. Might as well try to live up to it for that matter...

Before concluding the interview Paul left us that he's "as happy now as I was when we started—we don't have any money, but we've been at the bottom and it doesn't scare us at all." We tell him we can appreciate his attitude. He thanks us, adding, "I think we're doing something that no one did before. The Sex Pistols pretended to do this. But this is just naturally us. We don't want to be stars and shit—but we're sort of slipping into it."

What if the money becomes real good?

"I don't think so..."

That's a powerful incentive.

"No. It really isn't when you see the ramifications that are going to come along with it. Because we are uncomfortable now with the little tiny stardom of signing autographs. That's cool, but I would not like to be...even like Michael Stipe or something..."

By the time we re-enter the auditorium we are both seeing double (and maybe even triple). The place is packed.

"We can't find Bob," Paul says into the microphone. "Has anyone seen Bob?" (Bob is actually sitting with some fans in the audience—but no one knows this until later.) "Oh, well, this might be fun..."

The Replacements begin playing, replacing the lost Bob with a roadie—and later an usher—during the opening part of their set. They begin with a dynamic "Color Me Impressed," followed by an *incredibly* sloppy "Johnny B. Goode" that couldn't have been any more powerful if it were Chuck Berry playing it in '68 or the Stones in '66. "Bob! Bob!" chants the audience. "Bob?" asks Paul. "Fuck Bob!" He is obviously a bit perturbed.

Chris is a terrific drummer. Tommy is a terrific bass player (though he wouldn't want to admit it). They play Alex Chilton's "September Gurls," the intro riffs to "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Substitute," and a great "Unsatisfied" before Bob rejoins them in the middle of "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out He's late. Don't clap for him," says Tommy. Bob looks apologetic. Paul still looks perturbed, but says "Now we got it..."

They wail through "Bastards Of Young," "Left Of The Dial" (one of last year's best rock songs), "Waitress In The Sky" (pssst... .. Westerberg's sister is a "flight attendant") and a whole bunch of other songs from *Tim* and *Let It Be*. They cover "Black Diamond," "Takin' Care Of Business," "Polk Salad Annie," a snippet of "Folsom Prison Blues" and "20th Century Boy." Maybe to compensate (maybe not), Bob is playing some fine guitar licks, interplaying with Paul. They sound "awful"—sloppy, hitting wrong notes everywhere, missing cues—and positively, absolutely wonderful.

"I'd like to mention that the band is breaking up and we'll never be back again," Paul says at the end of the show.

The Truth: On this particular night, the Replacements are one of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands in the universe.

Westerberg: Enfant terrible or square?

Minneapolis Star Tribune, 5/12/1987

By Jon Bream / Star Tribune

"We are the sons of no one" from "Bastards of Young" - the Replacements

Paul Westerberg of the Replacements wrote and recorded that roaring rock 'n' roll anthem of alienation in 1985. Since then he has recorded a new album with stylish horns and strings, cut his ratty birdnest hair and given his girlfriend a diamond engagement ring.

It may be hard to believe that Westerberg, the most acclaimed Minneapolis rock figure since Prince, has been regarded as the Johnny Rotten of the 1980s, the enfant terrible of America's underground rock world.

"I am a square guy," he said by telephone last weekend from his fiancee's parents' home in Michigan, where he had gone for Mother's Day. "I go to bed by 9:30 sometimes. I am not what people try to pretend I am. I can be."

He puts it another way in "I Don't Know" on the 'Mats' new album: "One foot in the door, the other foot in the gutter."

Westerberg is witty both in song and in conversation. He's also shy, yet, at 27, he is maturing both personally and artistically.

"I'm probably not as nervous or worried as I used to be," said Westerberg, who will lead the Replacements into First Avenue nightclub Wednesday for their first local performance in more than a year. "I'm definitely a pessimist, so I figure if this doesn't work, we'll try again. We're prepared to fall on our faces; we always have (been). But I think now we're a little more relaxed about it 'cause we've finally come to terms with (the fact) that we do have a following."

The group's following is clearly growing. Westerberg reports that, since its release three weeks ago, the 'Mats' new album, "Pleased to Meet Me," has sold some 72,000 copies - almost three-fourths as many as its predecessor, the critically heralded "Tim," has sold since it was released in October 1985.

"Meet Me" reflects Westerberg's artistic philosophy: Be unpredictable and take a few chances.

"We still go over a lot of people's heads, which is a healthy sign," he said. "Maybe that's why we like other styles (besides rock)."

The singer-songwriter's concept for "Pleased to Meet Me" was to reproduce "Hootenanny," a 1983 album on which the 'Mats - which started out in 1980 as a loud and sloppy punk band - had worked in a variety of styles from folk and country to rock

and blues. He knew the band probably wouldn't achieve commercial success without focusing on a particular style, even though the 'Mats were riding a crest of hosannas for "Tim." Westerberg's concern is a bit more mundane: "trying not to embarrass ourselves."

After recording five albums in Twin Cities studios, the band members decided to record in Memphis, Tenn., with producer Jim Dickinson, who had produced Big Star (one of Westerberg's favorite power-pop bands of the early '70s) and played piano on the Rolling Stones' "Wild Horses." For the first time the 'Mats took their time in the studio. Working in Memphis also gave them an opportunity to record with the Memphis Horns, the vaunted brass section that had played on records by Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett. Dickinson also urged them to use string sections on the album.

"I honestly was opposed to the strings in the beginning, but I've grown to like them," Westerberg said. Although the use of brass and strings angered some Replacements fans, that was precisely the band's intention: "not for the shock value of it, but just to keep laying down the law: We will do anything we want; we still play for ourselves."

In much the same way that the Replacements have shifted their musical attitude from an anarchy band toward the rock mainstream, they have quit acting like antipop stars. Whereas the band members didn't used to appear at record stores to promote their albums, this spring they have attended four "listening parties" planned by Sire Records to promote "Pleased to Meet Me" among radio programers, critics and others.

"Everyone was very nervous that we were going to do something like moon 'em. Of course, we did the unpredictable thing, which was, we were very cordial," Westerberg said. "Maybe I've come around to the fact that some of these people are really trying to help us. I think in the past we've made mistakes where we assumed everyone was against us. They fly you to New York, Chicago and L.A. to sip champagne and walk around. How hard is that?"

Although the 'Mats may be a bit more serious about business - "We don't necessarily repeat our mistakes," Westerberg said, "although there's pressure to come up with new mistakes" - they frowned on the prospect of opening a concert tour for U2, the world's most popular rock band, because they would rather play for their own fans.

It's not that the 'Mats have a fear of failure. Their first gig in 1980 at a Minneapolis halfway house was such a bomb that they changed their name (from the Impediments) the next day. But the quartet - Westerberg on vocals and rhythm guitar, Chris Mars on drums, Bob Stinson on lead guitar and his brother Tommy (then 13) on bass - became the life of many parties and soon found its way to local rock clubs and Twin/Tone Records.

The 'Mats - the nickname is short for Placemats, which, in turn, is a shorter version of Replacements - offered classic garage-rock on their first two records, "Ma, I Forgot to Bring in the Trash" and "The Replacements Stink." The ensuing "Hootenanny" and "Let It Be," both surprisingly eclectic, brought the band critical raves, opened tour slots with high-profile bands such as underground heroes R.E.M. and X, a contract with Sire Records, home of such hip rock bands as the Talking Heads, the Ramones and the Pretenders.

On record, Westerberg's voice sounded tortured, but his songs spoke powerfully and poignantly about youthful insecurities, frustrations and hopes.

Many people couldn't figure out the incongruity between the group's records and their live performances. On stage, the Mats became notorious for their inebriated indulgences - doing snippets of such oddball selections as Bachman Turner Overdrive's "Takin' Care of Business," Vanity Faire's "Hitchin' a Ride," Hank Williams Junior's "All My Rowdy Friends" and Kiss' "Rock 'n' Roll All Nite." Their shows became precious, silly in jokes and their image didn't do their music justice.

"The bad press always outweighs the good," Westerberg said. "One great song won't reach as many ears as one bottle thrown through a window."

The rowdy life style, a lack of discipline and differing musical tastes led the group to fire guitarist Bob Stinson last year. His replacement is Bob (Slim) Dunlap, a veteran of the Twin Cities bar scene who is old enough to be 20-year-old Tommy Stinson's dad. Westerberg said Dunlap fits in "musically and personality-wise," though he added that the band is split about its approach onstage.

"We want to entertain first and foremost - at least, Tommy and I do," Westerberg said. "Chris and Slim are a little more musicians. When Tommy and I go onstage, we sort of throw music out the window and we enjoy ourselves. I'm sure we come across as sort of silly. The recording is a different thing. The songwriting and the studio is not pure entertainment. We like to move people."

Westerberg acknowledges that he and the 'Mats have matured since recording "Tim," touring the United States and appearing on TV's "Saturday Night Live" (on which he uttered the "f" word). But the group's leader, who has been pitching some of his songs to country singer Randy Travis and others, is hard pressed to describe the Replacements' current image.

"We still don't know what we are, but we know what we're not," he said. "I'd like to be able to sing like Frank Sinatra sometimes and I'd like to play guitar like (bluesman) Hubert Sumlin, but that isn't in the cards. I'd like to be able to wear clothes like (rock star) David Lee (Roth) and wear a tail. I'd like to have three legs."

"Our first goal was to be able to play as loud as we wanted. We achieved that. After we played bars a few times, we figured: 'Wouldn't it be nice if we didn't have to go back to our jobs at Munsingwear and the janitor and stuff?' We're successful now because we don't have to get jobs. That's my definition of success. I don't know if it's my definition of happiness."

REPLACEMENTS

By Bill Flanagan

Paul Westerberg's band may ascend to the stars or splatter all over the road

Well, here we are in Minneapolis and the Replacements are in trouble again. Last Saturday the band got mad at their old label, Twin Tone, for not paying them royalties they claim they owed for four albums they released before signing to Sire/Warners in 1985. Paul Westerberg and the boys figured they had as much as thirty grand coming and could sure use the money. The last straw was when they heard Twin Tone was releasing their early albums on cassette. So the Replacements got a wild idea and over a couple of cocktails that idea started looking better and better.

They drove over to Twin Tone and one Replacement kept the receptionist busy while the others waltzed inside and found their master tapes. Maybe somebody at the record company noticed and paid no attention. There goes one of our artists with an armload of tapes. So what? Maybe he's doing a remix for CD or something. The Replacements headed straight for the Mississippi River. When they got to her noble banks they took the tapes and threw 'em in. So long, *Stink. Sorry Ma*—forgot to take out the lifejackets.

The Replacements did not drown their work with the childish abandon of rock stars wrecking a hotel room. They did it because they thought they were in danger of losing control of their music through lawyers and fast talk and things over which they had no control. So they took control. And maybe to prove that it was about something bigger than money, they didn't keep the tapes for themselves. They threw them in the river.

The joke around Minneapolis is that sometimes himself sometimes sits on the banks of the river playing his guitar. What if his Purpleness is sitting right there looking for inspiration when the Replacements tapes float by? Can't you see it? "Sheila E.! I am having a vision! Fetch those tapes and bring them studio!" Next Prince album—soggy hardcore.

Did the Replacements go a little overboard, so to speak? It's such a great story you could almost think it's a lie—that band leader Westerberg has the tapes buried in his basement and wants Twin Tone to think they are floating toward the Gulf of Mexico. But all the not-for-attribution stories told around the Twin Cities agree. Splash.

Paul Westerberg's attitude toward the compromises of the music business has been a frequent source of his inspiration. On the Replacements' new song "I Don't Know" he says it pretty plain: "One foot in the door, the other one in the gutter/The sweet smell that they adore: I think I'd rather smother."

"Yeah," Westerberg nods. "That's us. That's the Replacements. The record company wants us to be big stars, but we're uncomfortable with that. We don't want to give them everything. We don't want to give them a hundred percent. As soon as you do that you've got nothing for yourself. We want to be in control of what we're doing. We don't want to be BonJovi. We want to sell records, we want to be popular, but we don't want to even be promoted the way the Del Fuegos are promoted. They know what they're doing. They allow Warner Brothers to say, 'Okay, we want this. Get it for us.' Whereas we hem and haw and say, 'Well, we would like this *if* you could do it our way.' It's like a card game and we haven't put our cards on the table yet. We're still upping the ante."

Westerberg is sitting in the shadows in a booth in the back of a Minneapolis bar. He's trying to lay a little low. Twin Tone Records is right next door and if one of those boys comes in for a pop, well, Paul may exit by way of the window.

"They put it down to us," he goes on, speaking of his new label. "They say, 'You can be big stars, you can make a lot of money if you do this and this. Make a video and show your face and film it live and look cute and the little girls will love it' and all this crap.' And we have this gut feeling that that's wrong. Because what we do live is live and you should come see it live. I don't really know what to do about that. But we're not doing bad. I think they have faith in us now. They're coming around."

It all sounds noble—except the part about not giving a hundred percent. "It's a broad statement," Westerberg says, "but it's true. I guess it's the fear of failure. I don't want to give everything and have it turn out to be shit or have people not like it. I hold a little for myself. I'm lazy, too. If I get seventy-five percent of the way there I'll pretty much say that's it, close enough. I'm not a perfectionist when it comes to songwriting. I'm more of a perfectionist when it comes to the instrumentation. I'll let nonsense words go by just 'cause they feel good. 'I. O. .U.' [the first track on the new LP, *Pleased To Meet Me*] has a nonsense chorus. I could sit down and get words to fit that, but I figure it doesn't need it. It sounds good enough to me."

For a guy who says he's holding back, Westerberg sure appears to put himself all the way out. Under the loud guitars his songs are as personal and moving as any sensitive folkie's, and when it comes to giving a hundred percent, this is the rocker who highlighted his last New York concert by taking an impromptu swan dive into the crowd—and played the rest of the show with a broken hand.

"When I say I hold back," he clarifies, "I mean not finishing something, not getting it perfect. As far as being honest, though, it's a hundred percent honest."

And there you have the central paradox of the Replacements. They give blood in their music, their fans fervently identify with them, critics and college radio count them as one of the very best rock bands going—but they are frustratingly reluctant to become big stars. The radio needs them worse, high school kids listening to the Cult need them most of all. Yet the Replacements keep playing

Hamlet, refusing to become the big stars they should be. Sometimes they seem to be snobs. After all, what's wrong with having teenage girls like you?

"Because," Westerberg says, "we don't want people coming to see us just because they saw this three-minute commercial of us on TV. It would kill us in the end, it really would.

"We want to do it a different way. Who was the first one to latch onto video and say, 'This is cool, man, this is a way to sell the band'? He was smart. There's gotta be someone now to say, 'Let's try something else!' We'd like to try a different way. We'd like to lead something different I'd just as soon not be a huge plastic monster of an act because a bunch of thirteen year-old girls saw our video. There's no satisfaction in that. There's a little more money, but we ain't in this for money. It's been seven years and we've made only a little bit of money; we're ready for none. We've got to hang tough for a little while longer at least."

Westerberg falls silent and someone punches up a Phil Collins song on the jukebox. "Shut up," he moans.

Okay, maybe he's got a negative attitude. But the Replacements are a terrific rock 'n' roll band, and Paul Westerberg is one of the strongest songwriters to emerge from American pop music in this decade. His band rocks hard and funny and loud, and the songs never fall into cliché. Whether he's singing about the lonely life of an abandoned mother or the bass player's tonsillectomy, Westerberg says things nobody's said in rock 'n' roll songs before. And he does it without holding up a sign saying "Big Statement" or "Comedy Relief." The Replacements come on like fighters for the best reason in the world—their music is worth fighting for. And when they do finally make it big—look out. Kids used to flattened-out, compromised, artificially preserved rock aren't going to know what hit them.

Pleased To Meet Me is the Replacements' shot at the big, time. They recorded it in Memphis with a real producer, worked hard to stay in tune and in time, even used horns and a few strings. So what have they picked as the first single? "The Ledge," a song about teenage suicide. Lots of airplay *there*, boys.

"I came up with the minor key riff and it made me feel like there should be something sad said to it," Westerberg explains. "And I was feeling down that day. It's sort of half and half through the eyes of myself and someone who doesn't have anyone to turn to. It was written in October or November-- this teenage suicide epidemic. I didn't even think about it at the time. When everybody heard it they said, 'Oh, man, are you gonna get in trouble! Is this about the kids in New Jersey?' No, no. I'm not trying to glorify that or jump on that bandwagon. I've tried to kill myself before. Never seriously. I mean, if you really try to kill yourself you kill yourself. To me, someone who jumps off a building really wants to kill themselves. It ain't like slitting your wrist and hoping Mom's gonna catch you quick, It's a total desperation deal."

Westerberg seems to have a big chunk of himself in every character he describes. That's why "The Ledge" comes off as more than exploitation; he makes the character's case so convincingly that the listener understands the kid about to jump. "I can feel for it," Westerberg nods. "I couldn't write a song about being an accountant 'cause I can't feel that. I'm not suicidal or nothin', but I know how it feels. I'm old enough now to know that there are people around me I can turn to. But I remember when I was younger and there was nobody. It was God or drugs or death or rock 'n' roll. Or all four.

"I've written some good stuff being depressed, but you can write about it just as well when you're happy. You don't have to be on the verge of suicide to write a song about suicide. I'm fine, I'm not going to kill myself. But I felt it that day I wrote it."

At the time of the Replacements' second record, the appropriately titled *Replacements Stink*, Westerberg came down with a bout of affectation—pretending to be meaner than he was, copying Black Flag. ("I couldn't write hardcore worth a shit but I certainly tried to sound as tough as I could. It was all bullshit. I figure those tapes are probably around Memphis or New Orleans by now.") Since then he's worked at stripping away falseness, writing in something close to his real voice.

"I get no satisfaction pretending I'm someone else," he shrugs. "I used to try that. This way it's more painful if people say they don't like it. If they say, 'This song is really wimpy and stupid,' I can lie and say I was pretending I was Gordon Lightfoot. But no. That's me." He smiles. "What the hell?"

Kind of an introspective guy. Yet a whole lot of rock fans are anxious for the Replacements to pick up the mantle carried so long by the Stones and dropped by the Clash—who decided they didn't want it. In fact, we could get some of our college trained rock psychologists to explain how the Replacements are filling the void left by the Clash—the need for an uncompromising, defiant punk band with hearts of gold. The *Give 'Em Enough Rope* opening salvo of the Replacements' "Bastards Of Young" made a strong claim for that Clash territory. Only one problem: "I never liked the Clash," Westerberg says. "Joe couldn't sing and he can't sing. I drop my voice. Maybe they're nice guys and true to their beliefs and they're a tough rock band, but I never liked them. I bought the Sex Pistols and the first Clash album and I returned the Clash the same day."

So who are the Replacements' heroes?

"The Faces were my favorite band of all time," Westerberg says. "I think they were the best band ever. Period." And that makes a lot of sense. The Faces were drunken rowdies who could switch gears from the harshest rock to a melancholy ballad to cry in your beer by. Even the toughest Faces tune held on to a thread of vulnerability, and even their saddest laments kept a sense of humor.

"A lot of those tender ones were Ronnie Lane's," Westerberg notes. "When I started to play guitar I listened to Ron Wood. It took me a few years to realize Wood didn't really know how to play all that good. I thought he was the end. Just the fact that he was drunk—that's what I tried to mold my playing after. He had to work hard at being bad to get that sound. He had a good tone, too. At the time everyone was playing Marshalls cranked full up—that big distorted sound. It was the opposite with him—Wood's *rhythm* guitar was fuzzy and loud and the *lead* was this little *plink plink plink*."

"I think it has a little bit to do with being a loser. They were losers and I think we are too. But not your dumb, down-and-out loser who's got nothing. Somebody who's got a little talent but isn't real sure of himself. The Stones always seemed real sure of themselves: They knew what they wanted and they went for it. The Replacements are like the Faces in that they knew what they could do but were ... afraid of it? They could feel for the loser who had to stand in the soup line or the woman who lost her husband." Westerberg takes a slug of beer and sums up his ideal: "The nice guys who finish last."

Westerberg is driving through Minneapolis, pointing out the street where he lives while humming along with "Venus in Blue Jeans" on the oldies station. He's heading to Ray's Uptown Grill, a local hangout. "Maybe we'll see Bob Stinson there," he says, referring to the band's recently fired lead guitarist. "I haven't seen him since. Then you'll have some color for your story. You'll get to see him kill me."

He pulls into the parking lot of the Uptown Grill and takes his usual place in the corner booth. A succession of regulars comes by to spread the latest gossip about Curtiss A., a local singer and Uptown Grill homeboy who is hiding from the cops. Seems Curtiss' ex got a judge to slap him with a restraining order to stay away from her and he failed to keep his distance.

Enter Robert "Slim" Dunlop, another regular and the Replacements' new guitarist. He slides into the booth next to Westerberg. Slim is close friends with fugitive Curtiss and more locals come by to ask the news. "He's gotta do ninety days," Slim sighs. "Starting when?" asks a local rocker.

"As soon as they find him," Slim says. "He's hiding out." A story is circulating that Curtiss asked Slim to be his alibi, and when Slim refused, his pal threatened to shoot him. Slim doesn't want to talk about it. Curtiss is just upset. "My main worry," Slim says, gesturing to Westerberg, "is that my liver won't hold out."

Slim describes himself as "a lifer, a terminal music addict. If people offer me a beer I'll go play. The recording and publicity ends of it are not really my thing, but I'll never get enough of the rush of playing live. When I'm an old man I'll find some little polka band to go jam with. For me, this is the chance of a lifetime, because I'll play with anybody who calls me up. I'm registered with the union, I do country & western, any kind of dates. I have some strange addiction to it. That's my whole life story—just stumbling from one gig to another."

But Slim doesn't think he should be quoted in a Replacements story. He says he's too new to the band and anyway, Paul is the voice of the Replacements. "Slim's played for everybody around here," Paul says. "If your guitar player got sick you called Slim. He's better than me but he's not a virtuoso. We thought about getting a real hot player, but then we thought it was better to get someone we got along with, and Slim fits in good. He's a real humble guy and he likes to take a drink and he owns a gun. What can I say? He's in the band."

Early the next afternoon, Westerberg can't find the band. Mostly he's checking the local diners. Finally he decides to try the Replacements' rehearsal space in the basement of an industrial building. The elevator's barely hit the cellar when a screaming electric guitar rings out above the clank and grind of heavy machinery. "That's Tommy," Paul says. He heads down a winding corridor, avoids a moving forklift, and tries the door that stands between him and the howling Les Paul. Locked. He knocks. No answer, the guitar's too loud. He pounds on the door. No answer. He yells. "Hey, Tommy! Hey, Tommy!!" No answer. He kicks it. "Hey STOOPID! Open up!"

The guitar stops and Tommy Stinson opens the door, long haired, skinny and grinning—the true rocker. If Westerberg is the brains of the Replacements, Tommy is the heart: the cackling twenty-year-old kid who has been in the band since he was thirteen, the tenth-grade drop-out who regularly out-talks interviewers, the bassist who falls over laughing onstage and goads band and audience into taking nothing seriously. Tommy's the one who keeps the ballads that Westerberg slips onto Replacements albums out of the live shows. Maybe all great rock bands have one guy who writes about it (Brian Wilson, Jagger, Rotten) and one guy who lives it (Dennis Wilson, Brian Jones, Sid Vicious). Tommy lives the Replacements. They agree on a rehearsal schedule and Paul heads out to grab a bite.

The Replacements were formed as a teenage garage trio by Tommy, his big brother Bob and drummer Chris Mars. Westerberg, the kind of kid who wrote songs in his bedroom, says it was seeing thirteen-year-old Tommy that made him want to join. "As soon as I saw Tommy," Westerberg laughs. "That was a kid who came halfway up his amp and played as good as he could. It seemed like a novelty."

Now Westerberg's twenty-seven, Chris Mars is twenty-three, and Tommy's pushing twenty-one. "I would not be surprised one bit if Tommy went on to become a big star and the rest of us come see him and get thrown out on our ear," Paul smiles. "Tommy dropped out of tenth grade to go on tour. How many kids would die for that? They're sitting in a tenthgrade algebra class and Tommy's drinking from a bottle of Jack Daniels, going down the road. He's come out of it real good. If you weren't strong enough that would really screw you up. Like being a child circus performer or something."

One of the reasons Tommy's mother let him go off with the Replacements was that his older brother Bob was there to watch out for him. Now the band's fired Bob. "It's tough," Westerberg concedes. "But Tommy was right there with me

and Chris. We didn't want to go down the toilet with a guy who wasn't willing to play. Tommy wanted to see Bob straighten up, but he wasn't and he wouldn't and he's gone."

Westerberg takes a booth at Hoyt's restaurant, across from the rehearsal space. Tommy shows up and says hi to his friend behind the counter, who asks if he heard right—that the Replacements were involved in a *shooting* last night? Oh, Tommy explains, that was a photo shoot. He sits with Paul. Asked about being a Replacement at thirteen, Tommy looks pained.

"That's the oldest question, man," he sighs. "I never had anything to do with school. I was in the band and I went to school and the two didn't even work together until I quit school for the band. The teachers didn't even know I was in a band. I didn't talk about it. The only ones who knew were a couple of guys I hung around with. That was all. It was all pretty quiet."

Okay, let's bury such questions. The Replacements have grown up, to the consternation of those who want them to be drunken teenagers forever, and the joy of those who want to see a great rock band keep evolving. Each record has shown growth (except 1982's *Stink*). If *Pleased To Meet Me* isn't a hit, it won't be for lack of great songs or hard work in the studio.

But the toughest change was firing Bob Stinson. Bob was a lead guitar player capable of a rough, inventive melodicism. Bob was also the wildman of a wild group, notorious for improvisations like taking the stage dressed in a diaper. At some point Bob crossed a line the other Replacements have avoided—the fine between liking to get wrecked all the time and needing to get wrecked all the time. Bob's guitar playing onstage became distracted and undependable. He had to go. It must have been murder on Tommy.

Now Tommy tells Paul that last night he went to see his mother and ran into his brother for the first time since the firing. He was scared Bob wouldn't speak to him, but he talked Tommy's ear off. He was in good spirits, had a job, and was rehearsing with a new band. To Tommy's amazement, Bob even asked how Slim was working out. Relating this to Paul, Tommy is clearly delighted and pretty surprised.

"It was weird at first," Tommy admits. "I'm sure it's always going to be weird. At least for the next few years. It was kind of hard. He's still in the same situations with his life that he was in when it all came down, but at least now he doesn't have all the stress of being in the band on his back. He can handle things a little better.

"I think it kind of drove him nuts a little bit. I don't think it was what he really wanted. I think he felt real strange about not having a lot to do with the songs. When we'd practice he just didn't fit into any of the new material—for the last couple of years. I think it's a relief for him to not have someone saying, 'No! You're not doing anything right there! Do something creative! Don't do what I'm doing!'"

Tommy's description pretty much kills the myth that the Replacements are guys who just go in and thrash around on their instruments. Nobody gets real good by *accident*. Right after firing Bob the band went to Memphis and recorded *Pleased To Meet Me* as a trio, with Westerberg handling all the guitar parts. That pretty much kills the myth that Westerberg's not much of a musician.

"I figured it out after we got down to Memphis to record, Tommy continues. "After we'd talked to Slim about playing with us. The reason I wanted Slim in the band was to *replace my brother*. I've known Slim for years so it was a good thing. We couldn't have some guy from L.A. with hair down to his butt come in. It had to be someone I liked."

How did the Stinsons' mom feel about one son firing the other? "My mom was totally supportive of the right move," Tommy says. "We mentioned it to her before we mentioned it to him. When he was in treatment. She said, 'You guys have to do what's right for you guys.' She's not really gotten involved in that sort of stuff. When it came to contracts she wanted to know what I was getting into. When it comes to what we do, it's not really her place. She likes to know what's going on.

"Bob kind of dug his own grave. The family—and everyone—tried to help him for God knows how long. After a point it got to be a real futile effort to even get him out of the garbage. But now that he's doing it on his own I think he's probably wised up a little bit about what's going on with his life."

It's unusual for Tommy to talk like this with a tape recorder rolling. Westerberg has been sitting silently and now the silence falls on the whole table. Paul motions to the cassette and says, "We might have to *wash* this when we're done." That cracks everybody up.

Pleased To Meet Me found the Replacements working with a producer, they say, for the first time. Tommy Ramone produced Tim, but Westerberg says he was as nonchalant as the Replacements themselves. The new LP was different, though. The band put themselves in the hands of veteran producer Jim Dickinson (Alex Chilton's Big Star, Ry Cooder) for two months.

"He generally won the arguments," Westerberg says. "We weren't ever ready to hop on a plane and go home, while he made motions a few times that he might want to call it a day, I think just to see how we'd react. We didn't react. We'd say, 'Fine.' I guess he wanted us to be a little more like 'No don't, please!'"

"But he pretty much let us do what we wanted. The main thing he did that was different was he got Chris to play in time. Before we would get bored after two or three takes and if there were drum drops we wouldn't give a shit. But Jim would make us do a song three or four times for two weeks. 'Alex Chilton' being the prime example of one Chris couldn't get a handle on. Chris finally did, but by then Tommy and I were drunk or bored so we had to wait another week.

Jim had a sense of the thing that we didn't understand: 'It has to be in time and in tune!'"

The Replacements played by Dickinson's rules—better they figured than getting into click tracks or drum machines or heavy overdubbing. Westerberg says he played all the guitar, "except when Dickinson had his fifteen-year-old son come in and play the Van Halen noises on 'Dirty Pool.' We didn't say anything. The consolation we got out of it was that there was no Lead Guitar Solo, just the noises. Dickinson's a nice guy. He's the best producer we ever worked with ... and the first."

One thing Dickinson accomplished that no one else had was to get a good take of "Can't Hardly Wait," a song that the Replacements had been failing to get on record for three years. Although a rough version of the song appeared on the live cassette, *The Shit Hits The Fans*, the version of "Can't Hardly Wait" that closes *Pleased To Meet Me* has new lyrics, a steady tempo, horns out of Van Morrison and strings out of Norman Whitfield. It's the Replacements' best-ever shot for a hit.

Westerberg: "The reason it sounds like it does—I'm not apologizing for it—is we had the opportunity to use the Memphis Horns. We said, 'If we're gonna do this, let's make it a different song.' I do not like the strings, I'll say that. They were not my idea. I can see he was trying to make it sound like Memphis 1968, the Boxtops or something, a pop tune. But it doesn't feel comfortable to me. I can listen to it like I'm listening to somebody else's tune and go, 'Man, this is kinda cool.' But knowing that it's us I laugh every time the happy horn riff comes in. It's a guy sitting in a hotel room saying, 'Goddam it, when am I gonna get home?' And then you got..." Westerberg mimes the horn riff, giving it a kazoo-like tone.

But a little blue-eyed soul is not half as shocking a departure as "Skyway," an acoustic ballad that really could be lifted from Gordon Lightfoot.

"The band didn't play on it," Westerberg says. "Chris tapped his foot. But better that song than if I was to whip up another bullshit rocker. I feel the good songs should go on and 'Skyway' was better than six or seven rockers that were left off. If Tommy and Chris want to fight about it I'll fight 'em. But they're smart enough to know a good song when they hear it. I'm not trying to pat myself on the back, but it was certainly better than 'Beer For Breakfast.'"

The Replacements practice incredibly loud. Even ears half deaf from years of sonic overexposure feel like they're about to blow after five minutes at top volume in the band's tiny, Oscar Madison-decor rehearsal studio. But it's worth it 'cause the songs are so good. For two and a half hours they stand there in a row: Slim watching carefully for the changes, Chris behind his drums, and Tommy with a perpetual grin. Half facing them is Westerberg, the maestro. He calls for "The Ledge," "I. O. U.," "Alex Chilton," "I Will Dare," "Never Mind," "Never Mind" again (Tommy cracks up every time he steps up to the microphone to strangle out the high harmony), "Unsatisfied," "Answering Machine," "Go,"

"Valentine," "Dirty Pool," "Red Red Wine," "Bastards Of Young," "Lay It Down Clown," "Little Mascara." This is a body of work! When they get to "Can't Hardly Wait" Slim struggles valiantly to compensate for the lack of those horns and strings, and the band gets bogged for a while in organizing the timing for a long break in the middle. Throughout the afternoon Slim is studious—he plays some of Bob Stinson's leads, some of his own, and always defers to Westerberg. After he recreates Bob's lead on "Bastards Of Young," Tommy says to Slim, a Fender man, "You've gotta get a Les Paul! Get that fat sound!"

Maybe that's where new wave got lost. When they all started playing Strats. The Replacements' tone is a Les Paul tone—thick and dirty.

By the time they move on to "Kiss Me On The Bus" Tommy is restless. He asks if they can play "something fast." Paul launches into a breakneck version of "Kids Don't Follow" (from *Stink*) and Tommy's face fights up. When it slams to a halt he smiles, "We haven't played that song that fast in four years!"

Some of the evolution in the Replacements songs has been subtle. In the old days, Westerberg explains, I would write the riff and sing to it, and try to get Bob to play my riff while I did the simplest chord changes behind it. But in the past year or two all the songs are in open tuning, so I can play rhythm and whatever fill at the same time, while singing. I think that's what fucked up Bob a little, because things weren't cut and dried like they were in the early days when we were playing pretty much punk stuff. Then it was just D-A-D and Bob would play a lead whenever I stopped singing. Now it's more structured. I play the structure of the song and the lead guitar player, Slim, uses his own taste to fill in where he wants."

So sometimes evolutions in style owe less to commercial or artistic forethought than to open tunings. Or living in an apartment. Those early Replacements songs were written on electric guitar at Westerberg's parents' house, while his folks were at work. Now his father's retired, and Paul has to write in his own apartment—where the neighbors limit him to an acoustic guitar. So now there are more "Skyway"s than "White And Lazy"s.

It turns out that even the songs on which Westerberg shares credit with the other Replacements all spring from his head. "I have to be delicate here," he says. "I don't want it to sound like I run the whole show, but I do come up with all the major ideas. 'Alex Chilton' will be the best example. They're credited as writers on that. In actuality they did not write the song. But when I came up with the three chords I said, 'This sucks!' And they said, 'No, this is good, let's do this!' They were excited about it, they got me excited about it, and I went on to write the rest of it. To me their willingness to be into something and to pull me along and say, 'Paul, this is good, let's do this,' constitutes writership. They're entitled to a third of it."

The other Replacements' influence is also felt in their reluctance to play ballads like "Skyway" and "Here Comes A Regular" onstage.

"That's a band decision," Westerberg nods. "I write most of the tunes and if the band don't want to do 'em then we don't do 'em. I'm not going to make Tommy stand there like an asshole and play a little plunk plunk song if he doesn't want to. It's the same thing for me if they want to do a song like 'Dose Of Thunder'—a song I hate that Bob and Tommy and Chris loved 'cause it was like Ted Nugent or something. I didn't want to do the damn thing but I would try 'cause they wanted to, and it sucked pretty much all the time."

Westerberg admits he has some parts of himself he's not putting into his Replacements writing: "I'm kind of saving it, to be honest. The time ain't now, it doesn't fit the band. Not that 'Skyway' really fits the band. I'll be around for a long time and I can do that stuff someday."

He's just as happy to not have everybody pick up on how much of himself he reveals. "Some songs are hard for me to sing live," he says, "but I've gotten pretty good at hiding things. I can have meanings only I understand. I can be real evasive when it comes to showing myself between the lines."

He's also real good at hiding the fact that this punk hero suffers from stage fright. "Once I get onstage I'm fine, beforehand I have stage fright. On tour I go to bed about four in the morning and I'll wake up about seven or eight. I can't sleep, I'm nervous that day. I know there's a show coming and I can't do anything. I can't read, I can't watch television, I can maybe do an interview 'cause then we're gonna be talking about rock 'n' roll. I'm afraid every night before we go on. So ... we drink. And it helps. I would advise it to any young band in the world. Have a couple of drinks. Not to be a raving alcoholic, but if you're not sure of yourself, have a few drinks, relax. Ain't nothing wrong with it."

If the Replacements get really big, the attention on Westerberg will almost surely push him farther apart from the rest of the band—at least in the public consciousness. Do they talk about that?

"It's something we don't talk about unless we're really tanked," Paul says. "We're all smart enough to realize that the Replacements are what we got. I could make a solo album tomorrow and so could Tommy, and who's to say which would be better? Tommy's would probably appeal to the initial Replacements fan who likes the rawer rock stuff. Chris is an artist, too. He does country things. I don't pull a lot of 'Skyway's on 'em 'cause that only makes them want to bring out their own little things."

"The songs are Replacements tunes. I write 'em but they're for the Replacements to play. We figure we're gonna ride this till somebody's had enough. Nobody's gonna get fired at this point. If somebody quits, it's over. Then I'll do what I want and they can do what they want, but at this point what I want is to keep the Replacements together. 'Cause I think we're a good band. I can be as egotistical as hell and say, 'This is a great song! We should do this one!' and they'll bring me down to earth. They'll roll their eyes and say, 'This is pretty cool, James Taylor.' And then it hits me: Yeah, why should I subject them to this?"

It's not rock 'n' roll, it's not the Replacements. I used to say we'd stay together forever, but Bob leaving the band sort of shook me there.. I figured we were supermen, we could always keep it together to the bitter end. Now we'll keep it together till it isn't fun anymore.

"We've been together longer than the Faces! I remember when I saw them in 1975 the preview in the paper called them a 'Veteran English Band.' At the time I was mad 'cause I thought they were calling them old. Now, Christ, by the end of this tour we'll have been together eight years. So we'll stick together and then after that..."

Westerberg says he figures no big rock band has gone out smoothly yet. Then he breaks into a grin and says, "Another thing—if Tommy wants to record those songs of his, I do want to slit his throat."

For a hard guy, Westerberg's songs sure have a lot of references to being scared and weak. As he said in "Swingin' Party," "If being strong is what you want then I need help here with this feather."

"I can be tough," Westerberg says, "but sometimes I'm not strong when it comes to tender things. That song was partially about a relationship and partially the band. I can be very fragile when it comes to the band's feelings. I don't want to be the heavy guy who says this is what we have to do and this is the road we have to go down. I lead the band. I guess I wimp out when I get to the crossroads. Then I look for everyone behind me and say, 'Now what do you want to do?'"

Another funny thing about "Swingin' Party" is its vampy cocktail ending. In fact, another subtlety of the Replacements' evolution has been a tendency to put tightly arranged endings—often different from the structure of the body of the song—on their recent records.

"I saw a thing once," Westerberg says, "that said what constitutes a song is a beginning and an ending-nobody listens to what's in the middle. I was twelve years old. It was impressed in my mind. I used that a couple of times. I thought, 'On the shittier songs well find real good beginnings and real good endings.' It's like guitar solos—start it cool, end it cool, and in the middle you can shit on the stage. It don't matter. They're gonna remember the beginning and the end." Westerberg breaks into a smile. "Same thing with an article, right?"

---LEFT OF THE DIAL---

"I got a '56 Les Paul," Paul Westerberg says, "my trusty gray guitar—and I've got a plexiglass Dan Armstrong, I think it's a '71. I've got a Yamaha acoustic. For keyboards Paul claims to have "a little Shittone, made exclusively by Shittone Incorporated."

What kind of bass is that, Tommy) "I don't know, it's been so repaired... It's a sort of a Fender, part Rickenbacker. Say it's 'hand-customized.'"

Paul says we should play it safe and say Tommy plays through an Ampeg amp, but that would be a lie. "It's yellow and orange and big," Tommy explains

like a true technowiz. "It's a square thing with a bunch of tubes. You come over and try to describe it!" So we did and it was a big yellow and orange thing with a bunch of tubes.

Slim is still a Fender loyalist. He has a '61 Telecaster neck on a 1970 Tele body. "My '61 body got completely destroyed," Slim sighs. "Me and a friend one time, just in fun, started putting little hacks in each other's guitars with this ice pick. Men, we got carried away. He took a chisel and a hammer and took a big hunk out of my Telecaster. I just about cried. So I took his Stratocaster and took a big chop out of that. Anyway, it got to where there wasn't much wood left on my Tele."

Remarkably, Slim turned down the band's offer to buy him another guitar for the road. "I've never had the need for multiple guitars," Slim explains. "I never really had a tuning problem because I play with a thumb pick which doesn't really push the string. A heavy pick will just knock your guitar out of tune. I get used to one guitar and it's hard to switch. I work it into the ground. You get better on one guitar than you are on others. Paul is really good at playing two or three guitars with really different necks."

"I can't play," Westerberg cuts in. "That's the difference! I can play 'em all *bad*. Bring'em on!"

The Replacements will probably use a combination of Marshall and Fender amps onstage. They figure anyone who says you only need a small amp to feed the P.A. is a fool, a liar or a wimp.

Chris Mars says, "Sears drums--that's all I can say."

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THIS BAND SPEAKS FOR LOWBROWS AND UNDERDOGS

The New York Times, July 19, 1987

By JON PARELES

COULD SUCCESS SPOIL THE RE-placements? Not if they have anything to say about it. On "Pleased to Meet Me," the Minneapolis band's fifth full-length album (Sire 25557-1; LP, cassette and CD), the band declares, "The sweet smell that they adore -I think I'd rather smother," and they describe themselves with "one foot in the door/ the other foot in the gutter." In "Shooting Dirty Pool," they tell a music-business type, "Do yourself a favor/ get yourself a spine"; in "I.O.U." they tell a deal maker, "I want it in writing - I owe you nothing."

And their idea of a rock-and-roll hero is the Memphis-based Alex Chilton, who sang pop hits in the 1960's with the Box Tops, formed the ambitious cult band Big Star in the 1970's and has surfaced fitfully at rock clubs and on independent labels in the 1980's - not exactly a model of upward mobility. (Mr. Chilton sat in with the Replacements on their 1986 album "Tim" and on "Pleased to Meet Me," which was produced in Memphis by Big Star's producer, Jim Dickinson.) On the new Replacements single, "Alex Chilton," they fantasize about millions of listeners hearing Mr. Chilton on the radio and saying, "I'm in love -what's that song?/ I'm in love with that song!"

But if quality will out, the Replacements are threatened with ever-increasing ambivalence. Slowly but inexorably, they're building an audience - even without commercial radio exposure. "Pleased to Meet Me" is their second album for a major label; their New York show this Thursday at the Beacon Theater reflects their graduation from the club circuit. They may never be well-groomed or docile enough for pop stardom, but with their most recent albums - "Let It Be" from 1984, "Tim" and now "Pleased to Meet Me" - the Replacements have emerged as one of the essential bands of the 1980's.

Like Big Star, they've got melody, propulsion and encyclopedic ears for rock from the 1960's and 1970's. The Replacements evoke bands from the Rolling Stones and the Beatles to Blue Oyster Cult and the Ramones without copying any of them. And in tuneful, noisy, memorable songs - rock that blasts away pretensions before a word is sung, along with a ballad now and then - Paul Westerberg, the Replacements' main songwriter, finds the words for existential dilemmas and adolescent pratfalls, sometimes within the same verse.

Singing in a frayed, heartfelt rasp, Mr. Westerberg speaks for lowbrows, underdogs, instinctive rebels. "Never do what you're told," he advises in "I.O.U.," "There'll be time, believe me, when you're old." He thumbs his nose at authority, but unlike a host of slickly packaged pop-rockers, he's not pretending to be a cute, lovable Superbrat. He's a troubled troublemaker, angry and cynical and desperate, a tangle of ethics and excesses - an updated, self-conscious rebel without a cause.

In words and music, the Replacements flaunt rough edges. Guitars distort and buzz and feed back; voices sound raw, nearly blown-out. "I Don't Know," with a honking saxophone that recalls the Rolling Stones' "Bitch," is a series of questions ("What are you gonna do with your life?" "Are you making a fortune?") answered by three drunken-sounding Replacements chanting the title. In that song and elsewhere, Mr. Westerberg admits it when the joke's on him - as it often is. "Spirit is willing, you think you got what it takes," he shouts in "Lay It Down Clown" from "Tim," "the only exercise you ever get is the shakes." On "Pleased to Meet Me," the song "Never Mind" is about, in part, forgetting words he was supposed to bring - "I'm not ready as I'll ever be," he mumbles - while in "Can't Hardly Wait," he vows to write a letter "tomorrow" because "tonight I can't hold a pen."

The Replacements don't just confess to fallibility; they've been known to revel in it. The first Replacements albums, "Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash" and "Hootenanny," rampaged through rock styles with a gleeful disregard for professionalism; "The Replacements Stink," an EP, opens with the words of a Minneapolis policeman trying to break up a noisy party. In concert, the Replacements have been known to play full-length sets of sloppy versions of other bands' songs while trading insults and cigarettes with the audience - although a change of lead guitarists, with Slim Dunlap replacing Bob Stinson, has reportedly curbed some excesses. Even on "Pleased to Meet Me," the Replacements' most carefully produced (but by no means tame) album, "I.O.U." ends with an off-center, sustained crash that sounds like a cymbal being knocked over.

Behind the Replacements' rowdiness, however, is both the ability to write well-crafted songs and a deep empathy with the characters they write about. The Replacements share some of their subject matter - running wild, feeling enraged and disoriented, despising the adult world - with heavy-metal rock. But they look past heavy metal's chest-thumping and self-importance to find the worried kid behind the din.

In "The Ledge," over a guitar riff that alludes to Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear the Reaper," a teen-ager stands on a ledge, looking down as a crowd gathers. From the room behind him, a girl he knows begs him not to jump; on the breeze, he smells coffee and doughnuts "for the press." A policeman reaches for him from the windowsill. "I'm the boy they can't ignore - for the first time in my life," Mr. Westerberg sings. Soon, with a bitter laugh, he amends it - "for the last time in my life!"

"The Ledge" is an unusual song for the Replacements. For one thing, it tells a story instead of delivering a manifesto; more important, its narrator gives in. For most of his other songs, Mr. Westerberg hurls himself into battle against liars, snobs, phonies, sellouts, cowards, cheats - and, lest he become too self-righteous, against his own failings. What he asks for, as he did on "We're Coming Out" from the "Let It Be" album, is "one more chance to get it all wrong." At a time when pop culture is busy worshipping yuppie success, and the standard-issue rock singer is as slickly packaged as a new brand of detergent, the Replacements aren't just another band with good tunes - they're an obnoxious, confused, boisterous slice of real life.

ROCK: THE REPLACEMENTS IN SONGS FROM 3 DECADES

The New York Times, July 26, 1987

By JON PARELES

AT a circus, one act always wows the audience: an unsteady character teeters and stumbles his way across the high wire. Thursday's concert by the Replacements, at the Beacon Theater, had that kind of slapstick suspense.

Paul Westerberg, the band's lead singer and songwriter, came onstage goggle-eyed and with slurred speech, looking drunk but not quite enough to keel over. Would he remember his own lyrics? Would he lead the Replacements, as has been known to happen, through a set of randomly chosen, mostly unfinished versions of other bands' hits? Would he make it through the next song?

For the Replacements, professionalism is the enemy and a far greater sin than sloppiness. Mr. Westerberg writes about being a self-destructive misfit, someone who's always unsatisfied, who can't get things conventionally right and isn't sure whether that makes him a pioneer or a klutz. It's an eternal adolescent dilemma, and one he refuses to resolve by cleaning up his act. His lyrics proclaim that he'd rather be honestly ragged than falsely slick, and he sings in a hoarse, urgent voice, sometimes just a wordless howl.

The songs are tuneful, even catchy - drawing on rock from the 1950's to the 1980's, with particular nods to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Ramones - but the band keeps them raw and noisy. Chris Mars, the drummer, kicked up a propulsive backbeat, and Tommy Stinson, on bass, nailed down the beat even as he clowning around on stage. Slim Dunlap, on lead guitar, stood on the sidelines and played with amused competence as Mr. Westerberg shouted and staggered (and, for one encore, inhaled helium between verses, making his voice small and squeaky).

As it happened, the set lurched forward without quite toppling, a mixture of Replacements songs and assorted covers - the Rolling Stones' "Honky-Tonk Women," Edison Lighthouse's "Love Grows (Where My Rosemary Goes)" and Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A.," to which Mr. Westerberg sang, "I'm a pretty obnoxious baby, and I'm here to stay."

He may be right on both counts. The Replacements are determined to rupture concert decorum, reclaiming rock's birthright as rebellious noise. "Whaddaya think we are, some kinda entertainers?" Mr. Westerberg mumbled when the band returned to the stage a final time after the house lights had gone on and the stage crew had begun to dismantle equipment.

For their finale, though, the Replacements chose two of their anthems - "Left of the Dial" and "Alex Chilton," songs about loving pop and hating its commercial routines - and played them with a fervor that could convince even nonfans, if any were still in the theater. There's a fine line between a self-indulgent freak show and rocking

pandemonium, and the Replacements walked it at the Beacon. They'll be at the Ritz, 119 East 11th Street, tomorrow.

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THE REPLACEMENTS – The Pleasure Is All Yours



By Bill Holdship
Cream, September 1987

For the most part, I hate rock 'n' roll.

Probably not the smartest thing to admit in print, and I wish it wasn't true. I used to love it. Worshipped it. Thought it was one of the most important things in my life. Just the mention of it could conjure up images that were like magic. In many ways, rock 'n' roll had replaced Disneyland. Today, I generally prefer Disneyland.

Because—beyond all the hype and the fakery and the right radio sound and the talentless dreck and the I'm-cooler-than-you-isms and the nausea-rock 'n' roll was always funny. Elvis was funny. So was James Brown. The Beatles were comic geniuses. Both Dylan and the Stones could be hilarious in their irreverence. Jim Morrison belched into his microphone during the quiet part of "When The Music's Over" at the Hollywood Bowl. That's *funny*. From doo wop through punk, rock 'n' roll always had a sense of humor, even when it was being serious or brutal, especially when it was being great. It wasn't a bunch of "superstars"—probably one-tenth of the talent John Lennon possessed—sitting around being more serious and more pretentious and more morose than Lennon ever imagined. Working class heroes, indeed.

For the most part, I love the Replacements.

"It's not that you hate rock 'n' roll," says Tommy Stinson. "It's that you hate everything that goes with rock 'n' roll. And we aren't rock 'n' roll, We play rock 'n' roll. We aren't rock 'n' roll."

After a short pause, Paul Westerberg retorts In his gravelly voice that's only going to get raspier before this night is through: "We are, too!"

"We're not fuckin' rock 'n' roll," replies Tommy with his ever-present laugh. "We don't wear tight pants and we're not on the radio and. . .

"But that ain't rock 'n' roll," says Paul. "See, that's the whole thing."

* * * *

I don't wanna make any grand proclamations here or anything, but the Replacements are probably the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world right now. And *Pleased To Meet Me* is probably the best rock LP of 1987, if not the '80s. If you've ever loved rock 'n' roll, you've gotta love this record. It's reminiscent of everything from the Beatles and Beach Boys to Exile-era. Stones and the Memphis Sound to Blue Oyster Cult and the Sex Pistols. The list could yeah, Alex Chilton is great wild frontier and everything wrote a tribute song for hi but I think *Pleased To Meet Me* is as good as any Big Star, solo Chilton record I've

Paul Westerberg loves much as all the folks mentioned Or, as he said about his songwriting during In a radio Interview later that night: "I do it because it comes naturally. I have no other skills." And songs like "Left The Dial," "Alex Chilton." Or "Ledge" are as good as any I've ever heard. Just listen to his guitar work on this LP; *Pleased To Meet Me* is the band's first LP since the departure of original lead guitarist (and Tommy's brother) Bob Stinson. "They actually let me sit down to play this time," says Paul-and it's terrific. The Attitude is there. The music is there, This is rock 'n' roll I don't have to hate.

A year ago, J. Kordosh and I met up with Paul and bassist Tommy (now 20--"I've grown a few whiskers since then"--and a great guy) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Tommy played Mutt to Paul's Jeff or vice versa. We had come to question them about the "joke," these rumors of 'greatness," and some pretty silly shows we'd seen them do. They got usor actually we got ourselves-very *drunk*. Tommy smashed bottles against the wall. It was one of the best interviews we think we've ever done. And the show they performed ... well, they even made "Johnny B. Goode" sound refreshing and new (no small feat). They conjured up images that were like magic, and left me proclaiming them "the greatest band in the universe" on that particular night.

So, it's a year later, and we're sitting in a bar on Sunset Blvd. in L.A., which is where J. and I now live. (TOMMY: "You stupid shits!"; PAUL: "No, no. Actually, I'd rather spend two days in L.A. than, uh, than, uh, three.") "We're on a promotional tour," says Paul. "Get a load of that!" Drummer Chris Mars didn't show up, but the band's new manager, Gary, is here with the first pressing of the band's latest single (which Tommy urges us to break, and Paul finally does), as is Slim, the band's brand new guitarist who hasn't played live or on vinyl with them yet. Slim doesn't want to talk about himself too much--"He won't tell us things about himself, like about where he grow up and stuff," says Tommy-but he's one heck of a nice guy, and he sure likes talking about the guitar solo of Scotty Moore and Hank Garland after Paul punches in "Little Sister" on the jukebox, and about the time he played with Bo Diddley, and about the time he almost got to play with Chuck Berry. We also know that he's married, originally from a small town, and as big of a Replacements fan as anyone reading this article.

So this wasn't an interview per se. The tape recorder was running at the beginning of the night-but this turned into, into ... a drunken orgy. Yeah! That's the ticket. No, actually, it was just having also happen to be in the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world. They don't want to be famous. They do want people to listen to their music. It's a dilemma, to be sure, but any angst Westerberg ever displays (and it's obviously there) generally takes an optimistic form. The following salvagable-and printable (see, you had to be there)-quotes aren't all totally in context. But, hey, give us a break, we were smashed, OK?



On the tour

PAUL: "Hey, we use a set list now."

TOMMY: "We've got a stage set-up. We've got lights, we've got props. . . " PAUL: "We've got lights, we've got dancers, we've got. . . "

TOMMY: "We've got big dinks onstage. . . "

BILL: "How about horn players?"

PAUL: "No. Although we may have a horn player. I talked to a guy the other day—one of the interviewers. He plays baritone sax, and he said, 'I'll come down and *honk!*' "

On the Beastie Boys

TOMMY: "They could use a good swift kick in the groin." (*Laughter*)

J.: "Wow, this is like the last interview except no one's gotten mean yet."

TOMMY: "Well, I'm going to start now! We're *assholes!* Hey, do you know any place in town where we can go 'butt' masks? (*The laughter is now at uncontrollable extremes.*) We want masks to wear to our promotional party tomorrow night."

On the LP title

PAUL: "It's Tommy's fault."

TOMMY: "The only thing is they screwed up the whole idea. They took part of the idea. The whole idea was simpler van it looks, and it doesn't look that great. the album cover sucks. But after three months of working on a record, you don't want to worry about an album cover or a video. So you turn it over to them."

PAUL: "They've got it like (*sarcastically*) 'Pleased To Meet Me.' And, no, its like '*Pleased*—you know, get it?—to meet you, sir.' I guess they didn't get it."

(Paul also mentions that, tracks recorded for the album, be released as single "B" including a cover of the Sons Of The Pioneers' "Cool Water" with Chris Mars on lead vocals.)

On playing Europe last year

TOMMY: "After seven years of trying to get to a certain point, you go over there and it totally deflates your ego."

PAUL: "You're sitting in a fucking hamster cage hotel room, and you're playing to a bunch of stupid skinheads. And you realize how much of an asshole you really are because you wanna ride in a big Cadillac and eat pot roast. And there's all these teeny cars, and this bullshit food. There were some good gigs in London, but no one had heard of us over there."

TOMMY: "We were like brothers, though, because we were locked in a van and we *had* to talk to each other because they couldn't speak English."

J.: "That would be like Krokus touring over here. They can't speak English very well."

PAUL: "They can't play worth a shit, either."

On attracting a metal audience

BILL: "You could conceivably cross over to a metal crowd."

TOMMY: "You think so? Well, I guess it has the same tempo and stuff. Yeah, but you'd still have to wear studs. At least with this record, there won't be as many skankers. They'll know from this one that we're not up there with Black Flag."

On Bob Stinson's departure from the band

TOMMY: "We had some artistic differences. . . "

PAUL: "He just learned that last night."

TOMMY: "Well, I've been searching for the easiest way to say something without saying anything. And someone said, 'Oh, you had artistic differences?' Yeah, that's it. Easy enough. It was something that had been building up for awhile, and, to be honest, he's a lot happier now. He's in a band where he does more of his own style of music, and he plays leads."

PAUL: "You guys summed up Bob perfectly in the last story. I can't remember exactly... "

BILL: " 'Eyes like cherries in a vat of buttermilk.' "

PAUL "Exactly. It makes no sense to talk about Bob. You've met him, you've seen him. Anyone who's met him knows what Bob is like. We don't want to tell everyone that doesn't know."

J.: "He's in another band?"

TOMMY: "Yeah. And he's a lot happier. And he's spending a lot more time with his wife, which was causing him personal problems. He'd leave town, and he wouldn't be happy. So he's happier now. I don't see him much, but I know that he is."

On "Alex Chilton"

PAUL: We did it because he paid us. I figured it would be good to come right out in the open and say, 'Yes, we love Alex's stuff, so here's a song about him,' rather than ape his style like so many bands do and then claim, "Oh, no we never listen to him.' Plus, we needed something to rhyme with 'million' and 'Chilton' was the closest I could get."

A free plug

PAUL: "We mentioned 'em last time and you didn't write anything about them so you should mention the Young Fresh Fellows from Seattle. If you think we're good, then they're the best band in the world. They're like the new NRBQ, only sloppier."

On their video

TOMMY: "What do you guys think we should do for a video?"

PAUL; "Yeah, we have to come up with a concept in about half an hour tonight, and then go in and do it tomorrow."

TOMMY: "Think of something as stupid as what we did before."

PAUL: "But not necessarily. If it's for 'The Ledge,' that's the only stipulation. If it was 'I Don't Know,' we could do a really stupid one. But we don't want to do something that makes the song look dumb."

TOMMY: "But we don't want to do anything relevant either."

On the future

PAUL: ... or an invitation to my wedding..."

BILL: "Are you getting married?"

PAUL: "You bet you, by golly, wow. Yeah, in October."

BILL: "To Lori (his longtime girlfriend)?" PAUL: "Well, what did you think?"

TOMMY: "Actually, his name is Ike."

PAUL: "Yeah, fucking Morrissey's going to do the ceremony."

Ideas for a Creem/Replacements contest

PAUL: "How about 'Cut the Replacements' hair'?"

TOMMY: "Nah, we'll get some fucker that wants to give us a Mohawk. I ain't gettin' no Mohawk."

PAUL: 'Smell the Replacements' socks. '

TOMMY: "'Sock the Replacements.'"

PAUL: "Let's make it 'slap.' "

TOMMY: "How about 'comb' my hair?"

PAUL: "Ah, that's it! 'Comb the Replacements' hair.' We could have it live on MTV"

TOMMY: "Yeah, that'll be great. Someone'll give us dreadlocks, and we'll look like fuckin' Bob Marley for a month! No. I've got it! I've got it! The Replacements Contest: 'Win A Night With R.E.M.!'"

On the future, part II

J.: "You guys should be glum."

PAUL: "We should be glum?"

J.: "Well, you're so good, you should",
more recognized."

PAUL: "No, we're very happy with this,"

TOMMY: "There's nothing about this that attracts us more than the music."

PAUL: "This gives us the opportunity if we want to have our ego stroked, we can go where people know us. I would hate to have people knowing you and stuff. hope we don't got real big. Just think we got as big as Bon Jovi or something, we wouldn't be able to do what we're doing here now. That would, take the fun of this."

J.: "Well, I'd like to see you guys make lots of money."

PAUL: "Nah, we're much better off not making lots of money."

On producer Jim Dickinson

PAUL: "He produced *Big Star 3* and that's all he really ever did."

TOMMY: "And he knows Dr. Nick."

BILL: "I saw this thing in *U.S.A. Today* about Elvis's supposed illegitimate daughter. . . "

TOMMY: "I hate thinking about illegitimate mate kids..."

BILL: "And they quoted Dr. Nick. I guess he's respected in Memphis again."

PAUL: "Memphis is like that. You can go to a doctor and say 'I want to lose some weight,' and he'll give you speed. Or 'I need to relax,' and he'll give you Valium. All this shady bullshit."

BILL: "Did you go to Graceland when you were recording in Memphis?"

PAUL: "No. Elvis used to live there. It was too depressing. I thought it would be In bad taste. I didn't want to go in there."

BILL: "Well, the Beastie Boys went there when they were in Memphis.

PAUL: "Yeah, but the Beastie Boys are crass assholes. C'mon, I'll fight 'em right now, goddammit!"

A class act

PAUL: "We're classy assholes."

TOMMY: "A lot of this is kind of a joke. I mean, I laughed for five minutes straight this afternoon for no fuckin' apparent reason."

I rest my case.



Following this segment of the interview, the Replacements go to dinner with some record company people to discuss the video—but somehow we all end up at a club in L.A. where the Long Ryders are playing. The drinks are still a 'flowin'. The record company and management want Paul and Tommy to go on a prominent, powerful "now music" station ("Put on the oldies station," says Paul on the drive there) for an interview. Paul doesn't want to do it, but finally agrees if Kordosh and I will go on the air with him and say we're "gay." (NOTE: This "gay" thing started earlier in the day, and was based around the humor of the double entendre. It got funnier as we got drunker. It had nothing to do with homophobia or hating homosexuals. We even discussed the Beastie Boys' anti-gay statements, and Paul said, "We're not anti-gay at all." And Tommy added: "Have you ever looked up gay in the dictionary? It means happy." I mentioned that Sam Cooke sang about pie being "so gay," and that Elvis sang

"I'm gay every morning, at night I'm still the same," and that Dave Edmunds recently changed that word to something else on his cover of the song. Aren't "loaded" words great?)

So we're sitting in a radio studio at one a.m., watching as Westerberg, with a look of terror on his face, looks up and mouths the word "Help!" Things got a little out of control. He tells the DJ that "Alex Chilton" is really about "our new guitarist, Slim. See, Slim is Alex Chilton's alter ego." Kordosh, who's pretty darn drunk, ends up answering the studio phones over the air. Probably a bad—but very funny—idea.

Some typical moments:

DJ: "When are you playing In town?"

PAUL: "Maybe tomorrow night."

DJ: "Where?"

PAUL: "I don't know."

D.J: (sarcastically) "That's a good answer, my friend. The next song up is 'I.O.U.' What can you tell us about it?"

PAUL: (not at all mean-spirited "God, he's got a great voice, don't he?"

TOMMY: "It's a fake voice. Listen to him."

PAUL: "No, he's a fucking professional ... Oops. I'm not supposed to swear, I guess."

KORDOSH: "Why don't you talk in your normal voice?"

DJ: "I'm afraid it doesn't change much this time of night."

KORDOSH: "No, seriously, talk in your own voice."

OR:

DJ: "How many songs did Paul write on the album."

PAUL: "Paul wrote 'em all. *(pause)* Paul's a creep. He takes all the credit."

DJ: "Does anyone else in the band write songs?"

PAUL: "Tommy and Chris also write songs. They're just not as good as Paul."

TOMMY: "That's the truth."

DJ: "Uh, huh."

(Everyone howls, except the DJ.)

DJ: "Why do you write songs?"

PAUL: "I do it to make Tommy and Chris look bad. *(pause)* No. I do it because I'm gay."

DJ: "What can you tell us about the new single, 'The Ledge '?"

PAUL: "Well, It's In E minor, and If you're following along at home—E minor, C major seventh, D suspended with a B seven turnaround."

OR:

DJ: *(Obviously very peeved)* "Well thank you for coming into the studio, guys."

PAUL: "It's been your pleasure."

People talk about outrageous radio, but I've listened to a to" of this interview at least a dozen times, and I always end up on the floor. It's one of the funniest things I've ever heard.

The following morning, a DJ smashes a copy of the Replacements' *Pleased To Meet Me* LP over the air, saying he can't understand how a major record label could ever "sign a band like this." Personally, I don't know why any major record label in their right minds wouldn't want to sign a band like this.

But then, I hate rock 'n' roll.

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INTERVIEW WITH PAUL

The Bob, Issue 40, June 1990

THE BOB: Would you mind doing an auto discography, and talk about each one of the LP's?

PAUL WESTERBERG: Of our stuff?

THE BOB: Yeah.

PAUL: Don't listen to it.

THE BOB: You can either start from the earliest one or start from the new one.

PAUL: Ask me a question on each one and I'll try to give you a suitable lie.

THE BOB: Well, SORRY MA, FORGOT TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH [1981]- I still listen to it and enjoy it. Do you ever listen to it and if you do, do you still enjoy it?

PAUL: I was at an all-ages show about two months ago, I went with my sister and they put it on. It was really loud and I didn't know who it was until the second song. So that tells you how often I listen to that. And I was thinkin' "Who the fuck is this playin' this old-hat shit?" You know, some crank band that thinks they're playin' rock'n'roll. And sure enough it was me. And they couldn't believe that I didn't recognize that it was the Replacements. But I always do that. Whenever I turn on the radio and we're on, I immediately don't recognize us. I just think, "This is familiar, who is this?"

THE BOB: The thing that set SORRY MA apart from the other hardcore bands of the time was the lyrics. I've always thought the Replacements strongest point was your lyrics. A few albums ago in an interview you claimed you were illiterate. That seems so ironic, because insightful lyrics have always been what makes the Replacements stand out.

PAUL: Yeah, well, I mean, Einsteinium was dyslexic [laughs]. But I think that's what saved us on SORRY MA, because musically there's nothing really going on there. I guess I was from a different school of thought at the time -- everyone else was getting into whatever was hip at the time, which I guess was more politically-orientated things. And I probably had met my first girl a week ago, so I was obsessed with that.

THE BOB: The next record, STINK [1982] was all-out, hard hardcore.

PAUL: Yeah, well that one rang the falsest of them all. It's funny that a lot of people still like that one the best. It was done in two nights. We recorded it on Saturday and mixed it on Sunday afternoon. That was kind of our way of making a demo tape to send out to all the clubs to say "See, we can play this stuff too; can we have a gig?" And then he did like a full year of touring with HUSKER DU and BLACK FLAG and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, whoever. I think that was the short-lived where we thought we were a hardcore band. And then we'd go back into the van and listen to TED NUGENT [laughter].

THE BOB: HOOTENANNY [1983] was a period of transition for you, because it started getting away from hardcore and took a turn toward slower, more emotional songs like "Within Your Reach"...

PAUL: Hmm-mmm. I think almost each record is a reaction to the one before it. It was like a year or six months of touring and doing the STINK thing, and the last thing I wanted to do was really bash out another one. You could hear me more-or-less trying to find my voice, or trying to find out where I fit in - "I don't _feel_ like a skinhead, I like pop songs, I like bubblegum stuff." That was in a way trying to fuse what I had been listening to growing up into what was happening at the time.

THE BOB: LET IT BE [1984] is the one that made people realize that Hey, this band is something else, this band is definately not a hardcore band.

PAUL: This band knows Pete Buck [laughter].

THE BOB: The songs were kind of transcendant compared to your earlier stuff. That album has some of my favorite songs of all time, like "I Will Dare" and "Answering Machine" and "Unsatisfied."

PAUL: And every one of those three were written at a turbulent period in my life. I'm glad that we recorded then--had it been two months later, it might have been different. I hate when I look at it that way, because then we're back to the question of, "Well, do you need that tension in your life to create great art?" But it just seems to come back to the fact that those songs that stay with you are the ones that were written at a hard time.

THE BOB: And then TIM [1985] was the first major-label record.

PAUL: That was right when we were splintering with Bob [Stinson, guitarist]. Bob wasn't on much of the record. And [producer] Tommy Erdelyi, for all the help he gave us, did a pretty crap-ass job at mixing the thing. I mean, he mixed it on headphones 'cause he was deaf from playing with the Ramones. So it didn't help us a whole lot. But it's got some great tunes on it.

THE BOB: On PLEASED TO MEET ME [1987] you played guitar by yourself, and I think you did a great job.

PAUL: Thank you. That one was coming out of TIM and not knowing what we were doing by getting rid of Bob. So we looked to someone older, and [producer Jim] Dickinson was perfect because he sort of took us by the hand and said, like, "Don't worry, boys, just put on the clown make-up one more time and make a punk record." And it was like, "Sure, okay, we know how to do that."

THE BOB: Have you seen Bob lately?

PAUL: Yeah, just the other night Tommy and I were out and Bob came in and it was nice, cause we all sat down and it was like he never left-- within two minutes we were both insulting each other and had our arms around each other. There's definately a lot of love there. I think any bad feelings are definately water under the bridge.

THE BOB: DON'T TELL A SOUL [1989] kind of shocked people by it's mellowness. I like the songs but I was disappointed by the ultra-heavy-sheen production.

PAUL: Hmm-mmm. And I think that was the problem of having a third party in there--having a guy mix it who didn't know the band, and wasn't there for the recording, and more than anything didn't listen to the words. He thought "I'm getting paid, this is my job to make it sound like Eddie Money, and that's what I'm gonna do." And us at the time, we're figurin', "Hey, it might work." And it didn't.

THE BOB: Are you disappointed to it now?

PAUL: Ummm, no. I mean, of all songs, "Asking Me Lies," I still listen to that a lot. And not so much for the lyrics, I just kinda like the groove that Tommy and Chris were playing. I think DON'T TELL A SOUL is gonna be a sleeper like TIM was. A lot of people didn't like TIM at first, and now I get all this, "Oh there's great songs on TIM." I think that's the new TIM, it'll be the one that people'll come back to later.

THE BOB: And then there's the new one, ALL SHOOK DOWN [1990]. Some of the best songs you've ever written, and I think your best singing of all time.

PAUL: Hell, if that's an endorsement, then I'll take it. Yeah, I agree. And it's a reaction to the last record, which was a little too slick, so I made sure we pulled it the other direction.

THE BOB: I haven't seen the album's first single "Merry Go Round," in the stores yet, but I understand that Tommy does the song on the b- side.

PAUL: Yeah, that's called "Satellite." We just recorded that, about three weeks ago. That was really kinda fun. That was the first thing that we had done as a band in a long time. I sort of took the role of producer, and Tommy took the helm, playing the guitars and singing and playing the bass. And Chris and Slim added their parts. It was a fun way to do it. It would have been nice to have done the new Replacements record that way. And it did open a new door, that I guess we could work this way if we wanted. But the album has to go Top-40 before they'll even press that up.

THE BOB: On "My Little Problem" you sing a duet with Johnette Napolitano [of Concrete Blonde]. Was that song originally written as a duet?

PAUL: Yeah it was. And it was kind of written with her in mind. She was one of my first choices, or I thought Joan Jett might be fun. But yeah, it was definitely written with a female vocalist in mind. And Johnette and I, we're similar in a lot of ways, and I figured it would be a nice match. She blows me away. Actually, I had a hard time keeping up with her [laughs]. She's cool.

THE BOB: "The Last" could be taken a lot of different ways. You could be singing about the last love, as in getting married. Or you could be singing about the last Replacements album, implying that this could be the last one -

PAUL: Or of course the last drink.

THE BOB: Exactly, that was my third...

PAUL: Yeah, and it's all three of those.

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THE REPLACEMENTS: Leaders of the Lost Generation

Melody Maker (11/10/1990)

by Simon Reynolds

This year, singer, downtrodden writer and all-around wasted boozier Paul Westerberg has given up drinking, abandoned his band and is trying to look on the brighter side of life. The result was the critically acclaimed album, *All Shook Down*.

Paul Westerberg looks well.

This might seem unremarkable, except for that the last time I met him (Atlanta, Georgia, 1987), he looked the *very* picture of terminal unease. He looked like he'd been languishing under a five-year hangover. As it happened, that wasn't far from the truth. But the real problem wasn't the boozing, but his underlying reasons for doing it: blurring and blunting that sharp ache of lack, that feeling of being lost in the world.

Westerberg's immiseration was also his muse; The Replacements' albums, *Let It Be, Tim, Pleased To Meet Me, Don't Tell A Soul*, were bursting at the seams with bruised and tender classics in the "beautiful loser"/ragged glory tradition. The Replacements had another side, bruising and delinquent, hellhound and hell-for-leather, and that was fun too. But Westerberg began to find the rock'n'roll life a grindstone, his raucous reputation a millstone.

This year he's made a strenuous effort to clamber out of the rut. He's kicked the bottle, and he's extricated himself from the context (the band as a recording, touring, hellraising unit) that drove him to drink. The new album, *All Shook Down*, is, to all intents and purposes, a solo album.

"Look, it's too early in the morning to construct an elaborate lie—the truth is, I was sick of the others," admits Westerberg. "We'd toured for six months, and then it was straight back to writing songs. I just couldn't stand the thought of going back to writing songs, and I just couldn't stand the thought of going back to the same old way of doing things, I decided to write how I felt, and not worry whether the songs were playable live."

Did you start to feel trapped by the gang aspect of being The Replacements, the rowdiness and hi-jinks?

"It's such a cliché, but I lost my identity. And I was tired of being known as the leader of The Replacements, or one fourth of something. Because it's always basically been me calling the shots, and if that's the case, I finally wanted to have control over how it sounded. Democracy fell to pieces on this one! I don't see this record as Paul stepping out, and then it's back to the old Replacements groove. I think this is me trying

to lead them into the one direction I think we should go. They don't look to the future, they do what they do, and sort of walk around thinking, 'We're the Replacements and we're great.' Whereas I think, 'We've done this, let's do something else, don't you like other music? I like to work with other musicians'."

Is *All Shook Down* a kind of goodbye to all that, the monument to a major life transition: the turmoil of a twentysomething turning into a thirtysomething and realising something's gotta change?

"Everything in my life is in upheaval. I've stopped drinking. I don't know whether it's such a big deal, or whether I can keep it up, but for the first time in my life I'd like to. Plus I couldn't handle the pressure of being the leader, and my personal life is in chaos. So I like to think that changes are around the corner. But if the only change is that that I have a lighter attitude to life, and stop killing myself with the bottle, then that's fine. If out of this, all that comes is that I can play sober and lead the guys with a clear head, then I couldn't ask for more."

But despite all his recent moves towards personal growth, Westerberg isn't—praise the lord—the latest reborn recruit to the cult of positivity. One thing that has survived the recent upheavals is his identification with the beaten and dejected, the wasted youth and the never-wozzers of the world. The first track on the album, "Merry Go Round", is a typical Westerberg portrait of a nobody who never had a chance, someone whose life spirit was crushed out of them from the start with hushes and prohibitions. Like the anti-heroine of "Achin' To Be", (s)he's been deprived of the wherewithal for any kind of emotional articulacy or perspective of her predicament.

"Yeah, 'Merry Go Round' is a really 'Achin' To Be' in a different key. It's the kind of character I tend to be interested in. The winners in life don't attract me."

And so much American mainstream pop is in that we are the champions vein: whether it's the bullying ebullience and air-punching triumphalism of Bon Jovi and his army of clones, or the despicable MC Hammer's vicarish attempts to be a positive role model.

"I've never been able to get a handle on that, I've tried to write'em, but they always ring false. It's like someone else's words coming out my mouth, just a slogan to pot yourself on the bock and kid yourself that it's all gonna be all right. We're gonna make V. That emotion has never been strong with me. I've always been kinda defeatist! A lot of it does come from drink. I didn't stop drinking in the hope that now I'd have a positive outlook on life. But at least maybe I'll be able to see some glimmers of the other side of life.

"This was supposed to be the record where I didn't pour it all out, and do this bogus Joni Mitchell thing. The last record I made a few attempts to talk about things that I didn't have a clue about, cos I figured that people were sick about me complaining all the time. *We'll Inherit Earth*' was trying to bed sort of clouded environ mental protest. But on the 'Don't Tell A Soul' album, I guess it was really 'Rock'N'Roll Ghost' that was the seed of 'All Shook Down'. The song's about the feeling of not having any goal. Finding myself always searching for something and thinking, 'One day, when the Replacements reach his level, it'll be great. And then realising that 'I'm not enjoying

this, the here and now', I'm always waiting for that time when everything is gonna be low I always wanted it to be. And realising that I have no picture of what I want, and looking back at everything as a waste, because I didn't enjoy it, I was always looking forward to this elusive level, just a feeling that I'd wasted my life playing rock'n'roll and not enjoying it. Which is not totally true, but at the time I felt like that."

It could be that Westerberg is a member of a lost generation, who will only get a footnote when the Great Book of Rock gets to be written. But it's also true that most of the great white rock of the Eighties was about precisely this feeling of being lost on the road to nowhere: Husker Du, The Smiths, Dinosaur Jr, Felts *Primitive Pointers*, Galaxie500's *You Go To Waste*. At least being lost can be a blissful bewilderment, a rapturous loss of self (*Daydream Nation*, *Isn't Anything*, *Everything Flows*). But for Paul Westerberg, such endless exile can only be agony; songs like "Can't Hardly Wait" and "Someone Take the Wheel" earn for a steady hand to guide him home.

What's it like, giving up the demon drink?

"One thing I find a problem is that I can't sleep. I find myself staying up all night a lot, and it's weird when you're not using chemicals to do it. The last time I did it was when I was 15, just to see what it was like. But it isn't as bad. I still want to drink.

"Before I had to turn myself into the 'Rock'N'Roll Ghost' character, travelling all day, looking out the window, listening to music, drinking, getting wasted. Now I'm going for a little bit of balance."

There seems to be a great divide in American popular culture: between the you can do anything you wanna do gung-ho spirit, on one side, and the beaten down folk who've realized that the Dream is always going to stay out of reach.

"Maybe the key is to stick with you can't always get what you want, but you can get what you need, and learning to be happy with that. Don't want something that you can't attain. That seems to be the way ahead for me—to enjoy this, the here and now, the little things, if this record doesn't sell that well, I'm not going to worry about it. I really had high hopes for the last one, I set myself up like a bowling pin.

"My insecurities and problems are more than just dependence on liquor. I'm one of those people who thinks that to be happy I need someone else to make me happy. I've got to get that do-it-yourself happiness that is the only way to be. I've always looked for happiness in someone else. A lot of artists and musicians are like that - they need other people to coax them and encourage them. At least I've realised that now. Maybe it stems from childhood. But we won't talk about the shrink!"

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ON A WILD JOYRIDE WITH THE REPLACEMENTS

The New York Times, April 4, 1989

By JON PARELES

The Replacements came to the Beacon Theater on Thursday night with a chip on their shoulders and something to prove. Although their two-night Beacon engagement quickly sold out and their current album, "Don't Tell a Soul," is receiving more radio exposure than any of its predecessors, among longtime fans the reaction to the album has been mixed. It's the Replacements' most toned-down, conventional recording. As if to compensate, the band came out yelling and bashing in a set that included many of its best songs.

In those songs, and on a good night in concert, the Replacements forge defiance, vulnerability, humor, craftsmanship and chaos into incendiary rock. Paul Westerberg, the band's singer and songwriter, draws on punk, country, hard-rock, lounge-jazz and especially the Beatles in songs with full-fledged melodies; his lyrics capture the contrary, contradictory feelings of people who can't bring themselves to be complacent, and who can't help thinking that, as one new song puts it, "Anywhere is better than here."

In hallowed rock-and-roll style, the band treats its songs the way those songs treat other people's smugness - they turn them into a jubilant, trashy racket, rampaging through melodies and toying with lyrics. On Thursday, at the end of "I'll Be You," the band's current single, Mr. Westerberg sang, "You be me for a while, and" - he paused - "let me think about it." The Replacements have a reputation for unpredictable, improvisatory concerts that can be sublime or ridiculously self-indulgent. Thursday's Beacon show was nothing like the anarchy of some previous concerts; songs were played all the way through, for one thing. But the band's volatile chemistry was a little off, tintured by unexplained hostility. At one point, Tommy Stinson threw his bass at Chris Mars's drum kit, saying something like, "Stay awake"; Mr. Mars, who had been putting real muscle into the music throughout the set, responded by flinging a drumstick at the bassist. And Mr. Westerberg seemed disgruntled. Between songs, he said, "Is it my imagination, or are we flopping?" and, later, "Here's another one that we don't like." And his vocals, often shouted, came across as forced.

Yet it wasn't a bad show. Even in off-peak form, the Replacements are an unstoppable rock band; they go barreling through songs like delinquents on a joyride. And unpredictability reigned; the set included unexpected covers (the Soft Boys' "I Wanna Destroy"), a throwaway or two and stray guest performers (Johnny Thunders, who had opened the concert; Dan Baird of the Georgia Satellites, and an unidentified female guitarist from the audience). Even if "Don't Tell a Soul" is unsettlingly settled, in concert the Replacements are anything but routine.

THE REPLACEMENTS GET GOOFY; THE BAND THAT COULDN'T PLAY STRAIGHT WINDS UP IN DISNEY LAND

Phoenix New Times, May 03, 1989

By David Koen

Poor, deprived Tommy Stinson. Twenty-two years old, he's been a slave to rock 'n' roll and the Replacements--the grown-up garage gods he plays bass for--nigh on ten years now. As of last year, between rehearsals, recording sessions and gigs, not once did little Tommy ever make it to Disneyland.

Then, last August or September (Tommy boy can't quite remember which), in a B-movie twist of fantasy pumped full o' the wickedest irony imaginable, Stinson went to work for Disney. If you hate the Minneapolis band's guts, you're probably hoping it made the bratty bassist sweep up after other people's gum or peddle Daffy Duck condoms in the gift shop.

Close. In fact, the kiddie conglom put Stinsky and the Replacements to work in the image-alteration department. Disney thought it would be totally, like, liberal to get the band to remake a cheesy chestnut called "Cruella de Ville" from 101 Dalmatians. Then it was slapped on an album stuffed with other lib and glib cartoon covers by hipper-than-anything pop artisans like Michael Stipe and Tom Waits. (Not to drop names or anything, but Stinson and the fellas waxed a B-side called "Date to Church" with Waits at around the same time.)

"They hounded us for a year to do the thing," sneers Stinson, shifting gears into his recall mode. "We were in the studio, we screwed around and said at the last minute, What the hell, we'll give it to 'em.' It was a favor to a friend of a friend of a friend."

Disney, it's safe to say, wasn't one of those friends. "They didn't want anything real racy and way out of context," Stinson says. Needless to say, the 'Mats (short for the band's secret code name, the Placemats) goosed the entertainment conglom, delivering a right tawdry remake.

In a major executive decision, Bette Midler and the rest of Disneyco's gray suits voted to be offended and threatened to boot the band off the record. Only after album producer Hal Willner whined long and hard did Bette and her flunkies relent.

Predictably, Tommy Stinson is not planning a trip to Disneyland. Ever.

And just in case anybody thinks he's a sucker for saying uncle to a bunch of 'toons last year, he adds that if any of the creeps from Disney's corporate office had asked the Replacements to do "Cruella" back in, say, 1981, when their first LP, *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash*, came out, here's what he woulda told 'em: "Get. Fuckin'. Lost."

That Stinson and his drinking buddies decided last year to breathe their boozy breath at Disney's bequest was proof positive they'd undergone at least minor surgery on their attitudinal glands.

Their willingness to play the industry game by throwing Disney a bone set the stage for the group's then-upcoming LP. Since signing with Sire Records after releasing *Let It Be*, the 1984 indie album critics are still hyperventilating with praise over, the 'Mats had put out two fair-to-middlin'-selling albums (*Tim* and *Pleased to Meet Me*) for the big label. In February, the band proved it could sell (some would tack on the word "out" to define "sell") by writin', 'rrangin' and recordin' eleven radio-ready ditties and pressing them onto a slab of vinyl they called *Don't Tell a Soul*.

Old Replacements fans across the nation and overseas wept uncontrollably upon giving *Soul* a spin. The same band that had given our culture untouchable youthful celebrations like "Gary's Got a Boner," "Fuck School," and "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out" was now cutting and pasting together importantly sentimental songs like "Talent Show" and "I'll Be You." To many listeners, what the Replacements were now floating over the air was mush.

The finicky former fans, Stinson snarls, "can pretty much take a hike. People don't think that's natural that we've changed from *Tim* to *Pleased to Meet Me* to *Don't Tell a Soul*. They're the people who want to see us lying on our back not able to play."

Stinson's referring to the band's early days, when the 'Mats were almost as prone to passing out on stage as they were to stringing together three chords in some semblance of order for a whole song. Bored punks bought Replacements tickets not so they could see the band *ROCK AND ROLL*, but so they could brag afterwards of having seen them do something stoopid. Any time you get a couple of aging 'Mats fans together these days, one of them will tell you he once saw Tommy's big bro' Bob Stinson (the group's guitarist who was booted out of the band in the mid-Eighties because he couldn't hold his liquor) urinate behind an amplifier during the first encore. The other will tell you with a gleam in her eye of the time singer Paul Westerberg heaved on himself before the set's third song was over.

Is the ironically titled (in an economic sense) *Don't Tell a Soul* the album that finally establishes the Replacements as a band that can play as well as it can pass out? Westerberg was quoted in a recent press release telling his record company as much, adding, "I think, in a way, this is the most daring album we've ever done, just because we made the choice to take the songs to a wider audience."

And how in the holy name of Madonna n' Roses is increasing one's popularity daring?

Stinson answers this 'un most craftily: "We took more time in learning how to play things. Rather than just winging it and succumbing to the old Replacements image, we said, Let's fuckin' show 'em we can play.'"

THE GROWING PAINS AND PLEASURES OF THE REPLACEMENTS

Rolling Stone (6/1/89)

by Steve Pond

Paul Westerberg has only been awake for about ten minutes, but it's time for him to go to work. Westerberg's job is to be the lead singer, songwriter, and rhythm guitar player for the Replacements, but these days that job involves more than just writing and singing and strumming: It also means shaking hands and small talking and signing autographs and discussing strategy and talking to reporters. In the dining room of a Holiday Inn in Rochester, in upscale New York, Westerberg struggles to wake himself up and act coherent for one more interview.

"This whole thing sucks," he says with a groan. "We left Maine at ten o'clock yesterday morning, got in the bus, drove here and got in about ten at night. It would have been ideal if we could have flown, but Warner Bros. is so *cheap*. . . ." He looks over at the next table, where three Warners staffers are having a late breakfast. "This is a bad place to be sitting, with them right over there. But maybe it'll keep me from hanging myself."

The record-company folks, though, just grin and carry on the business of coordinating the Replacements' schedule for me day: First there's Westerberg's interview with *Rolling Stone* and, at the same time, bassist Tommy Stinson's phone interview with a local publication; then a visit to a nearby radio station; then an in-store appearance at a local record store; then tonight's concert; and afterward, the nightly get-together for the band and a few important radio DJs and execs. That's all in a day's work for a rock band on the verge of breaking big—and for everyone involved, the expectation is that the Replacements are on that verge.

After seven albums that earned them a stellar reputation in underground and American-independent circles, the Replacements' third album for the Warner Bros.-distributed Sire label, *Don't Tell a Soul*, is the one that's supposed to take these former college-radio darlings to the big time and sell considerably more than the 200,000 copies their last album did. Already the single "I'll Be You" has reached *Billboard's* Top 100 Singles chart, until now an unheard-of achievement for this band. In addition, the tour is taking them into medium-sized halls rather than the clubs they used to frequent, and Westerberg's reputation for writing subtle, moving rock & roll songs is beginning to overshadow the band's old rep as loudmouthed, drunken thrashers. The standard line is that the band has grown up, matured; maybe so, or maybe the audience and the business have.

At any rate, the band and the business are closer together now, because Westerberg, Stinson and their colleagues—drummer Chris Mars and guitarist Slim Dunlap—have been spending their days doing interviews and in-stores and the kind of promotional chores they used to avoid. "If I was a little more clearheaded, I could come up with a reason why we're doing all this," says Westerberg, weariness showing in his drawn face. "I guess I just don't want to give the record company an excuse for not getting behind the record."

“We wanted to show them good faith, we wanted to say, ‘We’re not a joke, take us seriously.’ Before, it was always drilled into my mind - the underground mentality that they are the enemy. But that just defeats the purpose of making records, if you’re gonna fight the people who are working for you to get your music out there.”

Of course, that underground mentality is hard to shake: After all, the Replacements, like the other bands that sprang up in the wake of and were influenced by the Sex Pistols, are part of virtually the only genre in the history of rock & roll that considers it a shameful sellout to show any commercial aspirations.

“You’re damn right,” Westerberg says quickly. “It crosses my mind, what we would have been like if we were sitting around in 1965, when it was the hippest thing in the world to be huge. I don’t know. We’d probably be like the Pretty Things or something.”

He pushes aside his pot of tea and orders a Heineken. “You know,” he says, “we’ve seen one side of the coin, the underground side, the lack of success. But we’ve never tasted big success, and I’m curious to see what it’s like. I mean, I wonder why a million people like R.E.M., for instance, and only 200,000 like us. Are they better than us, or have the other 800,000 not had the chance to hear us? If this record doesn’t sell, I wanna know that people heard it and decided, ‘Piece of shit, I don’t like it.’ Then we can get back to me basement, where we belong.”

Inside a Rochester radio station, people are waiting for the Replacements. Outside in the parking lot, Tommy Stinson is getting a few things off his chest. “Shit shit shit shit, tuck fuck fuck tuck, drunk drunk drunk drunk, tits tits tits tits.” In the front seat of a parked jeep, the twenty-two-year-old, spiky-haired bassist erupts in laughter. “There,” he says, with a grin. “I think I got it out of my system. Now I can go calk on the radio.”

Stinson and the band’s gangly guitarist, Slim Dunlap, are handling the radio-station chores this afternoon, and the first item of business is to behave themselves and let this radio station know that the Replacements’ music is tuneful, commercial rock-n-roll, rather than thrashy protopunk, and that the band members are nice guys, rather than the hard-drinking, rowdy punks that their legend suggests. Dunlap, the newest Replacement, says he gets the question all me time: “Are Paul and Tommy really complete assholes, like everybody says?”

“They are,” he says. “But they’re the *niciest* assholes I’ve ever known.”

So the band members head across the parking lot to try and get themselves on the radio. “When I listen to the radio I chink, ‘We ought to be on here and this shit shouldn’t be,’” says Stinson. “Because face it, no one needs to hear Jethro Tull on the radio anymore. I don’t want to dog AOR radio, because they’re giving us support now and they never did in the past, but this is the fucking Eighties, and they’re still playing the worst shit of the Seventies and calling that classic rock. Boy, if ‘Aqualung’ is a classic, then fucking ‘I’ll Be You’ is *history*”

The interview itself is short and uneventful, coming to life only when the DJ dredges up the Replacements’ reputation as sloppy, undisciplined live performers and says she’s

heard they're liable to cover everything from Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" to R.E.M.'s "Radio Free Europe." At this, Stinson leans forward. "We haven't done that crap," he says, exaggerating, "in seven years."

Afterward they pile back into the jeep and find a college station on the dial. The station broadcasts an ad for tonight's concert, then segues into "They're Blind," a lush midtempo song from the new album. Dunlap beams. "You know," he says with a big, crooked grin, "there's nothing wrong with being appreciative of the fact that they're playing us on the radio. To me, it's important that Paul's songs be on the radio. If it helps for me to go make a fool out of myself at a radio station, I'll do it. There's nothing wrong with this band, and Paul Westerberg, seeking a larger audience. Because he deserves it."

After enough time to park at the hotel, gather up Westerberg and Chris Mars and drive across town, the four Replacements walk through a light snow-fall into a huge, cluttered and crowded record-store-T-shirt-emporium-guitar-shop. A line of more than 100 fans is waiting for them, and the routine is simple: The band sits at a table, and the fans file past slowly, pausing long enough to have the four members sign records or posters or fliers or whatever they have on hand.

Most of the fans look like the kind who've been following the band for some time, but every so often you'll see a few obvious newcomers: the two teenage girls who stand off to the side pointing at Tommy Stinson and giggling, "He's so cute," or the young Oriental girl who has her brother ask Paul if he'll kiss her—and who, when Paul complies, looks like she's about to faint.

The band members gamely put up with the ritual, but after about an hour they're getting antsy. One by one, they wander away from the table for short spells; finally, by the time the last few customers have reached the front of the line, Dunlap has wandered next door to look at guitars and Stinson is thumbing through stacks of records.

"It kinda takes the fun out of it for the fans, to meet the band first and then see the show later," says Westerberg, who adds, "After a gig, the people who are dying to say hello, those are the people I wanna talk to. But the people who are there in a structured environment like that, I don't like it at all. I would never have done that, even if it was fucking Dylan or somebody."

But then, the Replacements formed at a time when rock-n-roll bands were trying to tell the audience that anybody could play the game. Things started in New York with the Ramones and in London with the Sex Pistols, and before long, untutored kids with loud guitars were insisting that they could be rockers in towns across America - including Minneapolis, where a teenaged Paul Westerberg wormed his way into a local garage band whose members included twelve-year-old Tommy Stinson, his older brother Bob and Chris Mars. They were punks even if they weren't skinheads Stinson and they made punk records: 1981's *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash* and the following year's EP *Sink* were fast and hard and mean, close to hardcore but a little too smart and sentimental. (They don't like those records anymore.) They opened for lots of punk bands, pissed off the skinheads by doing country covers and began to change tempo on

Hootenanny, the real watershed, though, was 1984's *Let It Be*, a mixture of trashy rock and heart-on-your-sleeve sensitivity.

"We had a big dose of attitude in the early days," says Westerberg, "and it's kinda hard to put attitude down on tape. But we tried for, like, three records. And kinda gave up the ghost on *Let It Be*, and let a little bit of music happen, too. And that was the right mixture."

It got them a major-label deal with Sire. "My guess is they signed us to keep us off another label in case we might get good, and also because we were a cool thing to sign," says Westerberg. For Sire, the band made *Tim*, bigger sounding but still rough. Live, the group was alternately great and appalling; behind the scenes. Bob Stinson was so drunk and out of control that the others finally had to fire him. Despite their good reasons for giving Stinson the boot, the move angered longtime fans. Two years later it's still a sore spot: "I don't want to talk about my brother," announces Tommy Stinson out of the blue at one point. They made *Pleased to Meet Me* as a three-piece group, moving between full-bore raveups and soft Westerberg ballads, then integrated the two more fully on *Don't Tell a Soul*

"Writing the record," says Westerberg, "I wasn't feeling like the Replacements, the mighty rock band. I was just feeling like myself, and very casually just writing pop songs. And when I played them for the band, it was like Tommy would say, 'Where are the rockers, man?' So we compromised: I went back and kicked out a couple more rockers, and he came around and kind of understood what was going on." ("I was worried that it was gonna be a really dull, wimpy record, admits Stinson, the brashest and youngest Replacement, and the one who says that he's responsible for "keeping the spirit intact" in the band.)

The record they finally made, *Don't Tell a Soul*, keeps playing in the background as the Rochester in-store appearance nears an end. On the store's sound system, it sounds tough, tuneful and intelligent: The jagged edges that goosed previous Replacements records may be missing from much of this one, but the craftsmanship has reached a new level and there's an inescapable emotional kick to songs like "We'll Inherit the Earth" and "Rock 'n' Roll Ghost"

The record plays on as the band members edge toward the front door while the store's staff and some record-company employees try to round them up so they can pose for pictures and autograph the store's signature-laden back wall. Westerberg offers to sign the heretofore bare front wall instead, and when the store manager demurs, he mutters, "We sign this all or we don't sign at all," then walks out to the jeep. Finally, though, all four band members are coaxed back inside, where they pose for pictures and sign the back wall and smile for the right people. You wouldn't exactly call them *enthusiastic*—but they are cooperative, which with these guys ought to count for something.

A few hours later, the Replacements are back on their home turf. Onstage at the Renaissance Theater, they blaze their way through a set that bears a faint resemblance to the "mature" craftsmanship of *Don't Tell a Soul*. Mixing new songs with a selection of tunes from the past few albums — none of the early hardcore tunes, though — they

play just about everything faster and harder than the recorded versions, Stinson and Westerberg and Dunlap staggering about a makeshift stage that's been erected on the dance floor.

The emphasis is on rock, flash and the band's brand of early-Stones-styled decadence; fed up with rumors that he's going to do a solo album soon, Westerberg doesn't perform any of the ballads he includes on albums. The songs from the new album are revved up *far* beyond the recorded versions: On record, he says, he wanted "We'll Inherit the Earth" to sound like it was coming from a meek, timid voice, but onstage the song roars to life as a call-to-arms anthem. The Replacements slow down long enough to play their version of the *101 Dalmations* song "Cruella DeVille," their oldie "Waitress in the Sky" and the occasional midtempo tune, like "Achin' to Be," but more typical are tuneful hard rockers like "Alex Chilton" and thunderers like "Bastards of Young."

"On the last tour," says Dunlap, "you could kinda feel that everyone in the room had seen the band before and they knew what to expect. But now you look in people's eyes, and some of them have this look, like 'What the heck am I *doing* here?' It's kinda made it fun."

After the show, Westerberg parks himself at the bar so that fans can stop by and say hello. There, he meets one who tells him that she really liked the show - but that to be honest, she preferred the show a few days before in Syracuse. That was the show the band considers to be the worst of this young tour: They were drunk, they were sloppy, they screwed around onstage.

"There aren't as many people who come to see us fuck up anymore," says Westerberg later. "It's not like last time or the time before, when it seemed like eighty percent of the people came to see the circus. And if you fucking writers would stop writing about that stuff, *no one would* come to see it." He grins. "Hint hint"

An hour after the show ends, Paul Westerberg is sitting in the Holiday Inn bar with a gin and tonic, talking about his two bands. It's easy, he says, to tell them apart: The Replacements are the guys who make me increasingly accessible records, the adults who are all married and seeded down and respectable, and the Mats—an old nickname that's short for Placemats — are the rockers who have a few beers, get up onstage and tear it up.

"I do see a clear division between the Replacements and the Mats," Westerberg says, while at a nearby table Stinson and Dunlap chat with a group of local radio bigwigs. (As usual. Mars is nowhere to be found: An avid artist who says "drumming is second all the way to art," he's probably up in his room with a sketch pad. "We tried to capture what you saw tonight on record, and we never get there," says Westerberg. "You always lack a little spirit and spunk in the studio, and I guess we've realized that, well, let's make up the difference with maybe a little musicianship and thoughtfulness and intellect—and then throw all that crap out the window and fucking *rock*. I mean, that's what I love to do.")

So the Mats are more fun than the Replacements?

"Yeah," he says. "But the Replacements are more gratifying. If you create something in the studio that's good, you can be proud of it. I wasn't proud of what we did tonight I had fun and felt good that people enjoyed themselves and got their money's worth, but I didn't get any sense of 'Whew, we really did something there.'"

Westerberg is making a list of the recordings he's proud of, from the new album's "Achin' to Be," "I'll Be You" and "Rock 'n' Roll Ghost" to the older "Skyway," "Ledge," "Alex Chilton," "Nightclub Jitters" and "Hootenanny", when a pair of local DJs stop at his table.

"Sorry we missed the show,"* says one. "He was on the air until ten."

"Too bad," says Westerberg, good-naturedly. "We were actually good tonight"

"That's what I hear, man," says the other. "That's what I hear."

"So are you playing us, a little bit?" asks Westerberg.

"Not yet, we're not playing you *yet*" says me first guy, pointing to his pal. "It's up to him, he's the music director."

The music director laughs nervously. "Yeah, we gona - - -," he begins, and then stops.

"We gotta . . . check out, and ..."

"Well," says his colleague, interrupting. "Good luck on the tour."

"Thanks a lot, guys," says Westerberg, as they retreat. "See you again, I guess." Then he turns away - and under his bream, he mutters, "Kiss my fuckin' ass *sideways*."

The bar is almost closed and all the radio dudes have gone home, but Paul Westerberg is still sitting across the room from the table where he had breakfast and began doing business fourteen hours earlier. One more time, he's trying to answer the Replacements question: What's happened to this independent band turned big-league contender, and what does it all mean?

"In a nutshell, we've gotten better," he says. "We've lost a little bit of what we used to have, in terms of the old kamikaze spirit. But we can't do what we used to do, and we don't wanna. We don't want to be a joke, or a young rising band, forever. Its like, we're a good band, period. Not a great one, but a good one."

Earlier, Westerberg had told a local college DJ that he wanted a gold record with *Don't Tell a Soul*. Now, though, he begins to pull back from that ambition. "I kinda said that just to say something," he admits quietly. "A coupla weeks ago I thought the album might really get big, but now it doesn't seem like it's gonna. I don't think it'll sell a million records, and I guess I don't care — but if it went through the flicking roof, I'd be ready for it, and I'd like it to."

In the meantime, he'll make do with a steady living and a few other consolations. "I think about this sometimes," he says. "Whatever happened to all the punk bands? All the bands that we opened for and played with: Black Flag, Minutemen, Youth Brigade, Seven Seconds, Husker Du, Effigies, all the fucking hardcore bands. There isn't a damn one of them left. We fucking outlasted the whole stinking lot of posers, and all the time they gave us shit for having plaid shirts and hair."

Westerberg shrugs. There were some good ones, I can't lump 'em all together," he says. "But I gotta say that R.E.M. is the only band that we've ever opened for that has stayed bigger than us. Every other band — X, everyone else — at the time we opened, they were like rock gods and we were nothing, and R-E.M. is the only band that has continued to grow and get bigger. So there's our goal: We want R.E.M. to open for us." He breaks up laughing; in the world of regional American rock, he knows, R.E.M. and the Replacements are seen as the two titans, even if one of them is still fighting to be heard by most people- "A lotta people," he says, "try to push it as, you know, we'll be the Stones to R.E.M.'s Beatles. But, you know, we're *better* than R.E.M. Hey, we're better than the *Stones*. No, I'm kinda bullshitting you. . . "

Westerberg's in midretraction when Tommy Stinson walks by the table, sees the tape recorder and grimaces. Did you bury yourself yet?" he asks.

"Gimme a fuckin' lily," says Westerberg, "and I m home."

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DOWN TO A DULL ROAR

Newsweek, June 19, 1989

By David Gates

HIGHLIGHT: Post-post-punk rockers bang the head slowly

Bob Mould decided to bag his 10-year high-school reunion this summer. He's not the only one in his graduating class to become a personage -- Tom Browning makes \$ 1 million a year pitching for the Cincinnati Reds -- but he figured the reunion could still get "hectic." After a decade as leader of the now defunct Husker Du, the archetypal hardcore rock band, hectic is the last thing he needs. Paul Westerberg, leader of the still-not-defunct Replacements, feels about the same. Though the Replacements are the other great underground band of the '80s (R.E.M.'s platinum album disqualifies them), Westerberg says he'd rather listen to "mood music" around the house. "I play in a rock-and-roll band," he says. "I like jazz. You know, quieter music." The Replacements probably won't make their high-school reunions, either. They didn't graduate.

It's not exactly a stop-the-presses scoop that a bunch of musicians who used to be 18 about 10 years ago are now about 28. Or that their latest LP's, Mould's "Workbook" (Virgin) and the Replacements' "Don't Tell a Soul" (Sire) are more grown-up than their second-to-latest LP's. But these are musicians whose early work -- fast, loud and ragged -- made a cult of being 18. (At most, Replacements bassist Tommy Stinson was 13 when they recorded their first album.) They'll tell you now that to evolve from kids with guitars to polished recording acts is only natural; inner voices still whisper that to grow up is to lose your edge. They claim to ignore die-hard headbangers who accuse them of wimping out; those headbangers exist mostly in their own heads. In the early '80s the Huskers, the Replacements, R.E.M., Black Flag and the Minutemen sometimes shared food and floor space -- and "polished" was a put-down. "We all thought that we were doing something really different," says Mould. "And most of us were. We'd find places one of us could play and we'd all tell each other and everybody would go out and do tours and make 30 bucks a night."

Westerberg remembers those days less fondly. "The Minutemen and Husker Du, whether you like them or not, were serious musicians," he says. "Black Flag even. But a lot of the ones in their wake were like a bowl of crap. And there was a certain Sex Pistols-ness to the whole scene. Bands burned out quick." Drummer Grant Hart's heroin habit hastened Husker Du's breakup; the hard-drinking Replacements had to fire Tommy Stinson's harder-drinking brother Bob as lead guitarist. (His Replacement was their friend Slim Dunlap. "It was like, we can either get a hot-s--- guitar player," says Westerberg, "or we can get a guy we know who's really thin." The Sex Pistols were risky role models musically, too. Their 1977 album "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols" rejected not only prettiness but competence. Back then, they were a healthy rebuke to disco smoothies and strutting guitar heroes. But amateurishness as an esthetic let loose a lot of amateurs. "Peter Buck [of R.E.M.] is a resourceful guitar player," says Westerberg. "For a guy who can't really play, he's damn good. But guys like him opened the floodgates for every hack who thinks if he plays to open strings he's it. Just like me."

Click track: The Replacements' first albums were low-tech on principle; no overdubs to fix a woozy vocal or fuddled guitar line. "We used to make records live like we were on stage," says Tommy Stinson, "and thought that the same feel would come off on vinyl. It never worked." They also realized, says Westerberg, "that we don't play in time very well, and somebody's always out of tune. Live, you make up for it with spirit. But it ain't always quite together." On "Don't Tell a Soul," Westerberg re-recorded nearly all his original vocals; Dunlap kept revising his guitar parts; drum machines and a click track (a metronomic beat over studio earphones) rode heard on stray rhythms. This electronic primping (minimal by major-label standards) didn't tart up Westerberg's songs: it let them be heard. Catchiness started undercutting his punk credentials on 1984's "Let It Be"; parts of "Don't Tell a Soul" are even moving -- maybe because he'd taken time off to write and think. Not that this was some arty big deal, mind you. "It gave me something to do," says Westerberg. "I'd watch TV or cut the grass and . . . you know, you can only do that once a week, cut the grass."

Bob Mould is similarly offhand about "Workbook," composed in Virgilina solitude at his Minnesota farm. "I have a small home studio," he says, "and I spent last year writing for myself, just for things to listen to. Sort of make your own entertainment." For years, he'd written his songs on acoustic guitar, but with Husker Du, "they all came out the same way" -- that is, with his electric cranked up to 10. The typical early Huskers song sounded like a car wreck, victims' cries and all: an instant of impact that lasted three minutes. Later songs could have passed for pop, but thudding drums and roaring guitar still overpowered words and melody. "Workbook" ends with a fuzz-tone rant called "Whichever Way the Wind Blows," which seems to be about dead animals on the highway. But elsewhere we get acoustic guitars, electric guitars at relatively sensible volumes, a cello, and a fighting chance to hear what Bob Mould's voice sounds like. (Strong, full, agile, with a hard cutting edge.)

'Ain't appropriate': Even Tommy Stinson, often considered the heart and soul of the Replacements -- Westerberg is sometimes dismissed as merely the brains of the outfit -- acknowledges that "we're gettin' older and our music is gettin' older. And our f---- ideas are gettin' older. No one wants to sit there and f---- play really fast unless it feels like it's appropriate. And it ain't appropriate all the time." As good musicians have always done, the Replacements and Mould are transcending the narrow, homogenous tradition in which they grew up. They're not betraying themselves: they're becoming themselves. "What the Replacements are doing now," says Mould, "is complete different from what R.E.M. is doing, is completely different from what I'm doing. But we all still stay in touch. We'll all have our class reunion some time, wouldn't that be dreadful? Oh Jesus. Imagine all of us, you know, me and Westerberg and Pete Buck in the same room when we're 50? God, what would we say?"

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ONE FOOT IN THE DOOR, THE OTHER IN THE GUTTER

Associated Press, September 9, 1989

By Patricia Bibby

The Replacements, four rock 'n' roll bad boys beloved by college radio stations, worshipped by a musical underground but known by few others, might just make the big time.

Then again, maybe not.

The Minneapolis quartet, which started out in 1980 with fast, rough, thrashy rock tunes colored with adolescent anger and wit, released its seventh album this year - the third with Warner Bros. subsidiary Sire Records - and spent the summer touring with Tom Petty.

Musician Magazine, in a cover story in February, proclaimed portentously that they were the "last, best band of the '80s."

No doubt they are the closest ever to major recognition in the mainstream market. But lead singer and songwriter Paul Westerberg said their brush with success could be shoved aside for another pursuit, namely obscurity.

"We don't embrace success," he said over breakfast, his voice deep and hoarse, cut rough from a performance the night before. "If it happens, it happens. We aren't really trying to kill ourselves to get it."

Such a nonchalant attitude may sound a bit self-defeating, but it's not that the Replacements welcome failure.

Success, Westerberg said, can be a trap.

For instance, on "Don't Tell a Soul," their latest album, there was a major push by Warner and the band to get the single "I'll Be You" high on the charts. Album sales passed a respectable 350,000, but "I'll Be You" didn't do well on the charts.

"When 'I'll Be You' dropped off the Top 40 I was going, 'Damn,' " Westerberg said. "But now I go, 'Great,' because now it's not like 'I'll Be You' is No. 1 and I'll have to play it for the rest of my life. Next year no one will even remember it so I can play whatever I want."

The Replacements were discovered when Westerberg gave a tape to Peter Jesperson, who was booking bands at a Minneapolis nightclub and had a small record label called Twintone. Jesperson recalled that Westerberg was hoping to get a \$\$25 gig warming up for one of the top-billed groups.

But after the first play, "I immediately called them back and said, 'Were you thinking of 45 or album?'"

"I swear it was about 20 seconds into the first song that something got me deep down. I actually called three of my best musical pals at the time and said, 'You have to come over right now. Either I'm out of my mind or this is the greatest rock band I've heard in ages.' It was a real inspirational moment, one I'd consider calling magic."

Jesperson managed the band for six years, going to almost every gig as they crisscrossed the country playing smaller venues and building a reputation for their chaotic, unpredictable and often drunken shows.

Stories abounded about the recklessness of the young band - bassist Tommy Stinson was just 12 years old and Westerberg, the oldest, was 20. Former lead guitarist Bob Stinson, Tommy's older brother, was often the ringleader, showing up for gigs smashed. He once performed in the nude.

He was kicked out of the band when he "couldn't adapt to more tasteful or quieter things," Westerberg said, and now has a band in Minneapolis called Static Taxi.

The spectacle of Westerberg's highwire act also was a big draw. Reeling drunk, he'd often forget words of a song halfway through. Sometimes they would refuse to play their own tunes and launch into an hour of covers like "Yummy Yummy" or "Hitchin' a Ride."

Once the band reportedly stopped suddenly, gave their instruments to the audience and told them to play. Another tale has it that Westerberg tossed all the cash from his pockets to the audience and told the crowd to ask for a refund because they played so badly.

But he had enough savvy to know it's not necessarily what you play but how you play it that counts and if you're lucky the crowd will remember both.

"We did it because we wanted to make an impact. If we played on the weekend, we wanted to make sure there were people talking about us on Monday. If that meant being absolutely horrid, than that's what we'd do."

And, adding another essential ingredient of the classic rock 'n' roll fable, the outrageous shows helped disguise the fact that they didn't know how to play their instruments.

"When we started we weren't good musicians," Westerberg said. "We were smart enough to realize that playing your instrument is not going to get us anywhere. So we just created a smoke screen until we learned how to play."

While they learned to play, Westerberg learned to write better songs. The first albums, "Sorry Ma, Forgot to Throw Out the Trash," "The Replacements Stink" and "Hootenanny" often chronicled an inane, silly side of youth with songs like "More Cigarettes," "Hangin' Downtown" and "Dope Smokin' Moron."

But in the last few, "Tim," "Pleased to Meet Me," and "Don't Tell a Soul," Westerberg reflects the loss of a friend to suicide, the conflicts of commercialism, romantic longing and loneliness.

In "I Don't Know," from "Pleased to Meet Me," he talks about the band's precarious position straddling corporate, record-industry success after being so aligned with scrappy rock 'n' rollers: "One foot in the door, the other in the gutter, the sweet smell you adore, I think I'd rather smother.

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WESTERBERG IS ALL SHOOK DOWN

The Boston Globe, November 9, 1990

By Jim Sullivan

Paul Westerberg does not want to be another of rock 'n' roll's perennial Peter Pans.

He is aware, however, that some fans want just that. They look at him now and still see that bratty, beer-swilling teen who led his band, the Replacements, out of the garages of Minneapolis and into the vanguard of the American alternative rock scene, kicking and screaming all the way.

He's 30, not 19. Nothing lasts forever.

The affable singer-songwriter-guitarist hunkers down over a non-alcoholic Buckler beer - that's part of the story, too - and sees a man, and a band, at a crossroads. The band - formed 11 years ago, a part of the do-it-yourself, punk-rock revolution - is growing up, and, maybe, growing apart.

The Replacements have tasted success. Their last album, "Don't Tell a Soul," sold a respectable 300,000 copies powered by the wistful rocker "I'll Be You." They've also tasted failure. Opening up arena shows for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers last year, the 'Mats - as they're sometimes called - were met with a mixture of indifference and hostility. "It knocked me down a notch on the ego ladder," Westerberg admitted recently at the Sonesta Davio's. "We're a band with this raw attitude and spirit, and we can certainly be seen as a band that doesn't play very good. With Petty it got to the point where we just had this attitude: 'Well, they don't like our music, let's just let them remember us.'" That, he adds, is when they started dressing up in drag for the show and started drinking at noon: "We got under each other's skin a bit."

The new album, "All Shook Down," featuring the hit "Merry Go Round," has the Replacements - guitarist Slim Dunlap, drummer Chris Mars, bassist Tommy Stinson - on it, but not everyone plays on every track. They needed time apart after the tour. The album, currently No. 2 in Rolling Stone's college chart, was intended as a Westerberg solo effort, but the record company, Sire, shot down the idea: The band's name had more marquee value.

Westerberg understands. He looks at his current status this way: "This is the hardest age for rock 'n' roll, because I'm not old enough where I can look at it from a Petty point of view - because he'll go out and be a rock 'n' roll star for an hour-and-a-half for these 16-year-old kids who came to see him. I'm at the age, where - boy, I'm 30 - it's like I must look stupid; they must think I'm old. I feel silly doing this sometimes."

A big part of the problem is the fact that myths and legends die hard. At the onset, the Replacements played like the adrenaline-fired kids they were and Westerberg wrote us-against-the-world ragtag punk rockers like "God Damn Job," "White and Lazy" and "Shiftless When Idle." They also acquired a reputation as a reckless live band. Often pumped full of liquor and always playing without a set list (or a safety net), the

Replacements could veer any which way - good, bad, sloppy, silly. That was part of the aura, and the longtime tradition, say, that recalls the Kinks of the early '70s.

Westerberg suggests that their heroes were always rock 'n' roll's talented, but tainted, miscreants and cult heroes. "We've always followed these role models," he explains, "from Alex Chilton to Johnny Thunders to the Faces. I think that was a good excuse for us never to really go as far as we could, to set our sights low and then be 'surprised.' I think growing a little older, maybe growing up, I'd like to shed some of that - it's that attitude of: 'If I can't be the best, then I'm not going to try.' It's like 'I hate myself because I can't do it.' "

On the plus side, Westerberg notes, when people would wonder what they were doing on stage - doing song fragments, cracking up, playing "works in progress," shifting gears without warning or reason - he could answer: "We're trying to create magic that only happens when it wants to happen."

The next time the 'Mats tour, which will probably be in January, it will likely be a changed scenario. "We've been straight, as they say, for eight weeks," says Westerberg. "One day I woke up and I knew I had to do it. I was going through difficult things and I thought, 'Well, am I going to go into some treatment thing?' and the thought of it scared me so much I just quit."

But, going out on the road, Westerberg admits, may be a trial by fire. "I'll be more ready than I am now," he says, "but I'll still be very scared. I hope I can do it, but I don't guarantee anything."

And, he faces the prospect of singing a batch of songs - especially those from "All Shook Down" - that were penned in a different, darker time. "I was as unclean as you can get," he says candidly. "The record was written out of a depression and there was a bit of substance abuse. To go out and play those songs with a different outlook on life, trying to be happy and taking things with a grain of salt, will be difficult."

"All Shook Down" has an acoustic-guitar, pop underpinning, but a definite rock 'n' roll kick. The songs are mostly bittersweet, but even the most lacerating ones - "My Little Problem," "Nobody" and "Torture," to name but three - are imbued with ingratiating melodicism. The lyrics go against the melodic grain, a classic strategy. "I've always liked that," Westerberg says, "the rock 'n' roll thing with the pretty melody and the lyrics that don't really hit you right away."

As to his relationship with his bandmates, Westerberg says, "The worst times are over, I think. We sat down and talked about it, and we've never been ones to share our feelings. We sort of lived off humor and sarcasm for 10 years. . . . I'm still searching for what comes natural, what's the comfortable avenue here. . . . I'm in it for the long haul, but I don't know if it is going to be a rock 'n' roll band forever. I still want the Replacements to be successful, but I do get these inclinations like, 'Maybe this has been a good 10 years; I'm not going to do another 10 with these guys if it just inches along.' It's like the cliché about marriage - you have to make a marriage work. This is a rock 'n' roll band, not a marriage. It's not the most important thing in the world."

Westerberg chuckles at his own seriousness, admitting that if he were with his bandmates they'd all be goofing on each other. And so, without his band but dipping into that spirit, Westerberg announces: "We're starting our decade of farewell tours! Hell, we're crying wolf to the point where we will stay together forever."

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THE REPLACEMENTS' ROCK RAGES FULL TILT; THE REPLACEMENTS AT: THE ORPHEUM WITH THEY EAT THEIR OWN, LAST NIGHT

The Boston Globe, February 23, 1991

By Jim Sullivan, Globe Staff

You want humble? You want proud? You want the rag-tag all-American band of miscreants?

Consider the Replacements. The moniker itself is modest - hey, they're not originals, they're replacing originals. And here's how they introduced themselves to the soldout Orpheum last night. Singer-guitarist Paul Westerberg hits the stage with a strangled "Honey, I'm home!" shout, aping Jack Nicholson in "The Shining." He introduces his band as the Lobby Magnets, which, he later explains as a term for a band so wretched that it flushes the crowd to the lobby. The band's opening song, "I Don't Know," boasts about "having one foot in the door, the other in the gutter," which has been true for some time. Popular as they are here in town - and as they are through much of urban America - their latest LP, "All Shook Down," is not even on the Top 200. That's all right - they're happy to be around. The band nearly fell apart last year, after 13 years of grinding out punk, pop and country-inflected rock, and it took a new drummer Steve Foley to maintain the Replacements' status as a top-shelf name brand.

Last night, the Orpheum was treated to 90 minutes of full-tilt rock, with a few wistful ballads tossed in sporadically. A lot of bittersweet songs were played with a razor-edge not unlike the Rolling Stones circa "Exile on Main Street."

What didn't the crowd get?

They didn't get the 'Mats Mystery Mess Derby - the guessing game played by fans of the Replacements ('Mats for short) for years as to how intoxicated Westerberg, Tommy Stinson and the rest would be when they hit the stage and what sort of slap-dash, sloppy, fall-apart set would entail. See, the boys don't hit the bottle any longer, and drunken, bleary-eyed nostalgia aside, everyone's better off for it. The Replacements let it rip with screaming rockers like "Happy Town," "Bastards of the Young," "Nobody," "Another Girl, Another Planet" and catchy pop like "Merry-Go-Round."

Westerberg, 30, has had the privilege and pain of growing up in public. He started as an angry, but funny, hell-raising brat and he's become a penetrating songwriter, his songs touching base with various genres and tempos. He's not unlike the Kinks' Ray Davies, whom, come to think of it, he somewhat resembles. For instance, "When It Began" is bouncy and breezy, but it's about the fading days of a relationship; the lilting "Swinging Party" has the refrain of "If being afraid is a crime, we hang side by side." If last night's set had a downside, it would only be that the band didn't dig as deeply into its young, snotty past as one might have wished - it'd be wonderful to hear "God Damn Job" or "White & Lazy" again.

They Eat Their Own, an Los Angeles-based band fronted by eccentric and sexy singer Laura B., played a wonderfully inspired opening set. The band has scored an alternative hit with "Like a Drug" and the rest of their set matched that song's alluring appeal. Over the course of 45 minutes, TETO moved from Red Hot Chili Peppers-like hard rock goofiness to caustic politicizing - namely in the anthemic "Too Many Guns in America." Laura B. likes over-sized gestures - she's got a bit of Alice Cooper in her - and with the band's solid, crunching hard rock behind her she can pull those off.

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Evolving Replacements are ever exciting

Jon Bream / Star Tribune

Imagining the Replacements performing sober is sort of like envisioning Mick Jagger playing without Keith Richards, Bo Diddley without his square guitar, James Brown without a cape. Fans sometimes can't accept their favorites out of the familiar context.

Worry not about the newly sober Replacements, the Twin Cities' most acclaimed rock band. If they used to be a great attitude band while drunk, they have now become a great rock 'n' roll band. Their performance Wednesday night at the Historic Orpheum Theatre was a treat.

In the first half of their 1 1/2-hour concert, the 'Mats asserted themselves as a fine vehicle for leader Paul Westerberg's pop songs. He is a superior songwriter, who has evolved effectively from painfully raw songs about adolescent alienation to unvarnished expressions of adult worries. He seemed despondent, especially on new numbers like "Bent Out of Shape." The band favored kind of a carefree pop-rock sound of the 1960s, reminiscent of the early Faces and the Who in its "Happy Jack" period. However, these pop-oriented Replacements lacked an edge and the sense of daring that made them one of the most exciting rock bands of the 1980s.

"Talent Show" turned the performance around. The first verse and chorus were quiet, almost like one of Westerberg's acoustic ballads, and then the band busted loose, eventually turning the tune into a Chuck Berry-styled raveup. On the ensuing "Can't Hardly Wait," Westerberg and his mates played with unbridled passion. It was like the old 'Mats reinventing themselves. They even took on obscure flip-sides of their early singles, a raunchy T. Rex-flavored "Raw Ramp" and "If Only You Were Lonely," a marvelous country plaint that George Jones should record.

The rest of the concert was full-throttle rock 'n' roll excitement: The sing-along "I'll Be You," the closest the Replacements came to a hit single back in '89, was one of those transcendent rock 'n' roll moments where the band and the audience connected as one; the ensuing "Nobody," "Never Mind," "I.O.U." and especially "Alex Chilton" sounded like anthems for the alienated who had suddenly bonded with all these other lost souls in the Orpheum.

Westerberg slowed it down for a moment for "Here Comes a Regular" and then let out a guttural yell to ignite "Bastards of Young," a rousing declaration of the frustration of having no identity. It was a fitting finale.

The Replacements crammed more than 25 songs into their performance. Most of the material was drawn from the four critically acclaimed albums the 'Mats have made for Sire Records, beginning in 1985. They also threw in a few faves and raves from their early days on Twin/Tone Records, which began in '81.

Last night's concert was the first local one for drummer Steve Foley, who joined the 'Mats in December and has only three weeks' worth of concert experience with them. He was rock solid, a drummer who can drive this quartet. Guitarist Bob (Slim) Dunlap, who signed on in 1987, stayed in the shadows last night, though his colorings and shadings were integral to both the quieter material and the rousing rockers.

The Goo Goo Dolls, a trio from Buffalo, N.Y., opened with noisy power-pop that clearly owes a debt to the early Replacements and Husker Du, though the group ultimately sounded like a post-punk version of Cheap Trick.

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KEEPING THE FAITH

SPIN, August 1991

by MARK BLACKWELL

SPIN: Do you feel you adequately represent the soul of rock'n'roll?

PW: It's a flattering idea. My first feeling is no, but then my next one is who really does? I'm not really casting a vote for myself, but I can't think of anyone who really carries the torch. Maybe Keith Richards or someone like that, but that's been written about forever. I sure won't sell on the cover of *SPIN*. You'll have to have a girl with big tits on the next one. I don't need to see myself on the cover of a magazine. If it helps attendance or sells records, I do it. Being on the cover is in the category of a cheap thrill. I can smile about it and go, "That's awfully nice." I know a lot of people will see it and get excited about it, but basically it means that someone who hasn't heard my music's gonna recognize me at the 7-Eleven.

SPIN: What is the soul of rock'n'roll?

PW: To me the soul of rock'n'roll is mistakes. Mistakes and making mistakes work for you. In general, music that's flawless is usually uninspired. The people who go with the flow and go with the mistakes and turn that into something special are the ones that show guts—that's what we've always tried to do. The people who shy away from change and mistakes and play it safe have no business playing rock'n'roll. I never trust someone who thinks they know exactly what they want, and goes in the studio and gets it. That might be their art, but it's usually shitty rock'n'roll.

SPIN: Is rock dead?

PW: Well, is jazz dead? That's the way I look at it. Rock'n'roll is underground once again but it won't die, just like jazz won't. It's not the popular music of the day but it's not dead. R.E.M. went to No. 1, but I'm sorry they don't play rock'n'roll. They have their own niche which is great, but it's not rock'n'roll. They don't do it for me. The Black Crowes are rock 'n' roll and are great at what they do, but it's very pedestrian.

SPIN: Is Elvis King?

PW: Elvis didn't even write songs. Elvis was a performer. He rocked, but what did he really change, other than people's hair styles? Bob Dylan is probably much closer to the spirit of rock'n'roll. Or Gene Vincent maybe.

SPIN: What about somebody like Alex Chilton? You made him a rock hero in your song.

PW: No. I don't know what Alex represents. Now I listen to his new Rhino compilation, and it's like, I can't make up my mind whether Alex was some brilliant chameleon or just some guy who fucking lost it real quick. I almost regret writing that song. It's sad, because kids will come and ask me about Alex and you'll see this look in their eyes, and they think he's some guy in leather pants who jumps from amplifiers or something. It's like, if they only knew.

SPIN: You did a song about Johnny Thunders too.

PW: Johnny had everything except talent. He was frightening and beautiful and mean at the same time. Like a child. He comes pretty close to my idea of the soul of rock'n'roll. It's unfortunate that that always goes hand in hand with drug abuse and all that, which isn't rock'n'roll.

SPIN: You certainly had your share of that.

PW: Our teachers were Thunders, Chilton, the Faces, the Stones, the Pistols, the Ramones, and all the other people who were basically fuck-ups. Had our favorite music been Up With People it would have been different. It was a nice excuse to have someone to look up to and sort of make sense of what we were doing to ourselves. Had there been no bad examples I don't think we would have taken it to that terrible level.

SPIN: Is it less spontaneous now that you're not falling drunk off the stage?

PW: Not at all. I dove headfirst into the crowd the other night after I got hit in the face with a beer. Before the cup hit the floor I was flying off the stage in the direction where it came from. It was an instinct. It's good not to think when you play rock'n'roll.

SPIN: Did you expect to be as successful as you've been?

PW: When we started, what we were doing was underground, but there was the promise that what we were doing was the Next Big Thing. We were about to burst with all the bands alongside of us into the mainstream. We were a punk band. I was surprised that dance music took such a strong hold, but everything comes in phases.

SPIN: You guys rose up from Minneapolis about the same time Prince did.

PW: Yeah. Prince is pretty rock'n'roll himself. What he does is daring as hell. He takes chances, and I get the feeling that he doesn't know exactly what he's doing. I think he throws shit against the wall and sees what sticks. He's full of ideas. Coming out of Minneapolis, he has as big an influence on us as somebody like Husker Du did.

SPIN: What's Minneapolis like now?

PW: The town holds less and less for me. I don't know what's really happening on the scene. I was never really a big part of it. The scene the young people, and it keeps changing over. The clique. When it was our "time", I always hated the old fuckers who used to hang around. I remember how that felt, so I'm not going to hang around and try to be an part of the scene.

SPIN: As far as new bands in general, you're into the Goo Goo Dolls, aren't you?

PW: Yeah, they're really good, never got sick of them when they played with us. I think they come across dumber than they are, but it's cool. They've got a future. They can write and play and sing. I'd like them to have a producer and shit. Get some suits and chicks and horns and they're on their way. That was the best band we had open for us.

SPIN: I heard that opening up on Tom Petty's recent tour was a big disaster for you.

PW: We thought it was going to make us very successful, popular, and famous for very cheap reasons. But we didn't go out with a very positive attitude of "Let's win these people over." It was like, "On your knees you bastards! The mighty 'Mats have arrived." We were met with indifference. A few nights it was really unfair. Rock'n'roll is unfair, I guess. We played brilliantly at least twice and got no reaction. Middle America Petty fans don't want it, unless they've seen it on TV first, or heard it on the radio. But to give

them the real deal live and in person is a little too much for them. But even our own fans don't respond some nights.

SPIN: You guys definitely have a strong cult following, but it's not as high-profile as some band like the Cure or the Grateful Dead's.

PW: We really do. It's funny because there's no uniform. It's neat because then they're all regular, and in that way, they're exactly like me. I can fit in crowds easily. I can get lost in the crowd. I don't stand out like Robert Smith from the Cure would. I'm invisible. Can you see soul? We're getting at something here. People follow us every night. I can always spot them. I get a lot of letters slipped to me that say things like, "I've always listened to your stuff and I'd like to meet you and everything but I really don't want to." It's what makes me keep doing this.

SPIN: There are all these rumors about Winona Ryder being a die-hard fan and following you around.

PW: I don't want to say anything about it.

SPIN: People will still talk.

PW: Uh huh. Wait till they hear about me and Phyllis Diller.

SPIN: Are you still having fun?

PW: I've had more fun onstage this time out than I did last time. But I'm uninspired. I don't consider myself a born performer. I try to keep it fun and when it's not I want to throw it all away. I find myself onstage wanting to create something new. I get mad at the other guys for not being able to read my mind.

SPIN: Do you still feel like one fourth of a band?

PW: It's up to everyone whether you're an individual or just a guy in a band. I straddle the line. I've done enough things by myself and let the band do enough things where it's not like I've worked with a group my whole career. I was planning on the last record being my record when I started writing the songs. And they [the record company] said no, they wanted the Replacements.

SPIN: Will your next record be with the Replacements?

PW: No. The way I'm thinking right now, no. I don't know when it will happen either. Anything is possible. Things go through my mind like maybe even joining another band. I'd like to go work with some unknown people, but what seems attractive now is to work with another established artist and drag them through the mud a little bit. Fuck somebody's career up. There are a few things that in the works that I can't talk about right now, but you'd be surprised. Some people are interested and it's very flattering. If it brought my sort of punk spirit out, I couldn't resist.

SPIN: Now that we've proclaimed you the embodiment of the soul of rock'n'roll, I guess anything's possible.

PW: Yeah, thanks a lot. I owe you one.

PLEASED TO MEET MARS

By Jeff Scharlau
Cake, July 1992

Chris Mars isn't just an ex-Replacement and a nice guy. He's a Multi-instrumental, Art-makin', Song-writin', Record-releasin', Winter-lovin', Crappie-fishin' Renaissance Madman.

I don't know about you, but I expect popular people to be creeps. I almost want them to be. It makes it harder to envy someone whose hard work or talent or good fortune makes them a more notable human being. You might say, "Yeah, sure, he's a hell of a guy -- everyone adores him and he's made a trillion bucks from inventing Post-It Notes, but what a jerk!"

As the driving beat behind the beloved and belated Replacements and with his first solo album charming the critics, Chris Mars should be, by my estimations, a tremendous pain in the ass. Turns out he's an awfully nice guy, which kinda shoots my theory to hell.

So laid back and Minnesotan is Mars that he wants to be interviewed while he drowns a few worms at a secret fishing hole. And for a while, a founding member of a band who turned the world on with their snarl is worried that the kid down the dock is catching more crappies than him.

Horseshoes and Hand Grenades sounds close to a Replacements album; too bad it doesn't count as one. Mars had been writing songs for a couple years before the Mats' demise, but most of those that appear on the record were written following his departure. He had given some of the earlier songs to Paul Westerburg and *All Shook Down* producer Scott Litt, but they weren't considered.

I think that was Paul's attempt at a solo project and I don't think he wanted any outside help at that time. He wanted to do it himself and I think he was a little pissed off at the company for not letting him do that, so even if he liked the songs, I don't think they would have gotten on," he says. "Tommy had some around that time, too. It wasn't really open for discussion."

He's still willing to talk about the Replacements -- this time around. ("That's assuming there's a next time," he muses.) They don't out together, maybe out of respect for the past. "We're probably sick of each other for now, and all content to go our own ways," Mars says without sugarcoating. "I think everybody's fine with that. I heard something about the label really wanting the band to get back together. I mean, forget it, as far as I'm concerned. I would never go back to that. I could see a reunion a few years down the road, or even more than that. But I think it's just beating a dead horse."

'A reunion?' thinks a too-hopeful fan.

'A reunion /show/, yeah," Mars quickly cautions with a laugh. "I wouldn't go any farther than a show."

There's something deceptively calm about Chris Mars. I keep waiting for him to pop open like a jack-in-the-box. At any time – possibly while humming "Unsatisfied" -- he could suddenly push me off the dock and into the drink. Hard to believe that one of those wild-eyed South Minneapolis boys is quietly contemplating the next lure in his tackle box.

When Mars left the band, he announced that he would concentrate on his visual art, but eventually got a four-track machine and "started goofing around with it," although he admits that a solo album seemed unlikely, even to him. But, in true Replacements style, he did it anyway.

"The things I liked about the Replacements, even missed about the Replacements -- on their earlier records -- is something I wanted on my own record," Mars says. "The last couple didn't rock enough for me, so I wanted to get some of that flavor back."

He had played bass maybe once in his life, and so recruited J.D. Foster who has played with Green On Red and Dwight Yoakam, and asked Dan Murphy and Dave Pirner (from Soul Asylum) to sit in, "for moral support if nothing else." Mars praises both his co-producer, Tom Herbers, and David Leonard (who mixed *Horseshoes* in Los Angeles) for their technical touches on the record.

Working in the studio was a pleasure for this suddenly solo artist. He describes the process as adding paint to a blank canvas -- a process he is very familiar with -- and the mere elbow room in the control room made it even better.

"Up to *Pleased To Meet Me*, no one told anyone what to do. We would suggest things and were very democratic. Until then, we just went in and did what we did, and let it rip," he explains. "Then, the last couple, it started getting, 'You should do this beat' -- people telling you what to do, so that kinda sucked. It was nice working by myself. If I wanted something, I would just go ahead and do it."

Just as the creative mechanics of his painting make themselves useful in the studio, his art plows the fields of inspiration where the songs grow. But with different results. "My songs deal with real issues, where my paintings are very surreal. When I look at my art, I don't know why I tend to draw things so distorted and grotesque. It's sort of a rebellion against realism," Mars says with an artist's passion. After all, he is a visual artist taking time out to record an album, a fact he says his label understands. While he describes something that, in his mind, must be vividly subversive, I can imagine a tiny madman pulling levers and laughing maniacally in his skull. "I want to say," he says, pushing an invisible oil in corporate art's face, "Fuck that. Here, look at this. It's ugly. Like it." Minneapolis will continue to be home sweet home for Chris Mars and his wife, Sally, who is also his manager (and a better manager he could not ask for, he adds.) The seasons are important to him -- long winters might even help jumpstart those creative cold mornings. "What else do you do? Shovel snow, watch TV, write songs," he asks. "I wouldn't like California, and New York's not bad, but it's like going to the fair -- you just want to go there for a week and come back."

Despite the disbanding of the {{Twin}} Cities' best-known and most-loved acts -- the Mats, Husker Du, the Gear Daddies -- Mars is optimistic that Soul Asylum and other bands can keep attention focused on Minneapolis. He mentions God's Favorite Band, Run Westy Run and the Jayhawks as favorites. What has he been listening to lately?

"To tell you the truth, I listen to a lot of talk radio," he admits. "I'm sick of music." He favors KSTP (dismissing WCCO as an "old fart's station"), particularly Don Vogel, to whom Mars tunes in while he draws.

One name conspicuously missing from his list of up-and-comers is Golden Smog, whose pop pollution is a byproduct created by Mars, Soul Asylum's Dan Murphy and Dave Pirner, Gary Louris of the Jayhawks, Kraig Johnson of Run Westy Run, and assorted other local rock ringers. There is little doubt whether GS's new Crackpot release will be a big success, forcing a change in Mars' life.

"Oh, don't you worry -- it's not going to! Not if I can help it!" he laughs conspiratorally, although he admits that there are a few Elton John songs he'd still like to cover.

Mars is having as much luck with the fish as Charlie the Tuna had with stardom. (Or as much luck as the Replacements had with stardom, for that matter.) And he's getting nervous. He changes baits and sides of the dock. I change subjects, sensing that the push into the lake is near if I don't wrap this up.

I may not get another chance, so I have to ask: Are there any Replacements legends to put to rest, or are they all true? "They're probably all true and then some," Mars answers with a wide grin. "Shit, I can't say. Shit, only the four of us will ever know." I don't get details, although he peers into the water as if he were watching a 25-cent highlight film in some humid back room in his subconscious. He threatened at one time to regroup with Bob Stinson and perform as The Replaced, but that stalled without starting. Now it seems like success has him up against the ropes and is pounding him mercilessly. The Replacements are history.

"We don't see much of each other because everybody's doing our own thing. Everybody's busy -- I assume we are. I know I am," he says as he leaps up and pulls in a decent-sized perch, finally.

"Couldn't get any busier than this."

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BOB STINSON INTERVIEWS HIMSELF

CAKE, issue #10 (September - October, 1992)

Bob Stinson, former guitar wizard for Minneapolis' garage rockers, The Replacements, spoke to CAKE at 1:30 p.m., Thursday September 3rd, 1992. The meeting place: the world famous C.C. Club, where Minneapolis' musical elite smoke, drink Jagermeister and Summit Pale Ale, play pool, and piss, in that order. The topic of conversation: tour stories... plus a few other things Bob wanted to get off his chest. Recorded and deciphered by T. Trent Gegax

"Every day weird shit happened on the road. Usually we had three weeks on, couple weeks off, three weeks on, record, fuck around, not look at each other for a week. Tommy (Stinson), Paul (Westerburg), and Chris (Mars) could all shack up in the same hotel room -- I couldn't deal with any of them. I stayed with Bill Sullivan -- he works for Soul Asylum now. Bill did all our stuff: guitars, got us drinks. Couldn't get us a girl worth a shit. So we got him one -- it was a guy, but he still liked her, ah, him. Every time I tried to stay in a room with (Tommy, Paul and Chris) I had to turn the T.V. on 'cause I couldn't deal with it, it was just dead silence. None of the three, except maybe Chris and I, could go to a bar and have a beer. I think the only thing we had in common was playing in a band. I was always out on my own, doing something ridiculous: pissing in somebody's shoe or something gross. But I could play guitar, at least I thought I could.

I love touring America, but I don't like Boston, probably because it don't like me, either. I mean, I love everybody there, the girls are nice, but it's, I don't know, weird. Boston's not like Seattle, Washington, it's like coming off four hits of acid: you just want to go hide behind a dumpster -- that's what Boston's like. L.A.'s where all the wanderlusts live. We played the Roxy, but before that Chris stopped at a trick shop and bought a bottle of that stuff that smells really bad. Instead of sprinkling a couple drops on the audience, Paul just threw the whole bottle out into the crowd. The whole place stunk. We got a kick out of it, I don't know what our audience thought of that.

It was '86 and we were doing "Saturday Night Live," staying at the Berkshire Hotel. I caused all the trouble on that one: I broke the phones, put a hole in the door, threw an ashtray out the window. Lorne Michaels put food and flower baskets in our rooms, free bar tabs -- we went to town. I think I'd have to say I abused it more than anybody. They swore no band from Warner Bros. would play on that show again unless we paid the tab on the \$1,000 worth of supposed "damage"

we did.

We were picked up to go to the studio at 10 in the morning in a limousine stocked with booze, and from 10 to five you couldn't leave that floor. Anything you want they'd send for. Before we played we were completely just out of it. Harry Dean Stanton was in there drinking booze with Tommy. They were all fucked up. I was in the bathroom getting high. I had no idea those three had switched clothes, I didn't even know until I saw the playback -- didn't even occur to me. I was wearing something Lori, ah, Mrs. Westerberg, gave me. It was something like "I Dream of Jeanie" would wear: stripes, big bell-bottoms. But on stage I bent over when we were playing and Paul stepped back from the mike and said "fuck you." As long as it isn't audible they couldn't do a damn thing. Lorne Micheals was pretty pissed about that.

We played "Kiss Me on the Butt, er, Bus" and "Bastards of Young." That was the original name of it: "Kiss Me on the Butt," but we changed it to "bus," or Paul did -- take your pick. As soon as we went to commercial Lorne Michaels came to us and said "that was a cheap shot." We had to sign like a \$20,000 agreement not to swear on national T.V. The cheap way around it is to mumble. It was like our record contract: it never said we had to be in the videos we made, so we just had Paul's shoe and a cigarette in one of 'em. It just seemed the harder we tried to piss off everybody the more they liked us; I'd have to blame that on our demise, on what led us to walking away from each another (sic), anyway.

I'm different. I'm very individual. I don't contour to society in any way and that scares the hell out of everybody. I mean, you can call me a social outcast and I'll be damned proud to admit to those words. You gotta be able to stand out on your own to make a difference, right or wrong. Lately it's been wrong. But when I'm on, watch out. What comes around goes around.

We didn't listen to anything anybody told us. I mean, if they said the tape is rolling Paul would just put a cigarette out on the wall and say "fuck you," or "I'm going to take a drink," "go piss," ah, "I'll let YOU know when we're ready to go" -- whatever they told us we couldn't do, we did. I guess I instigated that.

But I still talk to Paul, Chris is good, Tommy's okay. The Bleeding Hearts {Bob's new band} -- me and Mike Leonard, my roommate and the guy I like to spit at all the time -- we might do something soon.

People are afraid of who I really am: a nice guy, very open, very honest, silly sometimes, willing to take a big risk for nothing. That's pretty important because a lot of people misjudge me. I've been having a lot of problems with people who kinda' get close and think

they know you and then discard you. It's not right; I've never done it to anyone I know of, but I've had it done to me. One's in, one's out, one's half way there. People get misconceptions by reading by reading too many fucking papers. I mean, if you want to know somebody -- and this is important to me -- ask them, don't believe what you read or what other people say. A lot of people have done that to me, they've called me completely insane to almost a saint. I'm in there somewhere in between, I don't know where but, I mean, I'm vulnerable like anybody else, so treat me like I'm human.

People just believe what they hear too much. I mean, look what happened to John Lennon. He more than any other, more than any of the other fellas could've ruined the (the Beatles') reputation with that one sentence. When in fact, he was just misquoted when he said, "We're bigger than God." {(sic), I believe. I think the quote was "more popular than Jesus Christ"...or something like that} And everybody accused him of being into acid and all that. That was bullshit, he was into heroin. If you want to know somebody, ask them, and I do that to anybody. I wouldn't say "what's this girl like?" or "what's this fella like here?" "Does he got a big knob?" or "Does she have nice tits?" I'd just go up and ask her, ah, well, as long as I don't get hit, anyway.

Half the people in this town {Minneapolis} have written me off, saying "there he goes again, he's way over his head; he's on the edge, stay away," because they don't know me. There's only three people in this town I'd spill my guts to. People don't think I'm responsible. Sorry, pals, but rock 'n' roll people aren't responsible anyway. I guess I've been thrown to the masses again, so it's like I'm being judged. It kinda sucks. I don't like it.

I get /some/ (royalties) -- a big /some/. /Enough/ some. I wish people would tell me if they were jealous of that, I'd lend them some money if they wanted it, if they'd quit giving me a bad rap.

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ACHIN' TO BE UNDERSTOOD

THE ROLLING STONE INTERVIEW

6/24/1993

By Chris Mundy

Former Replacements frontman Paul Westerberg, the man with the rap sheet of an anarchist and the soul of an artist, is wandering in and out of record stores in downtown Manhattan, chain-smoking and fielding questions with a crooked smile and straight answers. When those questions turn to whether he has always identified with the noble loser, Westerberg replies that he relates to the title character of an old British movie, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. In the movie, the main character is a working-class kid who is thrown into prison only to have the penitentiary officials coddle him - banking on his ability to win a cross-country race against a prestigious prep school. The runner, however, has a different idea. "I'm going to let them think they have me house trained," he says. "But they never will, the bastards. To get me beat they'll have to stick a rope around my neck." Nearing the finish line, out anti-hero, clearly the most talented runner, stops just shy of the victory tape, stares at the prison warden with a piercing smile and lets the rest of the field finish in front of him.

"It affected me that he won the race for himself but he wasn't about to win it for the cause or for the team that he never felt a part of," say Westerberg. "But I get the feeling the record company doesn't expect me to go all the way. If I place or I show, that's good enough."

With his solo debut, *14 Songs*, a definitive statement of his enduring viability, Westerberg has proven that he still has the ability to lap the field. And at least for now, he's still running.

In the beginning, Westerberg and the Replacements were supposed to save rock & roll. They were the scream of a generation that didn't even know why it felt like screaming - attacking the status quo with equal parts drunken abandon and divine inspiration.

Now, twelve years later, Westerberg is alone and the Replacements legacy - songs simultaneously tuneful and intimidating - is alive in a slew of young bands playing ultra-heavy guitar pop and residing in the upper echelon of the charts. The other Replacements, meanwhile, have projects of their own: Bassist Tommy Stinson fronts his own band, Bash and Pop; Bob Stinson, the group's original guitar player, who was fired in 1986, plays in various groups in Minneapolis; Chris Mars, who parted ways with the Mats, as they were known to their fans, in the band's final stages, has released two solo albums; and Slim Dunlap, Bob Stinson's replacement, has just put out his first solo effort, *The Old New Me*.

Westerberg's *14 Songs* comes three years after *All Shook Down*, the album that proved to be the Replacements' undoing. That record, originally conceived as Westerberg's solo coming out, instead marked not only the group's demise but the breakup of Westerberg's marriage and an end to the booze-soaked lifestyle that had become the mats' modus operandi. When the lights came up and the smoke began to drift away,

All Shook Down ended up being the Replacements' last shot. Instead of saving rock & roll, Paul Westerberg decided to save himself.

CM: You used to write so much about the band itself ["I Don't Know", "Bastards of Young," "Talent Show," for instance]. Does it make you feel lonely now that you're solo?

PW: No, the opposite. I feel more free because I used to have the entire world to write about and I chose to write about me and my three pals. It's like I broke out of a little cocoon. It was one-dimensional, writing about the band against the world. Now it's me, but I'm not against the world.

CM: Somewhere between 'All Shook Down' and now, you severed ties with the past. Was this intentional?

PW: Yeah, to me that's obvious. In a way, I've wanted to take the spotlight off me as the singer in this group and put it on what I do. Start over. "Ladies and gentlemen, this guy writes songs."

CM: You said the record 'All Shook Down' was the sound of someone having a breakdown. Do you still think that's true?

PW: Yeah. It was, essentially. without stopping long enough to really look at it clearly, it was the end of many things. My band. My marriage. My excessive lifestyle. They all came to an end, but I made the record before I dealt with any of it.

CM: So what is the sound of '14 Songs'?

PW: It's just me. It's the sound of a thirty-three-year-old guy who lives alone and enjoys it. I'm not part of a group. I'm comfortable with where I'm at.

CM: You were always intensely loyal. Were you afraid of leaving the other Replacements hanging?

PW: I was afraid of life and everything that goes with it. And to a certain extent I still am. But my fears were much deeper than offending someone in the band. All I can tell you is I feel good now, and I worried back then unnecessarily. There wasn't anyone in the band who was a real positive thinker or an uplifting guy. We were all kind of defeatists and kind of played with the idea of being the failure as hero. And we all fed off each other. We all escaped individually but not as a group.

CM: Booze used to be what you used to quell self-consciousness. What do you use now?

PW: I'm just not as self-conscious as I used to be. Thinking of alcohol as the answer to the problem ... when you look at it in the clear light, you realize it is the problem. If it's not the root, it feeds the problem. Eliminate that and the problem shrinks. I'm much more confident now.

CM: Do you miss the camaraderie of drinking?

PW: No. If that's what it took to be pals or to have a good time, then your good time was worthless. There's fun to be had once you stop. I don't want to preach, but this is ten times better because it's real. It might now be wild, but it's better, definitely.

CM: Do you think the Replacements would have been as good if you didn't drink?

PW: We would have been better musicians. It depends what you like. We would have been well-adjusted young men.

CM: Has there ever been anything written about you that was harmful?

PW: We reveled in that legendary shit. I guess if things weren't true, it would have hurt me, but we lived very excessively, and that was a fact.

CM: Did the Mats really dump their Twin Tone masters into the Mississippi River because you felt cheated on royalties?

PW: Not enough of them. Because they're releasing them now in Europe. We didn't get what we wanted. I think we threw out the original "Can't Hardly Wait," the one produced by Alex Chilton - which was kind of good. Oops. Of course, it was Tommy who talked to the receptionist, Chris and I actually did the deed, and Slim sat outside with the motor running. He had a car and a rifle, but we don't want to talk about that.

CM: Do you ever use interview settings as the place to mend some damage you've done?

PW: I have no regrets or apologies. I'm not going to use this as a forum to say, "I'm sorry about the time we ripped the wallpaper down." That's what we did one time. We played this club that was notorious for its graffiti, and we tried to get the roadies to go out and get some wallpaper. We were going to wallpaper the dressing room - over all the autographs: CHECK BERRY, 1968. But instead we just neatly tore all the wallpaper out. Avant-garde destruction. I'm not sorry for anything we did like that. We never hurt anybody, and we always paid for it, and we more often than not broke our own stuff.

CM: Do you regret the lifestyle you used to live?

PW: Sure, I regret anybody I might have hurt unnecessarily. I'm sure there's a bunch. I made it, I'm fine, I'm alive. I don't regret that the band didn't go further. I think we did exactly what we were supposed to do. We were probably supposed to die. I guess we should have died. That would have ensured that our legend was intact.

CM: Did the Replacements have an "us against the world" feeling as a band because each of the members felt it individually?

PW: I would say that's fair. I think that's why we became friends. I don't think a well-adjusted class president could have made it to play lead guitar for us. There was not a high-school diploma on that stage. We all had something in common.

CM: But you actually finished school.

PW: I went twelve years but never got the diploma. They wanted me to come back to get it. But I didn't want one.

CM: Because the Replacement took such a strong anti-establishment stance, doesn't any promotion you do now make people think you've sold out?

PW: Yes. And a lot of time, we used that [attitude] as a shield. The real reason was fear or plain old laziness.

CM: Who is your biggest "them" these days?

PW: Guys who wear suits. Guys who look down at musicians and think they have a free ride. I'm not saying what we do is more important than what they do, but if they don't respect us, what the hell do they expect from us in return?

CM: Turning back to your new album, "World Class Fad" is its first single. Did you want to make sure that one of the rock songs got out there first?

PW: Yeah. Maybe to reintroduce myself. Bottom line, I'm a rocker. I can write ballads, but I would rather be known as that than a balladeer that dabbles in uptempo music.

CM: Are you worried that people are going to think the album is too wimpy?

PW: Hell, no. There's nothing wimpy on that. Quiet music is not wimpy. Wimpy is trying to be too cute.

CM: You write on acoustic guitar, so it would figure that you'd be writing more slow songs.

PW: I did, in fact. And I didn't have a band or any musicians to play with for two years, so when I got into the studio and met everyone, within three minutes we were playing "Down Love." For some reason that never happened with the Mats.

CM: Which song on '14 Songs' is closest to you?

PW: I would say "Even Here We Are," in an odd way. "Runaway Wind," although it's poetic to the point where I don't paint myself into a corner. I mean, that song is me through and through. "Something Is ME," even. As silly as that is, that says a hell of a lot about me: "Something goes wrong eventually. Something is me."

CM: In "Even Here We Are" you talk about the most beautiful flower being the one that grows wild in the garbage dump. Is that autobiographical?

PW: Yeah, it is. Every damn line could apply to me or I won't sing it, as a rule.

CM: What do you want the record to communicate that's not implicit in the songs?

PW: I'm not offering an image of an attitude. It's an old-fashioned concept here: A guy who writes songs.

CM: If you had to make a representative three-song sampler of the new album, which three would you choose?

PW: Probably "World Class Fad," "Even Here We Are" and "Runaway Wind."

CM: That is basically, then, one total rocker, one constructed poem and one very self-reflective ballad?

PW: Sort of sums it up. All the others are based on that.

CM: And somewhere in the middle that's you?

PW: Yup. It's all me.

CM: What would you want to do if you had to give up music?

PW: I can't think of that. It's like what would I do without my limbs. It's like imagining what it would be like to be blind, although actually I seem to be on my way.

CM: Do you feel like you were trying to make '14 Songs' all things for all people?

PW: No. All things for me. My sister listened to it and said, "This is the first time you've made a record that you would actually listen to." And that's true. It felt indulgent. Who's going to like both "Even Here We Are" and "Silver Naked Ladies," let alone back to back? But I don't like just one thing.

CM: There are two different songs on '14 Songs' that have the same line about "the suicide you're on."

PW: Those lines just kind of came out. We weren't going to keep them both on, but hey, I just thought it was a neat line.

CM: You also wrote "The Ledge," on 'Pleased to Meet Me,' about a kid contemplating suicide. Is suicide something you've considered?

PW: Sure. I think about it and have thought about it, like anyone else, probably more than most people. Or at least more than people are willing to admit. But if you write it down, people think you have a problem. I can't even say how much was true depression and I thought suicide was a viable alternative or how much of it was me liking the glamour of someone thinking I might be that far on the edge. I think I stopped talking about it when I was afraid I might be dangerously close. By the end of *All Shook Down* it seemed very real.

CM: Have you ever been to a therapist?

PW: I went a few times. I kept feeling like he was looking at his watch, like he wanted to go on lunch break. It was depressing. You'd talk, and he'd just kind of nod and smile. It didn't last long.

CM: Who do you turn to for support?

PW: No one. I just put it down, I don't carry it. My songs have taken on a new life for me. I've written songs for lack of having someone to talk to, and it's gradually gotten to the point where if I have a problem, I sit down and get my feelings down on paper. But I don't really use them on the record. I don't want to be known as the king of sad rock.

CM: Bob Mould has made a pretty good career out of writing really good dark songs.

PW: Yeah. I like Bob. I haven't talked to him in years. He used to come over to my house occasionally when I was married and have dinner. We'd play around the living room, dulcimer and banjo. I'd play him my new songs, and he'd play me his, and we'd both be like "Yours sounds great." "Yeah, so does yours." And we're both thinking, "Oh, mine blows yours away."

CM: Do you write fiction or poetry?

PW: I kind of write, and then one day it will become a song. I have things written down, and one day I'll look for them if I need a line. I don't have a diary or a book of poems. I just have pages and pages that say things like "Buy milk. Go to the store. The man is the sea is the birds." I think, "What the fuck is this, is this lyrics?"

CM: Where do you write?

PW: In the living room, which is a new wrinkle. I used to write in the basement ever since I lived in my parents' house. It dawned on me a year or two ago when I moved into a new place and grabbed all my gear to go down to the basement. I thought: "Why

the fuck am I doing this? This is my life, it shouldn't be hidden downstairs. It should be right up here where I live."

CM: Have you ever written anything for any publications?

PW: They asked me to write liner notes for my album, and I tore them up in the middle of the night. I just thought it was giving too much away. I had explained everything to the point where it left no mystery. It's like "Nah, these go in the trash."

CM: They could be a collector's item.

PW: Maybe. Trash collector's item.

CM: Do you donate much to charity?

PW: I don't stand for causes, I don't do benefits. But if a guy comes up to me on the street and needs help, I give them what they need. I've emptied my pockets for guys. I've had like a hundred dollars that I gave away and then bum around myself for the next two days.

CM: When you think back on your childhood, was it fun?

PW: It was quite ordinary, middle-class Middle America. Maybe that's where the frustration came into play.

CM: Did you spend as much time alone then as you do now?

PW: My mom was always encouraging me to go out and play, but I tended to want to be alone. It's the way I've always been. I'm comfortable with it, I guess.

CM: Do you go on vacations?

PW: No. I never did as a kid, so it probably holds over until now. The first time I ever went out of the state was on tour.

CM: What does your apartment look like? Are you a pack rat or is it very sparse?

PW: It's kind of a classy dump. It's a house that I rent, and it's sinking into the ground, and it slants. If you put a gold ball on one side of the living room, it rolls all the way down. It's funky. Kind of New Age log cabin with no hippie vibe whatsoever. And nothing matches. I've got green chairs, a red rug and a blue painting and a black piano that's out of tune.

CM: Are you ready for the wear and tear of a tour now? You've been inside for two years.

PW: I woke up this morning, and I didn't know where I was. It's only been two days, and I already don't know where I am. We used to play a game with the mats on the bus, and it would be really quiet, and all the sudden you'd point at someone and yell, "Month, day, city, year!" And people would be like "February, Philadelphia, '92" And it was like March 3rd, '91. And it was serious.

CM: What makes you laugh these days?

PW: Myself.

CM: So, you're saying that you're basically an island, is that it?

PW: No, I have a handful of friends. I've traveled a lot, and the majority of my good friends are people who don't necessarily live in Minneapolis.

CM: Are you seeing anybody now?

PW: Yeah, I have a girlfriend.

CM: Has it been difficult to step back into dating life after your marriage broke up?

PW: No, this is a whole *Enquirer-esque* situation. You're asking about me dating again, like I ever stopped. I wasn't the best husband. We had a good thing, and I don't think I was really ready to be married. I thought I was, made a mistake and wasn't. But once that was over, oddly enough, I didn't want to go out on dates. I didn't want to go out and pretend I was nineteen again. And oddly enough, I ended up with a girl I had known for a long time, someone I knew seven or eight years ago.

CM: In "First Glimmer," you say, "I used to wear my heart on my sleeve, I guess it still shows." Are you trying to say you don't anymore?

PW: Oh, no, quite the opposite. It's there. I'm not about to change. I'm not about to become suddenly overly guarded. I'll still spill my guts.

CM: Do you want people to comment and tell you about your songs?

PW: Absolutely. In a word, yes. And people always come up and say, "You wrote this just for me." And I say: "Yeah, I did. I don't know you, but I knew you were out there."

CM: Do you listen to other confessional singer-songwriters?

PW: I went through a phase where I was very into that - Joni Mitchell being the epitome of that - about four years ago. When I'm down, I tend to listen to that stuff, and then I get a little more positive and aggressive and carefree and looser.

CM: You're a very solitary person, so isn't it likely that the solo work will be incredibly introspective?

PW: I'm a firm believer that my mind can travel farther when I'm surrounded by four walls than it can when I'm out in a crowd surrounded by people. There's no limits to my imagination.

CM: Do you talk to yourself?

PW: yeah. I carry on entire conversations. I ask people, "Do you ever talk to yourself?" And they say yes, and I say, "Do you ever have full conversations?" And they just stop and look at me. I have to say, "Oh, me neither." But sure I do.

CM: A lot of bands will use pop culture as a base to sing about. Why have you never done that?

PW: I won't even have a phrase in a song that reeks of the moment. I want to say things in the most traditional manner possible. If I have one of those phrases, I get rid of it.

CM: It's like waking up in five years with a Bart Simpson tattoo.

PW: Exactly. Or a record that's groovy. It's like with videos. People say things like "It should be in your face." To me that's like it's 1967.

CM: How do you approach videos now, you hated them for so long?

PW: I still do, I hate 'em. I hate the fuckers. And I know that now on this album they're going to be coming to me to do things like *The Tonight Show*. I might just have to say no. After playing a few tours, like the [Tom] Petty tour [in 1989] where we were playing to people who didn't know us, didn't like us and didn't care - I've come too far to be playing for people who don't care.

CM: Isn't that still just biting the hand that feeds you?

PW: No. It's simply not wanting to perform in that sterile environment of a studio where you're playing to people who have come on vacation and just want to get Alec Baldwin's autograph. There's an evil darkness that lurks inside of me that always wants to get out in those situations.

CM: You've said before that you never really give 100 percent?

PW: I think I read that and then adopted it. And as a band we were treated like a feather in the label's cap. We were a band that was cool.

CM: So what are you now?

PW: I don't know. I think I'm in transition because I haven't proven myself yet. I think that they do see me as a very talented artist. They have artists who sell a lot of records who maybe aren't that talented, I won't mention any names. But they don't expect that of me. And on one hand I wish they would.

CM: You'd want to be treated as a commodity?

PW: No, be treated as someone who should sell a lot of records, and if I don't they're saying, "Hey, what's wrong?"

CM: Do you like the idea of being famous?

PW: I like the idea of it. I don't know if I actually like being it. But I don't know if I am yet.

CM: But don't you write your music wanting as many people to hear it as possible?

PW: I tend to separate my music and myself. I would love for my music to be world renowned, but I don't necessarily want to go along with it. I can't even think of any example. Would you recognize Leonard Bernstein if he walked by? It's a bad analogy, but that's what I would like. I would want to be able to say, "Yes, I did write this." I could dig that in a big way. But it's a really bad analogy, because he's dead, isn't he?

CM: Do you have anyone you'd like to meet or anyone who makes you feel like a little kid or a star worshiper?

PW: Most of them are dead. I've met Dylan and Van Morrison and Keith. There's three right there. I don't have a lot of heroes. I never realized I had any.

CM: Those guys seem like the exact people whom you guys were kicking against for so long.

PW: That's what we were supposed to do. We listened to the Rolling Stones throughout the career of the band, even though we pretended they were the enemy. I mean, I couldn't give two shits about John Lydon now, but at the time I thought he was the greatest thing ever. Well, yes, I could give two shits about him. One and a half.

CM: Why has it been easier to focus your career and music without the rest of the band?

PW: We weren't clicking as a group. The only time we did things together were destructive things from the early days. It was "All for one and one for all, let's break this table." We ran out of things that we do well together. I lived in constant fear of retreading what we'd already done. And I sensed it around the time of *Pleased to Meet Me* [1987]. And Slim came along then, so that helped, but we should have stopped then.

CM: You once said, "if all this falls to hell tomorrow, I'll still have three friends, and that's enough for me."

PW: When did I say that?

CM: After 'Tim' came out, not all that long before Bob got fired. Does it seem strange that in the end, two of those three friends ended up getting fired? Is there any friendship left with Chris or Bob?

PW: I'm friends with Tommy and Slim, and the three of us are good friends. People change and grow. But Bob didn't change or grow, which was bad. Chris did, which was good for him, but it was maybe bad for the band. When we started off, we were getting bottles and cups and cans thrown at us. I had my teeth chipped. Nobody wanted to be the singer. Then you get a few nice reviews, people want to talk to Paul, and voila, everybody kind of wants to be the frontman. I resented the fact that the other guys wanted to step into my role.

CM: Was there one breaking point that got Bob kicked out of the band?

PW: I grew to like his style of playing, but from Day One I never was in love with the way Bob played guitar. I hear his guitar everywhere now - Dinosaur Jr. wherever. Whether they know it or not, Bob was doing that in 1980. But I don't think it's fair to talk about Bob. If he wants to talk about himself, fine, but I don't even think it's fair for him to talk about us.

CM: Do you ever see him?

PW: I visited him in the hospital. he had a wisdom tooth that got infected. He had a tube in his throat, and it was strange because he couldn't talk. But I sat and talked with him for a half an hour. That was the last time I saw him.

CM: Does it seem strange that a lot of bands that are big now are riding on your coattails?

PW: I think that's a credit to us lasting that long. If we'd been hugely popular right off, we probably would've cracked immediately.

CM: What do you think was the difference between the Replacements and a band like R.E.M.? Both of you guys had a huge fan base, great reviews, you toured a lot.

PW: Management [laughs]. They did all the right moves, and we did all the wrong moves. To be fair, they're an excellent band, and they made all the right moves.

CM: Are there any young bands that you look at now that you think are carrying the mantle?

PW: Not that I've heard, but I think I have a selective memory. The thing that always catches me is the guy's voice - not what he's saying, what the band sounds like, what they look like, but the tone of his voice. I can tell when somebody means it and when somebody pretends to mean it.

CM: Would you be comfortable with you bands coming and asking you for advice?

PW: Sure, then hanging up. "Get a life!" No, I think I would, in a constructive way. I remember trying to tell Charles Thompson of the Pixies once that he shouldn't open up for someone like Sting. And the next day I remember thinking, "Who the fuck am I to tell him what to do?"

CM: Do you feel connected at all to music in Minneapolis?

PW: No, not at all. But even in our heyday, we never did. We were loved by the audience but hated by the local bands, because they sat in rehearsal halls and learned how to play and got their act together. We'd get up there, swill a bunch of beers, tell a couple jokes and go down a storm. They hated us. So we were always outcasts.

CM: So is it strange now being considered an elder statesman?

PW: It's weird because when you're in the midst of it, you want to be looked up to, and you're not, because you simply don't warrant it. And then when years pass and there's maybe some credence to "Yeah, we started this thing, I should be looked to as an influence over these bands," I just don't care.

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ON & OFF THE 'MATS WITH PAUL WESTERBERG

by Bill Holdship
from *BAM* #413 - July 30, 1993

If Paul Westerberg is, indeed, the victim of bad timing, he doesn't seem to mind a whole lot. Never Mind Indeed.

Westerberg recently took time to talk before leaving for Boston to prepare for a tour that began in Europe the following week and which brought him to California earlier this month. (Westerberg was joined on this tour by former Raindog Darren Hill on bass, Dave Minehan of the Neighborhoods on guitar, and 20 year old Josh Freese on drums). The former Replacements frontman talked about the past ("I think we were a great little garage band - and that's what I want to be remembered for); a present that centers around a terrific solo LP called *_14 Songs_*; and his own role as the archetypal alternative hero.

BAM: This is the first time you're going on the road with a new band. How does that feel?

PW: Well, we'll see what it actually is because you know what people are like. You think you know someone until you live with them for six months in a bus [laughs]. But I mean, so far so good. Everybody has kind of the right attitude, and everybody's fairly easy going with a sense of humor. And that, as we know, is high on the list of things. They're all good guys, so that helps right off the bat. But it's a lot of pressure on them; I mean for me too. But for them to suddenly learn like 30 tunes, it'll probably be two weeks solid rehearsal. That's a lot of songs to know - seeing as how they didn't really play on the record or anything. So we're going to go with the ones that sound and feel the best.

We're just getting to that phase now where we're sort of dicking around a little and bashing around on covers - and that poses a little bit of a problem with Josh being 20 years old and all. He wasn't born when we were buying records. So, just for the hell of it, we started playing "Substitute" the other day, and we were waiting for him to crash in. He just sat there, 'cause he had never heard the song. I thought, "Whoa, This is a different kind of thing here.

BAM: Are you comfortable doing any of the anthem songs identified with the Replacements, like "Left of The Dial" or "Bastards of Young"?

PW: Yes and No. One of those. None of them are taboo, but there's a handful that I don't want to do. I particularly don't want to do "Bastards of Young". And I'll probably stay away from "Alex Chilton". But stuff like "Left of The Dial" which was really me speaking - my personal experience - I'll probably play that, pull that one out, see if the new guys like it or whatever.

BAM: I really love the new album, but what's really weird is that it first hit me on a musical level. The music spoke to me before the lyrics.

PW: That's a good sign. The lyrics, I think, are deceptively simple this time. Or maybe there's no deception at all, they are just simple. Like at first listen, you might think, "Oh well, he didn't think too long on these" and that's a fact. I didn't think too long. It's like I was clear in my thinking and I just wrote what I felt rather than trying to convolute something and come up with little twists and turns and use the thesarus. I've done that in the past, and there's really none of that this time. It's all kind of straightforward stuff.

BAM: The turn of phrases are so good, it's almost Dylanesque. People are going to wonder, "Geez, was he taking LSD when he wrote some of this stuff?"

PW: Nothing could be farther from the truth. But I'm no longer afraid to dip into that sort of style. I mean, I like to write a song that someone understands, but if I want to throw in a phrase that makes sense only to me, I'll do that. I'm not doing it to tease or to confuse. "World Class Fad" has a couple of them, and you can take them as you want. I'm already hearing that the line "I believe these starts are starting to shoot" is about junk. It's like, well you know, I didn't even think about it. It was just a line that came to me. It's like it grabbed me, and I don't know what the hell it meant. So I do that a lot and end up having to explain what it is that I meant. And I didn't even have a meaning when I wrote it.

BAM: You used to always prefer the songs to speak for themselves. Does it still bother you when people ask "Gee, what did you mean by that?"

PW: Well, I guess it doesn't bother me. It sort of goes along with the territory. If you don't ask about that, then they're going to ask about whatever rock 'n roll excess from the past. And if they don't ask about that, there's not much to say other than, "Well, we're going to be doing this song, and we're going to be in your town" and all that show-biz-y stuff so it's only natural you'd want to ask a guy who writes words about them. But I stand with the old adage that you can find more than one meaning in a lot of these, and it's true that some of these have even changed their meaning for me. From writing them to playing them and now to listening to them. I listen to them like a fan now. Like "Runaway Wind" has different meaning for me now than when I actually was writing the words down at the piano a year and a half ago. And to me, that's a good sign. The thing has life, it's alive, it's changing, it's growing and stuff. But yeah, if you want me to nail it. I mean, some things I can nail down. "Silver Naked Ladies" is about mud-flap ornaments, essentially. But I think much more to the point, rather than me taking LSD, it's probably that I've listened to more Bob Dylan in the last two years. I can't say that I specifically did, because, you know, I've always listened to Dylan. But spending a couple of years away from a band and clubs, I was listening to more intimate music along with jazz and other things. Not a lot of real raucous rock and roll. So I'm sure some of that has seeped in once again.

BAM: There's a lot more anger being expressed on *_14 Songs_* as opposed to the depression that came across on *_All Shook Down_*. I don't mean anger in the punk rock sort of way. But it seems you're overwhelmed with the media overload and all the celebrity bullshit.

PW: Yeah, I wish we could find a different word for "anger", 'cause I was never upset with anyone or anytin But I guess I'm full of life, and I was out of gas by the time of *_All Shook Down_*. I've recharged, though, and what you get, I guess, with my voice and the way I write is... It comes across as pissed off and "Don't cross me or you're going to get your ass kicked!" You know me, I'm not that kind of person. But it tends to come across like that, whereas it might be exuberant and full of life. "Knockin' on Mine" probably has the most anger of anything. And that's geared toward my disgust and hate toward news programs, newspapers, the sort of "Hard Copy" style journalism that America seems to be overloaded with at the moment. And the fact that you can see violence and stuff all the time on television, which kids are weaned on. People open the paper every morning, and that's what sells. That's what makes money is someone else's tragedy on the front page. That just makes me mad. I don't read the newspaper anymore; I rarely watch the news. I'll watch who won the game and what the weather's like. But that's as mad as I am on this record, that song.

BAM: You've always had an artistic temperament in that your moods swing both up and down. But since you've given up drinking and kind of straightened your life around, do you still have as much of a problem with that?

PW: No. I would say all the same problems are there. I just don't dwell on them anymore, and it's easier for me not to get pulled down by all that bad fodder, a depressive mood. You tend to wallow in it when you're a drinker or whatever and accept that as part of your life like, "Well I guess we blew that." And then you worry and think about it. If something goes wrong now, it's like "Yeah, you can get around it," but the trick is to drop it as quick as you can. And that's what I try to do, and then move on.

BAM: It always seemed that the Replacements were the 80's essence of that Elvis-like "loser as hero" rock model. Do you still feel like that's part of your role.

PW: No. It's so hard for me to analyze what we were 'cause we had no idea what we were when we were doing it. To look back, it's like it was someone else who did it. No, I think that all that shit was overshadowed by the drinking and everything that we did. The fact remains that we were a good little rock and roll band. And if we weren't good, we wouldn't have gone as far as we did. All the drinking, and all the breaking, and all the destruction and all the crap that went along with us got all the attention. But the fact, I think, is we were a great little garage band- and that's what I want to be remembered for. That's, to me, the essence and what I'm most proud of.

BAM: More for the music than the image.

PW: I don't even know if it was the music. It was the fact that the four of us could make a noise--whether it as music or not. We could hold a stage and

make a noise as good as the Stooges or Gene Vincent or the Dolls made a noise. We were a classic little rock 'n roll band and no one will take that away.

BAM: So how do you feel about all these bands that the Replacements have "influenced"?

PW: It feels good. Three or four years ago, when we were still a group, and trying to figure out where we were going, it hurt a little bit because we felt like other people were taking what we'd done and getting further with it. And we were thinking like "Gee, were we truly ahead of our time? Or were we just behind the times enough where we might have had a chance to be hip?" It doesn't bother me at all now. I mean, I'll stick to the other viewpoint, which no one is talking about -- which is that the Ramones probably spawned two or three times as many bands as we ever did. Every single, solitary, fucking band that played a guitar that we ever heard owed a debt to the Ramones. And I don't think that our influence reaches that far yet. But no, it's flattering. It's not like I'm offended by it or anything.

BAM: Well, it's sort of the Velvet Underground/New York Dolls thing. So the 'Mats'll get back together after you go into the Hall of Fame and make a million dollars, right?

PW: Well [laughs]...no. I don't know. I don't know what we would do. But you can imagine if the 'Mats ever did get back together, it would be a very 'Mats type thing and we would probably play in someone's living room and not let anyone see it.

BAM: That reminds me. It seems the 'Mats were always in trouble with management and the record company for doing the things you guys did. I remember the famous KROQ interview after which the DJ broke a copy of *Pleased to Meet Me* on the air. But these days, management and record companies would encourage you to do these things for image sake.

PW: Yeah. The only way to keep touching on that is to bring up examples of, well the Replacements did this back then, and it's true that we were sort of naturally snotty. And a lot of things that we did, we were reprimanded for, and it's encouraged now. The whole alternative thing has blossomed into the mainstream. You know, who knows? Maybe if that had been encouraged, we wouldn't have been the way we were. I think a lot was just the fact that we wanted to buck against what was hip at the time. But I don't know what I'm saying other than, "Yes." When we did it, we weren't supposed to, and that's what made it fun. And now that it's encouraged, I think if we were together, we wouldn't. We would probably act like perfect gentlemen just to piss them off. But it doesn't bother me. It's a big old world, and anybody who wants to take those three fucking chords to the top is welcome if they can do it. We couldn't do it. I'm not going to say, "Oh man, we could have, we could have, if we'd just waited." Bullshit! We could not. We tried; we failed. But we didn't really fail. I think we spawned all these other bands and stuff. Of all these popular groups, let's see how many of them last 11 years. I think that will tell the tale.

BAM: "World Class Fad." You mentioned that song earlier, and so many people have interpreted that as being about Nirvana or the mainstream "alternative" things out there. The Gen X kids...

PW: The song is about me. It's just a rock and roll song that people are reading a much deeper meaning into. The whole crux of it is just remember to leave a trail of crumbs. And it's like, I did leave a trail of crumbs, and I went all the way to the edge and couldn't go any further. It's more of a reflection of what I went through and probably am still faced with going through now. It's like if you want that bad, if you want to go all the way, remember where you started from and remember where you're going to end up again. And yeah, if it offends anyone, great! But it absolutely is about me. I don't know if I've mellowed that much, but I'm not at the point where I just want to give young bands shit. It's like, I'll give you some shit but I can take it too, so ...No, I mean, that's pretty fuckin' small to think that I'd write it about a popular band.

BAM: "Things" is the most personal song you've ever written. It's beautiful but sad. Were you uncomfortable with that at all?

PW: Yes I was, and I'm not now. Yeah, it's sad but it's true [laughs]--as we used to say. It is. I came to grips with just like, am I going to keep one of the best songs I've ever written off the record because it's too sad? And that answered my question. If I'm going to do this, I've got to do it and put the "A" stuff on. The song says a lot about what I am, and essentially says that what I do is the most important thing in my life. And no matter who you are, you can be in second place, but you're never going to replace my first love.

BAM: A lot of people would interpret "Things"-- and I did the first time I heard it -- as a farewell to your marriage.

PW: Yeah, but it really wasn't. Which only makes it more difficult, because well, then who is it about? It's about after the marriage had already broken up, and it was basically the next person that I met. It was a way of trying to deal with that by saying I've been through it big time once before "Don't expect me to just jump right in this." But, as always, it's a song that can have more than one person, and there's two or three different people floating through that song.

BAM: "First Glimmer" is a really romantic song that anybody can identify with as far as falling in love for the first time is concerned.

PW: Yeah. I think so. What can I say? I was just in mortal fear that it might sound like the "Night Moves" of the 90's [laughs]. At least I didn't put a date in there.

BAM: Yeah, how old are you supposed to be in that song?

PW: I don't know. You see, it goes back to the leaves burning in the street, and I remember that as a child in the Midwest, and they stopped doing that in 1969.

BAM: Is there something in there about safety pins? Somebody interpreted that

as being about punk rock.

PW: Viola! Yeah, it's set in like 1979.

BAM: Did you write a lot of this album on the piano?

PW: About half of it, I'd say. Well, not even that. Maybe five of them. You can kind of hear the ones, like "Runaway Wind." There's two or three that didn't make the record. I wrote a lot first on the piano. I didn't move to the guitar until six months into writing.

BAM: Gee, you must have lied to me a few years ago when you said "Androgynous" was the only piano part you can play.

PW: Well, that was a few years ago [laughs]. I couldn't play the sax a few years ago either. I can't play it now! But yeah, I've actually spent a few years playing the piano, and it's like now I've spent six months not playing it so now I'm back where I started. But I was very much into just making music and not writing, and playing the piano and listening to music, and that's when the writing started with a lot of stuff.

BAM: Did you write "Mannequin Shop" about some of the time you've spent here in Hollywood?

PW: Actually, I wrote it about a People magazine article. But then being out in L.A., and flipping through all the magazines, and all the ads for reduction this and supplement this--yeah, it's kind of scary. It's like all the little things you wouldn't see an ad for anywhere else in the country, there it's breast implants and stuff. And it's happening so young there. Which is weird. It's not like it's all women who were once considered beautiful and are now aging. It's like teenage girls, and their breasts aren't big enough.

BAM: Some people are predicting stardom. When we first talked, you said you were really afraid of being famous. You didn't even want to be as famous as R.E.M. was at that particular point.

PW: I still don't.

BAM: You have that fear still?

PW: [Laughs] I'd like to be as famous as Mike Mills.

BAM: Are you worried about being on the road again? I remember Lou Reed didn't tour for years after he sobered up 'cause he was afraid he'd get back into his old habits.

PW: Nah, It was trial by fire on the last 'Mats tour, and I've lasted fine. I'm really glad I did it last time, because it would probably be a little frightening now to do it. But, no, Slim did it with me, so it was good. And the band I got now--they're not party-types or anything like that, so it's going to be cool.

BAM: Did you bum when Tom Petty stole your line about a "rebel without a clue"?

PW: I was bummed when nobody realized it. Same thing with these interviews

that gave me a hard time. It isn't the interview that ever affects me or the fact that somebody lifts from me. It's the fact that a band won't come forward and say we were an influence on them. Or someone won't defend us. Or someone won't say, "Yeah, I took the line from him." In any of those cases it would be fine, but it was the fact that it goes without reference or without anyone saying anything. That irritates me a little.

BAM: When you were interviewed in *SPIN* magazine, you made that quote about Elvis Presley. Did you really mean that?

PW: What did I say?

BAM: They asked what you thought of Elvis and you said, "All he ever did was change people's hair style." And I was bummed because I remember you loved Elvis Presley.

PW: [laughs] Of course! I still do. That's the nature of this whole fucking thing. Half the time I spend just having a conversation like we all do, and there's a guy on the other end with a tape recorder. Then it's written. I mean, that's a conversation we might have had about Iggy, saying all he ever did was show us how to use peanut butter. And it's like, no, of course, it isn't true.

BAM: You have an identifiable guitar style at this point. It's Paul Westerberg's guitar sound--"The Ledge" being the archetypal example. Are you aware of that?

PW: Yeah, I am. I'm aware of it. I don't know if I'm proud of it [laughs].

BAM: It's great. I love your guitar playing.

PW: I like it, too. It's limited, but Johnny Thunders is the root there -- which is to, like, take a chance and take a dare. And if you fall on your face, you're better off crying that way than to play the safe route.

BAM: So you don't have to sit down anymore to play your solos like you did on *Pleased to Meet Me*?

PW: Oh, no, no, no. In fact I play better standing up. It's better when you can barely reach the guitar. You tend to play more with your body than with your fingers.

BAM: So how comfortable are you with the terms, "Songwriter of a Generation", "Godfather of Grunge", and "The Elder Statesman"?

PW: I would prefer "Greatest Guitar Player on My Block." That's the only one I know for a fact is true.

ROLLING STONE WITH PAUL

circa 1994

SIPPING GINGER ALE in a Minneapolis hotel bar, Paul Westerberg breaks the bad news: The Replacements have really broken up.

Sure, it's already been four years since that highly influential band's last album (*All Shook Down*), and it's been more than a year since Westerberg, the group's singer/songwriter, released his solo debut (*14 Songs*). The post-punk poet laureate behind "Unsatisfied," "I Will Dare," "Can't Hardly Wait" and "Achin' to Be," Westerberg is now a sober, thoughtful 34-year-old. His band, which once made quite an art out of falling apart in public, is now truly history.

"Just yesterday," Westerberg says, "my lawyer called me up and said that Tommy [Stinson] finally had his lawyer send a pink slip saying he is officially out of the band. So now, as of today, the Mats are officially broken up." Though he's taking a break from writing songs for his second solo album, he still seems very much in touch with some of the feelings from those not-so-good old days. "I was like 'You fucker, who said you could quit? You're fired!'"

Rolling Stone: The Replacements eventually became a model for a lot of bands that followed. Did the Mats have a model when you started out?

Paul Westerberg: Vaguely. It changed from month to month. There was a period when we'd want to be a cross between the Damned and Rockpile. We liked rockabilly, and we wanted to be sort of old-timey rock & roll, but the songs we were writing were kind of pop. And sonically we were pretty fast and loud - Bob [Stinson] loved the Damned and all the English punk bands. So we were a mixture of all that stuff.

RS: What did you make of punk at first?

PW: I loved it. I don't love it so much now. I can go back and still listen to the Pistols record, but I have a hard time listening to, say, the Damned or the Jam.

RS: Did you respond to it musically or politically?

PW: It wasn't the lyrics at all.

RS: So you weren't pissed off at the queen?

PW: Exactly. That stuff didn't mean anything to a lad who grew up in the Midwest. The truth is that the only politics any of us *ever* cared about was the politics of being cool. With punk, it was like Black Sabbath, but they weren't singing about iron, mystical, weird shit. It was "fuck you" and "fuck that," and we loved that.

RS: Is it fair to say that the Replacements were alternative when

alternative still meant something?

PW: I think in our earnestness we were trying in our way to be commercial rather than being a band who was really talented and chose to play avant-garde. And I think that came across. There was sincerity there: We couldn't tune, we couldn't play, and we did not care.

RS: So it's not like you were celebrating primitivism.

PW: Exactly. We were trying to play as best we could.

RS: Early on, people were talking about the Mats as part of the Minneapolis scene, comparing you with bands like Husker Du, the Suburbs and Soul Asylum.

PW: Yeah. In fact, that was pretty much the scene right there. The Suburbs were there when we started, and to this day they can re-form and they're bigger stars. The first shot of punk - the Ramones and the Pistols - was on the wane when we started, so everything was either skinny ties with pop tunes or out-and-out art noise.

RS: You mean to tell me the Replacements were actually trying to be the Romantics?

PW: Probably we were, but our talents were rooted closer to the Slits [laughs]. But the scene was split between those two camps: pop or noise. We were in the middle. Husker Du leaned a little more toward the noise end of things. Soul Asylum came a little later.

RS: How did you react to their success?

PW: At the time it stung a little. But I'm glad for them because they slugged it out in the same alleys that we did, and they stayed around just long enough.

RS: What about the other Minneapolis scene with Prince at the center?

PW: I was influenced as much by that stuff as by the other side. I mean, that guy could write some songs.

RS: Did you have much communication with him?

PW: He would stick his head in on occasion. But Prince, I think, said two words to me in 10 years. One was hi, the other was life.

RS: Life?

PW: I asked him, "What's up?"

RS: Did you always feel a little "Left of the Dial"?

PW: Always. Even toward the end. If our music wasn't as ferocious as the next wave that would come up, we felt alienated from them, too. So we were an alternative to the alternative as well as an alternative to the mainstream. We never found our niche. Maybe we were just a little too afraid, looking over our shoulders, thinking, "Is it *cool* to have a big record?" And our managers encouraged our high jinks more than they encouraged us to straighten up and fly right. We were a real band of the

'80s. We lasted literally from the dawn of 1980 to the dawn of 1990.

RS: A lot of people did connect to your songs, though.

PW: They hooked up with the thread of my songs, which is about some kind of alienation. When you're growing up, you look for anyone you can side with. They see me as someone who has gone through it - or is still going through it - and is able to carry on. The thing is, I don't have any answers, which is always disheartening... I don't really want to talk about this, but there was this kid who was depressed, and he found the Mats and my record, and I guess it meant something to him. He went on television and talked about it. But to make a long story short, he ended up killing himself. And they buried him in my T-shirt. That's obviously an extreme.

RS: What was your first reaction when you heard about Kurt Cobain's death?

PW: My old manager called, and my first reaction was slight relief, because he said, "Have you heard the news?" And I immediately thought it was someone else I knew who was dead. And when he said it was Kurt, my first reaction was "Well, at least it wasn't Tommy." But then I felt great sadness. I never knew him, but any time someone reaches that extreme, it's a tragedy. But it should be left at that. To immortalize it or glorify it is a crime.

RS: You're 34. Does rock & roll still make a difference to your generation?

PW: I don't know who my generation is anymore - I feel too old to hang out with the kids who make rock & roll, but I don't fit in with the settled-down people my age. Technically, my generation should be married with children, with a home and stable future. And I know I don't have all that stuff.

RS: Do you ever fear rock & roll is dead?

PW: Never. I never thought of rock & roll as this big cultural thing and worried about the state of it and all. It's, like, just plug that fucking guitar in and give me a backbeat, and it lives.

EX-REPLACEMENT RELISHES RETURN TO BAR MUSIC SCENE

THE DAILY IOWAN circa 1996

BY Shayla Theil

Slim Dunlap's sleepless nights have nothing to do with a preoccupation with achieving stardom.

The former Replacements guitarist has been there and said he doesn't particularly care to go back.

"(The Replacements) was a wonderful band to be in and a great song list, but I wanted to be out of it almost the minute I joined," Dunlap said in a phone interview Tuesday. "It sounds ridiculous, but I really didn't enjoy the big time. I'm really a bar performer, and I enjoy a situation where you have to work to get (audiences) to like you.

"Every now and then, the Replacements would hit a hostile crowd, and I'd be like, 'All right!'" he said. "When you achieve that kind of popularity, you sometimes get the attitude, 'Why bother trying? All we do is wondrous.'"

Dunlap, who admits he rarely sleeps at night, often uses the insomnia time for songwriting. When listening to Dunlap's 1993 album, *The Old New Me*, don't expect a "Merry Go Round" or "Skyway" sound-alike. Falling more into the area of front-porch roots music than the garage trash-pop of his famous former band, the album is a result of his sleepless nights -- not spent moving from concert arena to arena like in the old days but staying up in his Minneapolis home while his wife is asleep. The move from stadium to college bar suits the personable Dunlap.

"I'd much rather play for the sake of playing -- not on a big arena stage. You can control it when it's small enough. The arena concert is bad musically because it has to be so big and plotting," he said. "That's where the stupid rise of the power ballad came from. Power ballads don't work in bars."

Although Dunlap has taken his time recording a new album -- recording two or three days a month to achieve a different feeling each time -- he said the sporadic recording approach has helped him come up with a potpourri of hardly listener-friendly cuts.

"I was trying to stay away from writing big radio singles," he said. "I'm looking for the odd little songs all between those singles, so this is kind of an entire album of filler songs. I'm not really planning to become a superstar from this. In fact I'll be glad to get scathing reviews."

Dunlap, speaking in a thick Minnesota accent, said his composing style draws from myriad musical sources.

"I'm kind of a mad quilter. It's all fragments that don't necessarily fit together," he said. "I love deliberately stealing little pieces of other songs, but it's really difficult to categorize mine. Today, so many bands are trying to come up with music you can categorize."

And don't necessarily expect to hear The Old New Me's "The Ballad of the Opening Band." The humorous piece is just too long, Dunlap said.

"We're a terrible band to go see if you're there to hear your favorites," he said. "That was of the downfalls of being in the Replacements. People are paying a lot of money to come and see you play the songs they know. You can't play them a bunch of new songs you just wrote that afternoon."

Dunlap has only kind words for former bandmate Paul Westerberg, who sings back-up vocals on The Old New Me.

"Long before I was in (the Replacements), I thought, 'This guy can write songs,'" he said. "I really think people kind of underestimate his influence. I hear him all over the radio now (in other bands' music). His songs have a clear instantaneous riff where it's like, 'That's Paul.'

"I felt like Salieri in 'Amadeus' around Paul," he said. "People think he's a surly, cocky jerk because he's so talented, but he's actually a sweet, talented guy."

However, Dunlap said he sees Westerberg's preoccupation with material success as especially unfortunate.

"Paul's kind of a bitter person because he doesn't have the money or fame so many others have there days," Dunlap said. "But he doesn't realize he has something so much more important than that -- he's influenced music."

Dunlap said he strives to make such an impact on the music world.

"I love to make music you can play to death -- like 80,000 times for six weeks straight," he said "It's real challenging making records because so many people to make it because it will sell, but it should be made so it will last." As he drops names like Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen, it's hard to believe Dunlap now plays mostly Midwestern bars and occasional fairs. Anonymity doesn't faze the 40-something Dunlap.

"I'm happily dodging any chance of success lately," he said. "I'm pretty sure with this next album, I won't have to worry about it."

Images of being a rock star discarded long ago, Dunlap said he simply wants to

continue playing -- and maybe get some sleep in the meantime.

"It sounds pitiful, but (my goal) is to just somehow keep playing," Dunlap said with a hearty laugh. "I'm just one of those people where I'm going to do this until the day I die -- even if I have to play bowling alleys or have to be wheeled out on stage in a wheelchair.

"I'm really doing what I love to do," he said. "I'm a lucky person."

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INTERVIEW WITH SLIM

circa October 1994

by Scott Hudson

T: Although you've been around for a long time, most people know you only as 'former Replacement'. Tell me about your pre-'mat days.

SD: I've done this for over 20 years. I've been in 8 billion bands, mostly in bands that I never thought would get anywhere. I'm largely known prior to joining the Replacements for my work with this local singer by the name of Curtiss A, and I was in a million combinations with him. People ask me a million times for the names of the bands I was in, and I've forgotten them all. (Laughs) Best not remembered. I'm not a particular style. I'm a lot of different styles. I've taken on a lot of styles only to realize, shit I can't play that. The legend about me in Minneapolis is that people would see me playing bluegrass one night and in a big hard rock thing the next. Nobody around here could ever figure out exactly what I am. It's fun to change it up because I don't want to turn it into a job. A lot of guys think only in terms of career after a while. I definitely don't want a career. I've pulled the plug on myself many times.

T: What was your role during your stint in the Replacements? Do you think you added some stability to the band?

SD: Oh, I keep on getting credit for it but I think that's the last thing that band needed. I can probably say I'm the consummate sideman. I've spent 20 years being a sideman. Going into a band, a sideman is all about being there, and I tried to do that in the Replacements. It wasn't my job to come in there and say 'here's what you're doing wrong' because at the time I loved that band. Coming into the band, settling down and sobering up and growing up and shit like that kind of chronologically happened because they were kind of reaching that point. I really think that my role in the Replacements was to not have a role. To not change them in any way, shape or form. I get the credit for a number of things, but for the most part they're undeserved. You're in a position where I'm a songwriter; I know what being a songwriter's all about. There are many times when a band is a songwriter with a bunch of other people around him trying to guide his songs. I don't think that's necessary. I tried to let Paul know that he could do anything he wanted to and I'd do anything I could to help the song out. I think that's why he and I are still friends. That's how it can get ugly. There are so many bands that break up that started up as the best of friends and end up hating each other. I never take bands all that seriously.

T: I'll bet you have a million stories.

SD: Anyone who has been on the road has stories. That's why I love what I do. I'm a people kind of person. I love people and as a songwriter that's where I get most of my material.

T: The song on your solo album about opening acts - is that about being an opener or from years of watching warmup bands?

SD: A combination of the two. I love show business. A lot of my songs are about being a musician and they don't really mean much to people who aren't musicians. I believe

you should write your life, and it's been my life. Not in a bitter sort of way. They're not sad songs.

T: With all the critical acclaim the Replacements received, why do you think they never hit it big?

SD: I get the weirdest looks from people when I tell them, but in a weird way I'm kind of glad. When you reach the point where the band sells many millions of copies of a single record, it's usually the most wide open and successful type record. The Replacements were never a wide open band. The record company tried their damndest but I really think the Replacements were different from other bands in that they weren't writing songs specifically to be hits. They were writing songs that said something to the right person, the words meant a lot to this person in particular. You and me are still talking about the band because there will always be another group of kids becoming 17, 18 years old and the Replacements music will always mean something to that age group. I don't think every band should be a huge Def Leppard, Bon Jovi kind of thing. If the Replacements had made that leap, I don't think we'd be discussing them in the same way we are now. There'd be a big success, a peak, and a burnout period, and it'd be done. The whole time before I joined and then afterwards, I never saw this as a possibility for the band. In a weird way that music is too literate, too intelligent to make it big. You never know, though, because occasionally good stuff does make it. A lot of it also is that the times were different. If the Replacements where they were in 1986 were right now, it'd be a completely different story. At the time of the Replacements, the real competition for heading toward the mainstream was R.E.M. At one time both bands were in similar positions, and were poised to make that leap. R.E.M. made that leap, and the Replacements didn't. Who knows why that is, but I think a lot of it is that R.E.M. was more willing to adapt to the marketplace. They'd write the songs, record them, and then hand them to the record company and say do what you want with them. I think bands that do walk that line pay a price.

T: Certainly there's a bit of a backlash against them also.

SD: In a weird way there is. A lot of the people who loved the Replacements at the beginning stuck with them until the end, and there were some that thought they lost something at some point. You can't win with everybody. I think to a lot of the younger musicians, the Replacements are a shining example of all you end up with in the end is your dignity. The time you are in the limelight is very important because you live with it the rest of your life. All of the Replacements are proud of what they did and they have nothing to look back on in a bad way. I know some musicians that had a huge hit and when it comes on the radio and you're sitting there next to them you can just feel them bristle. That never happened to the Replacements. I think the saga of the Replacements is not over yet. I think in a weird way the band going under may have been the best thing for each person involved.

T: I must admit I'm surprised at the quality of the solo projects. Who thought that Chris Mars couple put out two pretty good albums, and Tommy's debut (Bash and Pop) was fantastic.

SD: It was hard for Tommy and Chris because they were writers. I remember being interviewed with them and the interviewer asked if sometimes we felt we were just the backup band for Westerberg. Tommy and Chris just looked at each other, and I said, 'actually, yes.' They got really upset, they were offended at that perception. That's a

difficult thing for a person like Paul, thinking we'll continue the band and these guys make a comfortable living. But in the end, they had music to get out. And that was kind of the impetus for folding. Everyone could go in their musical direction. Paul, to his credit, knew he'd be alright, and also thought if they get there music out there, maybe they'll do okay. Tommy and especially Chris definitely understand a lot more about this business than they did a couple of years ago. Chris and Tommy were both songwriters the whole time. That was an important part of the band, the competition factor. That's an important part of a lot of bands. A lot of people don't understand that the competitiveness is healthy. Paul guided his songs in a way that they would like them, and that was part of their contribution. I don't think Paul would have done things the way he did without those guys. You know, there are a lot of bands who make it to the point that the Replacements did, where they start to make a living. They think it's not a bad way to make a little money. 'This is not a bad way to go. We'll do whatever we need to do to continue this little gravy train we got going here.' Very often, this thinking helps destroy what you've done. That was never a goal of the Replacements, to become an institution like the Rolling Stones. We were always a little on the edge.

T: My understanding is that the couple of times the 'mats did flirt with success was disastrous, like the Tom Petty tour.

SD: It wasn't an utter failure. I think part of that is that no matter what part of show business you are, you dream of the next round. To be at the amphitheater status, I think what killed it for us was realizing that this is where we were headed. I think part of what happened to the Replacements is that concerts changed in the last 10 years. They've gotten more predictable. In the early days of the Replacements anything could happen when we walked onto the stage. The night could be a total disaster or it could be a great night. The further you get, the more protected you are and for us it just wasn't fun to play for 15,000 people. They're so far away. Plus, it was the Tom Petty audience that had a lot to do with it. That was not our crowd. When Paul Westerberg stands behind that microphone, there's danger. And when Tom Petty stands behind the mike, you're safe. Paul is one of the greatest 'anger channellers' in the business, but in an artful way. That's not what Tom Petty does. I really don't think it mattered who the band was we opened for. It was a matter of reaching that point in your life where you saw your future.

T: I've heard a rumor that Tommy Stinson is being kept under contract to Warners just in case of a reunion.

SD: Warner Brothers doesn't let anybody go if they can help it. They have so many artists who really aren't doing anything. A smaller label can't afford to carry someone. They had Tommy under contract; they didn't have anybody else. I think partly for them it's a salvage kind of effort. They put all of this into them and need something to show for it. There's an up and down nature to all careers. Record companies aren't dumb. Someone might be really down right now, but if they let them go they might go on and do something huge for someone else. They don't like that to happen. It's just like football and baseball owners. If they can keep you, they will. They're not going to take a chance. I think in the case of Tommy, they're behind him. I think they hear people talk about the Replacements. They never really understood them, but they hear the respect that keeps the interest in their music.

T: Are you surprised at how devoted Replacements fans are?

SD: No, because I played with them. I see people all the time that are die hard Replacements fans. Everywhere I play they come see me. The band was together for over 12 years and the people that come up to me are not people that were 22, 23 years old a decade ago. They're people much younger than that that have obviously picked up on it later. That's the power of the music! It continues to draw people. There's a very wonderful intelligence to those songs, and people respond to that. I think some of those songs I'm afraid are classics. Paul was on tour last year, and when he played here he was talking to me about it, he didn't really want to play old Replacements songs. But whenever he'd go into one, there'd be this incredible, thundering applause from the audience. We all knew they were good songs at the time, but a lot of people don't realize some songs live longer than others. Some of Paul's aren't going anywhere; he's stuck with them. (Laughs) I think in a weird way, a band like the Replacements going under the way they did makes the music seem more alive. If the band was still alive, this same phenomenon would still occur but not to the same degree. The band left at a time before it became ugly. I think some bands hang around way too long, not realizing that the music doesn't have to die just because the band dies. Some music sounds really, really good and a week later, it's 'oh, I don't know about that.' I think the fact that a lot of Replacements records, when they came out they got such mixed reviews, that's a real good indicator that something's happening. I've had a lot of people come up to me and say that they thought such and such record was a piece of shit when it came out, but now it's their favorite.

T: Exile on Main Street is a perfect example.

SD: That's a good example. I remember hearing nothing but shit about that when it came out. Right now, to me that's the zenith of the Rolling Stones.

T: One thing that shows the sustained interest in the Replacements is the various computer billboards. Are you aware of what's going on there?

SD: I've got a buddy that has that and he was showing me that one night. I really think that's a huge factor in the next few years. That's the way a lot of people are discovering new music. The huge bootlegging network that built up when the band was alive tortured the band, because you're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars spent that they couldn't recoup. When we saw some of the sales figures of some of our records and it made us sick when you add up all the unlicensed copies out there. A lot of the really dedicated music fans are broke people. I think a lot of bands are bothered by that, but I think it's a tribute in a weird way. The bands that are getting attention on computer lines are a huge test because people don't have to contribute. One band will wonder 'why don't people bootleg us.' You just want to go because you don't need to.' I really think in a lot of ways the Replacements weren't a band that didn't play the band game and you kind of took your chances if you liked their music. (Laughs) All the people that tried to shake Paul's hand and he'd snub them and shit, that's their memory of the band. I think as time fades, people tend to forget about those things. It was a hard band to love in it's day. You had to really be dedicated. (Laughs) It was a hard band to be in!!

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TOPSPIN

BY CHARLES AARON

Nobody could fuck up a guitar solo more beatifically than Bob Stinson, and for that alone I always wanted to buy the big, cross-dressing lug a beer. But by the time I did, just over two years ago, he demanded nothing less than a six-pack, a cheeseburger deluxe platter, a ride to the hardware store to buy a gizmo for a blown speaker, a \$20 loan, and well, you got the picture. Like most people who were transfixed by Bob's spirit, privy to his absurdly sharp sense of humor, and implicated in his sad demise, I coughed up the do-re-mi and exhaled a heavy sigh. You know, the whole "you can't help people who don't help themselves" routine. Besides, I wanted to get a decent interview from the guy. Which is a deathly lame cop-out, I know. And Bob, who gave of himself like his soul was throwing a year-round clearance sale, probably deserved better. Then again, the guy had a huge ego and couldn't wait to see his name in a magazine again. We all have our selfish motivations.

It's all murky water down the drain now, since Bob Stinson, the founder and original guitarist of the Replacements, was found dead of 'natural causes' the evening of February 18 in his Minneapolis apartment. Though there was a syringe next to his couch, the death was not technically the result of a drug overdose. Instead, doctors characterized it as complicated by "chemical dependency with acute and chronic alcoholism, hepatic cirrhosis, intravenous narcotism with recent opiate use, and bipolar affective disorder." A Hennepin County medical examiner put it more concisely: "What it says is his lifestyle finally caught up with him. Even though he was 35 years old, he wore his body out." Such abuse forced Stinson out of the Replacements in 1986 and caused his estrangement from his wife, Carleen, and six-year-old son, Joey.

Which all sounds roundly indicting and unseemly. And it's a damn shame that Bob isn't around anymore to argue his case. Because he was one arguing son of a gun. He also made a lot more sense than most people give him credit for. As 'Placemats' drummer Chris Mars said in a June 1993 *SPIN* article, "It's interesting about Bob. He's very smart, he's just so different. He says stuff that other people think, but are afraid to say." Despite being diagnosed at age 12 with an emotional disorder, he never received treatment. and who's to know how much that lack of care contributed to his subsequently debilitating alcohol and drug use. But it was obvious, even to a relative stranger, that Bob possessed none of the defense mechanisms that most of us develop to withstand life's nasty slights and temptations. He wounded easily. His emotions came at you with frightening intensity. Most Replacements fans, often as drunk, high, and desperate as the band members at their legendarily messy shows, willingly collapsed into a similar mood-swinging state when the subject of the band's problems arose. We behaved like betrayed lovers or long-suffering social workers.

Through Paul Westerberg's passionately dissatisfied songs and Bob Stinson's passionately impulsive guitar, the Replacements embodied all of rock 'n' roll's exhilarating possibilities and crushing limitations. For the record, a handful of Bob's

greatest hits: his slyly careening solo on "Customer" (described in the liner notes as "hotter than a urinary infection") and his mesmerizing, unsentimental wail on "Johnny's Gonna Die" from 1981's *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out Me Trash*; the wide-eyed, road trip riff on "Can't Hardly Wait," lamentably never captured in the studio; and his spotlight number, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," the musical equivalent of sticking your tongue out for three minutes.

Then there was the quotable Bob. Asked what was so great about the Replacements, he mused, "Mmm, let me see. Probably the way we shit down the elevator." Summing up the band's out-of-control image, he observed. "The harder we tried not to be us, the more we looked like us." And this exchange between friends while walking into a *SPIN* photo shoot "Bob, you've had that spaghetti sauce on your face for two days." "Yeah Bob, why don't you get that shit off your face." To which Bob replied, with deadpan liming: "That shit *is* my face."

People have rightfully spoken of Bob Stinson as representing punk rock's true spirit because of his joyfully disruptive lust for life. In writer Jim Walsh's vivid eulogy, he quoted Westerberg paying tribute to Bob's "creative insanity." And that was definitely part of it. But I also think Bob embodied punk's true spirit because he was so bravely vulnerable and open-hearted. He not only said and did things others wouldn't, he stuck around for the results. He wanted to feel all of it.

Once, when we were endlessly traipsing around the snowy streets of Minneapolis, one of Bob's favorite pastimes, he tried to explain why he had such a striking impact on people—family, friends, fans, or otherwise. Sniffling and sipping an icy beer, he finally said, "The one that's the furthest out is the one that everybody lets their heart trust, completely. Completely," he emphasized, his voice going quiet and trailing off. Then he stared at me hard with an odd combination of pride and bewilderment. That trust, real or imagined, was something that Bob Stinson felt painfully deeply. And he never figured out how to live with it.

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Replacements' 'lunatic guitarist,' Bob Stinson, dies

Unconventional musician struggled with drug abuse

St. Paul Pioneer Press (2/20/1995)

By Jim Walsh, Staff Writer

Bob Stinson, who gained national notoriety as the madman guitarist for the seminal Minneapolis-based rock 'n' roll band, the Replacements, was found dead Saturday in his Uptown (Minneapolis) apartment.

Stinson's body was found about 7 p.m. by a friend. A syringe was found next to the couch in the apartment. The cause of death has not yet been determined, Hennepin County officials said Sunday.

Stinson's struggle with drug and alcohol abuse led to his ouster from the Replacements in 1986 as well as estrangement from his wife, Carleen, and his 6-year-old son, Joey.

Stinson, 35, was diagnosed as suffering from a manic-depressive disorder last year and was taking medication to combat intense mood swings, his mother, Anita Stinson Kurth, said.

"He had been going through a real hard time these last couple weeks with his depression," she said. "He was down about it. But he did say that he was taking steps to get with a psychiatrist on that. Other than that, he was Bob."

Despite his recent battles with depression, Stinson Kurth said she was convinced her son's death was not a suicide. "I think it was accidental; I really believe that," she said. "I don't think it was intentional." News of Stinson's death yesterday elicited shock and sadness - but not surprise - from his friends, family and former bandmates.

"We all knew that it was coming, but that didn't soften the blow one bit," said singer/songwriter Paul Westerberg, who joined Stinson, his brother Tommy Stinson and drummer Chris Mars in 1979 in the first incarnation of the Replacements. "We knew that Bob led the lifestyle he did. But it hurt as much as if he'd been hit by a truck."

Westerberg got word of Stinson's death late Saturday, when Tommy Stinson called him from his home in Los Angeles.

"Tommy was shook up," Westerberg said on Sunday. "I was stronger on the phone, and then when I got off the horn, that's when the tears started to flow. Tommy sounded a little more together this morning; I have a feeling as soon as I see him, it'll be all over again."

With the Replacements, Bob Stinson made six recordings: "Sorry Ma, Forgot To

Take Out The Trash" (1981); "The Replacements Stink" EP (1982), "Hootenanny" (1983); "Let It Be" (1984), which was named one of the best 100 records of all time by Rolling Stone magazine; "The S--- Hits The Fans" cassette tape (1985); and "Tim" (1985).

Over the years, Stinson developed a reputation as a lightning-wristed, wholly unconventional lead guitar player, inspired by his six-string heroes Steve Howe, Johnny Winter and Prince. "It certainly was one of the most unintellectual musicalities that I've ever experienced," said Peter Jespersen, former manager of the Replacements, who remembered Stinson as a "gentle giant."

"I mean, what he played just came from somewhere else. It was instinctual, more than most people that I've ever experienced. He just played a weird amalgamation of things that he admired, filtered through the weird Bob Stinson brain."

As a performer, Stinson took to playing gigs in skirts, make-up and the buff. As one observer once wrote, Stinson was, for many, "the lunatic guitarist for the only American band that ever mattered."

But that reputation became a burden, and toward the end of his time with the Replacements, the band persuaded Stinson to seek treatment for his drug and alcohol problem.

"We paid for him to go into treatment, and he got out and scored some drugs that day," Westerberg said. "It was obvious he didn't want to quit, or wouldn't. But we were no angels at the time, either. I think the spectacle sort of took over the band, and we forgot about playing music."

When Stinson left, the Replacements filled the lead guitar slot with Bob "Slim" Dunlap. The group disbanded in 1990.

Stinson went on to play with various local outfits, including Sonny Vincent, Static Taxi, Dog 994, and, most recently, the Bleeding Hearts. The last year of his life was relatively inactive musically. But his legacy will always be as founder of the Replacements.

"I started that band, and I ended that band when I left," he said in an interview with the Pioneer Press last year. "In the Replacements, we all knew our positions.

"When the Replacements broke up, everybody went out and tried to be a lead singer and a frontman. I'm a guitar player. I don't have the ego . . . to do that. I'd rather be a guitar player lost in a band. I have a gas playing the guitar."

That much was evident at Lee's Liquor Bar a few months ago, when Stinson got up on stage and joined the local countryswing band Trailer Trash for an

impromptu version of Lefty Frissell's "Lil' Ol' Wine Drinker Me."

Stinson became a regular at the Trailer Trash shows because he was drawn to one thing: the music.

"He'd come for the escapism of the scene," says Nate Dungan, leader of Trailer Trash. "When the music was right and the big mirror ball was spinnin' around, that little room would kind of take you away from the big city. And I think that's why he was there, though I couldn't really figure it, because Bob is as punk as they come. He was the true spirit of punk rock."

"He was one in a million; I haven't met his equal yet," added Westerberg with a laugh, after recounting some of Stinson's more inspired antics. "He didn't have much education, but he would say things sometimes that were utterly poetic. He wasn't dumb. You would think he was at times, and then he'd come up with something that was just brilliant."

Stinson is survived by his son, Joey of Minneapolis, his mother, Anita Stinson Kurth of Minneapolis; his father, Neil Stinson of Mound, his brother, Tommy of Los Angeles, and two sisters, Lonnie of Monticello and Lisa of Big Lake.

Visitation is Tuesday at McDivitt Hauge funeral home. Funeral services are Wednesday.

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The Replacements' Bob Stinson's death is loss of inspiration

Minneapolis Star Tribune (3/23/95)

By Jon Bream and David Chanen

It took the Replacements only 30 seconds to get discovered.

Peter Jespersen was working at Oarfolkjokeopus, a record store in south Minneapolis, when singer Paul Westerberg handed him a demo tape. Jespersen, cofounder of the influential Twin/Tone Records, didn't even make it through the first song before he realized this band was "it."

R.E.M. certainly sold more records, and Guns N' Roses was more famous. But no American band born in the 1980s was more important than those punky garage-rockers Jespersen discovered in 30 seconds.

"The Replacements were about as good as any American band there has been," said Bill Flanagan, editor of Musician magazine. "Their music didn't recognize barriers that trendier bands following them now do."

"The Replacements were the link between the '60s creative explosion of the Who and the Beatles and the whole renaissance of the '90s with Nirvana and Pearl Jam," said Los Angeles Times critic Robert Hilburn, who is on the nominating committee for the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. "They'll never get to the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame because they didn't sell enough records, but creatively they deserve to be there."

>From 1979 to 1991, the Replacements made eight albums, performed on TV's "Saturday Night Live," received a Grammy nomination, played at Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards' birthday Party, toured with Tom Petty and R.E.M. and inspired hundreds of youngsters to pick up guitars and play aggressive rock with pop sensibilities.

Musical models for today's hit makers

These underdogs from Minneapolis influenced countless bands, from the Wallflowers (featuring Bob Dylan's son Jakob) to today's alternative rock sensations Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Hole, Green Day and Minneapolis' Soul Asylum. Crash Test Dummies, the Grammy-nominated folk-rockers from Winnipeg, recorded a Replacements tune on their debut album, and They Might Be Giants, an eclectic duo from Brooklyn, recorded a song about the Replacements as a tribute.

On the surface, the Replacements were loud, fast proto-punks churning out inebriated anarchy and cynical teen anthems. Underneath the chaos there was wit, sentimentality and a sensitive soul yearning to be understood. The death

late last week of the band's founder, 35-year-old guitarist Bob Stinson, may seem like another rock 'n' roll tragedy involving a misunderstood soul.

Stinson and singer-songwriter Paul Westerberg were considered the architects of the band's sound. As with many celebrated rock bands, it took the magical chemistry between two unlikely forces to make it work.

Westerberg was a poetic punk with a record collection that ran from Kiss to Frank Sinatra to Hank Williams, and an appreciation for the craftsmanship of songwriting. Stinson was a smash-mouth guitarist with an attitude of, "Let's just scream through it." Throw in Stinson's bass-playing brother Tommy - who wasn't even old enough to drive a car, let alone get into the bars where the Replacements played - and steady drummer Mars, and it was an intoxicating mix.

Jesperperson, who became the Replacements' manager, recalled his first meeting with the band at what was supposed to be a "chemical-free coffeehouse." Some of the musicians were caught with pills and liquor, and the gig was immediately canceled.

Bob Stinson played with the Replacements in this 1987 photo taken during the "Pleased to Meet Me" era. The band, which broke up in 1991, is credited for influencing many of the young bands now popular.

On the critics' pedestal

Fueled by alcohol and youthful enthusiasm, the Replacements made their first album for Twin/Tone- "Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash"-in 1981. From the beginning, critics adored the group, which Westerberg said was a "curse of death" for bands. The 'Mats, as their fans called them, released three more albums for Twin/Tone: "Stink," "Hootenanny" and "Let It Be." With the latter's release in 1984, "It was evident that a truly monumental rock 'n' roll band had arrived," according to Tom Sinclair in "The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock 'n' Roll."

The Replacements' performances were often unforgettable: daring and exciting or anarchic and frustrating, depending on your perspective and sense of fun. Sometimes the 'Mats would become an attitude band, playing only songs - or snippets of songs - by other groups and none of their own material. On other occasions they played it straight, like a great rock 'n' roll band with a taste for punk, rock, blues, country, pop and folk.

The Replacements reached their pinnacle with the 1985 album "Tim" on Sire Records, home of Talking Heads and Madonna. The Los Angeles Times called it the album of the year.

"Tim was a modern-day Tommy," Times critic Hilburn said this week, referring to how the 'Mats captured the isolation and uncertainty of youth in much the

same way the Who's classic "Tommy" had in 1969. "No one in American rock chronicled the insecurities and desires of youth more convincingly in the '80s than Paul Westerberg."

After Bob Stinson

"Tim" marked the last time Bob Stinson would play with the Replacements. He was booted out for living a life of drugs and drink. "Obviously the whole band was a mess, in a storm of turmoil," said drummer Mars, who would leave the band himself shortly after it made a final album in 1990. "But it wasn't like we had to save the band by having Bob leave."

In 1986 veteran Minneapolis guitarist Slim Dunlap replaced Stinson, and the 'Mats moved on. Their next album, "Pleased to Meet Me," has been the band's best seller at 282,000 copies, but the group was becoming more of a showcase for Westerberg and his growing talents as a songwriter.

The Replacements were everything punk was supposed to be, a working-class band that anybody could imagine playing with," said Rolling Stone senior writer Chris Mundy.

There would be two more albums, "Don't Tell a Soul" and "All Shook Down," which was nominated for a Grammy for best alternative recording. The Replacements disintegrated onstage in Chicago in July 1991.

The band never made it big, partly because radio never embraced the Mats in a big way. "They had all the quality and heart of the Beatles, Stones and the Who, but they came along at a time when radio was geared toward adult sensibilities," said Hilburn. "Rock radio thought they were too crude, rude or bratty. Their sound was a reaction against '70s rock slickness, and it blurred the songwriting excellence of the band."

"I think during the course of the band it was easy for us to find scapegoats and point fingers at the record company or other bands or the fans, and that's all crap," Westerberg said in 1993 interview with the Star Tribune. "You could list a hundred reasons, but the bottom line is we didn't go for it hard enough."

Post 'Mats

Since the band's breakup, Westerberg made a solo album in 1993 and has contributed songs to the soundtracks for the movie "Singles," which was set amid Seattle's grunge culture, and TV's Melrose Place." Bob Stinson played in a number of local rock bands, including Static Taxi, the Bleeding Hearts and Sonny Vincent. Two years ago Tommy Stinson formed a group called Bash and Pop, made an album for Warner Bros. and moved to Los Angeles. Mars has released two solo albums and exhibited his visual art at galleries in California and Minnesota. Dunlap released a solo album on Twin/Tone in 1993.

As soloists, none of the Replacements has made it bigger than the Mats themselves, who never made it bigger than America's biggest cult band. "We did what we were supposed to do," Westerberg told the Star Tribune in 1993 "which is live to tell the tale and influence a few other bands. For every 100 people who saw us, five of them formed a band."

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Guitarist Stinson's friends recount full, but tragic, life

Minneapolis Star Tribune (2/23/1995)

By David Chanen and Neal Justin

The day before he died, Bob Stinson had to borrow a broom from his ex-wife to clean his apartment.

The founder of the influential rock band known as the Replacements had no phone, no health insurance and hardly any cash, except for the \$5 daily allowance his girlfriend would shell out for beer.

When his body was found Saturday night, three days after he died, a syringe was near the couch.

At first glance, Stinson's life and death may read like the standard rock 'n' roll tragedy, a pop star whose appetite for booze and drugs spun out of control.

But Stinson never was a pop star. By the time the Minneapolis-based Replacements had gained national prominence, guitarist Stinson already had been kicked out of the band. Friends say he never regretted not becoming a major star, and he seemed content jamming with no-name bar bands.

"He lived and glamorized the rock 'n' roll lifestyle and found it romantic," said Paul Stark, owner of Twin/Tone, the band's first record label.

Chris Mars, the Replacements' drummer, who cried the moment he heard about Stinson's death, described his former bandmate as a tragic character, but said he never stopped loving him. "What I remember is that he had a presence like nobody else I've ever played with," Mars said.

Mars and Stark were among more than 250 people who gathered at McDivitt-Hauge Bradshaw Funeral Home in south Minneapolis on Wednesday afternoon to swap lighthearted stories, share a few tears and listen to classics by Louis Armstrong and the Replacements on a portable tape player.

With an acoustic guitar leaning against the open casket, one speaker after another told stories about Stinson living life to the fullest - and then some.

>From the way he scarfed down fast food hamburgers to his no-holds barred guitar playing, Stinson did more than dance on the edge. He wanted to hang over the cliff by his fingernails.

There was the time Stinson was sitting around a piano at 4 a. m. in a

Radisson Hotel lobby singing "Imagine" with a few friends, when suddenly he spit on the carpet.

"The manager came over and said, 'Did you just spit on the floor?' " remembered Ray Reigstad, who was in the band Static Taxi, a post-Replacements band, with Stinson. "Bob said, 'Yeah, but not belligerently.' "

There was the time he wrote to Carleen Stinson, his wife at the time, telling her "I could lead a simple life if I was a simple man, but it's getting to my head.... You can't change what you can't change."

"That was right before he threatened to throw me out a window," Carleen Stinson said with a half smile.

Jim Walsh, longtime friend and St. Paul Pioneer Press music critic, said the guitarist made everyone feel like it was Stinson and them against the world.

"He was the third-base coach, waving us all in, jumping up wildly - in a dress," Walsh said in his eulogy to mourners, including all the Replacements and dozens of musicians such as Lori Barbero of Babes in Toyland and Chris Osgood of Suicide Commandos. "He would have laughed at us in our suits today, the pomp and circumstance. He would have wanted to know where the beer was."

Medical problems also may have contributed to Stinson's erratic lifestyle.

Although Stinson last year received a diagnosis of bipolar depression, a severe mood-altering illness, family members think he had been suffering from it for years.

He had tried different medications and recently had made an appointment with doctors to find a more effective one, said his sister Lonnie Stinson. "I was fearful something might happen, but we had plans to have an intervention to get him to a clinic for his mental problems," she said.

Then there was the drinking. He had been in and out of the hospital for the past two years because of alcohol abuse, Stark said.

Friends say he was trying to get straight and apparently had been off hard drugs for several months. Family members suspect an overdose killed him, but the Hennepin County medical examiner's office has not released what specific drugs may have contributed to his death.

The day before he died, Carleen Stinson said her ex-husband "begged me to help him find a way to have a normal life."

If he had, Stinson may have lived longer than 35 years. It's doubtful that he would have lived "more."

Bob Stinson, 35, guitarist for Replacements

FROM OUR NEWS SERVICES

St. Paul, Minn. - Bob Stinson, who gained national notoriety as the madman guitarist for the seminal Minneapolis -based rock 'n' roll band the Replacements was found dead Saturday in his Minneapolis apartment.

His body was found about 7 p.m. by a friend. A syringe was found next to a couch. The cause of death has not been determined, Hennepin County officials said.

Mr. Stinson's struggle with drug and alcohol abuse **led to his** ouster from the Replacements in 1986 as well as estrangement from his wife, Carleen, and his 6 year-old son, Joey.

Mr. Stinson, 35, was diagnosed as suffering from a manicdepressive disorder last year and was taking medication to combat intense mood swings, his mother, Anita Stinson Kurth, said.

With the Replacements, he made six recordings: "Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out The Trash" (1981); "The Replacements Stink" EP (1982); "Hootenanny" (1983); "Let It Be" (1984), which was named one of the best 100 records of all time by Rolling Stone magazine; "The S--- Hits The Fans" cassette tape (1985); and "Tim" (1985).

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BOB STINSON

1959-1995

BY RUSSELL HALL

February 20.

I was supposed to talk with Bob Stinson in today. It would have been our fifth conversation in the past two weeks. On the chance that it might also be our last, I was going to tell him just what he had meant to me. After all, if it weren't for Bob - and the band lie started in his basement 15 years ago - I wouldn't be doing what I do, wouldn't be doing what I love. Were it not for the Replacements, I might never have become a writer.

I never got to tell him.

A few hours ago, Bob's girlfriend phoned me from Minneapolis. In a soft, wispy voice, she asked if I was sitting down, and of course, I knew what her next words would be. Bob was dead, apparently of an overdose.

For seven years, Bob Stinson was lead guitarist for the decade's best rock 'n' roll band, and one of the best bands ever. The Replacements were his - in the beginning - and without his goofy flamboyance, manic nature and wealth of talent, the group never would have followed its crooked path to glory. They never would have become legends.

The Replacements will always be characterized as Paul Westerberg's band. That's probably as it should be. It was Westerberg after all, who held up the cracked mirror to the group's Chaplinesque spirit, then painted that spirit in vivid song-portraits, singing his observations with harrowing abandon or with heartrending tenderness. But Westerberg once told a friend that a single quality - empathy - was the key to his songwriting. And despite all the words written about their bitter split, when Paul held tip his magic mirror, he saw Bob's image more than anyone's except his own.

*We're gettin' nowhere fast as We can,
We get a nose-full from our so-called friends;
We're got tin' no place, quick as we know how,
We whirl from town to town, treatment bound.*

For us fans, if Paul was the band's brains, Bob was its heart. If Paul was king, Bob was court jester. Especially in the early years, when the 'Mats were opening for larger acts at Minneapolis' 7th St. Entry, Bob might come out stumbling drunk, wearing a dress, or maybe nothing but his underwear. More than once, he vomited onstage. Still, his musicianship never failed to embody whatever wit, passion or tenderness Paul's songs called for.

"I hear his guitar everywhere now - Dinosaur Jr., wherever. Whether they know it or not, Bob was doing that in 1980."

Westerberg told that to Rolling Stone in 1993, seven years after Bob was fired from the band lie put together. But, as is often the case, there are no villains here - not then, not now. At 20, Bob's antics were funny; at 24, they were childish; and at 28, they were an

impediment, disruptive and troubling. By that time, Westerberg had blossomed into America's finest songwriter. Still, even then, Paul felt obliged to write songs for - and about -- his bandmates. Sadly, he could no longer write songs for Bob.

*Hold my life, until I'm ready to use it,
Hold my life because I just might lose it.*

So goes the chorus to one of the last Replacements songs on which Bob Stinson played. That was eight years ago. Last week, Bob asked me - whom he barely knew - to send him \$200 "For rent," he said. I told him I would send the money. "Promise?" "Yeah." "Oh, I love you."

Before writing the check, I decided to phone a friend in Minneapolis, someone I trusted, who knew and loved Bob. "What should I do?" I asked. "Don't send it," he said. "You don't know what he might buy. Remember the story of how Neil Young sent [Crazy Horse guitarist] Danny Whitten cash, and Whitten OD'd the next day? You don't want to have to live with that."

I never sent the money.

To soften the blow, and to salve my conscience, I told Bob that if the book I was currently working on - a biography of the band - should happen to make any money he would be counted in. Bob laughed. Not a mean-spirited laugh, just a gentle admonishment. I was naive. He didn't care about next year; he didn't care about next week. He just wanted to get through the day.

I keep thinking of one of Bob's last glories: the Replacements' appearance on "Saturday Night Live" in January of 1986. The band was drunk, of course, barely able to stand - but, amazingly, Bob seemed the least wasted. His solos were perfect, almost too good, but as the last notes died away, he suddenly narrowed his eyes, screamed a blood-curdling "Thank you!" and sent his Les Paul sailing over his shoulder and crashing to the floor. Even Paul looked surprised.

*Here comes a regular call out your name,
Here comes a regular, am I the only one who feels ashamed?*

I also think of Bob's girlfriend. Her name is Anna Nymittee. Anonymity. I swear to God. That's Bob's destiny now, I suppose. And while that might not be fair, the irony of it would surely bring a smile to his face. More importantly, he would want it to bring a smile to ours, and that's a measure of the man, not his tragedy.

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BOB STINSON IN HIS OWN WORDS

**“The Dewey Berger Show” Interview
by Steve Birmingham with Kevin Kruger
from *The Squealer* #5, May 1995**

Bob, I'm wondering if you could tell us how you met Paul Westerberg?

Okay, like I was starling to say, I just got out of the group home. I went home and for the like of me, I found a good deal for a bass guitar amp (you know, an Amp AB25B), and so I had those two and Tommy was always flat out getting into too much trouble. You know, riding his bike like a little kid and throwing rocks through gas station windows. You know they couldn't throw the little kid in jail, so I saw that he had some energy. So, I just gave it to him. I never sold it to him, I just gave it to him. And from there he swindled his way, you know, with words, to a SVT He was like eleven- I don't know how he did it Me and him started playing and I had a girlfriend who knew Chris. And it was us three for about a year and a half. We had a different ferent singer and another guitar player. Chris said he has this friend named Paul who lives down the street who we went to school with. We e went down there and me and Chris played with him. And Paul for the first time smiled, and he goes "This is the best we ever sounded." And they were playing just mainstream, you know Bad Company and all that, but Paul could play good. He had a singer's band too, and they wanted to do like **Molly** Hatchet songs. So we brought Paul over and he goes, 'Where's the bass player?' and Tommy was there in his chair! He could just barely, he had to sit on his tippy toes- but he could play! Paul just said, "Tommy, play this..." And we just went 'do-do-do' and it sounded great! I met Paul through a girl - friend, through Chris's friend.

Do you know of any other band that had a member as young as Tommy?

No ... it just happened that way . He was there, he had time, he had energy, and I was sick of looking around... I didn't I want to go outside. I smoked Kool cigarettes - rettes and drank beer and lie - toned to Beetle records through guitar speakers- LOUD. I liked it.

Now who was looking after who? Were you looking after your little brother or was he as bigga hellion as... ?

Oh yeah, we were both trouble. I mean I just got out of the group home and he was certainly deteriorating down that road. So I just gave him a bass amp and guitar, and away we went.

A good thing to put in a kid' s hand. Which I was also going to ask you, with Tommy being so young- I guess he was just eleven when you started out...

Yeah.

Did that pose a problem with licensings at clubs, like having such a young member in the band? Or did you have truant officers on ya ?

Umm, no, as a matter of act, back then they didn't expect somebody to be that age. It wasn't like The Cowsills, or Osmonds, or The Partridge Family, or anything—but in a way it was. But when they found out, they saw the sound check and they probably heard the racket and came and looked and noticed two things: One, we were too

loud/too fast and he was too young. So what happens? They made him always stay downstairs in the basement, or in the kitchen. And ya know...he'd cry. I mean they wouldn't let him play the pinball games or nothin'. You know, like an eleven year old would wanna do.

You hear that George Harrison's mom was very supportive of the Beatles in the early days—that she was more than happy to have the boys practice over at her house and stuff. You guys pretty much started up over at your house- was your mom supportive to have the band over there, or was there some problems with noise coming out of you guys?

Umm, no, as a matter of fact, of course she was supportive. She worked in a bar , The Uptown, and you know she'd seen bands, seen the place, and people mature. No, there was no problem at all, she liked us. The only problem we ever had with my mother was when we had to tell her Tommy was going on the road at fourteen, Ma. There was a problem with that. I think she flat out set up some tutoring. I, his brother, have no idea how he talked my mother into that one. Yeah, she was very supportive.

Well great. You hear that folks?

Ma's, let your kids play guitar very loud.

I was wondering if you could talk about what it was like having a first album out, SoRRY MA, FORGOT TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH. I know you guys probably started recording that in '79, and came out in '80?

'80, yeah. I actually wasn't surprised. At that point, I expected everything. I mean not EVER YTHING, I didn't know what to expect. We were recording ... I don't know, that's a good question. Umm, I didn't expect anything. I knew I was going to make it one way or the other. To tell you the truth, I don't think Paul—if I didn't ask him to play with us—would have done anything. He was always depressed. He didn't sing in his other bands. He'd just be working at Menards today or something, huh? Oh, I'm not taking no credit or anything like that, but he certainly started to smile. As a matter of fact, our first introduction—I quit smoking and he started smoking—his introduction was he gave me a joint from his brother. He goes, "Smoke this!" And for about the first two or three weeks, every time he came to practice he'd give me a joint.

About the STINK album, which believe, didn't I you guys record in one day and mix the next day . And also was that really the Minneapolis police at the beginning, clearing out that party. And where was that party if that really... ?

Right now, it's probably down where Caffé Solo is. Right by the highways is where it was. That used to be like a college area. Right now it's all restaurants. But STINK, I don't know if I remember if we did that all in one day . But, yes, the police really were there and the guy talking at the beginning is Dave Pirner . You know, I tried to gag him, but he wouldn't shut up. That's probably why they closed it down, because he was there. His dad's a cop. No he ain't. But yeah, we did it in one day and as a matter of fact, we left two songs of (maybe three) that which would've made it an album. Actually, "Love Lines" originally was a song called "Looking For Ya" which was the first song Paul ever played for us. And it went faster, it went 'do-do-do, do-do-do,' it was a very good rockin' song. So we know we had something going from there. But we kept 'em off. We couldn't decide on things then. We were just kids, I mean like twenty /twenty-one and someone was trying to make a band out of us. We were just a bunch of guys who

got together with some beers and liked our amplifiers and guitars ... just a regular rock band.

Well, a one-of-a-kind rock band. I'm wondering if you could comment on the song 'Something to Du?' Was that tongue in cheek or kinda dissing... ?

No, it's below that. We flat out were trying to make a strike against them because they were...I don't know... [the phone rings] I like that.

Well, hey.

I'm not here. [voice of Kevin Kruger] They're calling in!

[I answer the phone]

I remember your question, it's a flat out diss ... Husker Du go way back before the Replacements, they're like fifty years old by now. But yeah, it was time for them to go by the wayside and we were flat out an attempt to get them out of it. You know, when we started half the bands broke up—Curtiss A., The Pistons, The Phones—gosh, that whole schmear of crap. Well, there was actually some good bands. We couldn't walk by each other without punching each other or rubbing each other in the ribs. You know how it is—that other side of the team thing. We had that comradery going.

Could you talk a little about Peter Jespersen and your relationship with him in the early years- as far as touring and his involvement with Twin Tone and stuff. I believe the story is...a young Paul dropped off a demo tape at Oarfolk records and he eventually listened to it and went out of his head going 'Oh my God, this is like nothing I've ever heard before. This is fantastic. etc., was he very supportive or did you feel like he might be another business guy?

From the get-go, he went out on a limb for us, from the company. And all the bands—we took their confidence and made'em break up—got on Pete because it hurl us and we were a little bit faster and slicker than they were. And we were very young, that kind of got them. From the get-go, me and Pete really didn't see eye-to-eye. Though, it's like two cooks making the same recipe. You know it's gonna taste the same, the outcome basically came the same but you don't know what's going to happen at the end of the week until it happens. But we were both doing the same thing. Yeah, he was, I wouldn't say our fifth person, but almost. And, yes as a matter of fact, I wasn't a real big Beatles fan until I met him, and he said, "You're nuts! How couldn't you like the Beatles?" So, I started listening to them again, not deliberately, only because it's like I'd listen to REVOLVER and I'd put the band in Tommy's amp and the vocals in my Fender Dual Showman, and I'd crank the bass up and it sounded awesome. I mean "Taxman" with, not stereo speakers, but BIG guitar speakers. I kind of lost it there...but right after that, we had little disagreements...didn't talk to each other for awhile.

Speaking of Pete's, Pete Buck is given a credit for 'I Will Dare. ' Was he a pretty cool guy, kind of a prick, or what was that like hav ing him sit in?

I was not there when he did his overdub. He was in town and they decided to put his you know ... if you listen close, there's another lead underneath it. I did that way before

we ever made it. Yeah, Pete came into town and they did an overdub with him. What I remember then was when we toured with them, and that's when we became friends.

That was touring with R. E M. ?

Yeah.

What was that like?

You don't want to know. They did give us like beer and we'd wait until they'd go on stage and their dressing rooms- there was no lock, boys. We ate all their food and drank their booze. They're like doing one of their real pretty hit songs and we're just sitting there drinking their booze. And they're playing in front of a thousand people. You can't stop and come and grab it from us. We really had mean fun with them.

In the early years, was there a section of the country where you were really warmly received out side of Minneapolis, or were you pretty much, oh, the rotten egg of a lot of places?

Well, that's an okay question. Yeah, it's a question. We were received just about the same everywhere. Everybody was looking for something different. I wouldn't say we really changed anything, but THEY were just listening to hokey-pokey bands. In New York, you could go into a big bar and there'd be one person sleeping and there was this nice metal band playing. It was quite obvious that something is happening. But as far as another place, I'd say every place received us better than Minneapolis. It's like Prince said. He goes, 'Everywhere else, I'm God and everybody treats me great. Back home I'm just Prince.' And it's exactly the same way with all the bands from here. It is.

I was talking to guy named Dorian who works for Cruz Records and I asked him if he listened to COWS and some of these other bands.

Milk is good! I have to plug Milk. They're almost cosmic. They do have that aura. I'm surprised the bass player, I don't know if his name is Christian or what [Jeremy is the bassist, Christian plays drums, and Brett sings and plays guitar], can remember that many licks. I asked him once and he goes, "Most of the time." And they're straight. He's like Chris Squire on speed, it sounds awesome. I advise anybody to go see Milk.

[per an earlier discussion on his I Dream of Genie leisure suit (as seen on NBC's Saturday Night Live) and his dresses]

Nowadays, it's pretty acceptable to show up in a Denny's with a nice floral wedding dress or something. Has it lost it's, oh, cross-dressing value or...?

They're all going to hate me for this

That's okay, Bob.

Too damned bad. Yeah, it does. It was fun when I did it because Captain Sensible [from the Damned] did it over in Europe. I did it here and nobody else did it. Now everybody else does it. It's like something Iggy Pop would say, "I create images and then I leave 'em and everybody else takes 'am over." He said that, I don't live by that, but yeah you're right.

Bob, who did you see, when you were younger playing guitar and say "Yeah, that's what I want to do right there?"

I'd honestly have to say Johnny Winter. And then me and my brother went to see YES—people who could play, actually knew how to play and could do it by guitar, bass, and drums—him Steve Howe...

What did the Stinson kids think of KISS in their hey day?

Other than listen to 'em on the radio, they really didn't affect me. I have no idea why Radio stations I listened to as a kid would play Sweet, YES, Led Zeppelin, John Denver, Carole King... all on the same thing. Whereas nowadays you have everything broke—country station, rock, heavy metal, blah, blah, blah. When, in fact, in '73/'74, every thing thing was on the same station. Actually, I could fall asleep to it, it was beautiful 'Stairway To Heaven' next to 'Rocky Mountain High,' you can't go wrong with that.

Do you think radio has pretty much disintegrated?

It's like Trevor Home said, 'Video killed the radio star.'

Touche. Ten years ago...

It doesn't seem like it.

God, yeah, it's the mid-90's not the mid -80's anymore.

We're gonna see the turn of the century, it we live.

God, if we don't spoil it. What was it like, though, having paved the way- like say bands like Black Flag, The Police (I don't care for The Police, but they did show poor bands how to tour), and certainly you guys—where you just cram in a van and almost like create venues that so many kids can now just stop at and try out and play before people. I mean I don't think twelve to fit teen years ... it was a little more difficult, wasn't it?, to set up some shows, or maybe not?

Umm, you're right...NOT. Back then there weren't bands ... it was like the ingredients were in the pot, someone just had to turn on the mixer. Because when we started, I won't mention the names, but they were all slowrocking, boring, buttheads.

Mention 'em.

The Pistons, Curtiss A., an on and on etc., etc. Sorry Paul Stark, but they were a mess. And we'd go up there (they'd do like five songs in an hour) and like do thirty hot-rockin' numbers, with clever licks and all.

I have a question you may get tired of being asked, but are the Replacements nicknamed the 'Mats because they were kind of, sometimes, spread out on the floor? Or is it just an abbreviation?

Well, isn't like Led Zeppelin's Zeppelin, Lynard Skynard's Skynard, see what I mean?

Ah.

I guess you can tell our crowd, they can't talk that many words

Multi-syllabic names?

You got it.

Could you tell us a little about your performance on Saturday Night Live? Because I remember it and for your second song I

believe it was "Kiss Me On The Bus," at the end of the song – a young Bob Stinson tosses his guitar over his shoulder and...

That was a nice guitar, too.

That was back when, again, ya weren't smashing up your instruments, like with a lot of bands it's almost the prerequisite at the end of the show.

OOOHHH

Did you get flack for that at all?

No, no. I just did this *Goldmine* thing [an industry rag] and I pretty much stated everything that happened. When Nirvana played, they asked permission to smash their stuff. We took permission. I destroyed our hotel room. We showed up- there was flowers, fruit, and an old Nineteenth Century phone. I broke that, then I kicked out the window, and broke the door.

What were they thinking, giving the Replacements a 19th Century Phone? Back to Nirvana, what do you think about their \$uc\$e\$\$? Do you like their music? Certainly the Replacements...

I used to smoke weed with Nirvana, Kurt, way back before he had Dave in the band, Well, yeah, we go back.

Was that in Seattle?

When we were on the road. Sonny Vincent (the first band I played when I left the Replacements) over in Europe shared the same promoter as Urge Overkill, Nirvana, and Jason Bonham. He was just a little schmuck, just like I am now.

Did you know back then that he kinda just had IT? I mean could you just tell?

No, he didn't mention it. He just says, "I play guitar , blah, blah, blah "

Just another piss-ass ?

Exxxactly. Anyone with an ego shouldn't play an instrument. I mean it's a homo-queer-idiot-assholes, you can always edit this.

It's public access, anything goes.

Public ass kiss? Yeah, No, I'm not queer, I've got a lot of girlfriends.

Hey, it's the 90s now.

I know. I saw all your friends. Oh, ho-ho-ho. Shud up! Nah, I'm just kidding. That's what my brother would say all the time. 'Fuck you and shut up.

What do you make of the fact that you guys were not really played on the radio like everyone felt you should be. And now you got bands like Nirvana selling over eight million albums. Do you feel that you definitely played a role into the paving the way for bands nowadays that can go multi-platinum.

There's two answers to that: "Yes," and the other is "Not deliberately." Me and my friend were talking and he goes, "Why aren't there bands like Sweet, Pink Floyd, YES, The Beatles, blah, blah, blah, lying around?" And the answer I came up with was "Probably, there are." The age is what it is. I'm sure all the people that grow up

listening to them probably thought the same thing. You know, "They're nothing." What makes a band big is time. And that's the only word I can say for that one.

Time and space. [pointing to the album cover for LET IT BE] About this cover right here, do you remember the shoot, and where is this photo taken?

Paul is dead, just like in the Beatles. We replaced him with, gosh, I don't remember his name. Paul really did die though.

Well.

2215 Bryant Avenue South.

That's the roof, Huh?

That's the roof.

Don't stop by, people.

The tenants might be mad. It used to be a house. The whole second floor was all beds. The basement was ours. My mother had a nice big room. I always stayed in there. Sorry, Ma. If I drank her booze, she'd make me stay in the basement. It's true, until I came up with money to replace it. So don't drink your parents' booze.

Not unless you're gonna come home with some now stuff. Like the McKenzie Brothers, right?

Or songs. Money or a song. She even took my keys away once.

A lot of Replacement shows weirs characterized by unpredictable ness, which probably isn't a word, but what was with that? A fan just did not know what to expect with your shows. They know that it was always going to be compelling, but it was like a whole different scene every time. Sometimes you were the great set thing on the globe and other firms people thought, "Wow, I've been ripped out of five bucks."

Okay, I see, I don't mean to keep cutting you off.

Oh, please do.

I'm gonna put that one and our video together. It's all in the same thing. Everybody expects you to do something. It's like our video for "Bastards of Young." Ya know, it says all these things you can and can't do, but they left out one final detail: It doesn't say anywhere that you have to appear in your video. So we got a good chuckle over it. They gave us money to do the video, we spent it, and let Paul do it himself. Basically, none of us appear in it. Basically, it's the same thing when you get a rider to a show and they tell you what you can and can't do. That's where SHIT HITS THE FAN comes out. It says nowhere in the contract where you gotta play your songs, let alone finish one. And that's exactly...

Is this where the Kumbaya covers come from?

Yeah, we almost had to go out the back door because they were almost ready to burn the place down. It was a place the size of the Orpheum, and we didn't play any of our songs. Well, we played a couple but the songs we played only halfway through. And they thought it was a joke, but that's really how we were.

What did the label [Sire] think of your "Bastards of Young" video? I know it's kind of a great in-joke for your fans. Were they pissed?

It backfired on us. A lot of people liked it. The company didn't, they didn't. Seymour Stein is a genius. He saw immediately what he got himself into. It was a good joke for awhile. I was always asked not to go to the interviews with him, but he saw right away what we were up to and where we were going. And there was no way it could've gone on for very long. Ten years is good enough...if it all would've fallen apart the next day. at least we made our say. Fortunately for us. it didn't and it grew. We had to live up to that, that was our image. It's just the way we lived. There were a lot of fights—not in the band, but with our roadies. There were some pretty wild stories there. I mean like my brother kicked out the sound man (Monty Wilks, who is now working with Nirvana, or did) cuz they were seeing the same girl. I mean he fired our sound man just over a girl! But that's how nitpicky things were getting though. It was definitely us and them. I mean on stage we were four, but after that, in the van, we were always picking on each other, It was usually Paul and Tommy against me because that's what it took them. Okay, we'd like go on the road with a box of tapes (everybody's tapes) and the guys would go to sleep, and we'd just wreck everyone of them. We even had a rule. We refused to empty the garbage out of the van for the whole tour, and it got a little deep. It smelled, but rules like that. Tell somebody that they can't do it...it's kinda like that parenthood thing. Tell a kid he can't do something...well, we carried that over into our twenties.

Tenfold too.

Oh, non-stoppable.

[talking about the \$\$ of alternarock] In your day, there weren't shows like Lollapalooza that drew that many people...

Oh. I don't want to offend all them other ones..

Oh do.

... but we had to make our, they're getting all their attention given to them. We had to attract it, which makes you for a very strong person. Somehow, something said inside, "Keep going," no matter when you're half-way dead but you gotta play in three hours. But the next Lollapalooza show, I hear, is going to have my band (Tommy, Paul, and Chris won't be in it), Sweet, and YES will be there. Ar-ar-ar [winking at the camera] That'd be a dream. [we were talking about dinosaur bands] The Stones should have broken up. But, YES never did drugs (besides Chris Squire). I met Alan White and Steve Howe—he called security on me even though I was on the guest list for their last show. That was like a dream, next to meeting Paul McCartney. I'll meet Lennon when I'm dead, so I'm not worried about that. It's alive when it really matters. But what do you think of them? They're not on MTV are they? Pink Floyd is.

What do you think of that, the fact that they use the name 'Pink Floyd'?

It's two names.

I mean, I don't think you're gonna go out and call yourself The Replacements.

Oh heavens. And that brings into another question. Warner Brothers has asked us to do a 'Best of '

A box set?

...and that's the kiss of death. Real bands don't do it. Can you see a Best of , well the Beatles have done it, but can you see something called (after they're dead) "The Best Of The Beatles?" Why don't you just go and buy the whole collection and have that be "The Best Of The Beatles." But wait, as far as the dinosaurs ... YES- they're the only ones because they weren't into drinking and drugs or any anything thing like that. They were clean. And I quit smoking when I discovered Steve Howe and Alan White owned a health food store. So you don't have to be in a band to be a junkie. These bands now, if they stay together or if they don't all die, will be dinosaurs in ten years. And that's how it is. It's the same way with every era. [I'd been ragging on MTV] I can honestly say that two-thirds of these bands would not have made it without MTV, and that's BAD.

It seems like nowadays, as long as some mediocre kids have the backing of a company...they can just be on MTV now. There's so many ways to just be exposed to millions of people.

You know what really gets to me. This has never happened in the history of music—No, me being here—is albums, I mean not albums, CD's, starting at number one. That's never happened. If you were to take everybody's TV's away and made people go see bands, it would be a completely different story.

It'd be a better world, I'd say.

... Or this: You see videos and people try to make images out of them. If I was to do a video, it' a be just us with this white light and amps and microphones, and that's what it should be.

What do you think about rap? In my opinion, it kind of saved rock-n-roll at a period when it was get ting to be total flatulence.

Well, Motown, Tamala, Gordy [Barry]—all those records back when, was a different direction. I don't know how the black people feel now, but I'm just wondering if hip-hop is the same answer to that. Leave it to them: They made rock-n-roll, they made soul, they made rap. All three things. Without them, there wouldn't be any of us white ass ... [Bob, cut himself off before saying assholes to the folks in TV Land).

I agree, there'd be no Rolling Stones at all, if there wasn't African-American heritage.

Now tell me who owns the credit. Without a doubt, we know who. Is that a good answer?

A certain writer for SPIN did a story with you awhile ago, and it's the opinion of every one in the world that it was the biggest piece of shit.

Okay...

I thought it was a smear article and I was just wondering if you'd like to comment on it?

Every word in there was accurately true, but only one thing: The guy would probably be better on a soap opera. He was like twenty or twenty-two. He had no idea...well, wait a minute. He knew what he was doing. I hate this word, but he betrayed my trust. We had certain things that I said "Do not say and Do say" (which were drugs, blah, blah, blah) He even called my ex-wife, which was fine...but see, I trusted him, gave him

the number, blah, blah, blah. When he was here, he was fine, but when he went to New York and I couldn't ring his neck. He goes, 'Well...

... decided he was gonna try to make a name for himself by some tabloid piece.

Touche. This, I want you all to keep. After they did that, they did the same thing with a couple other bands. You know, print all the shit.

Just the shit.

Just to make them look good.

... and to put the shit under the microscope.

Yeah he did that too. I'm not slashing *SPIN*, but someone should. I am. They're a bunch of posers. The way I can describe *SPIN* is like, you know those old coloring books, with just the black lines and coloring in the colors? There's is all black and gray. Where in the same sense it could be colorful and pretty full. I don't know if those two words go together. They did it to me and they did it to somebody else, just read the issue after the one I was in. Me, Tommy, Chris, and Jesperson and Bob Dunlap did something with Goldmine, and I'd advise anybody that wants to know about the Replacements, to go read that.

We have Gina Arnold's book ROUTE 666: ON THE ROAD TO NIRVANA...

Wow! Are you going to let me take it home to borrow for a day?

Sure man, totally. It's a thoroughly alright book.

I'm taking this home!

Right on. Do you remember your first public gig with the 'Mats? Was that when you were The Impediments?

I'm not really sure which one really was our first. Everyone seems to think it was when we played that church for alcoholics, reforming alcoholics. But to the like of me, I don't think that was the first one. That's my first guess, but I don't know the right answer. Our first gig was without Paul. Our first gig WAS without Paul. And it was at one of my bosses (I was cooking) parties. We had amps galore And Chris was playing guitar, not drums. We had a different drummer The second one we played was in the backyard of somebody's place about a block from Chris's. It was like 34th and Garfield. And Chris was on drums again

What do you think of Soul Asylum, ten years after?

Oh, we used to all hang out.

Oh yeah!

All the musicians, I don't know if I should tell you this, live from Franklin to Lake Street, L Lyndale to Hennepin. Every dang one of them.

You tourists can just go to the C.C. Club if you wanna run into some of the locals.

We're the ones looking at our feet with shit drooling out of our mouths.

Oh, he's kidding of course.

Yeah, I just had the Reuben.

Let's go back to HOOTENANNY What kind of brought about the instrument switching for that song?

Irritation, depression, We were in a concrete room about the size of this floor. Just concrete and a big rug and we set up and started playing Like I was saying, "Love Lines" was originally called "Looking For You," which is on a record called *TRACKING UP THE NORTH*. And that was the first song us four ever played together But *STINK* should've been an album where we kept a couple songs off. That switching instrument that you're asking about came from boredom. We should've never made this, Peter Jesperson. I was reading in this interview that I did in October about some songs I don't even remember Paul playing. And they said I kept them off I because I didn't like them, Schucks, I can play anything, you know?

What was the inspiration for [the song] 'Buck Hill?' Obviously, people who don't know, it's a ski...

I never knew that until about a year ago, that it's a ski resort in Burnsville I didn't plan that. See, that's another case of a joke being a song- and then people expecting us to play it, which we did. So I had to learn the song, and it goes on and on That's the cue to our stones: We made jokes and people took them seriously. Kinda like Frank Sinatra. He's get serious, get a little tipsy, and make jokes. and then had to do them over and over for thirty years. It gets tiring, you know? [*HOOTENANNY*] is like a third of a record The rest should be all but thrown away. I just don't understand why they did that but *HOOTENANNY*'s the only one. There's tapes of me all the way up to *PLEASED TO MEET ME*. And maybe someday, they'll be released. They only did two records without me.

Right,

[Bob points to my notes, up until TIM] And that's like you have here...STOPPED.

Certainly after TIM, the edge out of the Replacements was gone. I don't know what you think about the other two albums. But cerany fan...

I never listened to them.

... notices the absence. Have you ever listened to them?

No, I'm serious, I have not. I think I may have heard them once, but if you ask me if there's anything on them I remember, Noooo.

Well, personally, I say come TIM,

TIM was even a little sloppy . I heard what we did and I thought they were out takes. I like the picture though, there's some good numbers on there.

[pointing at the TIM cover] *That's you right there, huh?*

Uh huh, we did that right up two blocks up the street as a matter of fact.

Was this someone's idea for this cover? It's really kind of a differ cover, or was this a Sire art department thing? Or did you have some input?

I can quote my brother as saying: This is like about the period where everybody thought they'd claimed us. And we'd already done our best stuff. If I had it my way, I'd had Paul stop talking to the other people because they were pulling him in one way

and was just trying to keep it the way it was before he ever joined the band. You know, drinking and drugs came into it, but they pin pointed, put a needle right on it and said that was it, when in fact it wasn't, It's like reading a definition in a book, and having five people trying to rewrite it: it's going to come out five different ways, instead of one. I wouldn't say I had the idea for the...well I did have the idea for the band, but Paul had the songs and we had the ideas. In that sense, we worked as a band up to about that [TIM]. We took a long time off. I went to treatment- when, hell, everybody should have and then we started working on what came out to be *PLEASED TO MEET ME*. I mean there's seven or eight songs with me on them.

Wow, I didn't know that. One other question Have you taken a nasty stumble on stage, where you just fell off stage or tripped over a cord or lost a tooth?

I was singing some songs once- one of them was with the Replacements because we were like doing three hour sets at the end. You have a choice: Quit and watch the other band or sit and go back to your hotel. Well, we took it upon ourselves to play until they made us stop. Otherwise, just go to the hotel? Now that's boring. Where we belonged was on stage (And always probably will). I don't know if Paul's had his teeth chipped, but I have and had to get 'em capped. I've never fallen off stage. If the soundman was doing a shitty mix, I'd piss on, I've pissed on the monitor. I've thrown up on the side of the stage for unknown reasons, and pissed on the side of the stage because there was too many people to get to the bathroom. But no, I haven't fallen off stage, you can ask the other guys. I've seen Tommy not be on stage for awhile and get thrown on stage, and swing his bass. I've seen Paul like sing "Sixteen Blue" or something—he likes straight mikes, I always liked the boom ones- and someone stepped on it and bashed him in the face. And he stopped and hit the wrong person on the head.

Oh no.

It was a pretty girl. So he stopped the show until she was okay. And then we mauled the guy who did it. (Sorry).

Do you have one gig that stands out in your mind as just being nuts—for whatever reason, good or bad? Something that was absolutely madness, like you had a near-riot on your hands?

Down in Alabama or Louisiana. They did not like us down there.

Go figure.

Some guy was fucking with me, and Paul stopped and started punching him. And Bill Sullivan (who's Soul Asylum's road manager. He was probably our third roadie besides Tom Carlson, our ace), we had to throw 'em out. There was fights and everything. it was a small place, again, the size of this room. Down in the South, these Northerners ... what are we called up here? Yankees!

I guess so.

And we were down there, yes. Riots? No. Fights? Blood? Yes. Me and Paul have had a couple tussles on stage before. too. One, he put a bottle (a broken wine glass) to my throat The other one, I was playing a lead and he just stopped playing and jumped on my back And we started rolling around, and then we'd try to keep one-ing each other. And Tommy and Chris would not stop playing the song. Les Pauls and Strats, and just rolling around on the ground. It's pretty funny. There's tape of it somewhere, I'm sure.

I'd like to see that surface.

I was bleeding, yeah.

... Did you ever have a problem getting money for a gig? You hear about the Beatles' brown bag money.

I heard about that. No, there was always somebody else who took care of that. Jesperson; a manager on the road. Our job—job, schmob—our thing was to get up there, have some snacks you know. We never ate before we played, so the deli tray was [tossed]. Then you didn't want to eat when you were done because you wanted to screw and do a couple lines of this or that. So we ended up being fast microwave boys. I mean that's the only time me and Paul ever ate. You'd go walking through the crowd and have a few drinks. We had nice dressing rooms (it you really want to know) and none of us ever used 'em. We'd sit in different corners of the bar, and "Pete, what time do we go on?" He'd tell us and we'd like come from different parts of the bar. Most of the places we played were colleges, and not many bars.

I'm curious, have you ever ver listened toned to any Bash-n-Pop?

I like my brother's stuff. It sounds like Rod Stewart with a good band.

Do you have any venues that stick out in your mind? How about just around town?

Basically, most of them because they threw us all out. It's kind of hard not to have just four guys trying to pick up all the waitresses and bartenders, but seven of us? We would not leave. It's like, "We don't have a hotel. Can we lay on your floor or on top of you?" Yes, all of them. They'd make us leave or had trouble getting rid of us. We refused to go. For about one yea, then we all had hotels. They figured that out- just give them the hotel money. [asking about the Minneapolis scene] Another plug Rex Daisy is awesome They have a cello player, but he follows the guitar lines so it doesn't even seem like a cello player. And they're friends of mine. All I gotta do is say , 'I need a place to stay, or can I use your girlfriend—I mean shower or stove or what not. Wait, I didn't answer your question: I wish someone would buy The Longhorn cuz it's just a vacated building that no one's bought in, I'd say, over ten years. But it's still there, they won't tear it down. Well we know the rest: My Mother's basement, that's an awfully good club. Tommy's basement, that's another one. Don't go to the bars. Go to parties, there a lot better, guys A rave with beer, go to something like that. And the hip hop guys are cool, just because they're black don't mean they're bad. [asking about the future direction of rock-n-roll, i.e., industrial sounds and rap] As a matter of tact, I think it just might've gone full circle. Snoop Doggy Dog, him and Hammer, see how they're getting away from rap and actually putting soul back into it, but in a different way It's happened three times: Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett, and Elvis (if you just give 'em a black crayon) are probably without a doubt my favorite singers of all time, next to Todd Rundgren and anybody in the Beatles. Snoopy is taking it in a way that just might do something He doesn't know it, actually I think he does. And he's on Atlantic and that's the original (instead of Motown, Tamala, and Gordy's soul label). Led Zeppelin was the first rock band to sign to a soul label. And Snoopy, Snoopy Bob, is actually doing something there. He's on the right track

Well Bob, we appreciate so much you being able to be on The Dewey Berger Show Do you have anything you'd like to say to the Twin Cities in closing?

Goodbye. Thanks a lot. I love ya. Home!.

Well put.
Cheers.

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INTO THE BLACK

the final days of Bob Stinson

City Pages 1995
by Joseph Hart

Last week it seemed that everyone had a Bob Stinson story to tell. Some of the snapshots were happier than others; Bob with his little boy, Bob with his guitar, Bob giving a big, no-hands-barred hug to a suffering friend. But in most of the stories the suffering friend was Bob Stinson. Like the party he'd gone to back in 1991 or 1992, Bob was in the bathroom getting ready to shoot up. A friend of his had brought a camera that night, and the man started snapping pictures of Stinson cooking a fix, injecting himself, breaking off the tip of his rig. Oliver Stone's movie about the Doors had come out not long before, and the friend had a thought, "I said, Bob, do a Jim Morrison for me. And he got in the bathtub and put his head way back and his arms up on the side of the bathtub and I snapped his picture."

It seemed like a funny idea at the time. Lots of people, friends and perhaps especially strangers, did that sort of thing all the time: Coax Bob to get fucked up, to do something stupid, to be a wild man. Buy him beers, give him drugs if you had them. It was the least a person could do for Bob Stinson From The Replacements. Sitting in a bar a couple of days after Stinson's funeral, the man who got Bob to play the Lizard King hung his head over his drink. "His fans killed him, man. I really think they did." For Bob Stinson, part of the peril was that his fans in many cases became his friends.

Paul Westerberg, Chris Mars, and Bob's brother Tommy kicked Stinson out of the Replacements in 1986. According to Westerberg, the band by that time had paid to put Stinson through treatment only to see him cop some heroin and shoot up on the day he was released. But Bob's ex-wife, Carleen, told a different story to Charles Aaron of *Spin*. During Bob's last stint with the band, a five-night run at the 7th Street Entry, "Paul came over with a bottle of champagne," she said, "and he said to Bob, and I'll never forget this, he said, 'Either take a drink, motherfucker, or get off my stage.' It was the first time I'd seen Bob cry. He came home that night in tears, he didn't know what to do. He'd been completely dry for the 30 day program and the three weeks following. But after that night, Bob felt that no one liked him unless he was drunk."

For the beginning, the Replacements were known for their reckless and unusually drunken musical abandon; on stage, they pushed at limits in more ways than one. Among a growing contingent of fans, it came to be viewed as a major disappointment if the Mats weren't completely fucked up when they played. They seldom disappointed. And even if Westerberg was the front man, Bob was the focal point of the wild-man energies the band evoked—the guitar player who on a good night sounded like a force of nature, the man who might do anything. The guy who, once he got started, couldn't stop himself.

Few of his long-time friends expressed surprise when the 35-year-old Stinson's body was discovered by his girlfriend in a Lake Street apartment on Saturday, February 18. According to preliminary reports from the medical examiner, he had been dead for up to two days, and a syringe was found nearby. The popular conclusion was that he'd overdosed, intentionally or not. But among friends, that speculation seemed beside the point. "I don't know how to say this," says the Replacements' first manager, Peter Jespersen. "There were times I'd say, 'I don't want to come home and find you dead.' But I guess Bob was just going to do what Bob was going to do. It's not like you could talk sense into him."

“In life you deal with probabilities,” says another friend. “Sooner or later something like this was going to happen.”

An old friend from the Replacements days remembers the last time he saw Stinson. “I was working downtown, last November or so,” he says, “and I’d just parked the van when I looked up and there’s Bob. I hadn’t seen him in a couple of years. I asked him what was going on. “Oh,” he said, ‘Paul’s got his deal and Tommy’s got his deal. Geffen’s got me. I’ve got an album almost finished, but they’re calling me almost every day about reworking this one song...’ And on he went. I knew he didn’t have a deal with Geffen, and I wondered whether he knew I knew. I really couldn’t tell. But I listened. It was sad— as if it just wasn’t enough to tell me how he was doing.”

Another friend, Ed Hoover, remembers a night when Bob started bragging about all the guitars he owned. He began describing each of them in detail. The odd thing was, at the time, Stinson lived in Hoover’s house— Ed and Lori Hoover had let him move in to their basement in June 1994 — and he had hardly any possessions. He certainly didn’t have a dozen expensive guitars, and Hoover knew it and Bob had to know he knew it.

Everybody knew Stinson drank and drugged too much, but toward the end of of his life, it was becoming apparent that this problems ran deeper. Friends say he had episodes of delusional thinking. Sometimes they were free-associative; he could switch in mid-sentence from the song he was working on to the tree outside the window and back again. Last June it got so bad that Stinson finally landed in the hospital. Over a period of about a week, Hoover watched Bob lose it. Once, at the beach, Stinson confided to Hoover that the lifeguards were in love with him. Another time he was at lunch with a friend when he began insisting that the waitress was crazy about him. He could get the woman into bed, he just knew it. He wouldn’t let it go.

“He claimed that he knew Kurt Cobain,” says Hoover, “He said they were going to get in on a record deal. But you don’t know how to take something like that. You don’t know whether to believe it or not. That was the thing about Bob, you just never knew.” But the most telling sign, says Hoover, was Stinson’s chess jones. Bob got obsessed with the game and made Hoover play constantly, even though he almost always lost. Even in the midst of losing, he would gloat over his every move, boasting that it had set him up for a decisive victory. Finally, Hoover convinced Stinson to check himself into Hennepin County Medical Center; where six months before he’d been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder— what used to be called manic depression.

Stinson also exhibited some of the symptoms of schizophrenia, though it isn’t clear whether that was part of his diagnosis. As Susan Sheehan, whose textbook study of a severe schizophrenic first appeared as a four-part series in *The New Yorker*, writes, “Schizophrenia, which afflicts 1 percent of the population, is the world’s most serious mental illness. Its symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, bizarre behavior, emotional withdrawal, and lack of motivation. The prevailing view of schizophrenia is that it is a variety of illnesses, many of which have a genetic factor that causes a chemical imbalance in the brain. Childhood environment that includes stress may, however, help to trigger the illness.” It is recognized as a progressive illness, one that often does not appear until a person has reached his or her 20s or 30s and grows worse over time.

For a while after his June hospitalization, Stinson seemed to take his condition seriously. He took his medication, and his delusional behavior waned. One night Hoover rented *Mr. Jones*, the movie where Richard Gere plays a man with bi-polar depression, and watched it with Bob. “It was very painful for him,” Hoover

remembers, "It was extremely painful. He kept saying 'Yup, yup. That's what it's like. That's what I'm like.' "

But his meds didn't seem to have any effect on his drastic mood swings, and his drinking bouts, which increased in frequency and severity, only aggravated the condition. In as little as a week's time, he could move from a manic state into fits of depression that kept him holed up in his room for days at a time. "After he'd wake up from that he'd be really good for about a day," Hoover recalls. "He'd get up here and he'd be lucid, intelligent, funny, witty, he'd laugh. He was a pleasure to be with." But then he's start drinking again.

Along with the depression came an obsession with Kurt Cobain. Even since the Nirvana lead man's suicide last year, Bob had expressed a feeling of kinship to Cobain. Both were manic depressive, romanced the needle, and felt trapped in their image. He told some of his friends that he admired Cobain's choice to end his own life, and he envied his freedom from mental illness and addiction. "We talked in November about Kurt," says former roommate and bandmate Chris Corbett, who recently started taking lithium to combat his own bi-polar disorder. "He really, really looked up to him and portrayed who he was in glowing terms, including his death. I didn't get the impression that he was being morbid or tossing out hints. But I think he was drawing a parallel."

In 1992, Stinson and Ray Reigstad, a former bandmate in a unit called Static Taxi, got in the habit of tossing ideas for songs back and forth. Bob would write one verse, and Ray would write the second. Once Stinson brought this rhyme to the table:

*I'd usually sit around
And drink up all my dreams
Then ask for yours
I go to bed
But not to sleep
I'm just one of those things
Life can't keep*

Through the years a lot of people moved in and out of Stinson's life. Many were only drinking and drugging buddies in the first place; some were closer than that. But the plain fact was that Bob tended to wear people out. One night while he was living with the Hooves, for instance, he went out with his friend Mary Johnson, a on-again, off-again sweetheart he'd met in 1981. The two spent the evening at First Avenue. Bob would have Mary buy him a beer, then disappear for a while. Then he would come back to cadge another beer, and disappear again. At one point an hour passed with no sign of Bob. She eventually left the bar and went back to the Hoovers' house, where she found Bob. He had drawn a loopy sketch on the white concrete wall of his basement bedroom— a portrait of van Gogh in a chef's togue, his ear floating next to his head, surrounded by scrawled phrases like "Me ass you" and "I am Love" and "U got big feet girl"-- and passed out on the bed. She went home.

When she came back the next day to check on him, he screamed at her for waking him up, so she went home again. An hour later the phone rang. It was Bob. "I need you to come and get me," he said. "She's coming to take me to practice, and I don't want to go." Who's *she*? Johnson wanted to know. "Carleen," said Stinson, referring to his ex-wife. So Johnson went over to get him. When she pulled up, he came out to the car with his guitar case.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"You're going to buy me some beer and take me to practice, he informed her.

“And of course all I could do was yell,” she remembers now. “Then, by that night, he didn’t even remember seeing me that day.”

Carleen Stinson was intimately familiar with the mood swings. She was in a band at the time, and they were trying out Carleen’s ex-husband as a guitar player. It didn’t work out; there were musical differences. And there was Bob’s condition. “He’d come in one night and he’d be ready to play,” she explains. “He’d come in the next night and he’d be sick, not feeling good, wanting to go home. Or he’d drink all the beer and want to get out of there. When Bob decided it was time to go, it was like the white flash. And the next time he came in his medications bothered him and he was shaking and sweating. It just wasn’t a stable environment to create anything in.”

Carleen was sensitive to Bob’s mental condition, but most people were not. The more charitable souls figured that he was a sort of idiot savant, a man-child who had never quite grown up; there were those, too, who thought he was just an idiot. “I really resent the fact that people made him out as stupid,” says Pete Jespersen. “He was a voracious reader. Especially music publications. I remember him doing that on the road when we traveled.” Stinson always loved rock & roll lore; friends remember him as a virtual encyclopedia of musical history from the 1950s and the ‘90s.

It’s predictable enough that Stinson would know a lot about rock & roll, but his capacity for obsessive attention to detail went further. “He knew every detail about every airplane that passed overhead,” one friend remembers. “He could tell you how much gas it could hold, the seating capacity, he knew how they were usually routed. He knew details maybe only an engineer would know.” He convinced more than one friend to drive out to the airport to catalog the planes as they flew past.

But those times were getting scarcer. “He’d say, ‘I’ve been like this my whole life. There’s nothing they can do,’” according to Hoover. “But he was barking up the wrong tree around here because I’ve got a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law on the other side of the family [with bi-polar disorder] and yeah, there is something you can do. You can quit drinking and go on lithium.”

By the time he moved in with the Hoovers, Bob had been more or less homeless for at least a year. His marriage to Carleen Stinson, which resulted in the birth of their child, Joey, ended about five years ago. He was always welcome at his mother’s house - as long as he didn’t drink or do drugs. He’d simply been bouncing around from couch to couch when a mutual friend asked Ed Hoover to rent Stinson a room so he could prepare for his upcoming tour with a band led by local musician Sonny Vincent. Bob didn’t have a guitar or an amp, so Hoover let him use his as part of the deal. His little room in the Hoovers’ house held a box-spring mattress on the floor and was heated with a pair of space heaters. It wasn’t much, but he loved the room and didn’t want to leave.

The Hoovers were different from a lot of Stinson’s acquaintances. “I was probably the only guy he knew who didn’t want him to play in my band,” Hoover says. But Ed and Lori didn’t really know what they were getting into when they let Stinson move in. The Hoovers already had their hands full with two children. Stinson was like a third. “We spent so many hours sitting talking on this couch,” says Lori Hoover. “He needed to be able to talk in a non-judgmental environment. His mouth was just connected to his brain and he needed other people to interpret it for him, and for that to be okay. And for him to be okay. He used to say, ‘You know what I mean, you know what I mean?’ All the time. And there were times when you had to say, ‘No.’ ”

“He really wasn’t that bad to live with,” according to Ed Hoover. “But the main thing was I just couldn’t stand watching it anymore. I just could not stand watching it. He had no direction in his life. He drank too much. He drank and drank and drank. It was depressing. Ultimately, I couldn’t stand watching it anymore. He could still play, but only once in a while. You can’t play guitar when you’re that drunk.” Hoover eventually got tired of trying to convince Stinson to clean up his act. “You could not get through his defense mechanisms. Believe me, I tried, He was like watching a kid. He really was. We all liked him a lot, but he was real hard to take.”

Finally, Hoover gave Stinson an ultimatum: Go into treatment or move out. During the first week of January, Bob moved out.

Around town he was never simply Bob Stinson; he was Bob Stinson From The Replacements. The title earned him free food, free liquor, free shelter, and free drugs. He could walk into any one of the several familiar bars and there would be a friend or a fan to buy him a drink. This was no small thing. Stinson had fought for and won royalties on his recordings with the Replacements, but after child support and debts, the semi-annual checks left little to live on. (According to one source, half of each check, or about \$2,000, went into a trust fund for his son, Joey.) He worked occasional odd jobs through the years, including a stint as a cook, but his primary means of survival was his name.

There was always someone with room on the couch for Bob Stinson, someone to slip him a \$5 bill. Sometimes they were fans he didn’t even know. Back when he was still playing in bands, college kids would buy him drinks between sets and ply him for stories about the Replacements. “He’d sit there and talk to them,” remembers former Static Taxi singer Ray Reigstad. “But he wouldn’t really talk about the Replacements.” It seemed oddly fitting when, on the day of his funeral, four teenagers who’d skipped last period at Breck to attend the services showed up at Carleen Stinson’s home for the post-funeral reception. They stood outside until someone took pity and invited them in, and then they hovered quietly as friends and family shared what Stinson’s mother, Anita Stinson Kurth, called “Bobby stories.” Occasionally they huddled to whisper among themselves.

Stinson took advantage of his fame. One friend remembers joshing Bob for mooching beers. “Geez, Bob, don’t you have any money?” the friend had quipped. “I expect you to buy me drinks because I’m Bob Stinson,” he snapped.

But if Bob Stinson From The Replacements reveled in the small-time perks he could command, he seemed ambivalent at the same time. Whenever Ed Hoover played the Replacements, Stinson would threaten to smash the tape. Once he actually did. “You know, he had a whole sack of fan mail back at Twin Tone he’d never opened,” says Ray Reigstad. “We’re talking from 1981 to the late ‘80s. ‘I don’t want to bring you down,’ he’d say to us, ‘but I have a lot of fans.’”

Chris Corbett, Static Taxi’s bass player and Bob’s roommate for a while in 1991, says Stinson had a dual identity. “He could be really caring and emotional one-to-one, but in front of an audience I think he felt the need to be a spectacle,” he remarks. “He couldn’t just be himself. And I think he was damned by this image of Bob the fuck-up.”

Spin published a sad and unflattering article about him in June, 1993. In the story, writer Charles Aaron quoted him offering to buy heroin so they could shoot up. Afterward, Stinson laughed off the story in public. (“It’s all true,” he told Jim, Walsh of the Pioneer press.) But some of his friends say he was devastated. “Of course he’s going to laugh it off,” in the words of one. “If *Spin* was a girlfriend and some macho

dude's like, 'Hey man, look what *Spin* did to you,' [you'd say] 'Aww, I don't give a shit about that bitch.' Which is natural. But with the people he was close to, he said that it hurt him."

"If you said anything against him," Hoover explained, "he would say, 'You don't love me.' And in a pretty genuine way. If I yelled at him for something, he'd say, 'You don't love me,' and he'd disappear for a couple days."

"He needed a lot of strokes," adds Lori Hoover. "He would sit me down and say, 'Do you think Ed likes me?'"

But the more he played the part of Bob Stinson From The Replacements, the more strokes he got. And the more strokes he got for that, the less he trusted anyone. Booze and drugs were the leveler: Loaded, he could enjoy being Crazy Bob.

When Stinson moved out of Ed and Lori Hoover's house, he began bouncing between his mother's and friends' houses, but spent most of his time at the Uptown apartment of his last girlfriend, who asked not to be named. Friends say he was trying hard to get his act together. He'd quit shooting up, as far as the Hoovers knew, as a condition of living in their basement and because he had no money to buy drugs. And recently he hadn't been drinking as much. He'd quit hanging out at Lee's, the northside bar where he'd taken to spending his evenings. On the other hand, others say he approached them in the last month of his life trying to score heroin.

But his behavior had spun out of control during the week before his death, and his girlfriend decided to move out. Bob had become increasingly demanding of her attention: Once he got mad because she was talking on the phone, so he smashed the phone. Another time he kicked the other phone and broke it because it was ringing. He threw a can of paint through a window.

"It wasn't like he was aiming toward me," she says, "but he was frustrated. And his way to express his frustration was to throw things. I didn't want to be part of that being-thrown-around scenario. So for myself I said 'Bob, I love you very much, but I need a little peace.' I didn't break up with him. What I did was I moved out. But he didn't understand that. He thought we were breaking up."

That week he overdosed on sleeping pills, and his girlfriend brought him to the hospital. A friend who spoke to her about it got the impression he was threatening to kill himself if she moved out. Hennepin County Medical Center released him and he returned to the apartment on Lake Street.

On Sunday, February 12, Ed Hoover got a call from someone who knew Bob's girlfriend. She told him to come over—they were calling the police. By the time he got there Stinson, who had been drinking, was subdued. But before that he'd been holding a knife up to his chest, threatening suicide. Hoover thought he may have been suffering another delusional episode. Before the police took Bob Stinson away, Ed and the others explained that he was more than drunk, that he was manic depressive and suicidal. Assuming Stinson would be held for 72 hours in detox or the psych ward, Hoover called Stinson's mom, who agreed that the crisis called for some kind of action. His girlfriend continued to pack her things in preparation for the move.

But on Monday afternoon Ed's phone and it was Bob. "This was a scary phone call," says Hoover. "He said, 'Hi Ed, this is Bob. I'm back with my woman. Everything's fine.'"

"I had told [Bob's girlfriend] they were going to put him on a 72-hour hold," Hoover continues. "I mean, really. They certainly had enough information. A guy holding a knife up to himself, and a week before he was taking sleeping pills? If that wasn't good enough for a 72-hour hold, I don't know what is."

Earlier that day, Stinson's girlfriend had brought Bob back to HCMC, where they refilled his prescriptions and sent him home. But Ed was worried. He drove over to the apartment and banged on the door. Bob's girlfriend answered. "She said, 'Everything's fine.' And I should go away, Bob didn't want me, or something," Hoover says.

That night at 9:45, police booked Stinson for 5th degree domestic assault, a misdemeanor. The incident report notes only that "[t]he defendant was arrested after assaulting his ex-girlfriend. The defendant was transported to HCJ and was booked." He was held overnight and arraigned on Valentine's Day. He pleaded not guilty. And then, once again, he was released.

Bob Stinson spent the last days of his life in the Lake Street apartment while his girlfriend stayed with friends across town. After he was released, he wandered over to the Uptown Bar and sought out a friend who was working the sound board that night. They talked for a while, and Stinson left. On Wednesday morning he went to Carleen's house. He was deeply depressed, and he asked her to help him find a normal life. "You have to start with what's inside you and take it from there," she told him. "If you don't like what you see when you look inside, find someone to help you fix that and get over it and move on," she said.

He talked for a half an hour about everyone else in his life-- his girlfriend, his family, friends, his son. He ran down the list, stopped before he got to himself. At Carleen's prompting, he finally told her he was scared to death of being alone, and scared of losing his girlfriend. Carleen says the conversation gave her hope that he was facing his problems. "I felt really good all day Wednesday," she said. "I felt like Bob and I had really made some progress. He was communicating on a different level finally. He was listening. He wasn't defensive."

Nightfall found him back at the Uptown. Thursday, he walked over to the Twin Tone Records office on Nicollet to borrow money against his next royalty check. Peter Jespersen, who had gone out to lunch, just missed him. But another employee gave him a small sum of money. After that, he dropped out of sight. His girlfriend found his body Saturday night after passing the apartment a few times and noticing that the same lights had been on for a couple of days.

"He called me [Wednesday night]," says a friend, "at 11 o'clock or so. And I talked to him a little while about courage and getting his act together. But I think that maybe he went out for a walk or went up to the Uptown. Somewhere along that line," she speculates, "Thursday or whatever, I believe that he probably just ran into someone who—" She can't find the words for what came next. "You know," she says. "He just had to be the old Bob."

REPLACEMENTS SHOWN THE DOOR AS WESTERBERG ASSUMES CONTROL

The Toronto Star, February 15, 1991

By Chris Dafoe

Of rock's many myths, none is quite so enduring as that of the pop group as the whole that equals more than the sum of its parts.

Even now, when producers are the creative force behind most of the records on the charts and most pop stars are as interchangeable as Milli and Vanilli, we still hold dear the notion of the group as a unit comprising four distinct but inseparable members - John, Paul, George and Ringo; Bono, The Edge, Adam and Larry; Paul, Tommy, Bob and Chris.

For much of the 1980s, those last four names comprised the Replacements, the unpredictable underdogs of American rock underground who, in their most recent incarnation, play the Concert Hall Sunday.

Formed in Minneapolis in 1980 when singer Paul Westerberg hooked up with a basement band that featured guitarist Bob Stinson, his 12-year-old bassist brother Tommy and drummer Chris Mars, the Replacements built a cult following on the basis of both their unpredictability - the band's shows were as likely to feature impromptu '70s covers as Westerberg's own compositions - and the way they seemed to epitomize the romantic promise of the traditional rock four-piece as gang cum familycum party-on-wheels.

Over the years, however, cracks began to appear in the Mats (short for Placemats) myth. In 1986, Bob Stinson, the wild man of the band, was given the boot and replaced by Slim Dunlop when his drug and alcohol consumption - which was, in a way, a cornerstone of the way fans saw the Mats - got so out of hand that it threatened to destroy the band. Further tensions emerged as Westerberg grew as a songwriter and found that some of his more reflective songs were buried by the hell-bent attitude of the rest of the Mats.

Those tensions came to a head last year, during the making of *All Shook Down*. The full band is featured on only two of the album's 13 tracks and outside musicians, among them John Cale, Benmont Tench (from Tom Petty's Heartbreakers) and Concrete Blonde's Johnette Napolitano, were brought in by Westerberg and producer Scott Litt. The cover may have read Replacements, but to most fans, it sounded a lot like the first Paul Westerberg solo record.

"In my mind I wanted it to be a solo record, but towards the end the band got involved," said Westerberg during a visit to Toronto last fall.

"I've been making my own demos for the last two or three records and I'd always liked the feel of them. But then the band would take the songs and add their personality to them and they would always change. I didn't want that to happen this time.

"I did it with the thought that I can't make an all-for-one-one-for-all record this time. I said I'm going to make this one this way, or we have to make the next move, which is for me leave the band. Did it cause a lot of tension? That's putting it mildly."

According to Westerberg, the tension was there already, even if it wasn't always apparent to outsiders.

"Every band that's been around this long has a love-hate thing, and we're no different," he said. "The only difference is that we never showed it. We would let everything build up inside and find our release through self-destruction. What we needed to do is sit down - and not have twelve drinks - and say, listen I don't like what you're doing."

"That would have been much more constructive than to do what we did, which was to go out on the road for six months and hate each others guts and smash up rooms. Cheaper too."

Inevitably, the change in approach - as well as the departure of drummer Mars, sacked after the release of the album and replaced by Steve Foley - has blurred the Mats myth. That's just fine with Westerberg. Indeed, in his view the Mats image as self-destructive but lovable losers has long obscured the band's musical merits.

"In the early days, for example, Bob certainly helped us get notoriety, he epitomized the early image of the band. But Bob was bad news - he was pulling us down, he was stealing money from the band to buy drugs. He lived that image night and day. And it started to seem that the music was being overshadowed by the image. I wanted to put the image in the back seat where it belongs. Get the perspective right. The plaid coats and the drinking were becoming the Replacements ... and oh yeah, they write some good songs."

"I know what the Replacements are. Part of it is attitude and image - which I don't think is me. And part of it is the songs and the sound, which I think I have a lot to do with."

It's probably risky to talk about the future of the Replacements. The departure of Mars leaves just two original members and Westerberg has said the involvement of the band on *All Shook Down* makes it less likely that the next record will be a band effort.

But if there is a future, it will likely be a very different band than its fans have come to know.

"A lot has been said about how badly our tour with Tom Petty went," said Westerberg of the band's experience opening for Heartbreakers in 1989.

"But one of the good things was seeing up close how a professional band works and how you handle material what you may not always be comfortable with."

"Because I was up there night after night singing these songs about desperation and pain and loneliness. Those are difficult things to conjure up and I would end up living those songs when we were on the road."

“That just leads nowhere. So maybe I’m going to have to learn to distance myself from some of those songs. Maybe I’m going to have to learn not take things quite so seriously.”

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THE REPLACEMENTS' ROCK RAGES FULL TILT; THE REPLACEMENTS AT: THE ORPHEUM WITH THEY EAT THEIR OWN, LAST NIGHT

The Boston Globe, February 23, 1991

By Jim Sullivan, Globe Staff

You want humble? You want proud? You want the rag-tag all-American band of miscreants?

Consider the Replacements. The moniker itself is modest - hey, they're not originals, they're replacing originals. And here's how they introduced themselves to the soldout Orpheum last night. Singer-guitarist Paul Westerberg hits the stage with a strangled "Honey, I'm home!" shout, aping Jack Nicholson in "The Shining." He introduces his band as the Lobby Magnets, which, he later explains as a term for a band so wretched that it flushes the crowd to the lobby. The band's opening song, "I Don't Know," boasts about "having one foot in the door, the other in the gutter," which has been true for some time. Popular as they are here in town - and as they are through much of urban America - their latest LP, "All Shook Down," is not even on the Top 200. That's all right - they're happy to be around. The band nearly fell apart last year, after 13 years of grinding out punk, pop and country-inflected rock, and it took a new drummer Steve Foley to maintain the Replacements' status as a top-shelf name brand.

Last night, the Orpheum was treated to 90 minutes of full-tilt rock, with a few wistful ballads tossed in sporadically. A lot of bittersweet songs were played with a razor-edge not unlike the Rolling Stones circa "Exile on Main Street."

What didn't the crowd get?

They didn't get the 'Mats Mystery Mess Derby - the guessing game played by fans of the Replacements ('Mats for short) for years as to how intoxicated Westerberg, Tommy Stinson and the rest would be when they hit the stage and what sort of slap-dash, sloppy, fall-apart set would entail. See, the boys don't hit the bottle any longer, and drunken, bleary-eyed nostalgia aside, everyone's better off for it. The Replacements let it rip with screaming rockers like "Happy Town," "Bastards of the Young," "Nobody," "Another Girl, Another Planet" and catchy pop like "Merry-Go-Round."

Westerberg, 30, has had the privilege and pain of growing up in public. He started as an angry, but funny, hell-raising brat and he's become a penetrating songwriter, his songs touching base with various genres and tempos. He's not unlike the Kinks' Ray Davies, whom, come to think of it, he somewhat resembles. For instance, "When It Began" is bouncy and breezy, but it's about the fading days of a relationship; the lilting "Swinging Party" has the refrain of "If being afraid is a crime, we hang side by side." If last night's set had a downside, it would only be that the band didn't dig as deeply into its young, snotty past as one might have wished - it'd be wonderful to hear "God Damn Job" or "White & Lazy" again.

They Eat Their Own, an Los Angeles-based band fronted by eccentric and sexy singer Laura B., played a wonderfully inspired opening set. The band has scored an alternative hit with "Like a Drug" and the rest of their set matched that song's alluring appeal. Over the course of 45 minutes, TETO moved from Red Hot Chili Peppers-like hard rock goofiness to caustic politicizing - namely in the anthemic "Too Many Guns in America." Laura B. likes over-sized gestures - she's got a bit of Alice Cooper in her - and with the band's solid, crunching hard rock behind her she can pull those off.

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SOBRIETY FUELS RUMORS OF DRINKING BAND'S SPLIT

The Washington Times, March 4, 1991

By Anne Gowen

When another singer in a rock 'n' roll band swears off the bottle, it's no longer news. But when the band is the Replacements - which for more than a decade has been known for raucous, off-the-cuff performances delivered under the influence - it's another story.

Far from bringing band members together, the new sobriety of lead singer and songwriter Paul Westerberg has fueled rumors that "the Mats" are headed for a breakup.

That, and the fact that the group's latest album, "All Shook Down" (Sire), features the assembled members of the band on only one track.

The band's recalcitrant singer decided to quit drinking after last summer's disastrous stint as the opening act for Tom Petty. At one point, the Mats appeared onstage in women's clothing. During the final show in Toronto, they tried to write songs onstage.

"We were never ones to go through the motions," Mr. Westerberg, 29, says. "The nights we weren't into it, we just didn't even try.

"You guys," he says, meaning the press, "wouldn't let it lie. It was the band without an image, who just so happened to take a drink all the time. That's what they wrote about, from sea to shining sea. That's what we became, the band that drank.

"Zillions of bands do and did and somehow seem to get their music across," he adds. "To us, it was a stumbling block."

But many fans have found the band's quixotic style appealing. This is a band whose seminal single was a tongue-in-cheek tribute to Box Tops lead singer Alex Chilton, a band led by a man who is not ashamed to say his favorite movie is "Old Yeller" and that he loves the music of Tom Jones.

But even newly sober, the Replacements continue to be unpredictable, as evidenced by Mr. Westerberg's description of two recent shows at the Orpheum Theatre in hometown Minneapolis.

"The first night I stood there and sang tremendous," he says, "and the second [night] we jumped around like idiots and I cut my head on my guitar and was bleeding the whole night."

It is not fun, he says, to play for a hometown crowd.

"I have no loyalty to the place where I grew up," he says of Minneapolis, the city that has garnered as much of a reputation in the music world as Athens, Ga.

This seems to be Mr. Westerberg's day to sit in a Connecticut hotel room and strum his red guitar and give attitude.

When asked about the recent departure of drummer Chris Mars, who was replaced for the tour by Steve Foley, he says testily, "I don't remember."

The band's eighth album - its most quiet, reflective work - began as a Westerberg solo project and features guest artists such as Concrete Blonde's Johnette Napolitano. The rest of the Replacements - then-drummer Mars, bassist Tommy Stinson and guitarist Slim Dunlap - got involved later.

"Me stepping out a little bit," Mr. Westerberg says, "allows everyone to do what they want and doesn't come off as a signal that the band is over."

***** WHAT: The Replacements with the Connells

WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow night at 8

WHERE: George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium, 21st and H streets NW

TICKETS: \$20 at TicketCenter

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SOBER BAND TOURING BEHIND ACCLAIMED LP

Associated Press, March 4, 1991

By John Pacenti

DATELINE: PHOENIX

The Replacements' Paul Westerberg might be riding high on his band's current critical success, but the soft-spoken singer insists that is the only high he is on these days.

"I stopped drinking this time in August and as far as I can tell I would like this to be the last time I stop. I have no desire to drink at all," Westerberg said from the band's home town of Minneapolis.

Westerberg spoke before The 'Mats - as diehard fans call the quartet - begun their 9-month tour in support of the acoustic-larded "All Shook Down."

The work has been praised by many music critics, including Rolling Stone magazine, which gave the LP four stars or "an excellent" rating. The disc also netted the band a Grammy nomination in the Alternative Rock Performance category. They lost to Sinéad O'Connor.

The Replacements - Westerberg, bassist Tommy Stinson, guitarist Slim Dunlap and drummer Steve Foley - once defined their alternative style as much by the band's booze-fueled sets as its angst-ridden rockers.

The band's original guitarist, Bob Stinson, was asked to leave the group in 1986, apparently because of alcohol-related problems.

Westerberg told Musician magazine last year, "If I was the bottle, I'd put me down." He now says that the drunken, frenzied tours for which The 'Mats have been known in the past are reportedly exactly that - in the past.

"There is no excuse to drink because you are on tour and you are on a bus," Westerberg said. "You play music for a living and people want to come hear you play. What is the big pressure in that?"

Frustrated when 1989's "Don't Tell a Soul" failed to achieve pop status, and disenchanted with winning few new fans after touring as the opening act for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, the frontman swore off future tours.

But he changed his mind after hearing from numerous fans. "I guess that maybe was all I really needed to sort of reassure me that there were people out there that wanted to hear us," he said.

And that, he added, is more important than trying to appeal to the masses and break the Top-40 barrier.

“We were set up once again for the last record (‘Don’t Tell a Soul’) to go big and when it didn’t, we were all taken down a notch because we all expected to do much better than it did,” Westerberg said. “In making this record there was no preconceived notion that this would be a hit record, so it freed me up.”

The result of Westerberg’s liberation from his pop albatross is what the singer calls the most “naked soul search I’ve ever done on record.”

For a band known for its rip-roaring screamers, “All Shook Down” takes a surprising acoustic path. But despite turning down the amp, the songs are as powerful as any rebellious tirade The Replacements have done.

“If anything, the commercial thing is to turn the amp up and compress it to get this big metally wash sound,” Westerberg said. “I wanted a more intimate-sound instrumentation because I believe it fits the lyrics better.”

To achieve his goal, Westerberg brought in a number of studio musicians and even initially toyed with having the disc be a solo project.

Going outside of The Replacements paid off. Westerberg brought in John Cale, formerly of the Velvet Underground, to play viola, a touch that makes the ballad “Sadly, Beautiful” live up to its name. Another recruit was Los Lobos saxophonist Steve Berlin, who gives “One Wink at a Time” a brassy, almost big-band feeling.

Westerberg shares the producing credit with Scott Litt, known for bringing the best out of such bands as R.E.M. “He is the only producer we have used that I would consider using again,” the singer said.

With Litt, Westerberg was able to attain the “demo feeling” that was absent from “Don’t Tell a Soul.”

“The problem with ‘Don’t Tell a Soul’ was, an outside party was brought in at the end to mix the thing,” Westerberg said. “He had no concept of why we used different mikes or different guitars to get different sounds. He had a tendency to make it all sound the same.”

Westerberg used the down-in-the-basement sound as a canvas to paint his most heartfelt vignettes. On “Nobody” he sings about attending an old girlfriend’s wedding: “You’re still in love with nobody and I used to be nobody.” On other songs, such as “Someone Take the Wheel” and “Happy Town,” he mixes wry observations with a sense of empathy for those for whom the American dream has been somewhat of a letdown.

“I felt if I didn’t say these things then I certainly could not get up there and write a fictitious tale about Dick and Jane and sing it with conviction,” he said. “These are the songs that were in me and had to come out.”

ROCK BAND GIVES UP FALLING DOWN DRUNK

The Toronto Star, June 13, 1991

By Chris O'Connor

Seen it; Done it; Smoked it; Drank it.

For 11 years, this was the Replacements' motto, a formula that led this band from their parents' garage in Minneapolis to college radio faves to uneasy wearers of the "Next Big Thing" albatross. During that time, they've released *Let It Be*, the best-selling independent LP of 1984, gotten drunk, signed a major-label record deal, gotten drunk, played on *Saturday Night Live*, gotten drunk, toured with Tom Petty, and gotten drunk.

Tonight, they will play Kingswood music Theatre with Elvis Costello, and they'll also . . .

"Nah, we won't be getting drunk," says bassist Tommy Stinson, a veteran of the Replacements' Rock n' Roll ethic since he co-invented it at the ripe old age of 13. Now 24, he's trying to change the 'Mats reputation as a band fueled more by Rolling Rock than the Rolling Stones.

"A lot of fans still come to see us stumble around and fall over," says Stinson. "We got tired of that act, we weren't getting anywhere with it. I honestly think a couple of us could've died if we kept it up. So what if a few people are disappointed because we're not falling down drunk any more?"

Last year's tour opening for Tom Petty was the nadir for Stinson, frontman Paul Westerberg, guitarist Slim Dunlap and then-drummer Chris Mars.

"God, that was dreadful," remembers Stinson. "We were worn down by the end. We had to play when it was still daylight, all our fans were stuck near the back because the record company had given away the best seats to (company reps) and Petty's fans didn't know who the hell we were."

Things started looking up from the bottom of the bottle when the tour ended. The 'Mats put out their latest *All Shook Down* album and unclogged their creative arteries by letting in new blood Steve Foley on drums.

"The band's a lot better with the new drummer," says Stinson, "not only because he drinks less (than Mars), but because he can keep more than one beat."

Stinson's also feeling confident about the Costello tour. "It could be a complete lie," he says, "but we were told Elvis asked for us to open, and that apparently he likes our stuff."

So is Stinson a big Elvis fan? Is he thrilled to be opening for the Angry Old Irishman who inspired nearly all of the Replacements' Angry Young Contemporaries?

"I'm not a fan," he admits. "I've only heard a couple of his songs, so I hardly even know his stuff. But he's supposed to be an alright guy. His fans also smoke a lot less pot than Tom Petty's, so that can only be a good thing."

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LEFT OF THE DIAL

GUITAR WORLD ARTICLE THE MINNEAPOLIS SCENE (August 1995)

By Marc Weingarten

In the early Eighties, Hüsker Dü, The Replacements and a handful of other scruffy Minneapolis bands forged what is now known as indie rock. This is their story.

Part 1 (1959-'76): LAND OF 10,000 GARAGE BANDS

Part 2 (1976-'89): DO YOU REMEMBER?

Part 3 (1984-'89): HERE COMES SUCCESS

Part 4 (1989-'95): LOUD FAST RULES

Most regional music scenes of any historical significance can be characterized in 10 words or less. Seattle? The birthplace of grunge, of course. New York? Breeding ground for the epochal punk revolution Athens? Home of R.E.M., avatars of jangly alterna-pop. But any attempt to pigeonhole the Minneapolis music scene into a convenient, easily marketable category would prove to be futile. This Midwestern city, located smack-dab in the center of Minnesota, has produced too many great bands and different sub-genres to be thought of as stylistically monolithic. And yet, the Minneapolis music scene is just as influential as those aforementioned focused movements, perhaps even more so.

If one traces the evolution of today's so-called alternative music, all roads lead to Minneapolis. The punkish-pop of Green Day and the Offspring would not have been possible without their groundbreaking forbearers, Minneapolis hometown heroes Hüsker Dü and Soul Asylum. Contemporary roots rockers like Wilco and the Bottle Rockets owe a huge debt to Minneapolis twang-and-clang bands like the Jayhawks and the Gear Daddies. And Kurt Cobain, perhaps the most important musical artist of the Nineties, was not the first songwriter to combine punk crunch with heart-on-your-flannel sleeve vulnerability. That honor belongs to the Replacements, arguably Minnesota's greatest musical export since Bob Dylan. The Mats, as the Replacements were known to their most devoted fans, made an incalculable impact on the Seattle grunge scene. "When I was living in Seattle, every band worshipped the Replacements," says Tom Hazelmyer, owner of the Minneapolis indie label Amphetamine Reptile. "If you look at some of the older photos of the Replacements, they were wearing the flannel shirts and the ripped jeans. Those guys virtually invented the whole grunge look, to say nothing of the sound."

But the roots of the Minneapolis music scene extend deeper than the Replacements, Hüsker Dü and Soul Asylum, and its impact stretches far beyond Seattle.

Part 1 (1959-'76) LAND OF 10,000 GARAGE BANDS

There's a rule of thumb in Minnesota that goes something like this: the number of local bands increases in inverse proportion to the temperature, which can get as frigid as 60 below in the winter. "It gets so cold here that people have to stay inside," says guitarist Slim Dunlap, who has been a fixture on the scene for over two decades and was a member of the Replacements for the last five years of the band's existence. "Musicians can also survive here for very little money. If you're a musician in cities like New York or Chicago, you live about as well as a junkie."

Perhaps this accounts for the explosion of Minneapolis bands that sprouted in the wake of 1964's British Invasion. Prior to that momentous event, Minneapolis was primarily a sleepy college town (The University of Minnesota is located there) whose music scene consisted of a few coffeehouses that catered to the folkie crowd. This pre-rock era is not without some historical import, however; a young U of M drop-out Robert Zimmerman, soon to be named Bob Dylan, played his first gigs during this time.

"There was quite an explosion in the Sixties," says Peter Jesperson, widely acknowledged as the patriarch of the second great phase of Minneapolis' music scene. "There were a bunch of great bands, like the Hi-Spirits, the T.C. Atlantic and the Jesters, covering all the popular British groups of the time. That was the first time I ever heard the word 'punk' applied to music."

The first Minneapolis band to achieve any national success were the Trashmen, whose one and only hit, 1963's "Surfin' Bird," climbed all the way to Number Four on Billboard's singles chart. The song, which features three poorly played chords and a baleful "bird is the word" chant, remains one of the loopyest Top 5 hits of all time. "Surfin' Bird's" amateurish aesthetic was also a significant harbinger of punk-the Ramones and the Cramps both paid homage to the Trashmen years later with their own hopped-up interpretations of the song.

"The Trashmen were like giant super-stars to us," says Slim Dunlap. "I saw them many times. 'Surfin' Bird' just hit you like a ton of bricks-it was so damned weird. All of the other songs of the time had these chants that were about dances, like 'Foot Stompin'. But then you heard this thing-'ba-ba-ba-ba-bird is the word'-and you thought, 'What the fuck is that?'"

A few local bands managed to chart nationally post-"Surfin' Bird"-most notably the Castaways, whose "Liar, Liar" peaked at Number 12-but during the late Sixties and early Seventies, Minneapolis was primarily a cover-band ghetto. "There really wasn't an audience for original music in Minneapolis at the time," says Dunlap.

Thumbs Up, however, were among the few bands in town that could play original material and get away with it, and it had everything to do with their driving force, singer/songwriter/guitarist Curtiss A. The magnetic frontman (whose real name was Curt Almstead) wrote eccentric yet infectious r&b flavored pop and possessed a powerful, impassioned voice similar to that of another blue-eyed soul singer, Van

Morrison "Curt was like Wilson Pickett with a guitar," says Bill Batson, leader of mid-Seventies Minneapolis favorites the Hypstrz. "He could do absolutely anything with his voice."

Almstead's musical foil in Thumbs Up was a young guitarist from southern Minnesota named Bob "Slim" Dunlap. "I was drawn to Curt's band because he was one of the few guys in Minneapolis who wasn't playing Top 40 stuff," says Dunlap. "I loved soul music at the time and you didn't hear many musicians playing it. Curt would play guitar riffs that didn't make any sense in the song but sounded great. He was a highly influential musician in town."

Curtiss A. may have blazed the trail, but the Suicide Commandos irrevocably changed the rules of the game. Led by guitarist Chris Osgood, the Suicide Commandos were Minneapolis' first real punk band Loud, fast and heavily influenced by proto-punk bands like the Stooges and MC5, they created the musical template for virtually every great Minneapolis band that emerged in their wake.

"The Suicide Commandos were the fundamental band at the time," says ex-Husker Du drummer/songwriter/vocalist Grant Hart. "When punk rock hit, they really filled a need in Minneapolis."

Adds Jespersen, "Without the Commandos, I wouldn't have been doing what I was doing, and I don't think the Replacements, Husker Du or Soul Asylum would have happened. They were the true catalysts for the whole scene."

By the time most of the world caught wind of the punk explosion happening in New York, the Commandos had been performing for well over two years.

"When that first Ramones record came out in 1976, we all thought, 'Wow, somebody else is doing what the Commandos are doing,'" says Jespersen. The first Minneapolis band to get signed to a major label-their debut album, Make A Record, was released on Polygram's short-lived punk imprint, Blank-the Commandos instantly legitimized the nascent local scene and provided the impetus for other local bands to start writing and performing their own material.

If the Suicide Commandos were Minneapolis' answer to the Ramones, then the Suburbs were the Midwest's very own version of the Talking Heads. This quirky quintet combined the angular, jumpy rhythms of the Heads with a high quotient of ironic detachment and Dada-esque, absurdist humor. "When the Commandos cashed it in, they sort of passed the torch to the Suburbs," says Peter Jespersen. "They were as wild and irreverent as anything I'd ever seen." The dance-influenced 'Burbs, formed in 1977, would soon become Minneapolis' most popular club draw.

By 1978, the Minneapolis music scene was thriving. The Suburbs and Suicide Commandos were selling out clubs like the Longhorn, the Blitz Bar and Suttons, while other local bands like the Wallets, the Flamings, the Hypstrz, the Spooks (Curtiss A's new band) and the Fingerprints were developing sizable followings of their own.

Like so many other Minneapolis music fans, sound technician and amateur record producer Paul Stark was excited about the changes afoot in his home town. Stark, who had already produced a few singles for the Commandos on his teeny P.S. label, was anxious to work with some of these great new bands and help them get the exposure he felt they deserved. So, joining forces with local sportswriter and closet music freak Charlie Hallman (who had "discovered" the Commandos) and Peter Jesperson, Stark formed Twin/Tone Records, a label that would prove to be the prime mover for the music boom to come.

Part 2 (1976-'89):DO YOU REMEMBER?

Although Minneapolis in the early Eighties had its fair share of important, high-profile clubs-The Longhorn, the Blitz Bar, 7th Street Entry and Goofy's were key venues-the locus for the burgeoning music scene was, in fact, a mom-and-pop record store called Oar Folkjokeopus. "It was the clubhouse," says Peter Jesperson, who the store for 11 years. "Oar Folk was the kind of place where nobody felt excluded. We weren't exactly guys with cool haircuts, after all-just nerdy record collectors." By stocking Oar Folk with imported punk vinyl at a time when those records were hard to come by, Jesperson drew serious music fans from all over the region to the store. "We all hung out at Oar Folk," says ex-Replacements drummer Chris Mars. "It was the alternative record store at the time."

Using Oar Folk as his base of operations, Jesperson would soon become the overlord of the early Eighties Minneapolis music scene. In addition to managing the record store, Jesperson also worked as a D.J. and part-time booker for the Longhorn and served as A&R man and house producer for Twin/Tone, which had already released E.P.'s by the Spooks, the Suburbs and the Fingerprints. "I guess I was a good guy to give a tape to at the time," says Jesperson.

One of the many bands hoping for a shot with Jesperson was Dogbreath, a quartet that certainly didn't conform to any notions of punk credibility. While guitarist Bob Stinson, his bass-playing baby brother Tommy and drummer Chris Mars worshipped the Sex Pistols and the Buzzcocks, they also had a strong allegiance to dinosaur artists such as Bad Company, Ted Nugent and Yes. "Bob idolized [Yes guitarist] Steve Howe, and he was doing a lot of speed at the time," says Jesperson. "So his band would play stuff like 'Roundabout' and 'Cat Scratch Fever' at 100 miles per hour."

Paul Westerberg, who lived in the Stinsons' neighborhood, was an ambitious guitarist and songwriter in search of a band. "I had played with Paul once before I met the Stinson brothers," recalls Chris Mars. "He was real nerdy. When Paul first joined the band, he would be drinking orange juice while we would be getting really drunk. Eventually he broke down, though." Westerberg, who used to eavesdrop on the band's rehearsals, managed to cajole his way into Dogbreath by convincing the lead singer that the other band members hated his voice. With Westerberg in tow, the band changed its name to the Replacements and recorded a crude four-song demo in the Stinsons' basement. Bob, the oldest member was 21, while his brother Tommy, the band's bassist, was only 14.

Meanwhile, across the river in St. Paul, another chapter in Minneapolis' storied musical history was being written. Grant Hart, who worked as a clerk in a St. Paul record store, wasn't exactly enamored of the legendary Oar Folkjukeopus: "Oar Folk was a place to get dissed," he says. "I remember walking in there and getting an 'Oh, you're buying that?' kind of vibe."

A lover of movie music and jazz as well as obscure indie rock bands, Hart fashioned himself as an outsider. So did Bob Mould, a guitar player who had just moved back to Minnesota from a stint attending college in New York. "Bob walked into the store one day looking for this indie stuff that he couldn't find in New York," says Hart. "He also had a bunch of cool records that I had never seen before, so we just hit it off from there."

Enlisting fellow record store employee Greg Norton, the three joined forces and formed a band, which they called Husker Du. The pigeon Swedish name, a winking tip of the hat to Minnesota's large Scandinavian population, actually came from an old board game.

The Huskers' formation coincided with the emergence of hardcore, the hyper-fast punk sub-genre that had already spawned a few great bands (Bad Brains, Black Flag) and countless lousy and mediocre ones. There was nothing pedestrian about Husker Du's brand of hardcore, however, primarily because the band was melodic and noisy in equal measure—their tuneful "steel wall of sound" was far more evolved than that of the typically plodding head-banging bands of the era. All three members brought with them a large degree of muscular musicianship that had heretofore been largely absent from hardcore. Hart drummed at a frenetic, whip-cracking pace, Norton was a human metronome on bass, and the dexterous Mould had a thick, caterwauling tone—all of which made Husker Du sound more like a five-piece band than a trio.

"Bob can do two things at once on guitar," says Slim Dunlap. "He can fool the ear into thinking there are more than just three people in the band. Instead of just strictly sticking to lead or rhythm, Bob will hold a chord, then play an intricate two-note figure, then go back to the chord effortlessly." Recalls ex-Suicide Commandos guitarist Chris Osgood, who was one of Mould's early guitar teachers: "Bob was able to create a sound that was both crunchy and sinuous at the same time. It's very unique to him."

Like just about every other band in the St. Paul/ Minneapolis area, Husker Du recorded a few rough tracks and brought them to Peter Jespersen, who rejected the band outright. "And I was like, 'Oh, by the way, you're going to have a problem with that Scandinavian name,'" Jespersen recalls. Unbowed by Jespersen's thumbs-down, the band did what all resourceful, label-less punks did at the time—they released their first single, "Statues"/"Amusement," and first two albums, *Land Speed Record* and *Everything Falls Apart*, on their own Reflex label. (*Land Speed Record* was distributed by New Alliance, a company owned by the legendary L.A. punk trio the Minutemen.) Recorded at an early gig on a paltry \$400 budget, *Land Speed Record* has the sound quality of a bad bootleg, but the Huskers' pile-driving, sonically expansive hardcore cuts through the record's lo-fi sludge like a sledgehammer through butter. Despite the record's bargain-basement production, it was clear that Husker Du was a new local band to be reckoned with.

The trio invariably attracted a largely male, leather-clad, blue-Mohawk hardcore crowd to their shows. "There was violence in that scene, but it was friendly aggression, male bonding," Bob Mould told *GQ* in 1990. "It was about getting your hair cut short and bumping into all these guys you didn't know. It was misinterpreted by adults, but then, everything is."

While the Husker's were playing their first gigs, Paul Westerberg was busy hustling the Replacements' demo. "Paul came in to Oar Folk one day and handed me this cassette tape that had stuff scratched out on it and 'The Replacements' written underneath," says Jespersen. "One day a couple of weeks later, I'm sitting in the back office of the store doing some paperwork and popping demos into a boom box. About 10 tapes or so into my listening session, I put the Replacements tape in. I don't think anything will ever be as magical for me as that moment. They were like Chuck Berry updated or something. It just absolutely floored me."

Jesperesen and his Twin/Tone partner Paul Stark immediately booked studio time for the band at Blackberry Way, a studio that Stark co-owned with ex-Fingerprints members Mike Owens and Kevin Glynn. "We just hit the record button and said, 'Go ahead.' They plowed though about 15 great songs in a row. I turned to Paul Stark and said, 'I think we're talking about an album here.'"

That album, *Sorry Ma Forgot To Take Out The Trash*, and its 1981 follow-up *The Replacements Stink*, are furious blasts of snotty petulance and locker-room humor played by a band who wore their manic, willfully sloppy execution like a badge of pride. Lurking just below the surface of the Mats' anarchic, frayed-at-the-edges attack, however, there were flashes of brilliance. Songs like the elegiac "Johnny's Gonna Die," "Raised In The City," "God Damn Job" and "I Hate Music" ("I hate music/It's got too many notes") were a considerable notch above the kind of sloganeering, nihilistic punk being proffered at the time. Westerberg wasn't interested in writing class-conscious screeds like the Sex Pistols or comic-book punk ala the Ramones. Rather, he was merely articulating the typical fears and frustrations of a bored, jaded teenager growing up in suburban middle America, albeit with more passion, raw power and intelligence than any other songwriter in any genre.

Although Westerberg's music immediately resonated with like-minded Minneapolis teens, it was the Replacements' freewheeling, wildly erratic live shows that forever sealed the band's near-mythic status. Frequently fueled by booze, the Mats' devil-may-care attitude made a mockery of rock star posturing. Audiences never knew what to expect—some nights the band would play brilliantly, while other nights they would deliver slurred, barely competent versions of "Smoke On The Water" and "Kumbaya." And Bob Stinson, the Mats' guitar-slinging court jester, usually led the way. Stinson, who would often spit on crowd members and wear dresses on stage, was the very embodiment of the band's anti-slick, balls-to-the-wall ethos.

"The first time I ever saw the Replacements, it completely changed my world," says Martin Zellar, ex-guitarist for Minneapolis roots-rockers the Gear Daddies. "It was one of their drunken shows. About halfway through the set, Bob, wearing a dress and a hat and tons of necklaces, gets pelted with a beer."

"Well, Bob starts staring the guy down while the rest of the band is chugging away. Suddenly, he makes this motion with his hand, as if to say, 'Bring it on,' and the crowd starts throwing beers at him left and right. Bob just started playing again, totally getting off on it I had come from this bar band, please-the-customers ethic, and here was this band saying, 'Fuck you, we do what we want to do.' It was incredible."

But Stinson was more than just comic relief or rebellious symbol-his slashing, careening guitar playing was the heart and soul of the band's sound. "Before Bob, there were all these impeccable, 'tasty chops' kind of guys in Minnesota," says Slim Dunlap. "Bob was the first guy to say, 'Fuck that.' He was the first guitarist in Minneapolis to play without trying to be Mr. Flashy God. His emotions came out in his playing. When he was really on, I have seen few greater guitar players."

By 1983, the Huskers and the Mats were firmly entrenched at the top of Minneapolis' musical hierarchy. Incessant touring and a series of strong albums had garnered both bands a considerable following beyond the borders of their hometown. Husker Du, in fact, were now recording for SST, a California label owned by Black Flag co-founder Greg Ginn. The Mats and the Huskers also found themselves moving away from the hide-bound constraints of punk and hardcore, respectively, into a more musically mature realm.

Metal Circus, Husker Du's first E.P. for SST, was a giant leap forward for the band. They were now venturing into previously uncharted territory, adding elements of pop and confessional songwriting into the mix. Similarly, Westerberg was now tempering the Replacements' sophomoric tendencies with new-found poignancy and emotional depth. This became evident on their third album, *Hootenanny*, particularly on the album's stand-out track, the bittersweet "Within Your Reach."

"Actually, Paul was writing quieter songs early on, but he was reluctant to show anybody because he thought it was weird," says Peter Jespersen. "So at the same time he was writing stuff like, 'I need a goddamn job,' he was secretly writing these plaintive acoustic ballads."

1984's *Let It Be*, the Replacements' fourth album, was a perfect synthesis of Westerberg's alternately sardonic and soul-searching sensibility. Widely acknowledged as the band's masterpiece, *Let It Be* completed the Replacements' transformation from one-dimensional punkers to mature rockers. Granted, the Mats hadn't completely sacrificed the youthful brashness of old, as songs like "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out" and "Gary's Got A Boner" made perfectly clear. But hook-laden Westerberg compositions like "Unsatisfied" and "I Will Dare" were catchier, smarter and more fully realized than anything he had tried before. The band itself was sharper than ever. Tommy Stinson and Chris Mars had by this time coalesced into a strong, cohesive rhythm section, while Bob Stinson's stinging, smoldering leads and staccato fillips provided the perfect counterpoint to Westerberg's gut-wrenching, tar-and-nicotine vocals.

"We had a big dose of attitude in the early days," Westerberg told Rolling Stone in 1989, "and it's kinda hard to put attitude down on tape. But we tried for, like, three records. We kinda gave up the ghost on *Let It Be*, and let a little bit of music happen, too. And that was the right mixture."

Let It Be would prove to be a critical turning point in the band's career. It sold more copies than their previous three releases combined and was effusively praised in the mainstream press as one of the decade's seminal albums.

At the same time that the Replacements were being hailed as rock and roll saviors, Husker Du were making waves of their own with their magnum opus, the two record, 23-track *Zen Arcade*. A bracing blend of acoustic balladry, psychedelic experimentation, quasi-rockabilly, ear-piercing distortion and the band's "pop-core" sound, *Zen Arcade* was Husker Du's breakthrough album. Like the Replacements, Husker Du would no longer be regarded as local cult faves. They were now unquestionably two of the best bands on the planet.

"It was kind of like having the Beatles and the Stones in Minneapolis," says Chris Osgood. "We had two very prolific bands making great music. It was really an amazing time." The Mats and the Huskers had arrived. Or had they?

Part 3 (1984-'89): HERE COMES SUCCESS

After four albums with Twin/Tone and the critical triumph of *Let It Be*, the Replacements were teetering on the cusp of mainstream success. But while the band certainly longed for mass recognition, they didn't court it, and they sure as hell weren't going to work for it. "Paul wanted to have his songs on the radio, but he didn't want to go through all of the bullshit to make that happen," says Peter Jesperson, who by this time had become the band's manager.

"If you told Paul before a show that there were some record execs in the audience, that was as good as saying, 'Go out and suck, please.'"

Says Mars, "We didn't plan on becoming stars, so when we actually became known in our own right, we felt very uncomfortable with it. We sort of threw it back at people."

Despite the band's ambivalence about fame, they were getting too big for Twin/Tone to handle. "One night the band just went for the throat at this gig in New York. They were just great," recalls Jesperson. "After the set, I spotted our attorney talking to this pudgy guy wearing an old corduroy jacket. After this guy left, our attorney turns to me and says, 'That was [Sire Records President] Seymour Stein and he says he's going to sign the band before the tour is over.'"

The band did indeed sign with Stein's Sire, a Warner Brothers imprint, in 1985 and soon recorded their fifth album, *Tim*. Produced by Tommy Erdelyi (a.k.a. Tommy Ramone), *Tim* contained some of Westerberg's most anthemic, radio-ready songs to date, and the Mats became critical darlings, receiving praise from coast to coast. But just when it

seemed as if the Replacements were going to hit the motherlode, the band's reckless lifestyle got in the way.

"I just kind of got caught up being a performer," Westerberg told author Gina Arnold in her book, *Route 666: On The Road To Nirvana*. "And where do you turn to? Drugs and alcohol, and every fuckin' escape you can possibly imagine."

Bob Stinson's drinking and cocaine intake was excessive even by the band's bacchanalian standards. "Bob didn't have a clue," Westerberg told *Spin* in 1989. "He didn't know the key of A from his left foot, so I'd sort of show him where to put his hands. `Just kinda start there, Bob.'"

The band's internal strife and obstinate refusal to play the major-label game did little to help Tim's commercial prospects. They didn't even appear in their own video for "Bastards Of Young," opting instead to use a single, black and white shot of a phonograph speaker instead. Not surprisingly, Tim was not the hit Sire was hoping it would be. The band's uneasy association with the mainstream had begun.

Shortly after a European tour in support of Tim, Westerberg fired Stinson. "The band was getting screwed up with cocaine and Bob was a scapegoat," says Chris Mars. "Everybody said, `Well, we did it for Bob's sake,' but we were all doing it just as much. After Bob left, I didn't see how we were going to fill his shoes."

The band's next album, *Pleased To Meet Me*, was recorded as a trio, with Westerberg handling most of the guitar chores. Produced by Memphis music legend Jim Dickerson, *Pleased To Meet Me* is the band's last great album and Westerberg's absolute peak. From the taut, raucous rave-ups "Red Red Wine," "Alex Chilton" and "I.O.U." to the fake cocktail jazz of "Nightclub Jitters," the wistful "Skyway" and "I Don't Know," a sly commentary on the band's next-big-thing status ("One foot in the door/ the other one in the gutter"), *Pleased To Meet Me* was an astonishing showcase for Westerberg's wide-ranging songwriting skills. And while Westerberg was no match for Bob Stinson, his searing solos on "The Ledge" and "Never Mind" were ample proof that he was a far better guitar technician than he had previously let on. Yet, despite almost unanimous critical praise, *Pleased To Meet Me*, like *Tim*, died an ignominious commercial death.

Husker Du suffered a similar fate when, in 1986, they followed the Replacements to Warner Bros. By this time, the trio had burnished their "candycore" sound to perfection on the SST albums *New Day Rising* and *Flip Your Wig*, dulling the old corrosive edge with streamlined song structures and a more palatable production veneer. Now that the Huskers had signed with a music biz behemoth, however, they faced the classic ex-indie-band conundrum: trying to expand their fan base without alienating their stalwart followers, many of whom felt betrayed by the move.

Despite the cries of "sell-out," Husker Du's Warners debut, *Candy Apple Grey*, was hardly the corporate concession the band's hardcore fans feared it would be. A ferocious mix of twisted love songs ("Don't Want To Know If You Are Lonely") and straight-ahead rockers ("Dead Set On Destruction"), *Candy Apple Grey* won over the naysayers but made nary a dent in terms of sales.

Candy Apple Grey's underwhelming commercial performance, coupled with the band's own substance abuse problems, began to breed infighting. Hart and Mould, Husker Du's principal songwriters, were now at odds over the band's increasingly pop-oriented direction. "I was challenging the punk stuff with more pop things, and Bob was more into hardcore," says Hart. "It got to the point where we were both doing side projects and we weren't focusing on the next Husker Du album."

Recorded under the most hostile conditions imaginable, 1988's *Warehouse: Songs and Stories* would prove to be the band's swan song, and what a glorious valedictory it is. Across two albums and 20 songs (11 by Mould, nine by Hart), the band pummels their way through some of the strongest, most accessible material of their career. It, too, was a commercial disappointment. When Husker Du's manic-depressive manager David Savoy committed suicide in 1988, the band -burned-out and embittered-called it quits.

By this time, the Replacements were also slowly unraveling. Not only were they working without a lead guitarist, but their drinking and drug problems had turned into full-blown addictions. With two mediocre-selling Sire albums under their belt and the label breathing down their necks, they were hurting for a hit. In 1987, Westerberg recruited Curtiss A/Spooks alumnus Slim Dunlap to join the band.

"I had no desire to be a Replacement", says Dunlap. "I was too old, I had a family; I just couldn't risk it. Then one night when I was doing a session, the guys dragged me to a bar and got me plastered. Somehow they talked me into joining the band. I just couldn't say no-I didn't want to see their music die."

Don't Tell A Soul, the Replacements' first album with Dunlap, was a tired, strained and-a first for this band-humorless affair. For the first time, Westerberg's writing sounded contrived and belabored. "I remember when Paul was making this record, he told me, 'This is supposed to be my dark pop album, and [Sire] wants me to write 'Bastards Of Young' all over again,'" recalls Peter Jesperson. "Songs like 'Anywhere is Better Than Here' and 'We'll Inherit The Earth' were phony little anthems that Paul was feeling pressure to write."

A disastrous tour opening for Tom Petty would prove to be the band's final indignity. "That tour was horrible," says Chris Mars. "We would be playing as people were coming in. Nobody cared. It was sort of a bitter end for the band."

1990's *All Shook Down* was a Replacements record in name only-Westerberg recorded most of the album without the band. While it was certainly an improvement over the listless *Don't Tell A Soul*, *All Shook Down* lacked the piss-and-vinegar exuberance of the band's greatest triumphs. And, with grunge on the horizon, nobody was really paying much attention anyway. Shortly after *All Shook Down's* release, the Replacements unceremoniously broke up.

In a two-year span, Minneapolis had lost its two greatest bands. An extraordinary era had ended, but it was hardly the death knell for great Minneapolis music. In typically resilient fashion, the scene continued to grow and flourish well into the Nineties.

Part 4 (1989-'95): LOUD FAST RULES

In 1984, with the Replacements' inevitable departure from the label looming, Twin/Tone's Jespersen and Stark were anxious to fill the void, and there were certainly more than enough bands in Minneapolis to choose from. Taking their cue from the Mats and Husker Du, post-punk bands such as the Magnolias, the Mofos, Run Westy Run and the Flaming O's (formerly the Flamingos) continued to keep the city's clubs pulsating with great music.

Jespersen was especially keen on a band called Loud Fast Rules, who had occasionally opened for the Replacements. Jespersen recounted one particularly magical gig for writer Gina Arnold: "One night at a club called Merlyn's, Tommy Stinson and I walked into the club real late and Loud Fast Rules were on stage ripping it up. I was getting chills it was so insane, and I went backstage afterwards and said to the singer, 'We've got to make a record.'"

Loud Fast Rules, who soon changed their name to Soul Asylum, would make five albums with Twin/Tone (two of them produced by Bob Mould). A tightly wound unit known for their high-adrenaline live shows, Soul Asylum were the next great band to emerge from Minneapolis, and the first to achieve the kind of big-league success that had eluded the Replacements and Husker Du. Four years after Soul Asylum signed with A&M, their 1992 album *Grave Dancers Union* sold over two million copies, thanks in large part to their photogenic front man, Dave Pirner.

While Soul Asylum, the Replacements and Husker Du were putting the Minneapolis scene on the musical map, their supremacy was being challenged at home by a contingent of hardcore groups who continue to regard this elite clique with healthy skepticism, if not downright disdain. Bands like (the now defunct) Halo Of Flies, the Cows, Hammerhead and Guzzard refused to fall in line behind the countless other would-be Minneapolis rock stars who were aping the sound of the Mats/Huskers/Soul Asylum axis. Twin/Tone's once unassailable hegemony was also challenged, as local indie labels like Red Decibel and Amphetamine Reptile began churning out records by Minneapolis' new generation of noise bands.

"There was definitely a reaction to what had become of the whole Minneapolis scene," says Tom Hazelmyer, who originally started Am/Rep in order to release records by his then-band Halo Of Flies. "Everyone had been injecting a lot of pop into the hardcore sound, and there were a lot of people who wanted to get away from that."

On another front, roots-rockers like the Jayhawks and the Gear Daddies were looking to country artists like Hank Williams and the Louvin Brothers as well as the Mats and Husker Du for musical inspiration.

"We were originally from Austin, Minnesota, so we had no idea what was going on in Minneapolis at the time," says ex-Gear Daddies guitarist Martin Zellar. "You couldn't even buy Replacements or Husker Du albums. However, if it hadn't been for those bands, we wouldn't have been signed."

The Gear Daddies made two countrified pop albums for Island records before splitting up in 1990. The Jayhawks recorded one self-released album and one for Twin/Tone before signing with Rick Rubin's American Records in 1992. Their latest release, *Tomorrow The Green Grass*-featuring the band's high-lonesome harmonies and shambling, pastoral arrangements-is finally garnering these local favorites some long overdue mainstream exposure.

As for the ex-members of Husker Du and the Replacements, only Bob Mould has managed to achieve some modicum of commercial success, with his power-pop trio, Sugar, which has reportedly broken up. Grant Hart's band Nova Mob now records for Peter Jesperson, the man who turned down Husker Du. Paul Westerberg's first solo album *14 Songs* fared just as poorly as his ground-breaking work with the Replacements; he has another album due soon. Slim Dunlap and Chris Mars have all recorded solo albums. Tommy Stinson formed a new band, Bash & Pop, which recorded one album for Sire before being dropped. Bob Stinson, who for so many personified the reckless, rule-busting spirit of the Minneapolis scene, died last February 18, a victim of drugs, alcohol and his own manic depression.

Minneapolis still continues to spit out great bands-Polara, the Hang Ups, Babes In Toyland and Zuzu's Petals currently lead the pack. But if history is any barometer, the best is yet to come. Perhaps Peter Jesperson, the scene's resident historian and most ardent champion, said it best: "The really great scene in Minneapolis right now is the one we don't know about yet-it's happening in kids' basements and garages."

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HOLD MY LIFE

from *SPIN*, 1995

Nearly seven years after getting booted from the Replacements, Bob Stinson continues to fight his past and duck his future. Charles Aaron fishes for some answers.

Sitting on a fallen tree on a small island in the middle of a frozen Minneapolis lake, Bob Stinson is a shaky defense for the rock life-style. Heineken propped up in the snow, thrift-store suit jacket pulled tight against the 10 degree cold, he blows his nose into the wind, belches, and shivers. An unrepentant alcoholic for more than ten years, Bob insisted that we buy a six-pack and do the interview out here, near where the speedboats race in the summer. "It's completely untouched by screw-ups," he marvels, blood-shot blue eyes squinting into a bright blue midday sky.

Still best known as an ex-Replacements guitarist more than six years after being fired from the band he started in his mom's house, Bob is harshly defined by the past. Every other Replacement, including his replacement, guitarist Bob "Slim" Dunlap, and Bob's half-brother, bassist Tommy (who refused to be interviewed for this story), has released, or will soon release, an album this year. Dunlap, "The Old New Me"; Tommy, "Friday Night Is Killing Me". Bash & Pop's debut; ex-drummer Chris Mars, "75% Less Fat", his second solo album; and ex-singer-songwriter-Winona Ryder heartthrob Paul Westerberg (who also refused to be interviewed), "14 Songs", his first solo outing. Meanwhile, Bob, 33 and holding on, is an unemployed cook, divorced, killing time in the Bleeding Hearts, a youthfully Stones-y bar band, and living in a dorm-style apartment wallpapered with rock posters (Jimmy Page, Ace Frehley) and Madonna pin-ups. A pink dress, a relic of Replacements past, hangs on a broken mike stand.

Long before Kurt Cobain's bankcard became an indie-rock talisman, the Replacements were self-destructively struggling with the postpunk myth of "selling out." While Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" video effectively fetishized the band and its fans' alienation, the Replacements refused to even show their faces for their first video, 1985's "Bastards of Young" (instead, the camera shot their feet, nervously tapping). The band flaunted its volatile dynamic. Bob, a burly, gentle Yes fan who favored thrift-store frocks nicked from Captain Sensible, played Shakes the Clown to Westerberg's half-assed Pagliacci, Grinning like a vagrant crashing an office party, he would petulantly refuse to play a solo, then spew out some grossly beautiful racket that was equal parts Kiss babyfood-metal, Robert Quine art-mangle, and pure-pop trash. Westerberg-an aloof fuck-up much like Bob-would inevitably smirk, look away, and cigarette-rasp a heart-wrenching, no-future-in-frontin' chorus. His best songs ("Shiftless When Idle," "Color Me Impressed," "Kids Don't Follow," "Unsatisfied") scripted the self-deprecating middle-class vulnerability of the '80s just as sharply as Dylan sketched the pretentious middle-class dreams of the '60s. Tommy, 11 when he joined, struck airborne rock poses and thumped punkily, flashing his I'm-too-young-to-know-better glance at college

girls. Mars, a dead ringer for an ABC After School Special "loner," hunched over his drums, slight frame pounding away like somebody was chasing him. There was never much tawdry glamour with the Replacements; just raw nerves.

But as boredom and fear of semi-fame crept up on the band, they more often sputtered through a schlock-block of stunted covers ("Detroit Rock City," "Smokin' in the Boys' Room," "Cat Scratch Fever," etc.) like janitors throwing a smoke bomb down the toilet. Night after night, they heckled themselves: It's a filthy job, but somebody's gotta screw it up. And Bob, the band's most recklessly troubled member, became a symbol of how rock dangles redemption, and then laughs in your face when it's snatched away.

He is offhandedly brutal about his risks and disappointments. "You know, I'd really like to meet myself sometime. I'd probably beat the shit out of myself for letting opportunities go by," he says, adding, "I guess you could say I'm never pleased, or in Paul's words, I'm unsatisfied." More problematically, he rambles on about his life's almost-clownish misery. "It's like trying to commit suicide. The bigger the gun, the less likely you are to make it happen. I mean, I put a gun to my head, but I'm still alive. I don't have a problem with that."

It's almost as if Bob's begging someone to tell him he's full of shit. "You know, he does play the tragic thing up," says longtime friend Terry Katzman, the Replacements original soundman and owner of Garage D'Or Records in Minneapolis. "He's a true rock'n'roll personality. He'll have little spells of lunacy...just stirring things up. That's part of what he's about. Still, I think he's a loving human being."

Neither terribly famous nor tragic ("Though I've seen him look pretty tragic," Katzman chuckles), Bob has muddled through a variety of bands since the Replacements, but nothing's clicked. Although he constantly downplays the Replacements as "not that big of a deal," what he's obviously missing is the tightly tangled, fraternal bond of the band—a sense of family, no matter how dysfunctional—and Westerberg's uncanny ability to write songs that were as much about Bob as himself. Now Bob awkwardly seeks out that bond everywhere, in other bands, in bars, in interviews, by reading rock bios and quoting and comparing himself to rock stars, particularly fellow mama's boy John Lennon. In the Bleeding Hearts, he tries to fit in, but he's more of a sideshow than a sideman, and it's hard to watch him cede the spotlight to his roommate, 23-year-old singer-songwriter Mike Leonard, a charmingly clueless rock brat who tosses back his retro-rooster-cut hair, belts out lines like "I was 21 / You were 17 / I was in love / You know what I mean," then yells, "Take it, Bobby!"

Bash & Pop's Friday night showcase with the Bleeding Hearts at the First Avenue & 7th Street Entry, a black-walled sunken rec-room of a club in downtown Minneapolis, was a minefield of emotions. And predictably, Bob stomped blindly, full speed ahead. During the opening set, when his mom, ex-wife Carleen, and sister Lonnie all walked in, Bob simply stopped playing. Waving crazily, resplendent in pinkish-orange hausfrau blouse and burnt-orange pajama bottoms, he leaned over to give them a kiss. The rest of the band was bewildered as Bob scurried back and started screaming in Leonard's ear. Finally, as the song ended, Leonard understood and also gave Mrs. Stinson a kiss. However clumsily, Bob was trying to welcome Leonard into the family. Later, when Tommy and Bash & Pop tore into their single, "Loose Ends," Bob jumped up and down

like an overgrown kid, hugging his mom from behind, and pumping his fist toward the stage. Like Tommy donning a dress in the video for the song, it was almost as touching as it was bizarre.

The Stinson family definitely was "no Leave It to Beaver," as Bob puts it. Mom, Anita, was an alcoholic throughout his childhood. A longtime bartender at the Uptown, a popular rock-scene hangout within walking distance of Bob and Leonard's apartment, she's been sober for seven years. (A recent Uptown exchange: Bob: "Mom, I need a rum and coke." Mom: "Need?" Bob: "Okay, I want a rum and coke.") His father, an alcoholic who divorced Anita when Bob was two, has no contact with the family.

Tommy's dad, his mother's longtime boyfriend, is dead. Neither son made it to high school. Bob was pulled out of ninth grade for being "incorrigible and self-destructive," and went through the entire juvenile system. "As a matter of fact, the last group home I was at was where I learned to drink, get good drugs, and play guitar, all at the same time," says Bob.

When Bob returned to the family, Tommy became his personal project. "He was throwing stones through gas station windows and shit like that and my mom said 'Something's got to be done.'" So Bob bought his brother an amp and taught him how to play Yes's "Roundabout" and Peter Frampton's "Show Me the Way," and appointed him bass player of Dogbreath, his and Chris Mars's first band. "God, I was so impressed," says Bob. "I mean, I made him cry a couple of times, throwing bottles and speakers at him, but when he caught on, he surpassed me, I mean, his happiness, not his talent, of course." Eventually, Tommy left school, in the ninth grade also, to join the Replacements full-time. The Stinson brothers have coexisted uneasily—sometimes not communicating for a year at a time—since Bob was dumped from the Replacements in 1986, reportedly for excessive drug use and his unwillingness (or inability) to learn the more "mature" material being written by Westerberg. This past year, though, the relationship got its biggest jolt when Bob went into a coma and almost died after a neglected tooth infection spread into his nervous system. "Same thing that Jim Henson of the Muppets had!" he laughs devilishly. Tommy, preoccupied with recording the Bash & Pop album, never visited the hospital, instead sending his brother a copy of *Stairway to Heaven: Led Zeppelin Uncensored*. "Beside all the shots that got me high every three hours—the Demerol and blah blah blah—I'd have to say that the Led Zeppelin book helped me through more than anything," says Bob. "[Tommy] was doing his record, and he was, um, how can I put this nicely, I don't think he could come to terms with the fact that I was going to kick the bucket, and that scared the hell out of him, to be honest." Letting the Bleeding Hearts, relative unknowns, open the show for Bash & Pop at the Entry was a thinly disguised peace offering from Tommy to Bob.

But some wounds never heal. And family and friends express uncannily similar frustrations with both siblings.

"Tom is Tom," says Katzman. "I feel real sad for him and Bob that they haven't stayed in touch. I think Tom will be sorry for that someday. I feel like he's disassociated himself. He's moving to L.A., he's separated from his wife. But hey, give the guy a break. He was playing the bass with the Replacements when he was 11. Its remarkable he's still around."

"You just can't change people," says Mars. "But it's interesting about Bob. He's very smart, he's just so different. He says stuff that other people think, but are afraid to say...I don't know if it's this rock-casualty thing. I think it's a personality thing, although something like the Replacements can really affect your personality."

Expectations for the Replacements raged after 1984's *Let It Be*—a perfectly torn flannel shirt of '60s garage-pop, '70s blues-metal, and '80s hardcore. As did doubts about Bob. Westerberg told *Musician* in *February* 1989: "[Bob] believed the image we played with onstage. Bob thought that was the Replacements. He didn't understand, 'Oh, we gotta play some music, too. We gotta do something.'" Here was the readily embraced mythology: Bob was a balls-to-the-wall slob holding back the band's aesthetic development. But what Bob embodied, and what Westerberg would not admit (except in his songs), was a specifically postpunk burden of truth. Like it or not, the Replacements' brilliance became noosed up with their pathos. They rocked because they felt pathetic. But then they still felt pathetic, so Westerberg's aching ballads about stunted hopes were even more poignant. After Bob was gone, that dynamic was lost.

"It was never the same after he left," says Mars. "I remember in Detroit, somebody got together like 1,000 cardboard cut-outs of Bob's face for the show and passed them around for everybody to put on, including Slim. It's like they were protesting, they wanted Bob back. That was a great night I missed him." "Yeah, we had our image, and then when I left, the Replacements were like a body without a face," says Bob with his usual bluntness.

But Westerberg was spooked that the band was being pigeonholed as out-of-control boobs. So he contrived a reality for outsiders in which Bob was the out-of-control boob. Which wasn't too difficult, since Bob was drunk, high, or in a dress most of the time (the cover of 1985's *The Shit Hits the Fans* live cassette was a hilarious drawing by Mars of Bob as a barber, beer in one hand, clippers in the other, and a sign above the chair which read: "Asylum Cut \$20... or lines"). But Westerberg's fatal contradiction was that he made the argument against Bob with a drink in his hand.

"Bob became the scapegoat, for whatever reason," says Mars, who was fired from the band in 1990. "Of course, he could've gone too far and killed himself. But if you say, 'Could Bob have died?' then you have to ask if any of us could have died. Funny thing was, after Bob left, it got worse with Tommy and Paul, and it was to the point where I was afraid that they wouldn't wake up the next day."

Supposedly, during the sessions for 1985's *Tim*, the band's major-label debut, the situation degenerated to the point that "Bob didn't have a clue," or so Westerberg told *SPIN* in April '89. "He didn't know the key of A from his left foot, so I'd sorta show him where to put his hands. 'Just kinda start there, Bob.'" After a European tour supporting "Tim" ended, Bob himself sensed the band was on the verge. "I remember he came to practice and said that he was sad, he didn't like himself for drinking, and just the state of the band," says Mars. "I think it was a plea to have some sort of camaraderie, to sit down and talk. You know, 'it's not only me who's fucked up, it's the band, it's the attitude.' But what can you do? We never talked about those things. It was almost sacred, this circus we had going."

Later in '86, about six months after he and Carleen were married, a court order put Bob in St. Mary's Rehabilitation Center for alcohol abuse treatment. "Bob hit me when he saw me talking to a guy at a party," says Carleen. "I'd never been hit before, and Bob had never laid a hand on me, but he was afraid that somebody was going to take me away from him. So I called his mom, we're really close, and she said he'd been diagnosed as psychotic when he was 12, and that nobody had done anything about it. The court sent him away as a condition of us staying married. But once he got in there, he made the decision to stay, and it worked, at first."

Shortly thereafter, Bob was playing on the stage at the Entry when the Replacements were doing five nights in a row. It turned out to be Bob's last gig with the band. "Paul came over with a bottle of champagne," Carleen says, "and he said to Bob, and I'll never forget this, he said, 'Either take a drink, motherfucker, or get off my stage.' It was the first time I'd seen Bob cry. He came home that night in tears, he didn't know what to do. He'd been completely dry for the 30-day program and the three weeks following. But after that night, Bob felt that no one liked him unless he was drunk."

Two weeks later, on a Saturday morning, Bob was sweeping up the First Avenue disco, where he worked to make extra money. Westerberg, very drunk, called up and explained that he'd been getting lectured for months by record executives in New York who'd indicated that they were fed up with Bob's behavior. "I don't think I can play with you anymore," Westerberg finally blurted. Bob murmured okay and hung up.

"After that, Bob started drinking again, and he's been drinking ever since, like he has some major death wish," says Carleen. "He sold all his guitars and amps, broke my guitar and bass [Carleen plays in a local band, My Uncle's Butt Trick]. We separated because we had a son by then and I didn't want Bob around him. It was just so frustrating. The constant abuse those guys in the Replacements were doing and then to try and clean up their image for the public and claim that they were a chemically free band now that Bob, their evil appendage, had been hacked off. Bob was not a wasted drunk when their relationship dissolved. In fact, it was the other way around.... He loved those guys so much that he actually trained Bob Dunlap, he taught him all his leads and all the songs. And how did they repay him? By trying to make him out to be some evil, codependent monster."

But Bob Stinson's travails with the Replacements pale in comparison to a relationship he's never even had the chance to get wrong. And that's with his four-year-old son Joey, a blond, blue-eyed Bob look-alike who was born without an immune system, and was not expected to live a week past delivery. Treated with an experimental drug used for AIDS and terminal cancer patients, Joey has never walked, only speaks a few words, and his medical costs run about \$200,000 a year. His mental capacities, however, seem intact "if Joey lives and grows up, he's gonna be a real neat human," says Carleen. "He has a lot to teach the world. And all animosities aside, he has a lot to teach Bob, too."

But unless he's sober, Bob's not allowed to see his son. When Joey was hospitalized recently for a staph infection, Bob stayed dry and visited. But as soon as Joey got better, his father went back to a steady diet of 16-ounce export malt-liquors. Nothing,

not Joey's illness, nor the threat of his own death, seems to jar Bob out of his cliched rock casualty rut.

As we trooped back across the frozen lake after our interview, Bob ducked under a bridge and slid out onto a section not covered with snow where he could see fish through the ice. I was afraid he was going to slip and all butt-over-beer-bottles again, like he had earlier in the day on the sidewalk in front of his apartment, but he kept his balance, excitedly pointing toward a group of men seated in lawn chairs up ahead. "Do you know what they're doing?" I nodded. "Oh man, I love ice-fishing." Then, just as quickly as the fish darted under the ice, Bob's mind switched subjects. "Have you ever done heroin?" Before I could answer, he continued. "Ever use a needle?" I shook my head no. "You can really get some good, cheap stuff around here. I don't really do it, but if you wanted to we could get some and do it, you know, later, if you wanted." He almost sounded like he was asking me out on a date. And I didn't want to say no, because this was the first real gesture of well, I don't know, trust or friendship or something that Bob had extended. When I finally said no, I knew he felt like I was judging him.

"You know, my mom's really worried about Tommy," said Bob, without prompting. "It bothers me that Tommy does drugs and it bothers him that I do drugs. But we still get along all right."

Later, back in the hotel room, channel-surfing a sizable wave of depression, I suffered through Ugly Kid Joe's MTV version of "Cat's in the Cradle," the most maudlin father-son lament ever, and I thought of Bob, and felt like punching a hole in the wall. What the hell was he doing to himself and what was I doing here, pushing his buttons? What did we want from each other? I remember at one point Bob said that I seemed like more of a confused fan than a reporter, which was just about right, though I was more confused than anything else. But for the life of me, I can't figure out where that leaves him.

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Paul Westerberg: Interview by Russell Hall

This is the complete version of the interview Russell Hall did with Paul in May of 1996. An edited version appeared in **Performing Songwriter**, thanks to Russell for letting us read the full text!

Few artists have had as great an impact on modern music as Paul Westerberg. It's not at all farfetched to speculate that without Westerberg's deeply personal, angst-driven songs, the entire alternative rock explosion might never have occurred. As leader of the legendary Replacements, and as a solo musician, Westerberg's facility for soul-searching balladry and searing rock 'n' roll has earned him the respect of songwriters everywhere. Artists as diverse as the Gin Blossoms, Nirvana, and Tom Petty have borrowed from him and cited his influence.

Westerberg began writing songs in 1979, inspired initially by punk pioneers such as the Sex Pistols and Johnny Thunders. Specializing in three-minute bursts of revved-up power pop, on the surface the Replacements' early songs were unexceptional, although Westerberg did slip in the occasional ballad, hinting at a mature aesthetic which would reach fruition within a few years.

Between 1984 and 1987, the Replacements released a trilogy of inspired, reckless masterpieces which, along with REM's recordings during the same period, constitute touchstones for practically every modern rock 'n' roll band. Let It Be, Tim, and Pleased To Meet Me each mixed a Chaplinesque spirit with songs that zigzagged between blustery bravado and harrowing insecurity. Several classics from this period--including the ballads "Skyway," "Swingin' Party," and "Here Comes A Regular"--rank among the best pop-rock songs of the '80s.

The Replacements' final two albums, Don't Tell A Soul and All Shook Down, heralded significant changes in songwriting for Westerberg. By the turn of the decade, he had begun focusing on the romantic disillusionment which had often lain at the heart of his best songs. Westerberg also began making serious changes in his lifestyle. Plagued since adolescence by an addiction to alcohol, he set about the task of conquering the problem, and by the time of the Replacements' final tour, he had stopped drinking entirely.

Since 1991, Westerberg has been living in his hometown of Minneapolis, where he spends most of his time playing piano, writing songs, and collaborating with friends. In 1992, he wrote the score for *Singles*, a Generation X film which also featured two songs showcasing Westerberg's pop sensibilities. A year later, he released *14 Songs*, an album which prompted *Rolling Stone's* critics to name Westerberg the year's best songwriter, the second time he had received that distinction.

The spring of 1996 saw the release of Westerberg's second solo album, *Eventually*. The

album features a set of songs tied loosely together by time-based themes, and evidences a poetic spirit susceptible to both empathy and enchantment. A great writer once said that art should "tell us things that we know but don't know that we know." Like all good artists, Westerberg seems to grasp this concept intuitively. Eventually paints a subtle portrait of a man becoming comfortable in his own skin, and in that sense it's an optimistic work. The album also proves that, at the age of thirty-six, Paul Westerberg is at the top of his craft.

Eventually sounds more relaxed, and more optimistic, than things you've done in the past. Does that reflect your state of mind these days?

I think so. It's not like everything is smooth as silk now, but I guess the more I do this, the more I realize that whatever happens is going to happen, and I just do my best and put it out there.

Do you feel any responsibility, musically speaking, to anyone other than yourself, whether it be fans or record company executives?

I think my standards are high enough that, if I meet my own, then that takes care of the "man," and most of the fans, at least. I don't cater to anyone other than myself, I'm afraid.

Most of the people I've spoken with who've heard Eventually--mostly journalists--have said that the album is growing on them. It didn't necessarily hit them immediately, but they're liking it more and more as they listen to it. Is that typical of the response you're getting?

I've heard that. I've also heard other people say they loved it the moment they heard it. I would say it depends on what you listen for, and that's probably a fair estimation, coming from people with a literary background. The lyrics may pass you by initially, but as you listen more and more, you maybe hear a secondary meaning in all the songs. Whereas someone who concerns himself with melody . . . I mean, it's probably impossible for that type of person not to like "These Are The Days." It's got such an infectious melody. So if you listen on that level, then it's easy to like the songs right off the bat.

The songs also seem to meet in the middle ground of the territory that was covered on 14 Songs, rather than veering back and forth between rockers and ballads.

That's true. I purposely left off the songs on the outer fringes, on both ends. Like the homemade, quiet stuff, for instance. I had to leave on "Hide N Seekin'," because I just thought the feel of that song was great. But 14 Songs was more of a concept album than people realize. It was fourteen songs; it wasn't fourteen performances. And it wasn't necessarily [meant to be] a full, rounded record. Whereas the new album is much more of an album in which the songs fit together. I had good songs that I left off, and I've rarely done that before. I usually try to put the best songs on, and if they don't all fit next to each other, then so what? But this time, I really tried to make them flow together.

Did you put a lot of thought into the song sequence?

A bit. I knew long ago that "These Are The Days" would be the first song. And once I'd written "Good Day," I realized that was the closer. Then, after a while, I thought that perhaps that would leave the album on too much of a down note, for some people, although it's an optimistic tune. So I added the last song. But yeah, I was fairly picky about the order, this time.

Speaking of "These Are The Days," I understand that one reason the Atlanta sessions didn't work out was because of a disagreement you had with [producer] Brendan O'Brien about the song.

Yeah. Brendan really wanted to do it as a ballad. We tried it several times, and he was happy with the results we were getting, and I just heard a much different song in my head. I heard it much more as a celebration, and he heard the opposite. He heard it as kind of a melancholy thing. So yeah, that was one reason we didn't see eye to eye. But we got some good stuff: "Love Untold," "Angels Walk."

Back to "Hide N Seekin'." Did that song go through many changes before it arrived at what it is on the album?

No. I demoed it at home a little more elaborately. But it was recorded while everyone was having lunch. I was playing by myself, the engineer had just come back, and he hit the "record" button. We added some bass and keyboard later, but it was one of those very organic, natural little performances. I'm really glad there was someone there to turn on the machine.

"Once Around The Weekend" sounds a little like a rewrite of "Merry Go Round," to me.

Hmm . . . I don't hear that. It's probably the same tempo. It's not in the same key, but there's probably a similar melodic line. Tempo fools a lot of people. Someone told me yesterday he thought "First Glimmer" and "Love Untold" were one and the same. I was like, "Yeah, well, they're probably the same tempo." The bass pattern is the same, but . . .

Are you putting your face on the cover, this time?

It is, yeah. I tried desperately not to. It's just a simple photograph of me, and there'll be one on the back as well, I think. Originally, we had this cover that I really wanted done, and we spent a lot of time on it. We hired an artist who was about eighty years old, who used to do art-deco advertising, and I had him make this elaborate logo. He was supposed to draw an animated figure depicting me, and it ended up looking . . . a little kooky. (laughs) It ended up looking like a Buster Brown ad for shoes. So we killed it at the last moment, and just slapped a photograph on there.

No lyric sheet, I presume.

No.

Never will be? Or never say never?

No, I never want one. I did sign a co-publishing deal this year, so I think they'll probably make a little songbook, which is something I guess I used to get when I was a kid. But I don't see that there's much use for [a lyric sheet]. You can hear the words, can't you?

Sure. But you realize, I suppose, that people have tried to decipher your old lyrics and put them on the internet. Have you seen that?

No, I haven't. But I've had people come up to me for years and say things like, "What is this line? It sounds like you're saying this to me." And that's what makes it fun, for me, because I get new interpretations of these lines that are dead obvious to me. I guess my diction isn't as clear as I thought.

Do you sometimes get improvements? Do you ever think, "Wow, I wish it had been that?"

Oh, yeah. They figure I couldn't have said anything as dumb as I actually said. They'll come up with an elaborate rhyme that gives the line new meaning.

I hear you've stopped smoking.

I had to do that. I'd always said I'd quit when I had to, and it had sort of gotten to the point where it was advised that I not smoke.

What will that do to your voice?

Well, you can hear it on the record. It won't really change it. I quit one year ago, so every vocal was cut since I gave up cigarettes. But I've damaged my larynx to the point where my voice is going to sound like this, forever.

Twice, Rolling Stone's critics have chosen you the year's best songwriter. Do you get anything for that?

No. No award, no money. You get the jealousy of other songwriters, I suppose. I don't know that the readership ever chooses their favorite songwriter, but it's always interesting that the reader's choices and those of the critics are never one and the same.

Whose comments do you tend to heed more, those of fans or those of critics?

Well, it's hard to make a sweeping generalization in regard to the fans, because I've talked to some journalists who were indeed fans, and also to some fans who were really dumb. And I just think . . . someone who is a little more intelligent, I tend to listen to. There are certainly dumb people who write, who I don't give the time of day to. I can tell when somebody gets it. I don't know if that answers your question.

Are you finding that a lot of fans from the early days have grown with you, or has there been a sort of turnover, where you've got new fans now and many of the old ones are gone?

Umm . . . I don't have a ready answer for that.

I suppose there's no way to know, for sure.

Exactly. I would imagine that most people my age, or who started out watching me, are not going to come out again to see me, if they're in their mid to late '30s. I know I don't go out like I used to. So I think that's why I see younger audiences, when I perform. But who knows who's buying the records? I would imagine that I still have a good many fans who always liked the Mats.

As time passed with the Replacements, you wrote less and less about the band. Now, it seems your lyrical perspective has broadened even further, and you're writing more about things outside yourself. Do you think that's an accurate thing to say?

I think so.

Has that happened naturally?

Yes. None of this is ever a concerted effort to write about this or that. It's more a matter of whatever is important at the moment. When I was surrounded by the three other guys, they were my world, and I wrote about them. I don't have them anymore, so I write about my surroundings. I've been accused of writing material that's too personal. But to me, people who say that don't get it, because . . . you know, you can listen to my music in a group, if you like, but I think I make the kind of music you should listen to by yourself. And when you're by yourself, and I'm speaking in the first person, if you can relate to it I think that makes it all the more enjoyable. I find that when I listen to musicians, I like to hear them singing about their experiences in the first person. I don't like slogans, or "movement"-style songs, or rants or chants. That's not for me.

Do you ever put something aside, or discard it, or just not let it see the light of day because it's too personal?

As time goes on, I try more and more to do the opposite. I think whenever I feel like a song is too personal, or I'm afraid--and I'm afraid of a lot of my songs--I've found that those are generally the ones that people say they love, or that changed their lives, or that they took with them. So I feel like I have an obligation to continue to do those. Like "Good Day," or "MamaDaddyDid." Those are two that I wrote--and it felt good that they were written--but I didn't really want to put them on the album, because I was afraid. But that's what sort of separates the men from the boys. You gotta do what you don't wanna do, sometimes.

Are you becoming more confident in your piano playing? You're instantly recognizable.

Really? I don't know if that's good. (laughs) I'm an utter and total hack at the piano. But I play all the time; I sit at the piano every day. People ask what I've been doing, or why I've taken three years off, and I say that's total nonsense. I've been at the piano every day since the last day I was on tour. I play the guitar when I'm writing songs, or in the studio, but the piano has become sort of my outlet. I think that as time goes by I'll be writing more and more songs on it. The songs aren't always played on it; "Ain't Got

Me," for instance, was written on the piano. But the songs that have a richer melody--I've found that it's easier to write those kinds of songs on piano.

Do you have anyone who you can bounce ideas off of?

No. I really don't, until it's too late. It's like, "What do you think of this? You don't like it? Well, tough, we're gonna do it anyway." (laughs) No, I don't have anyone like that, and that has its obvious drawbacks. But on the positive side, it makes me edit myself as heavily, or maybe more heavily, than most people would. I don't just write a song and think, "Oh well, somebody's gonna tell me if it sucks." It's more of a situation where I have to look at it and find out if there's something in it that could be better. Now, as far as performance goes, Brendan and I might decide something together. And Lou Giordano--I'd ask his opinion about things like which vocal take was best. But when writing the tunes, I really don't ask anybody's opinion any more.

Which come easier for you, ballads or rockers? Actually, I think I know the answer to that.

Do you? Which do you think?

Well, I would assume that the rockers come easier.

No. If the question is, "Which comes easier, great rock 'n' roll or a great ballad?", I think . . . (pauses) I think I can write a ballad pretty easily, but great rock 'n' roll, to me, is almost impossible to write, alone. With a band, it's a different story. And that's the whole gist of my career right now. I used to be able to write great rock 'n' roll easily, because I had a great rock 'n' roll band. Now I don't have one, so I would have to answer your question by saying that, yes, the ballads are easier because there's no one to bounce things off of. There's no one to throw a drumstick at me.

Do you ever write lyrics without melodies, and then try to fit them in later?

Yes. I wrote some stuff the night before last, for instance, when I couldn't sleep. I got up and wrote something, then turned out the light and laid down. Then I did that several more times. And I might carry that crumpled piece of paper around in my little cheap carry-on bag for a year and a half. Then I'll take one of those lines and use it somewhere in a song.

Does a melody ever suggest or inspire a lyric?

When I sit down to write, and sort of hum along, I always sing a dummy lyric. It's usually a generic "baby," or "come on come on come on," or "yeah yeah yeah," that kind of stuff. Then sometimes I'll try to fit, phonetically, the noises I'm making to the melody. That's a little more difficult, because sometimes there's a melody that your voice can only make if you go [sings "aaaayyyy"] as opposed to [sings "oohhhhhh"]. So you might want to write a real word for that part, one that sounds like that. Then you can fill in actual lyrics and story. But there's one or two key elements . . . it's called a hook, as you probably know. I do write hooks, first.

Is songwriting becoming more a matter of craft than inspiration, to any extent?

Crap? Can we put a "p" at the end of that? (laughs) It straddles the line between crap and craft. You can craft yourself a nice, fine, shiny piece of crap real easily. But sometimes it's just a jagged, bitter emotion--something that you sit down and just pound out--that is the essence of a great tune. It takes a while, then, to refine it a little for human consumption. But sometimes it's dangerous to work on something too long, I've found.

A member of the Gin Blossoms recently said that if [the Replacements' 1987 album] Pleased To Meet Me came out in today's market, it would be monstrous.

That's very interesting. The Gin Blossoms' producer [John Hampton] is the same guy who engineered Pleased To Meet Me. (laughing) He was probably the one who said it. But that's a nice thing to say. Who knows? I think it's safe to say that we were ahead our time. I don't think you'd get any argument about that, unless someone wanted to claim that we were ten years behind our time, which is probably also true. But yeah, I think if all that shit came out now, we would sell a lot more.

"Unsatisfied" and "Answering Machine"--was there any acting going on in those songs?

On "Unsatisfied," there was. I hate to break anyone's heart, but yeah, there was acting there. Probably the real acting came from the fact that the drugs were wearing off, while I was singing the vocal. I think it was something as base, and as common, as that. I don't hold "Unsatisfied" in as high regard as a lot of people do. "Answering Machine," on the other hand, I do. I think "Answering Machine" is one of my best songs. "Unsatisfied" . . . I don't know. It was like an open wound, something almost akin to Yoko.

When you say that "Answering Machine" is one of your best songs, are you speaking from a lyrical perspective, or the entire song?

From the lyrics, to the spoons in the pots and pans, to the . . . I mean, at the time, it wasn't really daring, but . . . even I, I must admit, have an answering machine now. In fact, I have two of them. I always swore I would never own one. But I went through so much shit, so much inconvenience, I finally thought, "This is ridiculous. I've become a slave to this song I've written." I had to break down simply because it's easier than getting up at, like, four in the morning to talk with someone you don't know. But what can I say? I think ["Answering Machine"] was from the heart, and it hit the nail on the head. There was real passion, and there was a real person on the other end, and that made it all come to life. We can all relate to it, I think.

Didn't you write "Sadly Beautiful" with Marianne Faithfull in mind?

Umm . . . sort of. I wrote it thinking that she was going to sing it. Someone told me that Marianne Faithfull was looking for a song, and he asked if I would write her one. This came from some A+R person; Marianne had probably never heard of me. But I thought, "Oh, Marianne Faithfull wants me to write her a tune," so I wrote her this song. It was about someone I knew. And once again, had it been up to me to write a song about . . . let's call her "Jane," . . . I wouldn't have put it on my record. It was for someone else to sing, and when she didn't sing it, I realized it was too powerful to throw away.

Whose idea was it for John Cale to play on the song?

That was so . . . that was like falling off a log. We were in the studio, and I asked if we could get someone to play violin. And Scott Litt, the producer, said "Yeah, I think I know someone. I'll give John Cale a call." I thought he was joking. An hour and a half later Cale walks in. I nearly pissed in my pants. (laughs) We didn't have one of those little things he sticks under his chin, to play the viola, so we had to give him a rag we'd used to wipe up the beer from the previous night.

I've been told that "Rock N Roll Ghost" was written for a friend who committed suicide.

Yes.

(pause) Can you add anything to that, how that became the impetus for the song?

He was seventeen, and I was sixteen or seventeen, and . . . he was my hero. I think of him often, still. He was a musician. He played the blues. He lived a life like . . . The rest of us were listening to Boston, and Led Zeppelin, and all this rubbish, and he wore straight-legged pants and a plaid shirt and a rope for a belt. And he played the harmonica. He was just a throwback to another era, the coolest guy I had ever met. And then one night he killed himself. We never knew why.

"Angels Walk"--that song sort of sounds like it's subject to me. Sort of ethereal and dreamy.

Yeah, it is. I'm trying to think now . . . something inspired it, although I can't remember what it was. I think that's one where the music came first, the guitar licks. I had all the music done at home, and I was gazing out the window, putting the lyrics to it as the song went by over and over again. It has a ghostliness to it, I guess.

"Here Comes A Regular" has some similarity to Dylan's "Knockin' On Heaven's Door."

Yeah.

You used to cover "Heaven's Door" live, didn't you?

We took a wild stab at it. I love that song. Chordally, it's similar. I've heard that, but I've also heard it sounds like Bruce Springsteen. I've heard all kinds of stuff, and you're all probably right. I make no bones about having listened to Springsteen, Neil Young, Bob Dylan. It's evident in what I do.

Did you ever play "Never Mind" live?

Oh, sure. That was always a challenge. It's beyond my vocal range. It's in "B," and "B-flat" is probably the top of my range. But we struggled through it.

Did you lift the phrase "never mind" from [Alex Chilton's] "September Gurls?"

No. We stole it from Nirvana.

(laughing) Right.

No. Christ, we all say things like that, like "get out of here" or something. (smiling) Believe it or not, it's part of my vocabulary.

Maybe I'm reading too much into this stuff.

Perhaps.

Do you keep up with what's going on currently on the music scene?

I'm afraid I don't. And I'm afraid I'm in trouble in about an hour, when I have to go to MTV and talk about it. Tell me somebody to talk about. (laughs) It's like, I really don't know shit.

Are there any particular novelists or fiction writers who have inspired you?

Yes, but . . . I'm not quite as stuffy as that. I'm also inspired by people who dress well. I'm happy that my [sensibilities] come from being a teenage guy who liked rock 'n' roll. I liked flashy-looking guitar players, and I liked glam. So find me the best writer who wore spangly clothes and threw his guitar in the air. It's people like Pete Townshend who inspired me, who I wouldn't necessarily have gone for had I not been a fan of rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll, in general, sort of formed what I like in a writer. I like people who are mysterious with their lives. I don't like a grandstander, or someone who's obvious, or who's very social.

Speaking of that, do you think MTV has robbed rock 'n' roll of some of its mystique? I remember, as a kid, how exciting it would be to find out that Lou Reed, or Bowie, or someone, was going to be on television maybe once that year.

Yeah. Someone who grew up in the '70s, and who came of age with MTV, doesn't know anything other than that. And it was probably the same way before radio. You'd only hear the band when they came through town. But yes, I remember that. You'd make a week of it. "Oh, man, I can't wait to see so-and-so." It was that Rock Concert show, or whatever it was.

Have you heard the Replacements tribute album that several Athens bands put together [for the Humane Society]?

No, I haven't. I was unhappy with the whole idea. My thoughts were, if you're going to do something for charity, then please give it to human beings. Not that I'm against animals--I love 'em. But it's like, if we're gonna make some money, then let's help a person.

Do you think growing up Catholic affected your songwriting at all?

I suppose it did, because it affected my life. It affects my way of thinking and everything. I mean, I'm still a religious person. I believe in God, although I never sit

down to write "God" songs. I have my belief, and my faith, and I keep it private. But I try to live right and treat people fairly, so I suppose that comes through in the music.

What was your family-life like, growing up. Was it happy?

It was generally happy. I think back often to the times when I was five to ten. Those are years I look back to with sheer bliss. And I think that . . . my early teen years were very difficult. It got hard at about thirteen. Thirteen to thirty-two was pretty tough. (laughs)

You caught some grief for "The Ledge," didn't you?

Yeah. We made a video for it, and MTV didn't want to play it because they thought it promoted suicide.

But that's not even listening to the song. You say people have come up to you and said a particular song helped them in some way. Has anyone told you that about "The Ledge?"

Possibly. I don't really recall anyone ever saying what that one has given or done for them.

Can we touch on the subject of drinking, just briefly?

Sure.

Everyone seems to have a theory about why writers drink. Do you have one?

Well, I drank before I wrote, so I could almost be disqualified as a writer slash drinker. My reasons went deeper than that. It was to cure an anxiety that I'd felt ever since I was small. And drinking would do that, but when it wore off it would make the problem worse. I don't know. Perhaps writers think too much, and liquor makes it hard to think. There's a simple statement, probably true.

At some point, with the Replacements, did you ever feel like that part of the band . . . that you were becoming an enabler for some people who were seeking a way to legitimize taking that approach? By that, I mean people who perhaps were very intelligent and had serious aspirations, but who wanted to set themselves up to be heroic failures.

Yes. That was a foul smell that I caught toward the end, and even earlier on. People would come up to me with a lost, hopeless look in their eyes, looking to me for a pat on the back for throwing their lives away. It didn't cross my mind that I needed to stop drinking for them, to show them the right way. I needed to save myself from dying. But now that I'm kind of back on my feet, I'd like to hope that someone might look at me and say, "If he can do it, I can do it." I mean, I was as bad as anyone. It's not impossible to stop, and you don't have to do it the way someone else says you have to. You don't have to go to a hospital; you don't have to go to meetings. If that works for you, then do it. But I didn't do that; I just stopped.

Is there anything that's changed drastically about your songwriting since you gave up [alcohol]?

I know right away when it's crap. It doesn't take me until the next day to find out.

So you wrote when you were under the influence?

Well, I was always on my way to being under the influence, or else I was coming off it. There was never, like, two days of being totally straight. I was always kind of halfway in the bag. Especially in the studio, you'd think that you had something magnificent, and then you'd listen to it in the light of day and realize it wasn't quite so good. I'm a little more able to catch it quick, now.

Where do you write?

Everywhere. But usually it gets pounded out right there in the living room. Hotel rooms are the seed of where a lot of things come from, when I'm traveling. And many times, songs get finished in the studio. I like to record away from home, so I can go back to a hotel each night, and not go to my home. I do a lot of my writing and finishing there in the hotel room, wherever the studio is.

Your lyrics are nearly always subject to multiple interpretations. They're kind of like a Robert Altman movie, where you might have several things going on at once and they all fit together.

Yeah, people usually don't see the layers. A lot of people take the song for its initial value, and maybe it takes someone who thinks a little more deeply to see that the song has more than one meaning. A lot of people see only the obvious, and that's okay. In a way, I'm proud that I can write songs like that, because it gives an option to people who want to go beyond the first meaning. But a lot of people don't.

Was there ever a point in your life where you knew this was what you were going to do? Or did that happen gradually?

I think it was gradual. I can't think of one exact moment. Maybe [it was] the day I quit my job and never went back, but I didn't have any reason to think when I was nineteen, "Okay, I've got it made now." I knew it would be a long haul. I mean, I made up my mind back then that I was never again going to sweep under anyone's feet. I wouldn't have led a life of crime, but [without music] I might've become some sort of low-life gigolo or something. (laughs) Anything to get by without having to go back to manual labor.

Do you feel like you're prepared, if this album were to really go through the roof?

I think so. I've never been more prepared. That would be the honest statement.

Are you hopeful that that will happen?

Yes, I am. With each record . . . I think each one is good, and I think each one should do something fantastic. And when they don't, I always have to go back and regroup, and try not to think about it too much. Or think, "Where did I go wrong?" But I believe it's the right mix this time. There seems to be real commitment from the record company. I've always done my part, more or less. I've toured, and interviewed, and delivered

"good" to "great" albums. And I think this one leans toward great. So yeah, I'm optimistic.

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CHRIS MARS INTERVIEW

Goldmine, 1997?

"If no one's on your canvas...
Catching up with Chris Mars" by Steve Roeser

Anybody who remember The Replacements, hands down one of the greatest punk bands of the '80s (and quite possibly one of the best bands to ever emerge from the American Midwest), knows that their drummer was Chris Mars. He was the one who, late in 1991, quit The Replacements before they actually broke up, several years after his friend and original band guitarist, the late Bob Stinson, was forced to resign from the group.

But the multi-talented Mars has been far from idle in the '90s. He has made four solo albums, the two most recent one, Tenterhooks (1995) and Anonymous Botch (1996), for the Bar/None label. The first two, Horseshoes and Hand Grenades (1992) and 75% Less Fat (1993), were done for the Smash label. All these albums feature Mars compositions, something that could seldom be said of the many Replacements records he played on.

Having been interested in visual art, as well as music, since his childhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota (where he still lives), Mars has also been moving full-steam ahead with his art work. In the fall of '96 he had a month-long exhibition of his pictures in Los Angeles, which bore the same title as his latest collection of songs. His painting feature a range of unusual characters that will soon form the basis for a feature-length animated film that Mars will provide music for. One of his collaborators on this motion picture project is director David Lynch, of Eraserhead and Blue Velvet fame.

There was a time when Chris Mars wasn't worried about too much besides banging on his drums for a few hours, watching his wild comrades jump and flail before him with their guitars, and then hoping there'd be free drinks awaiting them at the end of the night. But that was then, and a man learns to set aside the ways of a boy-child.

Goldmine: Years before you actually began making your own solo albums, did you have the desire to produce and sing songs you'd written yourself? Were you thinking about this in the mid-80s or so?

Chris Mars: I wasn't really thinking about it so much, as far as putting a record out. I would sort of goof around with little bits and pieces of melodies and stuff right around that time. But I didn't actually start putting songs together. My first few songs were probably like 1987, something like that. That's when I started thinking about it a little more seriously. But still, it was just more of an exercise than an aspiration.

Goldmine: When did you become seriously interested in visual art?

Chris Mars: That I have always been interested in. I think long before music actually, ever since I can remember, I loved to draw pictures. I loved what pictures did to me. They always inspired me and moved me, as a real little kid. So that was something that was, I think, naturally a part of me from the beginning. It was just sort of a natural progression to keep that up.

Goldmine: Is combining music and visual art, such as with this film animation project you have in store, something you thought about in the 80s?

Chris Mars: Maybe in the back of my head. Although the kind of things that I was drawing at that time I don't think were very much like what I'm drawing now. I think later, as I started developing a style and coming up with a lot of different characters in my drawings, that's when I thought, "These would lend themselves to animation." So I started thinking along those lines a little later, but never really seriously. I was always just content with making drawings and paintings, and inventing figures to go in them. But then after reviewing my stuff, I thought, "Wow, this might make real cool film."

Goldmine: Occasionally in The Replacements, you would play guitar on certain things, like "Hootenanny" or tracks like that. Do you play a lot of guitar now and write songs on guitar?

Chris Mars: I guess when I sit down to make record, that's when I go more head long into it, and sort of absorb myself into it. But outside of that, when I'm not doing that, maybe I'm pickin' up the guitar here and there. You know, like I'll come up with a melody or a piece, and I'll save it. But I'm not really sitting down and writing songs, and saving them that way. They become more compiled when I actually sit down to do a record. Then I go through all my notes and start makin' songs, and write down things. But usually, when I'm not makin' a record, I'm concentrating on art and doing that probably most of the time.

Goldmine: When you did the cover art of Bob Stinson, for the [Twin/Tone] cassette release of Shit Hits the Fans, did you get a lot of reactions from people on your art work at that time?

Chris Mars: Maybe a little bit, just from a few fans who liked the drawing and a couple people in town, like at record stores. But not a whole lot. Just a little feedback, basically, They thought it was pretty cool, and all that. [laughs]

Goldmine: Are you surprised, in retrospect, that The Replacements stayed together as long as they did?

Chris Mars: Um.. I think [sighs]... I'm surprised I stayed in it as long as I did. [laughs] Now that I look back. I mean, I think there was a [point] it wouldn't been a nice time for all of us to kind of say, "We passed our peak, and let's call it a night here." But I think what we all did is, we kind of tried to maybe -- especially after Bob left -- I think

we tried to sort of "flog a dead horse." That's sort of what it felt like. I think, with Pleased to Meet Me (Sire, 1987), we did a pretty good job of trying to capture the spirit of the band. But after that, we never could quite get back. And so I think after Pleased To Meet Me, right around there would have been a good time to hang it up. But we didn't know what was gonna happen at that time, too. And there's all kinds of elements that came into play. But obviously, in retrospect, it did go one a few years longer than it should've.

Goldmine: When Bob had to be "replaced," were you very reluctant to vote for that decision?

Chris Mars: Oh, definitely. Yeah, I was against it. But I just did not have a whole lot of say. You know, Paul [Westerberg] was pretty much calling the shots. And [sighs]... Paul and Tommy [Stinson, Bob's little brother] I think sort of came to the conclusion between the two, and I did not like it. So it was something that I just had to live with. And that's kind of how that went.

Goldmine: At the time when Prince emerged as a superstar, in the early-to mid 80s, and there was suddenly all this interest in the Twin Cities as a music hotbed, did that attention have a positive or negative effect, do you feel, on the alternative scene in Minneapolis?

Chris Mars: Boy! Ah, goin' back, goin' back... let's see-- I think it was good, as far as gaining attention for Minneapolis. I think the city was a little bit more "on fire" at the time, with bands breaking and getting signed for the first time. You know, like us, and the Huskers [Husker Du], and Soul Asylum and stuff like that. And, of course, Prince. Well, Prince was kind of in a different music scene, I think. He wasn't really, quote, "alternative," I guess. But, then again, he crossed a lot of lines, so he obviously gained a hell of a lot more attention than any of the other bands in the city! [laughs] I think he still, to this day, lives here most of the time. I mean, the guy's a genius. And I'm a fan. Always was.

Goldmine: Before The Replacements began touring outside of Minnesota, were any of you convinced that the band had the potential to get a national following?

Chris Mars: I think so. Maybe not so much before we started touring. It was more like we were just content to bang around between the five-state area- you know, Minnesota, Wisconsin, wherever we'd go at the time. We never went past Chicago for awhile there. We just were kind of havin' fun. I don't think any of us really thought about what could happen. So all that stuff was just sort of a surprise, I think.

Goldmine: Who ran the Smash label, and why did you do your first two solo projects for them?

Chris Mars: Smash was based in Chicago, and they were subsidiary of PolyGram. I sent a tape to them with maybe four to six songs on it, and a guy named Leroy Fields, who worked there briefly, was the guy who actually

coaxed the label into signing me. So he's responsible for getting me started. It was just one of those things. I was fresh out of the band, and I had some songs I'd been goofing around with on 4-track. And I didn't really think that I'd even get signed. "I might get a little interest from some indie labels and put out a record, and that might be kind of fun," is what I was thinking. You know, just to keep active in music a little bit, and sort of express myself a little beyond the drums. So when a major label wanted to sign me, I was quite surprised. I didn't expect that. I was going back in the studio [in 1991], which I didn't think would be happening! It was exciting. My intentions were to release something on an indie label, and here comes a major wanting to do it. I thought, "Well, I'll give this a shot." I think there was some interest with Warner Bros. at the time, too. There was a certain amount of time where my contractual obligation to put out a record [persisted]. Because I was still under the name "The Replacements" at the time. That was gonna run out, and I was hoping that it would. I didn't want to go do a record for them, 'cause then I would inherit the back debt. Because The Replacements were pretty heavily in debt, and still are, actually. And I'd still be on the same label [corporation-wise]. So that was great. I remember squeezing out of that. They called me about a week too late. So there was some interest from them. I was crossin' my fingers and I went, "Aw-right!" I got the hell outta that deal! [laughs]

Goldmine: So after quitting The Replacements in 1990, you spent most of '91 working on your first solo album?

Chris Mars: Yeah, that's pretty much what I did. I got the word that I would be makin' a record, then I started to seriously going through my stuff to try to compile [material], plan it out and all that. I was pretty nervous, I remember. I had no idea what I'd be able to do. So it was a great, very emancipating time, and it was a great learning experience. And it was fun.

Goldmine: Where did the album title Horseshoes and Hand Grenades come from?

Chris Mars: I was just trying to think of a title, and it was an old saying. You know, "almost only counts in horseshoes and handgrenades." And I remembered that saying from somewhere. None of my title have very deep meaning. [laughs]

Goldmine: Is the song title "e.i.b negative" [from Tenterhooks] an answer to the dreaded, oft-uttered 90s term "HIV positive"?

Chris Mars: Actually, "e.i.b. negative" is a slam on Rush Limbaugh. I listen to a lot of talk radio, and we have this talk radio station in town that has some really cool hosts. And then Limbaugh would come on, like in the middle of the day, and I'd just sort of leave it on and listen to it -- as much as I could take. Just to kind of see what the extremists were talking about. And I just, I mean blech! Obviously it went way against my grain. So I decided to do a little ditty about it.

Goldmine: Do you agree with the commonly held maxim that drummers are the least respected people in rock?

Chris Mars: You know, I never really thought about it that much. I remember hearing jokes like "Drummers are just people who hang around with musicians," and all that stuff. I was aware of it, but I always like drumming. Up to a certain point, anyways, until I got sick of it. But it was my instrument, so I didn't really think about what people thought. I'd just sort of bang away.

Goldmine: If you hadn't joined a band around 1980, what do you think you would have wound up doing?

Chris Mars: Wow! I probably would've gone more headlong into art, and maybe kept music more of a sideline. Maybe I would've gone to art school. I don't know if I would have done that, to tell you the truth. Maybe I'd have just turned into a big, drunken bum. I don't know. I was drinking pretty heavily around that time. I mean, my life has changed quite a bit since then. I probably would've been bangin' around in some band, if it wasn't the Replacements. And drawin' pictures, pretty much. That's sort of what I did.

Goldmine: Has making records gotten back to being more fun and exciting for you than it was for the last couple of Replacements albums?

Chris Mars: Oh, definitely. Especially now. I have a little home studio that I did the last two records on. And you can do all right with it. It's 16 tracks and as far as making the records, I think that's what I always liked about the business, anyways. Up to a certain point, I loved playing live. And then the "frat-boy" phase sort of wore off, when I got into my mid-to-upper twenties. And then the road became a big pain in the ass. But I still like makin' records. I always did. I always liked the studio. There was just a lot more room for discovering and learning, and trying out new things. It was more of a natural approach for me, anyways. Especially makin' my own records, I really had a great time. Because makin' The Replacements records, obviously, there was some collaboration, but not nearly as much in the later years. So I was more limited there. It's definitely been great to be able to do my own stuff.

Goldmine: A song like "Janet's New Kidney" on the new record sounds like it was influenced by some of Tom Waits' later work. Is that so? Did that come from working with him [in The Replacements, "Date to Church," 1989]?

Chris Mars: No, I don't think it came from working with him, although I like Tom Waits, I like his stuff. I think the song, more than anything, just came out the way it came out. I think, with that one, I was thinking of doing a little instrumental or something, and I just had this kind of scary-sounding lick that sort of runs through the song. And I added words later, since it was intended to be an instrumental. I don't think I was [aware] of any influence or anything like that. I just went with that I felt was the direction the song should take.

Goldmine: What is the angle, employed in the packaging of "Anonymous

Botch," of not really wanting to reveal names of people on the record? A lot of these people really didn't want to be identified?

Chris Mars: Actually, that's just a joke. I did all the stuff myself. And that was just to kind of go along with the theme of the name of the record. Kind of an "anonymous" sort of thing. But really there's nobody there, except for one guy. There's one guy [Chuck Whitney] that's credited, that played some guitar. And he's the only guy that did anything.

Goldmine: But who did sing with you on "Janet's New Kidney"?

Chris Mars: Oh, actually that's right! That's the other person. Excuse me for forgetting. That was my wife! [laughs]

Goldmine: There's a contrast between Tenterhooks and the new record. Tenterhooks ends with kind of an "up" song, "New Day." And the new album kind of ends with a downer, "I'll Be Gone." And there's a couple of other songs which are maybe more pessimistic, like "It's A Long Life" and "Black Days." Were you in kind of a pessimistic frame of mind writing some of the songs for this album?

Chris Mars: I think I might've been, yeah. Because I think when I wrote Tenterhooks, that was before Bob died. And I think after is when I started writin' songs for the new record. And I was kind of in a funk after he died, I remember. And so I was, Maybe. I would say that that's accurate, that I was in little more pessimistic mood. Although, then some of the songs I wrote quite a bit after [Stinson's death], when I was sort of bouncing back. So there's some more upbeat stuff on there. But yeah, I think that's pretty accurate observation.

Goldmine: Did you see Bob much in later days?

Chris Mars: No, I didn't. After he left the band, you know, I would see him around here and there. We toured pretty extensively after that, so I just did what I had to do with the band, and we sort of parted ways, the band and Bob. And I would just run into him every once in a while. I'd talk to him on the phone, see him at clubs. but we just sort of drifted apart. I think, at that time, everybody sort of drifted apart, at least emotionally. I [drifted] away from the band, even though I was still in the band. Do you know what I mean? It was just kind of one of those things, like I was talking about earlier, where it just sort of ran its course, and we stayed with it a little longer than we should've. And so, it wasn't out of any sort of [animosity]... Bob developed his own scene and circle of friends, and I did my own things. It wasn't out of any dislike. You know, I always loved Bob. And I still miss him. I think about him.

Goldmine: How important is it for a songwriter to have his or her own publishing company?

Chris Mars: I think it's a good thing. I don't think publishers do a whole lot for you. I think what they do is collect money. Your average publishing deal is gonna be like a fifty-fifty split. And I just figured,

"Why?" [ergo, Chris Mars Publishing, Inc.] I think maybe, in some circumstances, they might promote, or try to get your songs on soundtracks, or something like that. I don't think they do a whole lot of that. I think they just sort of buy things up and then sit on it. And if something happens, they collect. They reap the benefits. I just thought, "Why do that?"

Goldmine: What ever became of Golden Smog, and how long did that last?

Chris Mars: Well, I don't know what they're doing now, to tell you the truth. I heard their last record. I think it started out as more of a joke thing, when I was in it. Just kind of a fun gig here and there type of thing. And then it got a little more serious. I had just got out of The Replacements, and I had no intentions of wanting to get in another band, really. Unless it was kind of low-key, like the Golden Smog started out to be. But then it got a little more serious and they were talkin' about touring. And I just said, "No, I'm gonna get out of this." And they got some other members and kept on goin' and released a record, and I think did some tours.

Goldmine: Do you have much, or any, contact with Paul or Tommy these days?

Chris Mars: Um, no, I don't. I really don't. And it's just, again, one of those things where, you know, I think maybe...who's to say, in the future, what will happen? We may see each other, maybe be friends again, or we may never. It's kind of like, I mean, it was a job -- that's the way I look at it. I worked in the band for as long as I did, and we were close at one time. But people drift apart, and that's just something that happens in life. And so, basically, that's kind of the status right now. I don't talk to them, they don't call me. So it's just one of those things.

Goldmine: What are two or three of you favorite things you did with The Replacements?

Chris Mars: You mean as far as records?

Goldmine: Yeah.

Chris Mars: I think the earlier stuff, you know, when we were more in, as I say, our frat-boy phase and we were pretty boisterous and spirited. Those records. I don't listen to my records, and I don't really go back and listen to The Replacements records. But, from what I remember of the times of the band, obviously when Bob was in the band and we were the "true" Replacements -- right around that time, in the earlier days. Up to about, like whatever -- *Hootenanny* or *Let It Be*. I think around Tim [1985] things kind of got a little goofy with the band. But yeah, the earliest days, those records are the most memorable and enjoyable to remember.

TOMMY STINSON INTERVIEW

regarding *All For Nothing/Nothing For All*

The Replacements were always the band on the verge ... the band most likely to . the band so far left of the dial most people never even knew who they were. Now, with the release of the two-disc *All For Nothing/Nothing For All*, a collection of highlights from their four Sire albums and a hodgepodge of live tracks, alternate versions, and several of their infamously quirky cover tunes, the chances of any of that changing are slim. At least that's what the band's bassist Tommy Stinson, thinks. What are Paul Westerberg's thoughts on the subject? Perhaps his silence speaks louder than anything he might have to say. More on that later. In the meantime 'Mats fans, it's up to you to spread the word. Now, read on and revel in the wit and wisdom Tommy Stinson has to offer on the little band that could but never did - the greatest rock hand of the '80s. The Replacements.

Y3: How do you feel being the spokesperson for *All For Nothing*?

TS: I'm not really being the spokesperson for it. I guess because Paul won't speak - which is very hypocritical in a way because he did the whole thing - I'm the one people are talking to.

Y3: You think he should speak.

TS: Well he did help put it together... Why not?

Y3: Did you participate?

TS: Hell no. I didn't think it was a good idea. I didn't think it was the most timely thing to put together at this moment; not that I'm totally against it. What makes this the best time? We haven't been broken up that long and there isn't anything going on right now. Now, if some group was singing our praises as they sold two million records, that would be cause to do something like this.

Y3: Kind of like what the 'Mats did - on a small scale - for Big Star with "Alex Chilton."

TS: Yeah. There are just times to do something like this. It's just that this collection is only our last four albums. For a lot of people it ain't gonna cut it. It's only half the picture.

Y3: Are there plans for the Twin Tone era 'Mats records to have something similar released?

TS: I heard that they're going to do something, but they might do it in the year 2000. The turn of the fucking century. I think it's (the Reprise collection) a fucking great idea, The thing that bothered me, really, was the timing of it. Putting it out at this time of the year - I mean I can understand the want for something at Christmas time but come on, there's a zillion dinosaur records coming out. Have you got a copy of it yet?

Y3: Yeah.

TS: So you know that the second CD is crap.

Y3: You think Nothing For All lives up to its title.

TS: Exactly.

Y3: Can you recall one of your fondest memories with The Replacements?

TS: Oh no, you're not gonna ask me to do that? There were lots of good things; but to try and conjure up a fond one right now at this hour of the day is kind of hard.

Y3: You've said you feel unhappy with the collection because it excludes the early years, but are you happy with the choices they made from the records they had to choose from?

TS: Not really.

Y3: What would you have included that's not on there?

IS: I'll tell you what I wouldn't have done, only because they asked me sort of after the fact. I wouldn't have included "Anywhere Is Better Than Here." I wouldn't have put "Someone Take The Wheel." I probably wouldn't have included "Nobody." I don't think those are the strongest songs on the planet. I think there are better songs.

Y3: What would you include instead?

TS: I don't really know. That's going a little far. But if you're asking me to critique it, I wouldn't have put those on.

Y3: Every time I read about you, Bash and Pop, or Perfect, The Replacements are always mentioned. Does that bother you, or are you happy to come from that place?

TS: It really doesn't do anything to me either way, Obviously I've been doing this since I was 13 so I'm probably not going to suddenly sound like the Chili Peppers. When you grow up doing something, pretty much that's what you do. Not like I'm a one-trick pony or anything - I figure I got my education at that school, so.

Y3: I've read where people say Perfect is more like early Replacements and what Paul does is like late Replacements. How do you feel about that?

TS: Whatever. Comparisons don't really matter to me. I don't give them a lot of credence. I think what I do is probably what I've always done. That's not to say I'm stagnant or I've stopped growing. I just think there's a certain thing that I learned that I love to do, and I still do it. There's the pop music that I grew up on that The Replacements sort of emulated ... sort of emotional pop music with some kind of a twist I guess.

Y3: How much did Paul influence your songwriting?

TS: 100%. I didn't know how to write songs before I met him. He's a total

influence. Who better to learn from than Paul Westerberg. I mean, come on, he's written some of the greatest songs of the '80s. People will remember these songs for years to come. I'm proud to be part of that legacy. I think, beyond all the shenanigans and shit, the songwriting really holds up well.

Y3: Lots of people say that The Replacements were the original alternative rock ... you paved the way for a lot of bands that became more successful than you.

TS: That's a biggie. It's not like I have any grudges because it didn't happen to us. To have had anything to do with being the start of all "that is now" kinda thing; I think that's huge. Way huger than selling a million records once.

Y3: Would you choose being influential over selling a million records?

TS: I wouldn't say that. I would say, given the cards that we were dealt, our legacy is all we got.

Y3: Sometimes I think The Replacements got too much respect and not enough success.

TS: I agree.

Y3: Do you think this compilation will effect that at all?

TS: Hell no.

Y3: Why not?

TS: Cause there isn't a hit on the record. There's nothing that sold major amounts of records, so why should it now'?

Y3: What do you think it was about The Replacements that was so special?

TS: I think it was the songwriting and the attitude of the band at that time. At that time everything was about MTV hair rock. You know we really weren't conforming to anything that was going on because it all sucked.

Y3: Do you think The Replacements ever went too far?

TS: Everyday.

Y3: Would you say that was your downfall?

TS: Uh huh. I think we took it too far at times when we could have made a better impact or could have gotten more help from people trying to help us with our career.

Y3: When I first heard *Pleased To Meet Me* I really thought that the songs would get a lot of radio play. Then when all the alternative stuff became successful I thought that if you went back to a lot of earlier 'Mats albums, you could fit a lot of songs in with what was going on at the time. I guess it just wasn't meant to be.

TS: I guess we just weren't the most timely thing on the planet.

Y3: Why did the band break up?

TS: We ran our course. We just got to the point where we said, "OK, now let's do something else." Paul felt that way more so than the rest of us, but certainly I was right there. I was very understanding about what he wanted to do and I quickly jumped to my own thing. It wasn't like we went home and cried in our beer.

Y3: I know that you stay in touch with Paul; and you've played on each other's records - a though you seem to be a little out of sorts that he's not speaking about this record.

TS: No no. Not at all. I understand why. He started putting it together and realized it was lame (laughing) and he bailed. That's what he did.

Y3: Why will you speak about It?

TS: Because I sort of have an opinion, and I guess it he's not going to get to talk I guess I have to talk to someone.

Y3: It would be i shame if nobody said anything.

TS: Yeah. I don't want to be an asshole about it. I'm not really adamant for, or against, anything. It's just sort of what he did.

Y3: You've said you don't see you and Paul getting The Replacements back together again. Some of your best 'Mats moments were with your brother and that era, and of course that can never happen again and that's kind of sad.

TS: Exactly.

Y3: Do you see you and Paul ever working together again?

TS: No. For one simple reason, why would we bother trying to do it all better?

Y3: It doesn't seem like the bands that reform try to do it all better. It seems like they just put together a greatest hits package, maybe with one or two new songs, and basically they try to make money on something they've done before.

TS: I think if you can't do it better why bother.

Y3: You think it's pointless to get together to play the old tunes?

TS: Hell yeah. Paul's already been playing all that old shit for years. And I haven't missed it yet. Even the Sex Pistols were ... least they were very honest about why they were doing it.

Y3: For the money.

TS: Fuck yeah. It was like, "OK we're gonna do this for the money and if you guys are going to be idiots enough to pay us again, for for it. And every promoter in the country lost their shirt.

Y3: The Replacements couldn't exactly get back together for the money.

TS: No, 'cause that wasn't our M.O. so why would we bother to make a mediocre splash and play the same shit.

Y3: I understand that you and the band Perfect are about to go into Ardent Studio with Jim Dickinson producing. Would you say that it was the good experience in the past, recording *Pleased To Meet Me*, that led you to take this route?

TS: Yeah. I did have a good experience with Jim Dickinson, and he's a lot of fun to make a record with. And those are reasons enough for me to make a record with him. I think he's great for our project. Our project ... oh my god.

Y3: You're working again with Peter Jesperson (who once managed The Replacements) and I know you got together after you met at your brother's funeral, and it's kinda hard to talk about...

TS: Why?

Y3: The loss of your brother...

TS: Oh, I love talking about my brother, I have great memories of my brother.

Y3: What's your fondest memory with him in The Replacements?

TS: Again, the brother things I conjure up aren't band related, so I won't go into that. But I miss him to death.

Y3: Have you written a song about the experience?

TS: I sort of avoided that 'cause I didn't want to write a "Candle In The Wind" kind of thing. All of my thoughts about my brother are very private and I'm not ready to share them in a song with anyone. The day I do it will be for my own reasons.

Y3: Let's go back to my earlier topic ... fond memories of The Replacements. You must have several.

TS: Heh, heh. Well, really, truly, honestly one of the highest points I can conjure up right now is - only because this guy is playing around here this weekend - is while we were doin' *All Shook Down* there was a guy who Paul and Slim admired for a long time, Terry Reid, a singer from England. He came into our session to meet us and hang out because our guitar tech was his roommate and we were just blown away. He sat down in the waiting room of the studio and he sang us this song called "Mayfly" which is on one of his records that we always listened to. He sang it to us with just an acoustic guitar and it was so moving that we were all bawling at the end of the song. His voice was just so incredible. That's probably one of my fondest memories that, and during the same session, meeting Bob Dylan. He was recording down the hall. He flagged me into this lounge area and started asking me all these questions about the Minneapolis area. So we sat and talked about Minneapolis for about forty minutes, talking like the average Joe about nothing important or great.

Y3: Was he familiar with your music?

TS: Uh huh.

Y3: Was he a fan?

TS: I don't know if he was a fan or not, but he brought his two kids, Jakob and Anna, to meet us and hang out.

Y3: You're lucky to have been playing music for so long and still be so young. You were in The Replacements at the age of 13 and now you're only 30.

TS: Yeah, I've done this over half my life. It's kind of a neat thing.

Y3: What keeps it exciting for you?

TS: Oh boy. ..the girls?

Y3: Well, I guess the songwriting, for you, is still in the early stages.

TS: Yeah, that's exactly it. I haven't really written long enough myself to be bored with it.

Y3: What inspires you?

TS: God, riding the bus. Lots of things that are very intangible.

Y3: What inspired "Alternative Monkey" on the Perfect CD?

TS: Hanging out in a nightclub watching all the groovy ghoulies just kind of freak out and be all pretentious. I kinda laughed it off. And that song is really actually kinda funny. It really isn't a serious thing. It's just a commentary of a bad night out. If you listen closely you can actually hear me giggle in that song.

Y3: We talked earlier about Twin Tone putting together a collection of early 'Mats songs. If they do it will you be participating?

TS: Hell yeah. I probably would because of Peter (The 'Mats former manager and Tommy's current one).

Y3: So then that infamous story of The 'Mats destroying all their Twin Tone masters isn't true.

TS: It's true we threw the tapes in the river, but they weren't actually tapes of any worth.

Y3: You probably will never get to have the last word on The Replacements because people (including myself) will always bring them up. But if you could, what would it be?

TS: : We're over. Forget about it. Get a life.

Paul Westerberg

Interview by Mark Brown 2/99

Early February, 1999: Another album, another interview: Suicaine Gratification is a much more personal album than previous, resulting in a much more personal interview with Paul where we ended up just shooting the breeze and trying to decipher his own song lyrics. It's all pretty self-explanatory, so read on.

Q. Give me your version of how this album happened.

Once upon a time ... (laughs). That's a tall order. I started writing these tunes directly after coming off of my last tour. I've never written as many songs in a short period of time – or as many good songs as this. So I wrote about half of it, recorded it in my basement, and I was then getting off of my Warner's deal. In a way it was my demo tape that I was shopping around to the labels. I played it for Gary (Gersh); I think I played him "Self Defense" and "Sunrise" and he said this is pretty much exactly where he thought I should be. We started the conversation off with him talking about what he thought was wrong with my last record.

Q. And what was that?

Oh, I didn't listen! (laughs). It's like bringing a used car in – 'Yeah, you don't want that piece of shit, I'll put you in a nice brand new one.' No, he had a few valid points and it was nice to know that we were both sort of thinking along the same lines. So he signed me. And Don Was got involved, via an accidental phone call to me.

Q. What was that?

He called me for some other reason. I'd known Don casually and he called me, I think, to play with another artist or do a duet or something. I was under the assumption he was calling me to make a record – to say 'How you doin', what you got?' So I kinda took the helm and started pitching my new album.

Q. And you bent him to your will?

Yeah. But anyway, he said sure, let's do it. I played him the same songs and he agreed that we should keep them as simple as possible. We basically spent a lot of time re-recording things that we knew were good enough. I felt like I already had the record in my back pocket, but you sorta have to try things a few times to see, to make sure. Out of those session in New York we got "Best Thing That Never Happened" and "Lookin' Out Forever," the more aggressive rock 'n' roll stuff. There was the balance.

Q. Any idea what caused that burst of songwriting? Does that just happen to you?

Serious depression and a sense of coming away from performing with a vague feeling of "I don't want to perform anymore."

Q. Why was that?

I don't know. I can't really put my finger on it and say it was because of that show there and that audience. The shows were good; it was perhaps maybe I'd just become to adept at what I was doing to where it was no longer creatively fun for me onstage.

Q. That wonderful combination of frustration and depression usually doesn't help people get more prolific.

It usually doesn't, but in this case I had a healthy dose of fear thrown in. I didn't have a clue as to what my next move was. Well, I don't want to perform anymore, I gotta get off this label, the leaves started falling from the trees and the rain started and I basically sat in the basement and just wrote and wrote and wrote and recorded. I'd never sort of

delved that much into my brain. I felt like the next thing I'm writing has got to be the real "what's going on in my head." I don't care if it's commercial. I don't care if people understand it at all. I guess I feel I made "a commercial effort" on the last record and it was ignored. Nothing like being slapped down for trying. So it was just "The hell with you, then. I'm just gonna make what I like."

Q. It seems like this album was just what was on your mind at the time you wrote it.

Yeah. Whether I just didn't have the will to sort of unplug the thing that kept cranking them out... I became obsessed with it. I started writing night and day. It was a manic-depressive phase where it was a serious downward spiral, but it was also sorta coupled with mania where I couldn't sleep and was up all night. It just sort of got worse and worse. Yet I didn't just sit there and do nothing and sink down like that. In a way it was like therapeutic; I was actually working through it, even if it was creating something that was about a dark subject matter. It made me feel validated to accomplish something.

Q. It seems so reflected in the album; there are these themes of giving up in some spots, yet there's this dogged determination and sense of hope, too.

It's kind of a farewell to something. It's an introduction of something else. "Bookmark," that song doesn't even rhyme and that's probably the first one I've ever written in my life that didn't. I didn't intend to; it just came out that way. I think I freed something in my creative side that I sort of put to bed on the other hand.

Q. You said that the songs people are closest to are the ones you don't edit much. I would think that would include songs such as "Things," "Even Here We Are," those songs like that.

Those would be the ones. The great majority of these are those songs. They weren't rewritten lyrically. The ones that were, it was maybe the third verse changed or something. But yeah, I don't have a solid answer as to why this one is different. I think I was just fed up; why say something twice? If you mean it once, once is enough. Why rewrite it if that's what I meant the first time?

Q. So do you feel that in the past you've gone against your natural instincts?

Oh yeah. Yeah. Being my own worst critic, I'm always trying to make the stuff better. So if four people I kinda like come in the room and start saying "Well, this one is better than that one," they will influence me. This is truly a solo record where maybe the last two before it were me trying to like still be in a rock group. It's funny; as soon as the band broke up I went back to making records that were performable and all that. I had no sense of "I'm gonna go out with a rock group and play this stuff." This is what I like and I'm not gonna listen to anyone else.

Q. That's carried over onto the sound. I thought "Eventually" was somewhat stripped down, but I put those songs on a tape next to some of these and the difference was astounding.

Yeah. I'm not sure where that all came from. I know there's a reason for it. We don't have all day for me to think about it, other than ... I'm trying to think, what haven't I said before? I'm forcing the people to listen to the words. And when you don't put an extra instrument on there and when you don't change the melody or give them a little piece of ear candy, they either turn it off or they become enthralled in the story. This is almost like a spoken-word record, but there's strong melody. I'm very proud of it; this is the first time I ever allowed them to reproduce the lyrics. It's not in the record itself but there are a few special editions that'll have them. I've never wanted to do that before. I've never felt that rock songs are poetry or whatever, and this is the first time that some of them actually stand alone, without the song.

Q. You were lucky to find both Don and Gary having the same idea about where you should go on this album. Don has a very transparent production style here that didn't interfere. But did Gary's departure from Capitol Records complicate things?

It's not a problem. I would have made this record, in one form or another, without them. It was the best thing in the world and it was exactly what I needed. I needed two very smart guys who know the real shit when they hear it. And they know when something's disposable. We had to argue over a few songs and in the end, that's exactly why I hired Don. It's easier for an outsider to see something that doesn't have long-lasting value. But Gary actually is working for my management company. In a way, we're still working together. I don't even know if he's my manager. But he works along with my manager.

Q. Is it scary releasing something like this? You see so many people doing great work that gets ignored.

I've gotten used to it. (laughs). I've truly, truly gotten used to it. If something doesn't work for you the way you planned it, you tend to gravitate toward others who have faced a similar fate. If it's books I'm reading or things I see on television where people are talking about their career, certain things always keep repeating. As soon as you try to write for people, they don't want it. They only react to things that come from the heart and come from the gut. I've always felt I've followed that, but after I made this record I realized no, I didn't. I certainly strayed from that. So I'm back kinda to square one. As stupid as "Sorry Ma" was, I wasn't writing songs, I was 19 years old and yelling what I was doing that afternoon. This is very similar and yet maybe I can edit, a little better, the bullshit.

Q. There are two thoughts your fans have about you. One is that you have THE great, classic Replacements album still inside you, and you could make it anytime you want. But you don't.

The Replacements album that they really want is – we should get back together and record a blank record, with a cover, and make them pay for it. They would hate it and hate us, but I guarantee you it would be exactly what the real fans would want. It was all about 'What are they gonna do next?' As soon as the audience dictates it, it's gone.

Q. The other conviction out there is you could create a blockbuster anytime you wanted to, that you could do like Bruce Springsteen did -- take some songs, purposely polish them up into a Born in the USA blockbuster.

Uh....only ... well, no. I can't change to make that hit. If everything changed around me, then sure. But I don't even think along those lines at all. There's so much ass-kissing necessary to make that kind of sales, I could no longer either physically or mentally even entertain the notion of going around and being nice to that many people. (laughs). So fear not!

Q. The Billboard interview makes it sound like you never wanna play live again and if you ever did, you'd never play another Replacements song. Is it that severe?

Ah... I never wanted to give that impression, that 'Oh, it's those damn Mats songs that are the problem.' Those are the songs I've written; they're just the oldest. I'll say this: The album was borne out of feeling like I don't wanna play again. And for me to immediately pick up the instruments now and prepare for a tour almost feels like I've tricked myself. And I didn't. It wasn't a strategy; it was a necessity. A lot of these I don't see making it to the concert stage. "Self Defense" is written by myself, recorded by myself. To bring it to an audience – what's the purpose? You can hear the record. I'm probably not gonna sing it better, ever live. To me live performance is entertainment,

it's rock 'n' roll. If you you're not gonna do that, who wants to see the lonely guy up in the spotlight shiver and quake? I'm not prepared to do that.

Q. What will you do? I heard a radio thing where you did this amazing acoustic version of "Love Untold" on the last tour. Might you do that kind of promo tour?

I don't even remember doing that.

Q. Some place in Texas?

Oh yeah, OK. Um, yeah, I'm up for doing that. There's some documentary footage that's been shot in New York and L.A. Don actually shot me playing in the bathroom, three or four songs. I think to start along those lines first is the way I'd like to do it. It's so funny; you make a record, you pour your life into it and the first thing they wanna know is 'When are you gonna come perform?' It's unnecessary. This is the record, buy it, live with it, then we'll see.

Q. What made it not fun to do that anymore? It always seemed like you were having fun onstage.

Part of it comes from not being in a rock band. If you can't share fun, what good is it? When I was up there with hired musicians as opposed to guys who are your band, it's a different kind of thing. You don't fight as much when you hire 'em, but there's just no ... (sigh) ... there's no replacing a band like The Replacements. You know? If you're gonna play rock 'n' roll, you need a rock 'n' roll band. You can't hire guys to be spontaneous. Maybe in an odd way, I was realizing that I was out there on tour and my audience wasn't there. I don't know who was showing up, but it wasn't necessarily the people I thought should be hearing me. Maybe I was frustrated. I'm not 22, I don't hang out in bar rooms. I saw a lot of that coming to my shows. It was like 'Man, this ain't right.'

Q. Do you still love writing?

Um...I do it, but I don't love to sit down and write a song, ever, really, no. I feel compelled to do it or finish it. I'll feel satisfaction for a moment when it's done. Or when it starts to come together. But I don't get up in the morning and can't wait to get to a pen or a keyboard or something.

Q. You don't ever get a melody in your head that makes you unable to do anything else until you sit down and...

Till I sit down and go through my record collection and find it? (laughs). The melodies I have in my head are the ones that I can't sing. (laughs). If I could actually vocalize what I hear in my head, I could be extremely dangerous. We all have our burdens to bear. Maybe Bob Dylan has a symphony in his brain.

Q. Do you work on your voice or guitar playing? It seems to have gotten better over the years. I know that Dylan and others have actually sat down, mid-career, and taken guitar lessons.

Wow. Really?

Q. Yeah; Carlos Santana says he gave Dylan guitar lessons just before the recording of Blood on the Tracks.

OK. God. No, I don't at all. I'm kind of a different school. I'll buy a new instrument and it'll make me excited and take me away from whatever. I'll buy a trombone, I don't know how to play it, but I'll spend two weeks just horsing around with it. Jack of all trades, master of none is sort of my modus operandi.

Q. Do you ever get pissed when your phrases turn up places – "feelin' like a hundred bucks," "rebel without a clue," "can't hardly wait"?

Where did "feelin' like a hundred bucks" end up?

Q. I saw it in an episode of "Cheers" with Woody Harrelson telling someone "you look like a hundred bucks."

Where did it come from? (laughs)

Q. From "Alex Chilton."

Oh, OK. The positive side is that I've always felt like I'm ahead of my time and I've got ideas. I remember telling somebody ten years ago, maybe longer – I said "One day, punk rock is gonna sell beer." (laughs). And they go "Get out of here!" I'm goin' "Mark my fuckin' words. It's gonna happen." And when it happened, it's like part of me wants to smile and the other part is "Why can't I ever parlay this into some sort of fortune?"

Q. Because other people certainly manage to.

Yeah, yeah. I think I'm in the wrong occupation.

Q. I'll say the words so you don't have to: "Goo Goo Dolls." When you see others blatantly copying your style, commercial-ing it up and getting great attention, does it drive you nuts? Because it would kill me.

Um...ah...you know ... it's weird. Because I don't feel like ... I don't have some great quote. It's better that he take it somewhere than for it to go unheard. But it's not like he's taken – he doesn't have my soul. You know? He can take my style and do what he wants with it. We're not unfriendly. I like Johnny. I wish him luck and everything. I hear his words over melodies and I immediately sing different words. I wanna call him up. But no, the good side I suppose is I get a mention every time he gets a write-up. I'm sure he hates my guts by now.

Q. Tell me about the version of the album with special packaging with lyrics and artwork. I don't know anything about your art beyond your music.

I would think that's a falsehood. I saw what it was and there is no artwork. If I throw my shirt in the corner and spit on it, that's my art.

Q. No doodlings, no drawings?

Well, there are, but there are no pictures or things that one would generally think of as "Ah, look at this work of art." There are lyrics scrawled on the back of matchbooks and junk like that. They just told me "Whatever you have laying around" and I stuffed an envelope full of playing cards, words, stuff like that. But there are no drawings or pictures or anything like that.

Q. So where are you going from here? This is the best record I've heard in a couple of years. But I don't know if there's a single here, and I guess there's no touring. Where are you going from here?

I wouldn't say there's no tour. And I wouldn't say there's no single. "Lookin' Out Forever" – the strange thing is every station jumped on that before they were told that was gonna be the one. They instinctively grabbed it. At one time five stations here were playing the thing, like a month in advance. That has never happened before. We had to pull teeth to get them to play us. Maybe that staying away for an extra year was good. And as far as no tour – if everything lines up and if it's as simple as the thing gets some airplay and I feel that people have digested it and my physical health sort of mends, I'll probably travel and play some songs, yeah.

Q. Is it anything besides your back?

The back is the greatest symptom of it. It might be A.S., a severe case of that, which ankylosing spondylitis – it's like rheumatoid arthritis, which can make you sick, like a fever, joints, dizzy, ringing in the ears, swollen glands. When it hits, you feel pretty sick. But I'm feeling right on. I'm feeling good today. It's not gonna stop me. It might slow me a hair, till I get it under control.

Q. Now that you're a father, do you wanna do the things you need to do to have a career?

I said all this junk before Johnny was around. I don't want all the blame to be on him – "Oh, Paul's staying home with his little boy." I went out to L.A. two weeks ago and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being away. And I actually got a little rest. I missed him and I couldn't wait to get home, but hell, I could bring him along. It's not the end of the world. That wouldn't prevent me from playing music if I felt the need to do it. But I think everything works out the way it's supposed to. I'm glad to be home right now when he's like 8 months old. It's a good time. He's just starting to try and walk and stuff, and it's great.

Q. What's the core of the new album to you? Did you carve it down from a large body of songs?

There's about four real songs that didn't go on it, and some other sketches. One guy called it a mid-life crisis. I already feel like I've been through that a long time ago. Maybe it's that horrid disease of the end of the century. When I was making this thing, I didn't feel like I was making a record. But when it was getting close to done, I felt like if I don't ever make another one, I'm satisfied with this one. That's a scary way to think, but from now on, it's upped the ante for me. If I'm going to record another record, it's gonna have to be as good as this, or I'm not even gonna bother.

Q. When you say "as good as," I assume you could make a more upbeat album. The goodness in this just seems to be the straight-from-the-soul part of it.

Yeah!

Q. Is that what you mean?

I mean ... what the hell do I mean? I mean that in 10 years, you're gonna listen back to this record and it's not gonna sound like 1999. It doesn't sound like 1999. I think it's the first time I've hit on something that might be close to timeless. There isn't earmarks of the era on it. Actually, a few of the songs you mentioned are closer to that. And something like "Self Defense," that could have been recorded in the early '60s. It doesn't have a time. In a way, that's the way I feel about me and my career. I don't have a time. I don't know if I fit here. It's a guy who doesn't belong, and it's ... I don't know, man. It's a blue cover. It's my third blue cover in a row. What can I say? The final in a trilogy (laughs).

Q. "Sunrise Always Listens:" Tell me about that song. It sounds like that moment when you get in touch with yourself, when you're sitting quiet and you know things. The theme that runs through the album for me is clarity. A lot of these songs strip away distraction and give a real clear-eyed look at things.

Mmm hmm. Um...

Q. Did I have a question in there?

I'm certain you did. It's whether I can elaborate something that looks like an answer. The best songs are ... the very first words I say out of my mouth is the blunt and brutal truth. And that one ("Sunrise Always Listens") is. And I think every damn one of these are. It's not like it was written as a song. You hear me playing the chords over and over maybe for a day, with no words, and then the first words that come out. "Talking to myself" or whatever. That's exactly what I was doing – talking to myself and going "arrgghh." It's a guy losing his brain and immediately feeling that OK, what I've got to do is work now, work my way through this, so I'll create a song out of it.

Q. Anything messed up every time you do interviews?

It's not my place to explain or anything. But as soon as I hear the words "this is mellow and this is mature" it's like - my ass it is! Mellow in comparison to Marilyn Manson or

somebody? That's chicken! That's chicken music! It's like, hide behind a persona and volume and everything. This is so naked – look, there's nowhere to hide. You can't sort of hip some people to this stuff. They're not gonna be able to get it. So I've limited myself there.

Q. Do you worry about making it too naked? You've obscured yourself in the past.

Clearly this time there was no obscuring.

I'm gonna say what I have to say. If it destroys my life, I don't care because if I keep it inside it'll destroy me anyway. I feel like it's now my obligation to let it out.

Q. Tell me about Shawn Colvin on "Born For Me." Is she someone you knew before, was that one of those long-distance things, or how did it happen?

She's from South Dakota originally. She could smell the Replacements from where she was so she sorta knew about me. We met once in England in front of a hotel. I guess she's been kind of a fan and Don knew her and brought her in. She was available, she was great. She came in and sang it once – for free. Didn't charge me! A Grammy winner! She's great.

Q. Do you see any of the sites devoted to you on the Internet? Are you even on the Internet?

No, I'm not, not at all. I'm aware that there's stuff out there. But I even if I was (on the Internet), I don't wanna look at it. I don't read the reviews and stuff. I've read 'em before. I don't wanna know anymore what people think. It's not my place. People are talking to each other about me; I don't wanna eavesdrop. It's weird.

Q. What haven't we hit on?

I think nothing. I'll let you go.

Q. I'll stay here all day if you're up for it.

Shit, I don't mind.

Q. Now I'm asking questions just for me. I've never been able to figure out the bridge of "World Class Fad."

I have no idea what it is. I'm almost tempted to reach in my drawer and put the thing on. I haven't heard that song... (sings) "want it that bad, world class fad ... higher and higher..." It might have been just bullshit. That was kind of an immediate-take vocal, where I may have just said one line then tried to rhyme it and didn't have a word.

Q. I know for years people couldn't figure out the "Liberty is a lie" line from "Unsatisfied," but "World Class Fad" is the one that's been driving me out of my mind.

OK, you're in for it now. If I've got the thing here I'm gonna put it on and we can talk for two minutes till it gets to the bridge.

Q. OK. Do you hesitate including lyrics? In "Self Defense" I thought the line went "you only run fast when you're chaste", but then it was printed as "chased."

Yep. Both make sense to me.

Q. Was that the purpose?

Yeah. Absolutely. I haven't seen it but I'm sure they spelled it like "chased."

Q. I thought I was completely wrong.

Double entendres – I don't go shopping for them, but occasionally when you're in the mode or the groove, one will happen.

Q. Reading the lyrics killed that one for me. I thought oops, I was wrong, moved on, didn't think about it anymore.

No, you were right sir. Someone told me that in Canada they'd printed on the back of the jacket "Burn For Me." It is "Born For Me" you've got, right? They were asking about "Burn For Me." Suddenly it was like Blue Oyster Cult.

Q. We there yet on "World Class Fad?"

We gotta go through one more chorus. Ask a question.

Q. Do you need a record company at this point? You've got a studio in your house. What was recorded there is as good as anywhere else...

Wait, it's the bridge now – "the pressure's gonna build in ... higher and higher, oh no ... something's gotta move here? ... (laughs) ... you're knocking on wood ... you find some ago" (laughs). There you go, baby!

Q. It's cleared up now. Now I can sleep.

Yeah. Sheesh. Cripes.

Q. Do you need a record company?

They need me.

Q. They do. But with today's technology and your home studio, do you really need them?

Sure I do. I don't have any business skills. Did Picasso need somebody to get his work to the people? I'd just pile up the tunes in my room and nobody would hear them till I was dead.

Q. But there's ways to get 'em out these days without the standard "you get 11 (percentage) points, they get 89% thing.

Yeah. Well, you know, if I was just starting out – well, hell, I was on a little label for six years. You know, somebody offers you money, you take it. After 12 years on a major label it's kinda hard to say "Well, I'm just gonna go home." The way I figure it, one day there'll be a time perhaps when I won't need one. I've gotten used to it. It's how I work. I don't find it a hindrance.

Q. What did you make of the set that Sire put out with the unreleased stuff? I'm a big fan of the "Picasso's sketchbook" theory. I wanna hear the songs from inception to the final product.

I helped work on the Sire/Reprise one, just kind of as a "thank you" for letting me go, an "I'll help you out" kind of deal. I was truly please at like listening to "Beer For Breakfast" and listening to Chris and Tommy sorta talking before the song and remixing it. It refreshed my memory as to how feisty a little rock band we were. It was obvious why the outtakes didn't go on in my mind. The vocals are flatter than a doornail. It's kind of a cringer for me. But I don't have any more desire to work on that older stuff. The further back you go, the more chaotic the performances get. Believe me, there's no gems that didn't make it on. I know you're someone who's interested and you wanna hear everything. But you don't keep great songs off because they're great. You do it because there's something terribly wrong with them.

Q. Is the Twin Tone thing gonna happen? Do you have any say in that?

I probably do have say in it. I don't know what my legal rights are at this point. The contract was sold, the masters were sold, I don't even know who owns 'em anymore or what. Jeez, I never did understand that you need to be a lawyer to understand it. Can you blame us for going in there with 10 cocktails in us, trying to steal the tapes and throw them away? We didn't know what to do. We didn't wanna get screwed. We wanted to help ourselves.

Q. Did those really, truly get destroyed?

Yeah.

Q. Gone, unsalvageable, they weren't pulled out and stuck away, can be baked or anything?

Threw them IN the river.

Q. No one went in the river after them?

No. Nobody knew where they were except for the four of us. And we didn't get what we wanted. I think we ended up throwing out some outtakes and the acoustic version of "Can't Hardly Wait."

Q. Would you do a full unplugged? Hearing "Love Untold" unplugged made it a little more personal.

You could, but I like drums. If I'm performing music that isn't rock 'n' roll ... I have to talk myself into this. I never wanted to do this. I never woke up and wanted to be a sensitive guy writing little acoustic songs. My love and passion was rock 'n' roll. There was that sense inside of me, and "my art" kinda brought that out. But I don't know if it interests me too much. The playing of the music was my fun; if they loved me or applauded, it was like "I don't care."

Q. But isn't the courage and the growth in ... I mean, I saw the Stones the other night and they did a show just like the ones they tried to do when they were 25. It was great fun, but it was kinda sad.

Well, yeah, we could talk about all that. I could see why though. He never traded ... he did it for fame and for sex and then he became an astute businessman and he still does it for fame, sex and business. That never changed, as long as he could get it up and add the numbers.

Q. But you don't need the cash flow at that point. I could see someone in another position wanting to do that....

But it becomes addictive. Does Trump need any more dough? It's making the money. It's not the having it or spending it.

Q. You mentioned earlier that "Sorry Ma" sounds bare, raw and immediate, like this album; when do you feel you last followed your instincts that closely? You seem to think there was some artistic compromise on "Eventually," which I disagree with.

No, no, they brainwashed me on that. I just ... I guess "Eventually" was me writing songs and putting myself in them. This record isn't so much me writing songs as me absolutely having no clue what to do with my life, then sitting at the piano for days and then opening my mouth. And that's kind of the difference. I wasn't thinking "This is my new record." I didn't have a label. I didn't know what it was. It was almost like a diary.

Q. That situation where you don't know what you wanna do – it sounds like a nightmare, but so liberating.

Yeah, the lower you go and scoop yourself up, you kinda rebound back. I would not be surprised if I ended up going higher than ever, kind of a boomerang effect or something.

Q. Back in the old days, did alcohol play a role in being able to take you down to that level? When I used to drink more than I do now, it sorta served as a manic-depressive thing; you could get manic with it, you could get depressed with it. Was it an artificial way for you to do that?

It would, but it would prevent me from actually doing anything with it. It would make me just think about it and not even write it down. The difference now is when you get down there, you don't sober up tomorrow. You're still there. The next day it's still there. And it's "All right, I've got to shake this" somehow, even if it's just write it on paper and stick it in the drawer.

Q. You mentioned four leftover songs? Something for b-sides?

One in particular, "Cheyenne," is one of my faves that I wanted to be on the record. Then there's "Pleasure of Your Company," "33rd of July", and, of course, "Wonderful Copenhagen."

Q. Were they just wildly different from the theme of the album?

Yyyyyeah, two of them were sorta fun-loving, one was incomplete. Lyrically, I wasn't really there. I sorta went with a riff and wrote a song that probably would have fit on my other records more. On this one, each song lyrically had to hold up to the previous one. These kinda didn't.

Q. Is that what Grandpa Boy was? A place for the extras? You mentioned last time a song "Come On Little Bitch" that didn't make "Eventually."

Grandpa Boy came right in the middle of making this. It was literally for the first month of 11 years, I was out of my contract and free and clear to do whatever I wanted. So I like "whoopee!" and banged out a little record. But the other part of it was a song called "Lush and Green" that would have made it on the record. I knew that by the time I signed a deal and went through all of it it'd be a couple years before it came out, so I kinda like slipped one out for the fans. OK, here's a song. That's the one that would have been on this record. That was my little way of releasing a single two years early and not telling anyone.

Q. Kinda like Stain Yer Blood?

Yeah, kinda.

The Making of a Classic: The Replacements' *Let It Be*

St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 15, 2001
By JIM WALSH POP MUSIC CRITIC

From the outside these days, the house that sits at 606 13th Ave. S.E. in Minneapolis' Dinkytown neighborhood doesn't look much like a place where history was made.

The house was once owned by Twin/Tone co-founder Paul Stark, who rented it to three members of the local band Fingerprints -- Mike Owens, Kevin Glynn and Steve Fjelstad. In short order, the house became a makeshift recording studio, and many local bands made crude, charming slabs of vinyl that quietly laid the foundation for alternative rock.

In their first three years together, the Replacements released three records -- "Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash," "Stink" and "Hootenanny," all for Twin/Tone. Many saw the band as hard-drinking screw-up punks, but singer/songwriter Paul Westerberg, who had displayed a tender side early on in ballads such as "If Only You Were Lonely," "Go" and "Within Your Reach," was gaining a reputation as an ace songwriter that would reach a new peak on "Let It Be."

The Replacements' "Let It Be"

Label: Twin/Tone Records

Released: September 1984

Musicians: Paul Westerberg (vocals, guitar), Bob Stinson (guitar), Tommy Stinson (bass), Chris Mars (drums), Peter Buck (guitar solo on "I Will Dare"), Chan Poling (piano on "Sixteen Blue")

Produced by: Steve Fjelstad, Paul Westerberg, Peter Jespersen

Recorded at: Blackberry Way Studios, Minneapolis

Songs: "I Will Dare," "Favorite Thing," "We're Comin' Out," "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out," "Androgynous," "Black Diamond," "Unsatisfied," "Seen Your Video," "Gary's Got a Boner," "Sixteen Blue," "Answering Machine."

"The material had clearly stepped up a notch. Or 12," says Twin/Tone Records co-founder and then-Replacements manager Peter Jespersen. "Paul (Westerberg) called me in February or March of '83, and said, 'I just wrote the best song I've ever written, and we've got to record it right now.' I was like, 'Paul, we can't do that, we don't have any money. We just did 'Hootenanny.'"

The song was "I Will Dare," which, when finally recorded with Westerberg playing mandolin and R.E.M.'s Peter Buck doing the guitar solo, became the lead track to "Let It Be." In July 1984, Twin/Tone uncorked the 12-inch single of "I Will Dare," backed with covers of Hank Williams' "Hey Good Lookin'" and T. Rex's "20th Century Boy." The whole of "Let It Be" was recorded piecemeal over an eight-month period in 1983 and 1984, and finally saw the light of day in September. The band didn't have enough

money to buy blocks of studio time, so they recorded in between local bar gigs and national tours, including some opening for R.E.M.

"It was the first record that they recorded after having toured heavily," says Jespersen. "Instead of just playing the Longhorn and Duffy's and the Cabooze or whatever, they were more of a real band."

Of the "Let It Be" sessions, co-producer and engineer Fjelstad recalls "the drugs, drinking, late nights and Tommy Stinson's bass, which shook the walls and probably gave the neighbors fits." Fjelstad also remembers a band that was unlike the dozens of others he recorded back then.

"They were a lot of fun to work with," he says. "Paul was more focused than the other guys, and that helped. Sometimes you'd be pushing bands, trying to get a little tension going, and with them it worked because if they got a little bit p---ed off, they played harder."

The result was a college-rock classic that bristles with sex, humor, romance and spirit and ultimately plays like a tug-of-war between adolescence and adulthood. "Sixteen Blue" was Westerberg's big brotherly love letter to then-16-year-old Tommy Stinson ("Your age is the hardest age/Everything just drags and drags"), and the playful "Androgynous" was a bold statement of sexual liberation and empathy. "Seen Your Video" drew a line in the sand between the 'Mats and the emerging MTV generation of bands -- which is why it is so deliciously ironic that today, the notoriously bland VH1 will celebrate an album whose angriest lyric goes, "Seen your video/Your phony rock 'n' roll."

Named in mock honor of the Beatles' record of the same name (legend has it that Westerberg wanted to call the 'Mats' follow-up record "Let It Bleed," after the Rolling Stones' classic), "Let It Be" also includes a wicked cover of the KISS rocker "Black Diamond" and Westerberg's gut-baring anthem "Unsatisfied," which cemented his status as the voice of a generation.

To many, anyway. The 'Mats' late guitarist Bob Stinson told Goldmine magazine in 1993, "Again, that sounds like we're trying to come up with something cool in the studio. ('Unsatisfied' is) another half-assed attempt to make a good song. If we'd have put another five minutes' worth of time into it, it would have sounded 50 times better." The album's cover photo was taken by local photographer Dan Corrigan, who propped the band up on the roof of the Stinson family house in South Minneapolis after band practice finished one afternoon. It has become one of the most recognizable album covers to ever come out of Minnesota, but the man who took it didn't think much of it. "I made a picture of them at the same time, in an elevator at Coffman Union (at the University Of Minnesota), that I thought was just a stronger image," says Corrigan. "I still do. But (former Twin/Tone talent scout Dave) Ayers picked the roof shot. "Whenever people ask what I think about pictures, I always use that as an example of 'What do I know?' It's my most famous picture, and if it had been left up to me, I never would have used it."

"Let It Be" became a staple of college radio throughout the '80s and has since influenced countless bands, including Nirvana, Green Day, the Wallflowers and the Goo Goo Dolls. Rolling Stone magazine chose it as one of the 100 best rock records of all time, and in his 1985 piece "Kill Your Parents," Village Voice critic John Piccarella summed up what many felt when he wrote, "The Replacements are the best rock and roll band of our time."

Jesperperson, for one, agrees: "To me, all of their records should be in 'The Best 100 Records Ever Made.' Not to sound snotty about it, but certainly the Replacements are one of the best rock bands there ever was, and all four of those (Twin/Tone) records are great ones.

"After each record, I was like, 'Oh my God, this is incredible.' I felt that before it was made, while it was being made, and after it was made."

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THE REPLACEMENTS TEMPT VALIDITY BY MAKING THOSE YEAR END LISTS...

1983

Village Voice

Album - #4 *Let It Be*

Single - #17 "I Will Dare"

1985

Village Voice

#2 *Let It Be*

1987

Village Voice

Album - #3 *Pleased To Meet Me*

Single - #20 "Alex Chilton"

Melody Maker

Album - #14 *Pleased To Meet Me*

Single - #13 "Alex Chilton"

NME

#48 *Pleased To Meet Me*

1989

Village Voice

Album - #16 *Don't Tell A Soul*

Single - #18 "I'll Be You"

NME Albums

#43 *Don't Tell a Soul*

SPIN 25 Greatest Albums of All Time

#12 *Let It Be*

SPIN 100 Greatest Singles of All Time

#54 "Kiss Me On the Bus"

1990

Village Voice

#11 *All Shook Down*

1993

Neil Strauss 100 Most Influential alternative albums

Let It Be

1995

SPIN 100 Alternative Albums

#31 *Let It Be*

1997

Rough Trade Record Label/shop

#68 All For Nothing, Nothing For All

VH-1 Top 100 Albums

#75 *Let It Be*

***Village Voice* Top Albums of the 80s**

#21 *Let It Be*

#22 *Pleased To Meet Me*

#23 *Tim*

***SPIN* 50 Essential Punk Records**

#25 *Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash*

THE REPLACEMENTS SESSIONOGRAPHY

special thanks to Jason Czeskleba (czeskleba@mindspring.com) for this excellent compilation that originates from his website at http://www.22designs.com/foshaytower2/index_ie.html

Blue titles were released on official albums.

Red titles are included in this demo set.

Green titles have not surfaced to date but have been documented as existing.

Original demo tape (1980)

This is the demo tape which Paul Westerberg gave to Peter Jesperson one night at the Oarfolkjokeapus record store. Jesperson was a booker for the Longhorn Bar, and Paul hoped that the cassette would help the Mats get a gig. When Jesperson heard the tape, he decided he wanted to manage the band. Two recordings from this demo cassette were used on the *Sorry Ma* album.

Raised in the City	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Shutup	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Shape Up	
Don't Turn Me Down	

First session (July 21, 1980)

Careless (alternate version)

Otto (alternate version)

Shiftless When Idle	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
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More Cigarettes (alternate version)

I Hate Music (alternate version)

Shutup (alternate version)

Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash sessions (early 1981)

produced by Steve Fjelstad, Paul Westerberg, and Peter Jesperson. Engineered by Steve Fjelstad. Recorded at Blackberry Way Studios, Minneapolis.

Takin' A Ride	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Careless	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Customer	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Hangin' Downtown	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Kick Your Door Down	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Otto	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
I Bought A Headache	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Rattlesnake	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
I Hate Music	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Johnny's Gonna Die	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
More Cigarettes	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Don't Ask Why	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Somethin' To Dü	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
I'm In Trouble	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
Love You Till Friday	<i>Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash</i>
If Only You Were Lonely	<i>b-side of "I'm in Trouble" single</i>
Raised in the City (alternate version)	
Takin' a Ride (alternate version)	
Careless (alternate version)	
Johnny's Gonna Die (alternate version)	
Somethin' to Dü (alternate version)	

Love You Till Friday (alternate version 1)

Love You Till Friday (alternate version 2)

Like You

Stink sessions (early 1982)

produced by Steve Fjelstad, Peter Jesperson, and the Replacements. Minneapolis police recorded live on location by Terry Kaufman.

Kids Don't Follow	<i>Stink</i>
Fuck School	<i>Stink</i>
Stuck In The Middle	<i>Stink</i>
God Damn Job	<i>Stink</i>
White And Lazy	<i>Stink</i>
Dope Smokin' Moron	<i>Stink</i>
Go	<i>Stink</i>
Gimme Noise	<i>Stink</i>

Trackin' Up the North session (mid-1982)

This song was recorded specifically for the "KQDS Miller High Life Rock to Riches Talent Search Contest", and appeared on a compilation album dedicated to contest entries from various bands. At the end of the song Paul yells "Keep your riches, gimme a Budweiser," which probably didn't make the Miller beer people too happy. Needless to say, the Mats did not win the contest.

Lookin' For Ya	<i>Trackin' Up the North</i>
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Hootenanny sessions (October 1982 to January 1983)

Produced by Paul Stark, Peter Jesperson, and the Replacements. Engineered by Steve Fjelstad. Recorded at Blackberry Way Studios, and at "a warehouse in some godawful suburb north of Mpls."

Hootenanny	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Run it	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Color Me Impressed	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Willpower	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Take Me Down to the Hospital	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Mr. Whirly	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Within Your Reach	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Buck Hill	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Lovelines	<i>Hootenanny</i>
You Lose	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Hayday	<i>Hootenanny</i>
Treatment Bound	<i>Hootenanny</i>

Don't Get Married

Shoot Me, Kill Me (aka Sex with a Goat)

Note: Peter Jesperson has stated that the Mats recorded almost two album's worth of material during the *Hootenanny* sessions, so there are presumably several other outtakes from these sessions whose titles are unknown.

Let It Be sessions (1983-1984)

Produced by Steve Fjelstad, Paul Westerberg, and Peter Jespersen. Engineered by Steve Fjelstad.
Recorded at Blackberry Way Studios, Minneapolis.

I Will Dare	<i>Let It Be</i>
Favorite Thing	<i>Let It Be</i>
We're Comin' Out	<i>Let It Be</i>
Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out	<i>Let It Be</i>
Androgynous	<i>Let It Be</i>
Black Diamond	<i>Let It Be</i>
Unsatisfied	<i>Let It Be</i>
Seen Your Video	<i>Let It Be</i>
Gary's Got A Boner	<i>Let It Be</i>
Sixteen Blue	<i>Let It Be</i>
Answering Machine	<i>Let It Be</i>
20th Century Boy	b-side of "I Will Dare"
Sixteen Blue (alternate version)	
Who's Gonna Take Us Alive	
Temptation Eyes	
Street Girl (version one)	
Street Girl (version two)	
Gary's Got a Boner (alternate version)	
Perfectly Lethal	
You Look Like an Adult	

Alex Chilton sessions (January 1985)

Produced by Alex Chilton and the Replacements. Recorded at Nicollet Studios, Minneapolis.
The original plan was for Alex Chilton to produce the next Mats album. But when they signed to Sire Records shortly after these sessions, the label asked them to replace Chilton with Tom Erdelyi. So these January sessions wound up being the only production work Chilton did, and Left of the Dial was the only Chilton-produced song that made it onto *Tim*.

Left of the Dial	<i>Tim</i>
Nowhere is My Home	<i>Boink!!!</i>
Can't Hardly Wait (electric)	
Can't Hardly Wait (acoustic version)	

Tim sessions (June-July 1985)

Produced by Tommy Erdelyi. Engineered by Steve Fjelstad. Recorded at Nicollet Studios, Minneapolis.

Hold My Life	<i>Tim</i>
I'll Buy	<i>Tim</i>
Kiss Me On The Bus	<i>Tim</i>
Dose Of Thunder	<i>Tim</i>
Waitress In The Sky	<i>Tim</i>
Swingin Party	<i>Tim</i>
Bastards Of Young	<i>Tim</i>
Lay It Down Clown	<i>Tim</i>
Little Mascara	<i>Tim</i>
Here Comes A Regular	<i>Tim</i>
Can't Hardly Wait	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
Kiss Me on the Bus (alternate version)	
Little Mascara (alternate version)	

Pleased To Meet Me demos (August 1986)

Bob Stinson did his last gig with the Mats in June of 1986, so these sessions mark the last time he ever played with the band. They give an indication of what the PTMM album might have been like if he'd been on it.

Valentine
Birthday Gal
Bundle Up
Red Red Wine
PO Box (aka Empty as Your Heart)
Time is Killing Us (Not the Other Way)

Pleased To Meet Me sessions (late 1986-early 1987)

Produced by Jim Dickinson. Recorded and mixed by John Hampton and Joe Hardy. Recorded at Ardent Studios, Memphis. *Pleased To Meet Me* was recorded as a trio. Bob "Slim" Dunlop joined the band after sessions were complete.

I.O.U.	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Alex Chilton	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
I Don't Know	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Nightclub Jitters	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
The Ledge	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Never Mind	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Valentine	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Shooting Dirty Pool	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Red Red Wine	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Skyway	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Can't Hardly Wait	<i>Pleased To Meet Me</i>
Election Day	<i>b-side of German "The Ledge" EP</i>
Route 66	<i>b-side of German "The Ledge" EP</i>
Tossin' and Turnin'	<i>b-side of German "The Ledge" EP</i>
Jungle Rock	<i>b-side of German "The Ledge" EP</i>
Cool Water	<i>b-side of "Can't Hardly Wait" single</i>
Birthday Gal	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
Beer for Breakfast	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
Till We're Nude	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
All He Wants to Do is Fish	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
I Don't Know (alternate version)	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>
Never mind (alternate version)	
Alex Chilton (alternate version)	
Red Red Wine (alternate version)	
Kick it In (aka Television)	
Valentine (instrumental version)	
Run for the Country	
Going Out of My Head	
Trouble on the Way	
Make this Your Home	
Learn How to Fail	
I Don't Know (alternate version with "Going Out of My Head" fragment)	
Shooting Dirty Pool (alternate version)	

Tony Berg sessions (1988)

Produced by Tony Berg. Engineered by Dan Bates. Recorded at Bearsville Studios, Woodstock, NY. According to Chris Mars, an album's worth of songs were recorded at these sessions, but the Mats decided to scrap the album because it was turning into a typical loudfast Mats album, and Westerberg decided he wanted to try for a different sound instead. Nothing from these sessions has been bootlegged, so the other titles aren't known.

Portland *All for Nothing/Nothing for All*

Wake Up *All for Nothing/Nothing for All*

Beer for Breakfast (remake)

Don't Tell a Soul sessions (1988)

Produced by Matt Wallace and the Replacements. Recorded at Cherokee Studios, Los Angeles.

Talent Show *Don't Tell a Soul*

Back To Back *Don't Tell a Soul*

We'll Inherit The Earth *Don't Tell a Soul*

Achin' To Be *Don't Tell a Soul*

They're Blind *Don't Tell a Soul*

Anywhere's Better Than Here *Don't Tell a Soul*

Asking Me Lies *Don't Tell a Soul*

I'll Be You *Don't Tell a Soul*

I Won't *Don't Tell a Soul*

Rock 'n' Roll Ghost *Don't Tell a Soul*

Darlin' One *Don't Tell a Soul*

Date to Church *b-side of "I'll Be You"*

We Know the Night *All for Nothing/Nothing for All*

Ought to Get Love *Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap*

Rock 'n' Roll Ghost (alternate version)

Stay Awake session (1988)

Produced by the Replacements. Recorded at Paisley Park Studios, Minnesota. This track was recorded specifically for a compilation album of pop and rock artists doing songs from Disney films.

Cruella DeVille *Stay Awake: Various Interpretations of Music from Vintage Disney Films*

All Shook Down demos (1990)

Kissin' In Action

Only If We Must

Someone Take The Wheel

When It Began

Nobody

One Wink at a Time

Someone Take The Wheel

My Little Problem

Sadly Beautiful

Attitude

Torture

Happy Town

All Shook Down sessions (1990)

Produced by Scott Litt and the Replacements. Engineered and mixed by Scott Litt. Recorded at Ocean Way Studios, Los Angeles. This was originally intended as a Westerberg solo album, but Tommy, Slim, and Chris were gradually added to some songs and it was decided to market it as a Mats album. "Attitude" is the only song which actually features all four Replacements.

Merry Go Round	<i>All Shook Down</i>
One Wink At A Time	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Nobody	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Bent Out Of Shape	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Sadly Beautiful	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Someone Take The Wheel	<i>All Shook Down</i>
When It Began	<i>All Shook Down</i>
All Shook Down	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Attitude	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Happy Town	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Torture	<i>All Shook Down</i>
My Little Problem	<i>All Shook Down</i>
The Last	<i>All Shook Down</i>
Kissin' in Action	<i>Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap</i>
Like a Rolling Pin	<i>Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap</i>
Who Knows	<i>All for Nothing/Nothing for All</i>

Satellite session (1990)

Produced by the Replacements. Engineered and mixed by Jay Healy. Recorded at Paisley Park Studios, Minnesota.

Satellite	<i>Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap</i>
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ROBERT "THE DEAN OF ROCK CRITICS" CHRISTGAU REVIEWS THE REPLACEMENTS

- * ***Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash*** [Twin/Tone, 1981] B+
- * ***Stink*** [Twin/Tone, 1982] A- (#69 on his end of year list)
- * ***Hootenanny*** [Twin/Tone, 1983] B+
- * ***Let It Be*** [Twin/Tone, 1984] A+ (#2 on his end of year list)
- * ***Tim*** [Sire, 1985] A- (#14 on his end of year list)
- * ***The Shit Hits the Fans*** [Twin/Tone, 1985] B
- * ***Pleased to Meet Me*** [Sire, 1987] A- (#20 on his end of year list)
- * ***Don't Tell a Soul*** [Sire, 1989] B+
- * ***All Shook Down*** [Sire, 1990] **
- * ***Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap*** [Sire/Reprise, 1990] **
- * ***All for Nothing/Nothing for All*** [Warner Bros., 1997] A- (#70 on his end of year list)

Consumer Guide Reviews:

Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash [Twin/Tone, 1981]

A non-quite-hardcore Twin Cities quartet who sound like the Heartbreakers might have if they'd started young and never seen Union Square: noisy, disgruntled, lovable. I mean, with liner notes like "this could have come close to rock-a-billy if we had taken the time," "stole a mess of these words from a guy who's never gonna listen to this record," and "written 20 mins after we recorded it," how bad could they be? Yeah, I know, pretty bad, and anyway, how good could they be? Hearing is believing.

Inspirational Verse: "I hate music/It's got too many notes." B+

Stink [Twin/Tone, 1982]

They're young and they're snotty. They think fast and short but play it too loose for hardcore. And they make getting pissed off sound both funny and fun, which is always the idea. Tunes emerge from the locomotion, sometimes attached to titles like "Fuck School," "God Damn Job," "White and Lazy," and "Dope Smokin' Moron," sometimes not--usually it doesn't matter all that much. They even have their lyrical moments. A-

Hootenanny [Twin/Tone, 1983]

Thrashing their guitars or shambling like bumpkins or reading the personals w/ musical accompaniment, this young band has a loose, freewheeling craziness that remains miraculously unaffected after three records. They'll try anything--there's even synthesizer percussion on one cut. If the rock and roll spirit is your bottom line, you'll love 'em. But because they play it so loose they do gravitate toward sloppy noise, which means that too often they're more conceptual than a loose, freewheeling rock and roll band ought to be. B+

Let It Be [Twin/Tone, 1984]

Those still looking for the perfect garage may misconstrue this band's belated access to melody as proof they've surrendered their principles. Me, I'm delighted they've matured beyond their strange discovery of country music. Bands like this don't have roots, or principles either, they just have stuff they like. Which in this case includes androgyny (no antitrendie reaction here) and Kiss (forgotten protopunks). Things they don't like include tonsillectomies and answering machines, both of which they make something of. A+

Tim [Sire, 1985]

No songwriter in memory matches Paul Westerberg's artful artlessness, the impression he creates of plumbing his heart as he goes along. Statements like "Hold My Life" and "Bastards of Young" are pretty grand when you think about it, but you don't notice in the offhand context of the tastelessly amorous "Kiss Me on the Bus" or the tastelessly resentful "Waitress in the Sky." So far Westerberg hasn't been touched by the pretension and mere craft that seem to be inevitable side effects of such a gift, and I see no reason to anticipate that he will be. With a band this there, presence is all. A-

The Shit Hits the Fans [Twin/Tone, 1985]

This slop bucket of shit-aesthetic covers from Lloyd Price to X with lotsa BTO/Foreigner/Skynyrd in between was "recorded live at the Bowery, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11.11.84" without the band's knowledge: "Our roadie pulled it out of some enterprising young gent's tape recorder toward the end of the night." Sound is more than adequate considering, songs mostly good-to-great, overall effect a little unrealized for my taste. I might want to hear them do "Misty Mountain Hop" twixt "God Damn Job" and "I Will Dare," but twixt "Iron Man" and "Heartbreaker" I'll take Led Zep's. B

Pleased to Meet Me [Sire, 1987]

It's no different for Paul Westerberg than for less talented mortals--sooner or later he had to grow up or fall apart. That's why he got rid of Bob Stinson, who threatened to destroy the band along with himself and anybody else within range. But that doesn't mean Westerberg's guitar can extend Stinson's perpetually broken promise to harness the power of naked anarchy. Or that he can altogether avoid the sentimentality inherent in subjects like teen suicide and red red wine. Of course, with almost any other band those two songs would be airplay cuts, but compared to "I.O.U.," "Alex Chilton," "I Don't Know," "Valentine," they're product and filler. For the third straight album Westerberg delivers the goods--grimy, uplifting, in the tradition and shocking like new. No competing rock and roll mortal can make such a claim. If by some stroke he learns to handle maturity, Valhalla awaits him. A-

Don't Tell a Soul [Sire, 1989]

Circa Let It Be, Bob Stinson's guitar was a loud, unkempt match for Paul Westerberg's vocal, only he'd juice the notes with a little something extra and probably wrong, defining a band whose idea of inspiration was crashing into a snowbank and coming out with a six-pack. Especially on side two, the basic guitar move here is much classier: new guy Slim Dunlap plays hooks. On "Back to Back" Westerberg sings "Back to back" and Dunlap doubles a four-note cadence, on "Achin' to Be" Westerberg sings "She's achin' . . ." and Dunlap chimes in two-one two-three--like that. They aren't always so simplistic, but a decade-plus after the dawning of power pop the device reeks of the mechanical--except in country music, where formula is part of the charm, it's tough to

bring off without sounding corny or manipulative. At its worst--I vote for "Achin' to Be," which starts off "She's kinda like an artist" and never once slaps itself upside the head--Don't Tell a Soul is both. At its best--the Who homage "I Won't" ("I w-w-w-w-w-won't"), the Tommy Stinson anthem "Anywhere's Better Than Here," or even "I'll Be You," with Dunlap reaching bell-like through serious clamor--it sounds like old times. B+

All Shook Down [Sire, 1990]

slow thoughtful rools ("Sadly Beautiful," "The Last") **

Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap [Sire/Reprise, 1990]

loud sloppy rools ("Satellite") **

All for Nothing/Nothing for All [Warner Bros., 1997]

I never bought the theory that Warners tamed them--life generally has that effect anyway. But the all-for-nothing disc's selection from the descent made inevitable by Let It Be, which stands beside Wild Gift as Amerindie's very peak, short-changes the wild ("I Won't") and the tasteless ("Waitress in the Sky"); you'd be better off just proceeding from Tim. The miscellaneous arcana on the nothing-for-all disc, however, are pretty unkempt for a pop band that's mastering its craft as it loses its purpose--blues, lo-fi come-on, Disney cover, B sides, what-all. Although it's a mess or because it is, it's got more life than either of their two final albums--and no "Aching To Be," either. A-

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RECORD REVIEWS FROM THE TROUSER PRESS

Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash (Twin/Tone) 1981

The Replacements Stink EP (Twin/Tone) 1982 + 1986

Hootenanny (Twin/Tone) 1983

Let It Be (Twin/Tone) 1984

The Shit Hits the Fans [tape] (Twin/Tone) 1985

Tim (Sire) 1985

Boink!! (Glass) 1986

Pleased to Meet Me (Sire) 1987

Don't Tell a Soul (Sire-Reprise) 1989

All Shook Down (Sire-Reprise) 1990

For a time the world's best rock'n'roll band — proof that those who missed the '60s could still build something great on the crass and hollow corpse of '70s music — Minneapolis' Replacements began as juvenile punks whose give-a-shit attitude masked the seeds of singer/guitarist/songwriter Paul Westerberg's self-destructive genius for injecting sensitivity into flat-out chaos. When it all clicked — volume, rawness, speed (pace and ingested substances), energy and passion — the Mats (short for Placemats) teetered drunkenly at the brink of the abyss and recklessly cracked jokes about it. Onstage and on vinyl, nothing could compare with their unpredictable excitement. But over the years, the onset of maturity and a reasonable desire for self-preservation caused Westerberg to draw the group back to the point where the latest album has almost none of the old fire.

The original foursome got written off a lot as sloppy, but only by those who chose not to see beyond the confusion. Chris Mars drummed as one possessed; spoiled teen Tommy Stinson (twelve when the band started) thumped a mean bassline; buffoonish guitarist Bob Stinson might wear a dress (or less) onstage but could alternate between ripping metal leads and achingly tender melody lines that come from his heart (if not his brain). And Paul Westerberg — too terrified to sing his soft songs — hid behind the band's noise. The Mats were one of those classic rock'n'roll combos whose music, looks and personalities fit together perfectly, the stuff of which legends are made.

The musical evidence of their creative importance was there on the first album, eighteen songs following the usual loud/fast/cynical rules with titles like "Shutup," "Kick Your Door Down," "I Hate Music" and "Shiftless When Idle." But a slow, bluesy ode to J. Thunders, "Johnny's Gonna Die," showed depth beyond their years. The *Stink EP* — initially issued in a white hand-rubberstamped sleeve — went for pure driving thrash and produced some gems, including "Dope Smokin Moron," "Kids Don't Follow" and "God Damn Job." But it landed them in the hardcore bins, even though the music and lyrics are much sharper than most, mixing equal parts arrogance and self-deprecating humor.

When *Hootenanny* combined blues, power pop, folk, country, straight-ahead rock, surf (or, more accurately, ski) and punk in a way few hardcore bands could even imagine, people started taking notice. *Stink's* "Fuck School" gave way to "Color Me Impressed,"

a wise and soaring rock number about getting drunk and being bored by trendinistas that sounded pretty incongruous next to "Run It," a paean to beating red lights. Amid the roaring power of "Take Me Down to the Hospital" and the wacky Beatlesque collage of "Mr. Whirly," Westerberg reached into his bag of solo heartstoppers for a naked (yet never sappy) confession of loneliness, "Within Your Reach."

With *Let It Be*, the Mats became "stars," at least on the independent club/college radio circuit. The LP is more focused than anything else they'd done, boldly carrying out what they'd only tried on Hootenanny. They blended rock-pop and country shuffle on "I Will Dare," covered Kiss' "Black Diamond" and raved-up on novelty rockers like the lyrical vérité of "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out" and "Gary's Got a Boner." Westerberg's knowledge of loneliness ("Sixteen Blue," "Answering Machine") gave way to total emptiness on the harrowing "Unsatisfied."

Critics trampled each other in a rush to claim discovery rights, Sire signed them and Twin/Tone celebrated with a cassette-only live tape — stolen from some kid bootlegging an Oklahoma show — which showed the feckless Mats at their most messed-up, playing (at least starting to play) a motley collection of their favorite covers, from R.E.M. to the Stones, Thin Lizzy to X.

The Replacements made the transition to major-labeldom with their artistic integrity intact. Ex-Ramone Tommy Erdelyi produced *Tim*, retaining all of the band's raggedness and devil-may-care spirit. Westerberg's tunes here are among his best ever, from a melancholy bar ballad ("Here Comes a Regular") to an obnoxiously mean-spirited anti-stewardess slur, "Waitress in the Sky." His raging insecurity shines through on "Hold My Life" ("because I just might lose it...") and the anthemic "Bastards of Young." "Left of the Dial" celebrates alternative radio, while "Kiss Me on the Bus" considers the romantic possibilities of public transportation. A stupendous record.

Boink!! is an eight-song UK condensation of the band's pre-Let It Be catalogue, with the added bonus of an otherwise unreleased Alex Chilton-produced cut, "Nowhere Is My Home."

When it became apparent that Bob Stinson was in danger of succumbing permanently to the band's treacherous lifestyle, the Mats fired him and proceeded to record the incredible *Pleased to Meet Me* as a trio. With Jim Dickinson producing and Westerberg doing all the guitar work, the group stirred up another batch of their finest brew: virile, witty rockers ("Valentine," "Red Red Wine," "I.O.U."), tender ballads ("Nightclub Jitters," "Skyway"). There's a rollicking number about "Alex Chilton," a bizarre but fabulous stab at commercial radio acceptance ("Can't Hardly Wait") in which the Memphis Horns echo a deliciously nagging guitar riff over a wicked backbeat, and "The Ledge," a tense suicide vignette musically rewritten from Hootenanny's "Willpower." On tour following the LP's release, the group unveiled a new guitarist, Slim Dunlap (ex-Curtiss A), and a far less obstreperous attitude.

Whether *Don't Tell a Soul* is a strong album with a few clunkers or a weak album with some great songs, the Mats' previous glories tinge the record with disappointment. (Initial impressions were strictly the latter; the record's better qualities have emerged over time.) Westerberg's arrival in adulthood has softened his outlook (while increasing

his disillusionment) and reduced his desire to play blaringly loud, wild rock. But as his passions have cooled, his lyrical concerns have grown increasingly private; the songs are as strong and artistic as ever, but somehow less compelling. Arrangements which favor acoustic guitars, layers of harmony vocals and keyboards undercut the band's standard attack; Mars is consigned to keep the backbeat with a criminal minimum of rhythmic variation. "Achin' to Be," a gentle country love song, and the stately minor-key "Darlin' One" are extremely effective, as are "I'll Be You," the soaring "We'll Inherit the Earth" and "Anywhere's Better Than Here." But there's still an unsettling aloofness to the record. Rather than the previous album's reach-out-and-grab-someone impact, *Don't Tell a Soul* is merely an uneven collection of songs.

Compared to the stultifying *All Shook Down*, however, *Don't Tell a Soul* is positively blistering. A band album in name only, Westerberg used session players (including the three other Replacements) to craft lightweight songs that resemble the Replacements, but lack fire, content, imagination and tension. Considering the Mats' past achievements, the vocal duet with Concrete Blonde's Johnette Napolitano on "My Little Problem" is a fairly lame excuse for rock'n'roll. ("Bent Out of Shape" is the album's sole working burner, although the Stonesey "Happy Town" comes close.) While the acoustic "Sadly Beautiful" (with viola by John Cale) demonstrates how to find intensity in tranquility, the album — even a piano-based pitch for sobriety entitled "The Last" — fails to perform that feat twice. Oh mamma, can this really be the end?

For Chris Mars, it was. He quit in November 1990. With a new drummer, the group hit the road, but that was the end of the band's recording career.
[Elizabeth Philips/Ira Robbins]

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Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out The Trash

Released 8/25/81, Twin/Tone TTR-8123, Time = 36:46, LP, CD, cassette

Takin' A Ride / Careless / Customer / Hangin Downtown / Kick Your Door Down / Otto / I Bought A Headache / Rattlesnake / I Hate Music / Johnny's Gonna Die / Shiftless When Idle / More Cigarettes / Don't Ask Why / Somethin' To Du / I'm In Trouble / Love You Till Friday / Shutup / Raised In The City



The Replacements

- 1987 TIME SIDE 1 - 1989 - Paul's writing
- ① Take a Ride (2:23) ... Radio Blastin...
 - ② Careless (1:08) - Don't worry, we're thinking about taking lessons.
(I'm in love with the girl that works at the store ~~and~~ working out)
 - ③ Customer (1:29) - MAKE up your own words, I DID. Bob's lead is hotter than a urinary infection.
 - ④ Hanging Out (2:00) - We wanted to put car horns over the mistake, but none of us own a car.
 - ⑤ Kick your Door Down (3:05) - 1st take - written 20 mins after we recorded it.
 - ⑥ Oh No (2:07) - We ain't CRAZY about it either. Also this song is proof that Chris Mars is one of the best ~~drummers~~ drummers we could find at the time.
 - ⑦ I Bought a Headache -
 - ⑧ Rattle Snake (1:30) - A Song About Gardening
 - ⑨ I Hate Music (1:38) ... Tommy says so...

- ⑩ Johnny's Gonna Die (3:30)
A REAL Heartbreaker. 1st lead Bob 2nd lead PAUL
- ⑪ Shiftless When Idle (2:16) Title - GOOD
Song - Kinda
- ⑫ More Cigarettes (1:15) - this could have come close to Rock + Billy if we had taken the time.
- ⑬ Don't Ask Why (1:50) - Stole a mess of these words from a guy who's never gonna ~~listen~~ listen to this record.
- ⑭ Something to Do (1:30)
Song for the Huskers, who have never taken drugs
- ⑮ I'm in Trouble (2:07) - Warbling Ken sings a little flat, but Bob was in tune. After listening to several soul records with a friend one night, I asked that he play something "white + talentless". This was what he played. Thanks Pete.
- ⑯ Love you till Friday - Pop music - Larson likes it too
17. Shut Up.
18. Raised in the City - Key of C Fix it Fix it stop.

Studio Photos By ERIC HANSON
All others GREG HALLGREN
CD LAYOUT By PATRICK MORRARTY
THANKS TO LOU FOR telling us to turn up.

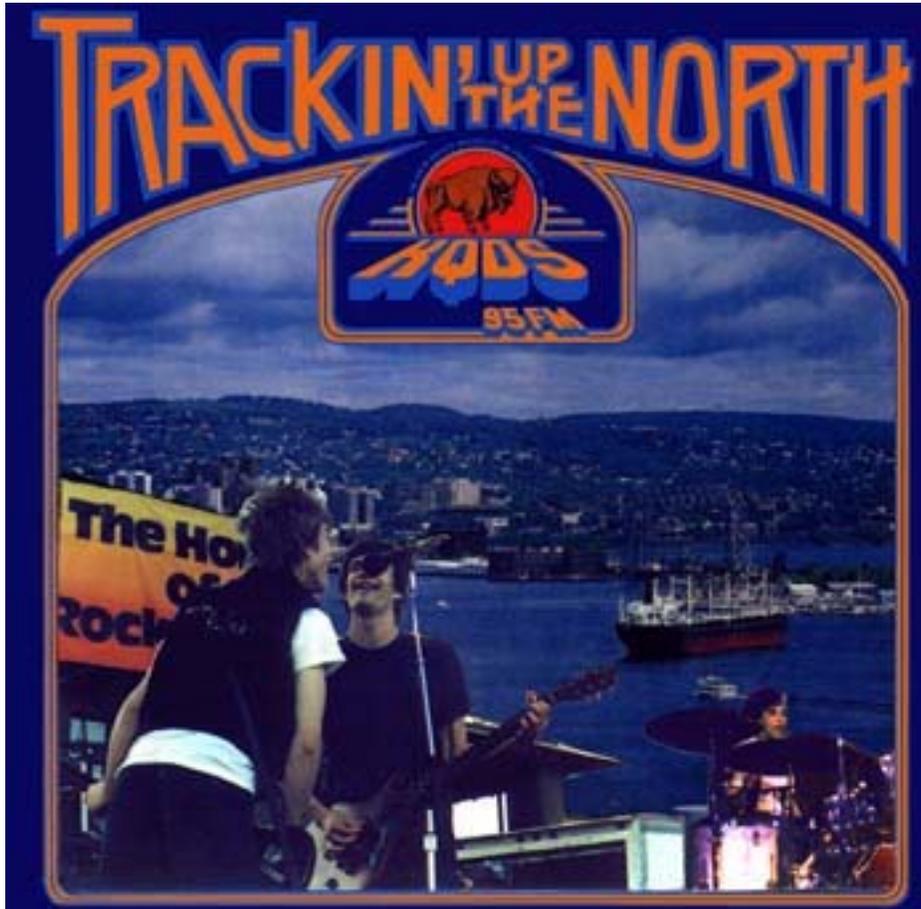
By the way,
Headache + Shiftless are from a 2 channel direct recording mixed live by Paul Stark. It was our 1st studio demo for twitter and was recorded at Blackberry Way July 21st, 1980 we were drunk.

AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash is a slight but enjoyable debut album from the Replacements, capturing the quartet halfway between the loud, fast punk rock of the Ramones and Husker Du and the classic rock raunch of the Rolling Stones. Most of the record speeds by in a flurry of ragged guitars, rushed rhythms and hoarse vocals -- it's about the sound, not the songs. However, there are a handful of songs that indicate the Replacements are capable of depth, including the bluesy Johnny Thunder tribute "Johnny's Gonna Die," the tongue-in-cheek "I Hate Music" and the near-anthem "Shiftless When Idle." ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Trackin' Up The North

1982 Talent Contest, Duluth MN, LP

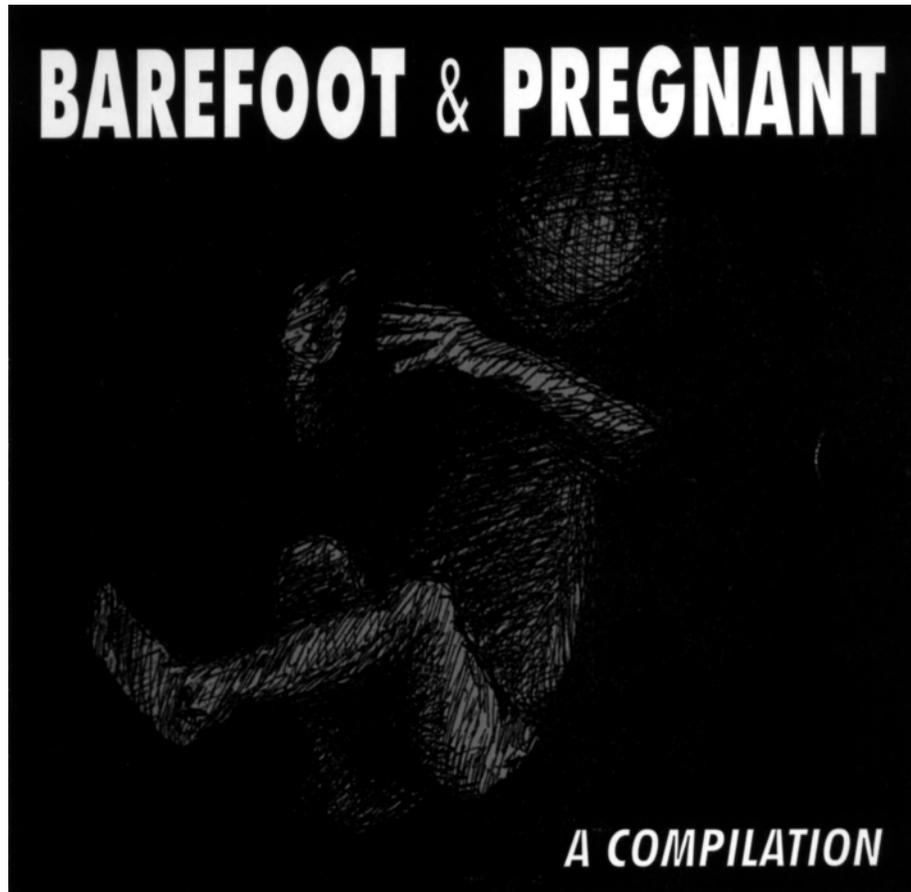
Track: Lookin' For Ya (early version of Lovelines)



Barefoot And Pregnant

1982/1998 Reflex Records, cassette/CD

Track: Ace of Spades (live)



Bang Zoom magazine

issue #3 bonus cassette compilation

Track: Lookin' For Ya (early version of Lovelines)

--no photo available--

Stink

Released 6/24/82, Twin/Tone TTR-8228, Time = 15:14, LP, CD, cassette

Kids Don't Follow / Fuck School / Stuck In The Middle / God Damn Job / White And Lazy / Dope
Smokin Moron / Go / Gimme Noise

(front)



(back)

SIDE #1 KIDS DON'T FOLLOW (P. WESTERBERG) (2:18)
 FUCK SCHOOL (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:25)
 STUCK IN THE MIDDLE (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:46)
GOD DAMN JOB (P. WESTERBERG) (1:15)
 DOPE SMOKIN MORON (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:46)
 SIDE #2 WHITE AND LAZY (P. WESTERBERG) (2:06)
 DOPE SMOKIN MORON (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:46)
GO (P. WESTERBERG) (2:28)
 GIMME NOISE (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:30)
RECORDED AT BLACKBERRY WAY 3/13/82
 PRODUCED BY STEVE FJELSTAD/PETER JESPERSOON/THE REPLACEMENTS
 MPLS. POLICE RECORDED LIVE ON LOCATION BY T.K. 1-29-82
 ALL SONGS COPYRIGHT 1982 N.A.H. MUSIC B.M.I.

Twin Tone
 RECORDS
 Twin Tone Records 445 Oliver Ave. So. Minneapolis, MN 55405
TTR 8228

SIDE #1 KIDS DON'T FOLLOW (P. WESTERBERG) (2:18)
 FUCK SCHOOL (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:25)
 STUCK IN THE MIDDLE (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:46)
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 ALL SONGS COPYRIGHT 1982 N.A.H. MUSIC B.M.I.

4

(front)

THE REPLACEMENTS?
STINK
"KIDS DON'T FOLLOW" PLUS SEVEN

(back)

SIDE #1 KIDS DON'T FOLLOW (P. WESTERBERG) (2:18)
FUCK SCHOOL (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:25)
STUCK IN THE MIDDLE (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:46)
GOD DAMN JOB (P. WESTERBERG) (1:15)
SIDE #2 WHITE AND LAZY (P. WESTERBERG) (2:06)
DOPE SMOKIN MORON (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:37)
GO (P. WESTERBERG) (2:28)
GIMME NOISE (P. WESTERBERG STINSON STINSON MARS) (1:35)
RECORDED AT BLACKBERRY WAY 3/13/82
PRODUCED BY STEVE FJELSTAD/PETER JESPERSON/ THE REPLACEMENTS
MPLS. POLICE RECORDED LIVE ON LOCATION BY T.K. 1-29-82
ALL SONGS COPYRIGHT 1982 NAH MUSIC B.M.I.

twinTone
RECORDS
Twin Tone Records 445 Oliver Ave. So. Mpls. Mn 55405
TTR 8228

AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Following quick on the heels of the group's debut, the Stink EP takes the loud-hard-fast attitude of Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash to the extreme, mistakenly giving the impression that the Replacements were a hardcore band. Event though the EP isn't much more than clamor, it's *better* clamor than before -- the band doesn't sound tighter but their noise is more galvanizing and a handful of songs ("Kids Don't Follow," "Fuck School," "God Damn Job") suggest Paul Westerberg is improving as a songwriter. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

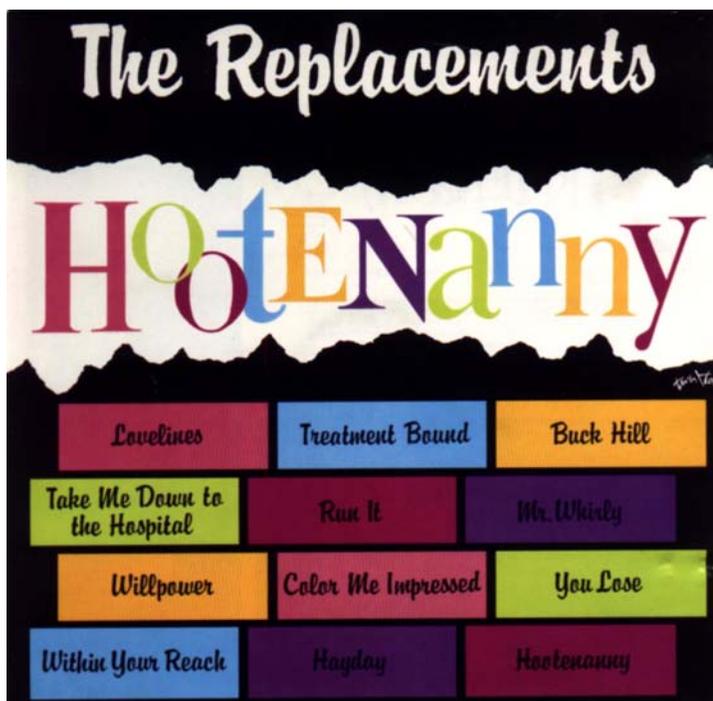
Hootenanny

Released 4/29/83, Twin/Tone TTR-8332, Time = 31:12, LP, CD, cassette

Hootenanny / Run It / Color Me Impressed / Willpower / Take Me Down To The Hospital / Mr. Whirly / Within Your Reach / Buck Hill / Lovelines / You Lose / Hayday / Treatment Bound

(front)

(back)



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: The Replacements came into their own with *Hootenanny*, a careening, drunken stumble through punk, rock & roll, country, blues and folk. The eclecticism of the album separated the Replacements from the post-punk hardcore pack, but it's also what makes the record a mess. Half of the record is devoted to ironic jokes, whether it's the Beatles pastiche of "Mr. Whirly," and the tongue-in-cheek title track or the silly closer "Treatment Bound." Not so coincidentally, those are songs where Westerberg branches out into other styles, and he found it easier to experiment under the guise of a joke. He does let his guard down on the extraordinary "Within Your Reach," a disarmingly open plea for love that he recorded entirely himself. It's the only truly vulnerable moment on the record, but the snide "Color Me Impressed" also comes close to true emotion. And it's fun to hear Westerberg act tough on "Take Me Down to the Hospital," "Run It," and "You Lose," especially considering how the group has improved. They're still sloppy, to be sure, but Bob Stinson's guitar stings and the rhythm section of Tommy Stinson and Chris Mars rocks with a loose abandon that makes even the filler -- and there's a lot of filler -- enjoyable garage-punk. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Let It Be

Released 10/2/84, Twin/Tone TTR-8441, Time = 33:29, LP, CD, cassette

I Will Dare / Favorite Thing / We're Comin' Out / Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out /
Androgynous / Black Diamond / Unsatisfied / Seen Your Video / Gary's Got A Boner
/ Sixteen Blue / Answering Machine



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: The Replacements half-heartedly tried to expand their reach on *Hootenanny*, and they followed through on that album's promise on *Let It Be*. Kicking off with the country-rock shuffle of "I Will Dare," the record explodes into a series of pseudo-hardcore ravers before hitting Paul Westerberg's piano-driven rumination, "Androgynous," one of four major ballads that cuts to the core of Midwestern suburban alienation. "Sixteen Blue" is one of the definitive teenage anthems of the '80s, while "Unsatisfied" rages in despair and Westerberg rarely was more affecting than the solo performance of "Answering Machine." All four, along with "I Will Dare," form the core of Westerberg and the Replacements' canon, and are enough to make *Let It Be* a cornerstone post-punk album, even if the rest of the record pales next to the songs. All the remaining songs are convincing garage-rockers, even if they reveal the Replacements' former punk stance to be a bit of a pose -- a cover of Kiss' "Black Diamond" comes off as a tribute, as does the co-opting of Ted Nugent's "Cat Scratch Fever" for "Gary's Got a Boner." Furthermore, the original numbers lean toward

the Faces, leaving the Ramones behind and while everything except "Seen Your Video," which now sounds as dated as a "Disco Sucks" rant, are bracing rockers, they're a bit inconsequential and point the way toward the band's deadly fascination with classic rock. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

ROLLING STONE REVIEW: This is a brilliant rock & roll album: as loose as it is deliberate, as pretty as it is hard rocking and as pissed off at all the right things ("Seen Your Video," "Androgynous") as it is hilarious ("Gary's Got a Boner").

Paul Westerberg – the Replacements' lead singer, songwriter and principal guitarist on *Let It Be* – writes about funny little things, like "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out," then fills the songs with anger, frustration and excitement. His voice is great – so desperate when he sings, "How do you say I'm lonely to an answering machine," so sympathetic when he sings, "Your age is the hardest age; everything drags and drags." In "Androgynous," Westerberg seems to find shortcomings in the whole lot of males in his generation: "Don't get him wrong/Don't get him mad/He might be a father, but he sure ain't a dad," he sings sadly. And in the heavy rocker "Favorite Thing," with the other members of the Replacements pounding behind him, he screams like an incensed Joe Strummer.

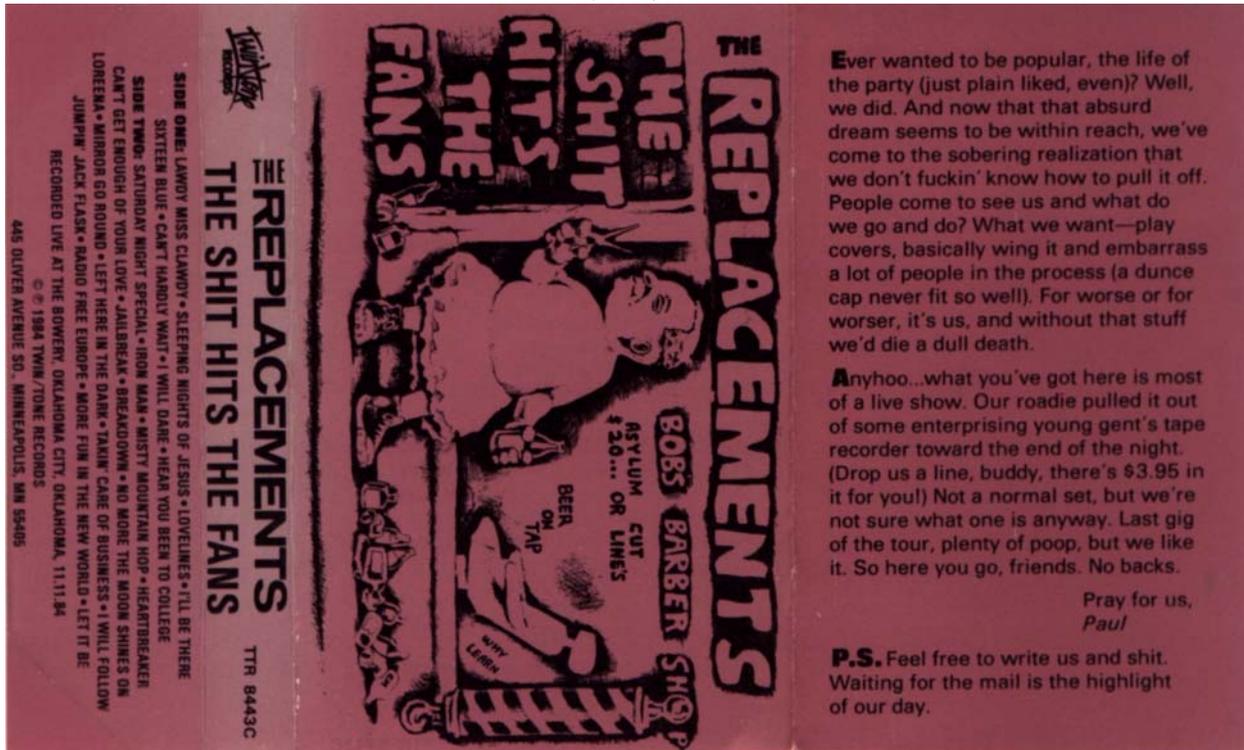
Whereas most of the songs on the group's first two albums, *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash* and *Hootenanny*, were speeding, hard-driven rock, there's an amazing range to *Let It Be*. Westerberg works out his many different ideas by occasionally augmenting the band – which is almost invariably awful live – with friends like R.E.M.'s Peter Buck on guitar and the Suburbs' Chan Poling on piano. He leads into "Unsatisfied" with a gorgeous solo on twelve-string acoustic guitar, then tears out your heart singing, "Everything goes or anything goes/All of the time/Everything you dream of is right in front of you/Liberty is a lie." Of course, he's not the first rocker who wanted satisfaction and couldn't get any, but in an age when most rock records are studied and wimpy, this rugged album feels truly fresh. (RS 441) DEBBY MILLER

The Shit Hits The Fans

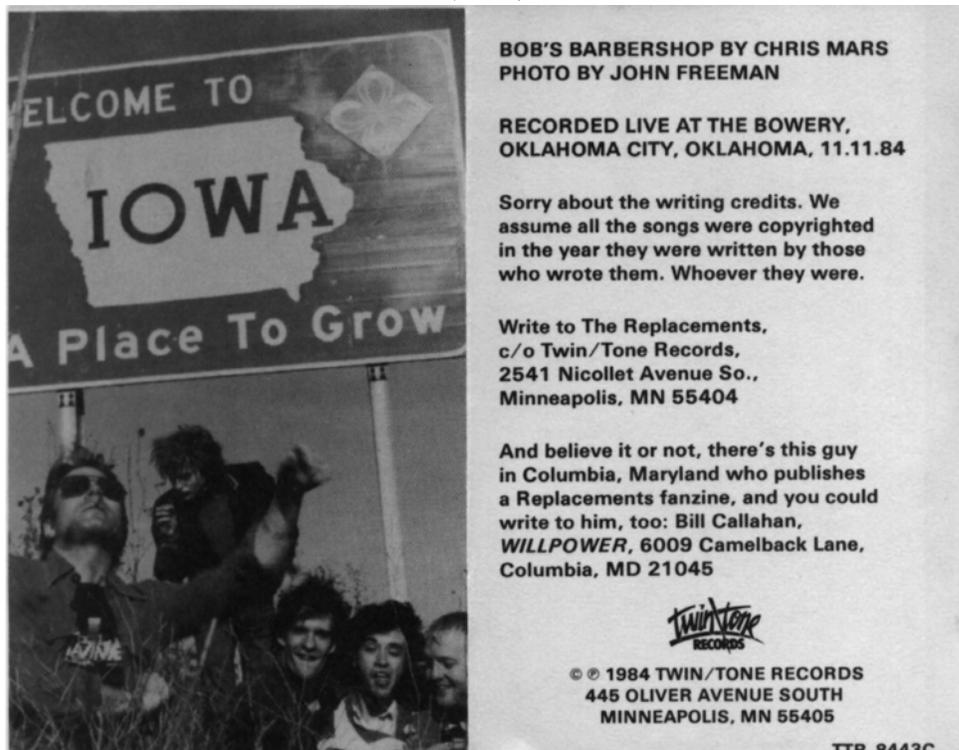
Released 1/22/85, Twin/Tone TTR-8443, Time = ??, cassette
recorded live at The Bowery, Oklahoma City 11/11/84

Lawdy Miss Clawdy / Sleeping Nights Of Jesus / Lovelines / I'll Be There / Sixteen Blue / Can't Hardly Wait / I Will Dare / Hear You Been To College / Saturday Night Special / Iron Man / Misty Mountain Hop / Heartbreaker / Can't Get Enough Of Your Love / Jailbreak / Breakdown / No More The Moon Shines On Loreena / Mirror Go Round / Left Here In The Dark / Takin' Care Of Business / I Will Follow / Jumpin' Jack Flask / Radio Free Europe / More Fun In The New World / Let It Be

(cover)



(liners)



Tim

1985, Sire 25330, Time = 37:04, LP, CD, cassette

Hold My Life / I'll Buy / Kiss Me On The Bus / Dose Of Thunder / Waitress In The Sky / Swingin Party / Bastards Of Young / Lay It Down Clown / Left Of The Dial / Little Mascara / Here Comes A Regular



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: *Let it Be* made the Replacements into college-radio and critical favorites, leading the group to a major-label contract with Sire. The band's major-label debut *Tim* does represent a bit of a compromise of the group's garage-punk sound. Producer Tommy Erdelyi (formerly of the Ramones) helped clean up the band's sound, primarily by harnessing the rhythm section to a click track -- no longer does the band thrash all over the place, they keep a steady rocking beat. Similarly, Bob Stinson is kept in check, and his wildfire guitar bubbles the surface only on two cuts, "Dose of Thunder" and "Lay it Down Clown," which are both filler. Some of the rockers, even the anthemic "Bastards of Young," are gutted by the by the cleaner sound, but the overall effect of the record isn't hurt because Paul Westerberg turns in his finest overall set of songs, ranging from the charming love song "Kiss Me On the Bus" and the college-radio anthem "Left of the Dial" to the detailed chronicles of loneliness like "Here Comes a Regular," "Hold My Life" and "Swingin' Party." Westerberg's melodies and observations

are sharper than ever, giving Tim an eloquent but edgy power that can't be diluted by the tame production. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

ROLLING STONE REVIEW (printed in 1998): You know the story. Out of a mid-size American city comes a scruffy, punky band harboring a songwriter with special gifts: a hoarse, heartfelt voice, a sympathetic eye for outcasts, an ear full of melodies and guitar riffs. The band builds a reputation on the punk-club circuit for shows that are either reckless epiphanies or drunken disasters. After a celebrated indie disc, the next step is a major-label contract, a decent studio budget and a make-or-break album, with the band determined not to sell out. Released to rave reviews, the album goes on to sell. . . .

Well, we're not talking about *Nevermind* here. *Tim*, the Replacements' fourth album and their first for Sire Records, has sold about 300,000 copies to date. The sound of the Replacements never grazed the Top Forty until the Goo Goo Dolls latched onto their chord changes and sore-throated sincerity in the late Nineties, long after the band broke up and Paul Westerberg, the group's resident genius, had turned to singing ballads.

As part of a Minneapolis rock upsurge that also included Husker Du and Soul Asylum, the Replacements were post-punk, alt-rock prototypes who weren't afraid to mix tunes with blare and to reveal insecurity as well as anger. Westerberg loved both the craftsmanship of the Beatles and the trashiness of Kiss; the Replacements' last album for Minneapolis' Twin/Tone Records was called *Let It Be*. Rockabilly, the Rolling Stones and Alex Chilton's Big Star all resonated through the Replacements' eager but bruised rockers; country and folk rock sat at a bar stool away from the ballads.

The Replacements would never be construed as professional. Tommy Stinson on bass and Chris Mars on drums bashed like kids in a basement, while Bob Stinson's furiously disheveled lead-guitar lines careened toward stray notes and feedback. *Tim* was produced by Tommy Erdelyi, better known as Tommy Ramone, and while the album had more heft than the Replacements' previous albums, it didn't trim any loose ends. Click-track accuracy doesn't govern the unsteady tempo behind the fuzz-tone announcement of "Bastards of Young."

Treating *Tim* as the Replacements' chance to reach a national audience, Westerberg came up with anthems of ambivalence: the songs of a brat who was growing up fast, like it or not. "Bastards of Young" and the college-radio tribute "Left of the Dial" were for a generation that couldn't claim any heroic struggles or grand mission, that felt marginal and inept but refused to ease into slackerdom. Westerberg presented himself as an honest fuck-up, "a mess on the ladder of success" who was bursting with thwarted possibilities and romantic hopes, or at least the chance to kiss a pretty girl on the bus.

Tim isn't a perfect album; the anti-stewardess diatribe "Waitress in the Sky" is more mean-spirited than its targets deserve. But its other songs -- rangy, obstreperous, unsparing, funny and ever tuneful -- turn post-adolescent confusion into some kind of screwed-up enlightenment. (RS 841) JON PARELES

Boink!!

1986, Glass Records MGLA016, Time = ??, LP, cassette

Color Me Impressed / White And Lazy / Within Your Reach / If Only You Were
Lonely / Kids Don't Follow / Nowhere Is My Home / Take Me Down To The Hospital
/ Go

(front)



(back)

MGLALP016
Also Available
On Cassette
(MGLAMC 016)

1

COLOR ME IMPRESSED

PRODUCED BY PAUL STARK, PETER JESPERSON/REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE L.P. 'HOOTENANNY'

WHITE AND LAZY

PRODUCED BY STEVE FJELSTAD, PETER JESPERSON/REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE E.P. 'STINK'

WITHIN YOUR REACH

PRODUCED BY PAUL STARK, PETER JESPERSON/REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE L.P. 'HOOTENANNY'

IF ONLY YOU WERE LONELY

PRODUCED BY PAUL WESTERBERG, STEVE FJELSTAD, PETER JESPERSON
B SIDE OF 'I'M IN TROUBLE'



2

KIDS DON'T FOLLOW

PRODUCED BY STEVE FJELSTAD, PETER JESPERSON, REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE E.P. 'STINK'

NOWHERE IS MY HOME

PRODUCED BY ALEX CHILTON/REPLACEMENTS
PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED

TAKE ME DOWN TO THE HOSPITAL

PRODUCED BY PAUL STARK, PETER JESPERSON/REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE L.P. 'HOOTENANNY'

GO

PRODUCED BY STEVE FJELSTAD, PETER JESPERSON/REPLACEMENTS
FROM THE E.P. 'STINK'



Paul Westerberg reacts to 40 Watt owner Doug Hecht after he pulled the plug on the band.

PAUL WESTERBERG GUITAR & VOCALS

BOB STINSON GUITAR

TOMMY STINSON BASS

CHRIS MARS DRUMS

COMPILED BY THE REPLACEMENTS
FOR GLASS RECORDS
SPECIAL THANKS TO DAVID AYRES

LICENSED FROM



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Glass Deutschland, Mittelweg 14, 2000 Hamburg 13



Distributed by Nine Mile & The Cartel

Pleased to Meet Me

Released 5/5/87, Sire 25557, Time = 33:32, LP, CD, cassette

I.O.U. / Alex Chilton / I Don't Know / Nightclub Jitters / The Ledge / Never Mind / Valentine / Shooting Dirty Pool / Red Red Wine / Skyway / Can't Hardly Wait



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Bob Stinson was kicked out of the band after Tim, allegedly because he was unwilling to make the musical leap forward necessary for *Pleased to Meet Me*. With Stinson left the Replacements' hardcore roots, leaving behind the conflicting desires of Westerberg's wish to be a serious singer/songwriter and for the group to become either the Faces or Big Star. That conflict is played out throughout *Pleased to Meet Me*, and it isn't helped by the stultifyingly clean and detailed production by Jim Dickinson. Chris Mars and Tommy Stinson are reigned in tighter than ever before, giving most the songs a strangled, distanced feel which isn't helped by Dickinson's canned guitar sounds and the odd production flourishes, including the occasional sax and keyboard. The full-blown production works on the horn and string-drenched "Can't Hardly Wait," but it makes mindlessly rocking filler like "Shooting Dirty Pool" and "Red Red Wine" irritating. For the most part, Westerberg's songs make the clean sound tolerable, particularly on Stonesy "I.O.U.," the suicide sketch of "The Ledge," the power-pop of "Never Mind" and "Valentine," and the lovely acoustic "Skyway." But the fan love-letter "Alex Chilton" reveals more than necessary -- even

though Westerberg is shooting for stardom, he has more affinity for the self-styled loser, which means he never wants to make the full leap to the mainstream. And that can only hurt a record like *Pleased to Meet Me*, which has stardom in its sights. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

ROLLING STONE REVIEW: When God was giving out self-confidence, where the hell was Paul Westerberg? Out buying beer? For someone so blessed with songwriting ability, the singer-guitarist seems unduly consumed with doubt about his own worth and that of the Replacements, his merry band of Minneapolis rock & roll idiot savants. "One more chance to get it all wrong ... one more chance to get it half-right," he bawled desperately in the semiautobiographical blitzkrieg "We're Comin' Out," on the group's 1984 album *Let It Be*.

The equally raucous "I Don't Know," on *Pleased to Meet Me*, the Replacements' fifth full-length platter, is Westerberg's latest ode to his own uncertainty. "One foot in the door/The other foot in the gutter," he sings in his trademark rasp against the crude Stonesy gallop of drummer Chris Mars and bassist Tommy Stinson. While Mars and Stinson whine, "I don't know," like a stoned Greek chorus over the baritone sax of guest Steve Douglas, Westerberg details the tragicomic hopelessness of his dilemma and that of his vagabond band ("Our lawyer's on the phone.... What did we do now?"). Too talented to play the fool, disgusted with showbiz protocol, he dreads the very success his undeniable gifts can bring. "The sweet smell that they adore/Well, I think I'd rather smother," Westerberg snarls defiantly in the chorus. But near the end, when he asks, "Whatcha gonna do with your life?" a barely audible voice replies, with dreary resignation, "Nothin'."

Pleased to Meet Me, like nearly everything in Westerberg's *oeuvre*, is about not fitting in, about square pegs surrounded by nothing but round holes. What distinguishes Westerberg from the misfits populating his songs is his uncanny ability to speak for the tongue-tied, articulating their aspirations and insecurities with intuitive sensitivity, boozy whimsy and straight street talk – leavened with a little poetic license. As a lyricist, he is fond of the hilariously surreal (in "Can't Hardly Wait," he sings, "Jesus rides beside me/He never buys any smokes"), and he has a knack for dramatically potent non sequiturs (in "Shooting Dirty Pool," he delivers the acidic put-down "You're the coolest guy I ever have smelled"). As a melodist, he revels in a kind of perverted pop classicism, hanging his spiritual tensions and mischievous lyrics on offbeat hooks and change-up choruses like some grungy offspring of Randy Newman and Elton John; meanwhile, the band's guitar-drums gunfire threatens to turn your brain to tapioca.

The result is an album alive with the crackle of conflicting emotions and kamikaze rock & roll fire. Nowhere on *Pleased to Meet Me* is that tortured vibrancy more evident than in "The Ledge," a powerful study of teen suicide set to an urgent beat and death-knell guitar arpeggios. Westerberg makes no excuses here, no accusations. Instead, there is a haunting clarity in the face of eternal darkness, sympathy not just for the poor devil on the ledge but also for the people down below, whose help comes too late: "I'm the boy they can't ignore/For the first time in my life I'm sure/All the love sent up high to pledge/Won't reach the ledge." There is no loss of life in the next song, "Never Mind," but when Westerberg sings, "All over but the shouting," in that hoarse bark of his, you can hear that same need to be understood, even as he walks away from an irreparably damaged relationship.

Life is not always a bed of nails in Replacementsville. "Red Red Wine" is a simple ode to the pleasures of the grape, a delightful rouser in the Mohawk party spirit of the

band's thrash classics *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash* (1981) and *Stink* (1982). "Skyway" and "Can't Hardly Wait" are both songs of gentle longing, the former inspired by the elevated walkways in downtown Minneapolis ("Oh, then one day / I saw you walkin' down that little one-way / Where the place I catch my ride most every day / There wasn't a damn thing I could do or say") and played on acoustic guitars, which lend a heavenly grace. "Can't Hardly Wait" is a touching snapshot of road weariness in which Westerberg falls into dreams of love and hearth on a sweet pillow of strings and soulful brass ("I'll be home when I'm sleeping / I can't hardly wait").

But what fuels *Pleased to Meet Me* is the combination of Westerberg's instinctive grasp of adolescent trauma and the band's basement-rock fury, brilliantly produced by Memphis studio legend Jim Dickinson, who gets it warts and all, like the loud amplifier buzz that opens "Red Red Wine." Indeed, the jewel in this collection of wonderfully rough diamonds is "Alex Chilton," a frenzied celebration of the precocious frontman of the Box Tops and Big Star, who skidded into artistic paralysis in the late Seventies before hitting the comeback trail three years ago. (Chilton produced demos for the last Replacements LP, *Tim*, and plays guitar on "Can't Hardly Wait.") With Mars's snare drum echoing like a rifle shot and his own guitar balled up into a clenched fist of distortion, Westerberg salutes Chilton's genius with a knockout melody the equal of anything in the Big Star catalog while examining the insane pressure of living up to one's own myth – "Children by the millions sing, 'Will Alex Chilton come around?'"

Will children by the millions sing the same thing about Paul Westerberg in a few years' time? Not likely. In the Replacements (now back to quartet strength with new guitarist Slim Dunlap replacing Tommy Stinson's older brother, Bob, who left after *Tim*), Westerberg is blessed with a band of renegade realists, sometimes pickled out of their heads in concert but tough as nails in the clench, anchoring Westerberg's meditations in bar-band bedrock. Tracks like "I.O.U." and "Shooting Dirty Pool" practically sound like *Exile on Main Street* at 78 rpm. It is ironic that Westerberg and the Replacements can make such a joyful noise out of so much anguish and insecurity. But on *Pleased to Meet Me*, the pleasure is all yours. (RS 503) DAVID FRICKE

Pleased To Meet Paul Westerberg

1987, Warner Brothers WBMS-148, Time = ??, LP only

**Stay Awake:
Various Interpretations of Music From
Vintage Disney Films**

1988, CD

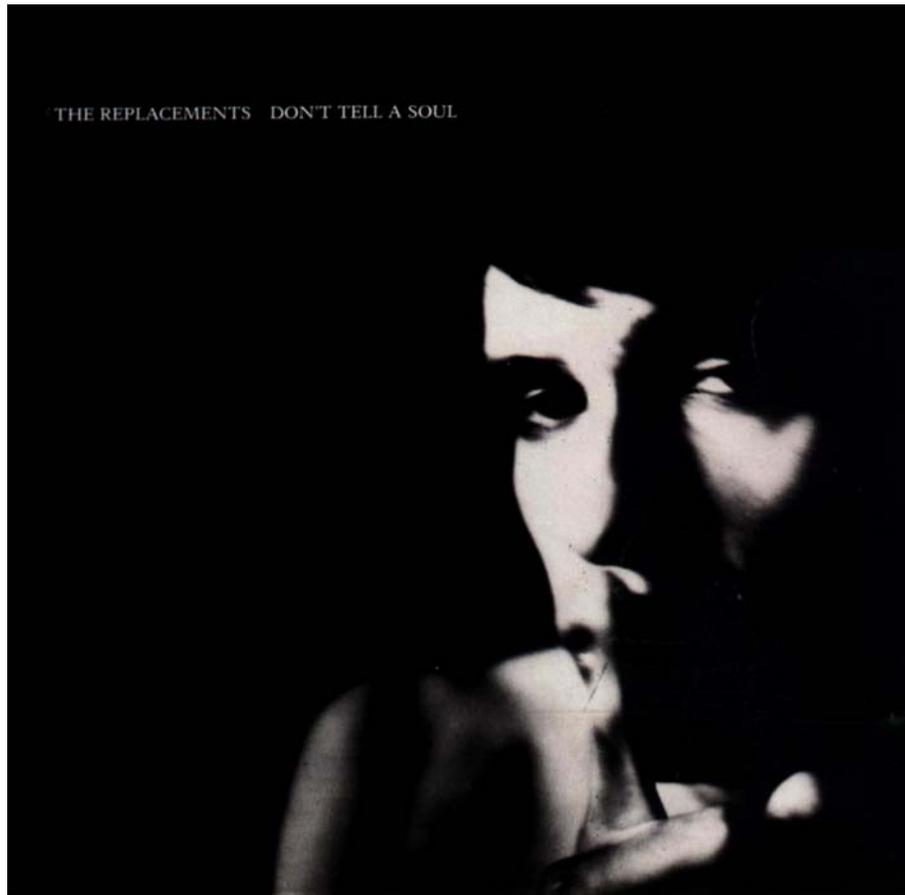
Track: Cruella De Ville



Don't Tell A Soul

1989, Sire/Reprise 25831, Time = 39:18, LP, CD, cassette

Talent Show / Back To Back / We'll Inherit The Earth / Achin' To Be / They're Blind /
Anywhere's Better Than Here / Asking Me Lies / I'll Be You / I Won't / Rock 'N' Roll
Ghost / Darlin' One



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: All of the slick production of *Pleased to Meet Me* couldn't prepare listeners for the glossy sound of *Don't Tell A Soul*, the Replacements' last-ditch attempt at mainstream success. Bathed with washes of synthesizers, shining guitars, backing vocals and a shimmering, AOR-oriented production, *Don't Tell a Soul* puts an end to the Replacements and begins Paul Westerberg's solo career. The bulk of the songs are self-consciously mature, as Westerberg looks back on his career (the autobiographical "Talent Show") and is haunted by the past ("Rock N Roll Ghost," "Darlin' One"), as he attempts to refashion himself as a craftsman. A few of these attempts work, particularly the country-rock ballad "Achin' to Be" and the arena-rock stab "I'll Be You," but the lite-funk workout "Asking Me Lies" and the stuttering "I Won't" are flat-out embarrassing. And the rest of the album suffers from Westerberg's determination to be adult. The songs are too self-consciously mature and the band is functions as a supporting act for the lyrics, which lack the unpretentious poetry of his best work. Ironically, Westerberg's desire to be an "adult" is the reason why radio

ignored *Don't Tell a Soul*, because it meant that the record lacked both rockers or power-ballads which would have given them air-time. And most old fans found the production too heavy to make sorting through the album worthwhile. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

ROLLING STONE REVIEW: When The Replacements left the indie world to sign with a major label four years ago, fans of the Minneapolis quartet wondered if the corporate music industry could somehow subvert the rock underground's most feckless heroes and turn them into a calculating hit machine. They needn't have worried. The band – raised on the fodder of Seventies radio and the fiery irreverence of Eighties punk – continued exploring its mutant combination of chaos, sensitivity and self-abuse and filled two albums (*Tim* and *Pleased to Meet Me*) with explosive energy and playful, incisive lyrics, leavening the power with sturdy melodies and tender sentimentality. The group's gigs remained joyously haphazard mixes of song fragments, lengthy pauses and impromptu cover versions, from Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" to R.E.M.'s "Radio Free Europe."

But as the Replacements shrugged off external pressures to toe a straighter line, personal maturity struck from within. Faced with the possibility of indulging his way to an early grave, Paul Westerberg, the group's twenty-nine-year-old songwriter, took a safer road: he grew up. The author of "Treatment Bound" and "Shiftless When Idle" traded in his careless ways and married his longtime girlfriend.

The band made a critical move toward self-respect in 1986 by sacking guitarist Bob Stinson, in light of whose increasingly erratic behavior Westerberg had become a straight man. When the Replacements hit the road again with Slim Dunlap in the lineup, they played complete songs; set lists rather than inebriated whimsy guided the band's performances.

Don't Tell a Soul reveals the extent of the rethink. Proceeding from the experiments of prior records (which ranged as far as cocktail jazz on *Pleased to Meet Me*'s "Nightclub Jitters"), this subdued album turns exceptions into rules, reducing the ration of loud rock & roll in favor of detours into funk, folk and Beatlish pop. More than half of the songs on *Don't Tell a Soul* are built on acoustic guitars; layers of harmony vocals, keyboards and modest studio effects are part of the sonic overhaul. Outside the handful of traditional rock numbers, electric guitars appear only to play brief solos and provide texture; otherwise, Westerberg's unmistakable shaggy voice and Chris Mars's decisive 4 4 snare work are all that keeps the LP from drifting away.

Amid such artistic adventurism, Westerberg's writing remains the band's rich core. *Don't Tell a Soul* is full of his sharp-tongued wordplay and idiosyncratic musical structures. Although the rampant diversity occasionally stymies the album's momentum, many of the songs are quietly powerful, expanding the group's repertoire in both quality and scope.

"Talent Show," a plain but pleasant recollection of the band's amateur days, and "Back to Back," an intricate, catchy number with a jarring key change, open the LP on a superficially upbeat note. With the exception of "Achin' to Be," a twangy country song that paints an enigmatic portrait, and "Darlin' One," a memorable minor-key love song enhanced by majestic production and an uplifting chorus, the rest of the album takes a grimmer view.

"We'll Inherit the Earth" is a soaring anthem of alienation whose acoustic power strumming suggests a postapocalypse Moody Blues. "I'll Be You," the record's most

engaging tune, is a cry of disillusionment, sung with mounting desperation. Describing himself as "a rebel without a clue," Westerberg offers to swap lives in the hopes of escaping the bitter disappointment of dreams realized. Selfcritical dolor hits a rueful peak in "Rock-n-Roll Ghost," an ethereal dirge about the band's wayward past, sung in a haunted voice over extended Mellotron strains and mournful slide guitar.

Sadness turns to vitriol in "They're Blind," a stinging attack on an unspecified enemy (critics? record buyers?). As the band plays a slow shuffle accented by mandolin and doo-wop backing vocals, Westerberg sings, "The things you hold dearly are scoffed at and yearly judged once and then left aside/ They're blind/ They hold you too close to the light." But even careful examination doesn't illuminate the intentions of "Asking Me Lies," a Stonesy funk stroll that nonchalantly strings together non sequiturs.

Mindless defiance of rock-star traditions is what originally endeared the Replacements to those unmoved by ambitious bands of wanna-be stars. But with irresponsibility threatening to become an identity – just another exploitable gimmick – the band has gone out on a new limb, with an audacious album that reclaims its valued independence by confounding audience expectations. (RS 545) IRA ROBBINS

Just Say Mao

1989 Sire Records 9 25947-2, CD

Track: Date To Church

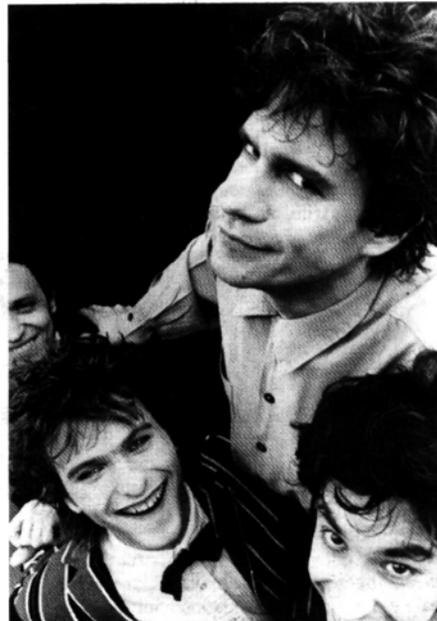


THE REPLACEMENTS

The Replacements were recently hailed as "the last, best band of the '80s." It wasn't long before someone quickly dubbed this dubious quartet "the first, best band of the '80s," as well. Like a lot of heralded rock & roll outfits, The 'Placemats have had to deal with their fair share of hosannas. No matter. The Minneapolis band continues to do what they've always done: plow into the thick of their music with an uncanny ability to tear up conventions like so many used ticket stubs and sales slips.

In a long line of blasphemous songs and obscure B-sides, the Replacements herewith offer "Date to Church," the flipside to their "I'll Be You" single. It's the kind of tune often heard at the end of an extended night of crazy cover songs and assorted hanky panky. Written by one Reverend Backwash, "Church" also features the vocal talents of Tom Waits, another rock & roll rascal. Recorded in exactly three minutes and forty-eight seconds, "Date To Church" has already been added to the official playlist of the Vatican at Pope John Paul's request, and is being talked about as the theme song for the next space shuttle. Don't leave home without it.

"Date to Church" is the B-side to the Replacements single "I'll Be You" and was produced by Matt Wallace and The Mats. B.B.



Say Anything

1989 WTG PK-45140, CD

Track: Within Your Reach



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Outside of the accompanying LPs for John Hughes' movies like *Pretty In Pink* and *The Breakfast Club*, no other soundtrack captures the zeitgeist of '80s teen films quite like *Say Anything*. Though the film itself was only a modest box office draw during its initial theatrical run, it earned a major cult following on home video, and its soundtrack found an audience as well; it launched Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" as one of the generation's pet-favorite love songs (it was impossible to attend a wedding reception during the '90s without hearing it), brought the Red Hot Chili Peppers closer to mainstream stardom with "Taste the Pain," and finally handed the Replacements at least a sliver of mainstream recognition with "Within Your Reach." Both the movie and its soundtrack were much smarter than the standard teen fare of the era -- maybe that's why both are still fondly remembered today. ~ Chuck Donkers

Inconcerated Live

1989, Sire/Reprise PRO-3633, Time = 20:58, LP, CD
Recorded at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee 6/89

Talent Show / Answering Machine / Anywhere's Better Than Here / Another Girl,
Another Planet / Here Comes A Regular / Achin' To Be (LP Version)



All Shook Down

Released 9/17/90, Sire/Reprise 26298, Time = 41:30, LP, CD, cassette

Merry Go Round / One Wink At A Time / Nobody / Bent Out Of Shape / Sadly Beautiful / Someone Take The Wheel / When It Began / All Shook Down / Attitude / Happy Town / Torture / My Little Problem / The Last



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: Although Don't Tell A Soul sounded like a Replacements record, it felt like a Paul Westerberg album. All Shook Down continues that trend -- it's a Replacements record only in name. Recorded with a variety of session musicians and sporting no individual credits, All Shook Down emphasizes the songs, not the band, and it's a weary, beaten set of songs. Despite a handful of forced rockers -- especially the down-right embarrassing Johnette Napolitano duet "My Little Problem" -- the album is low-key and primarily acoustic set, finding Westerberg knowing that the band is over and wondering where it all went wrong. While All Shook Down doesn't have any nakedly emotional stunners like "Answering Machine" or "Skyway," it has a unified atmosphere and an off-the-cuff, unpretentious feel which comes as a relief after the weighty ambitions of Don't Tell a Soul. It also has a number of excellently crafted songs, ranging from the wistful "Sadly Beautiful" and the druggy "All Shook Down" to snappy pop-rockers like "Merry Go Round," "When It Began" and "Happy Town." As the loungey closer suggests, the record is meant to be "The Last," and few bands ended their career in such a knowing, worn-out fashion. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

ROLLING STONE REVIEW: America's best band is back where it belongs: the garage. After almost a decade of raw, piercing albums about uncertainty and growing disenchantment, the Replacements scored a commercial breakthrough with last year's toned-down, shined-up Don't Tell a Soul. Critics lined up to praise the album before hearing a note, but this is the record the Replacements should have made. Though even mellower than Don't Tell a Soul, All Shook Down nevertheless manages to sharpen the band's edge by doing away with the pointless layers of production that glossed the previous record. The Mats may be back in the garage, but now they're not waking the neighbors.

The acoustic leanings and decelerated pacing of All Shook Down assure that this record is less anthemic than many of the Replacements' previous efforts, but the band

has gone from the screams of "Bastards of Young" on Tim to the whispers of "All Shook Down" without losing power. Songs are now presented with a hushed urgency that demands immediate attention. On "Sadly Beautiful" you can hear the pick scraping across every guitar string and feel shivers as guest star John Cale draws the bow over each strand of his viola. Throughout the album, Chris Mars's drumming strikes a rawer note, his drums snapping like fists hitting flesh.

On this outing, the band seems much more comfortable with the direction of Paul Westerberg's songwriting. All Shook Down is, in fact, one of the group's loosest albums; band members laugh between tracks, shout out counts and yell to each other midsong. And if the boys feel at all inhibited by the record's slower tempo, they take out their frustrations on "My Little Problem," a searing rocker in which Westerberg trades banshee wails with Concrete Blonde's Johnette Napolitano and guitarist Slim Dunlap rips a solo that chain-smokes Camels.

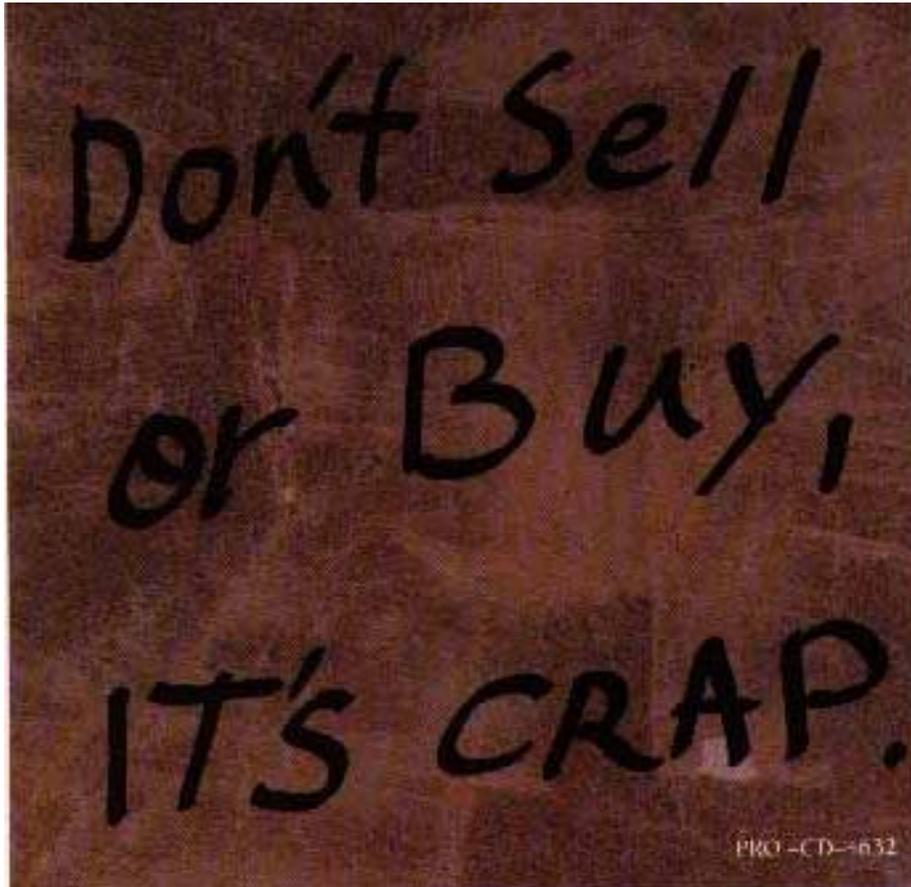
Still, All Shook Down is Paul Westerberg's show, and he has always viewed the world with a cynic's eye and a poet's heart. No matter how confident his presentation may seem, he vividly describes the suspicions and misgivings he battles every day.

On the poignant "Nobody," for example, he views an old love at the altar: "You like the frosting/ You just bought the cake/ But your eyes can't fake ... That you're still in love with nobody/ And I used to be Nobody." On All Shook Down, the Replacements retreat to the turf over which they once passionately reigned < however reluctantly < and quietly reestablish themselves as the bards of the basements and bars. Here's hoping they always keep one foot in the door and the other one in the gutter. (RS 588) CHRIS MUNDY

Don't Sell or Buy, It's Crap

1991, Sire/Reprise PRO-4632, Time = 15:41, LP, CD

When It Began (Album Version) / Kissin' In Action / Ought To Get Love / Satellite /
Like A Rolling Pin



More Hits From Mid America

1992 Twin/Tone Records TTPRO-001, CD

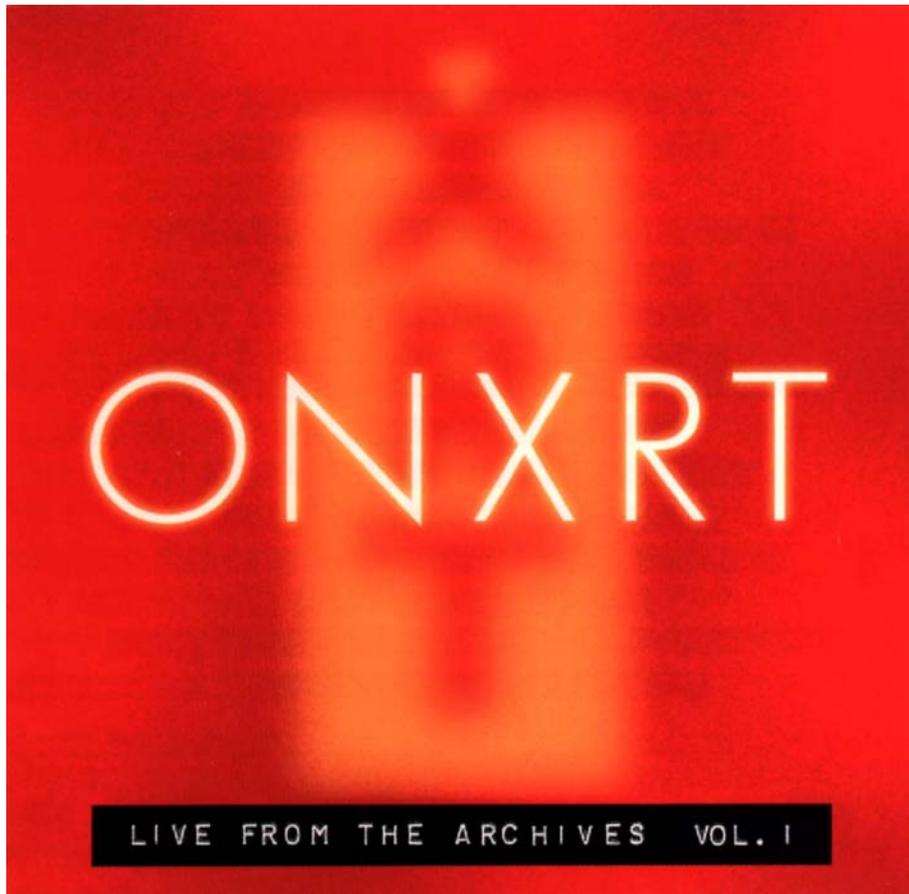
Tracks: Kids Don't Follow / If Only You Were Lonely (as cd hidden track)



OnXRT: Live From The Archives Vol.1

1993 ONXRT-001, CD

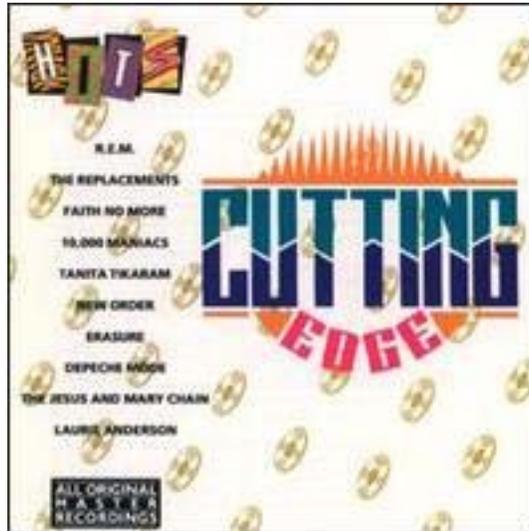
Track: I Will Dare (recorded live 7/4/91)



Cutting Edge

1994/1997, Jupiter Compilation

Track: Alex Chilton



Feeling Minnesota

1996 Atlantic Records movie soundtrack, CD

Track: I Will Dare



Can't Hardly Wait
Released 5/19/98, Elektra, CD

Track: Can't Hardly Wait



AMG EXPERT REVIEW: During the '80s, when teen movies reigned, the Replacements were a cult band, selling their records to an audience that, for the most part, wouldn't be caught dead at a theater showing *Sixteen Candles* (although they'd probably watch it on video, and they'd certainly catch the Westerberg Highschool reference in *Heathers*). So, it's a little ironic that the film that brought back the teen comedy in the late '90s was titled *Can't Hardly Wait*, after the Replacements classic. Nevertheless, anyone thinking that the song would be the launching pad for the soundtrack would be a fool (then again, Matthew Sweet is on the soundtrack). Teen movies may be about universal themes like love, sex, alienation and humiliation, but they're always true to their times. This means, of course, that the soundtrack to *Can't Hardly Wait* is filled with ska-punks, hip post-alternative rappers and tenth-generation punkers, as well as countless faceless post-grunge combos. There's no denying that classics '80s cuts like "It's Tricky," "Paradise City" and "Can't Hardly Wait" are the most memorable items here, but with remixes of Missy Misdemeanor Elliott's "Hit 'Em Wit Da Hee" and Busta Rhymes' "Turn It Up / Fire It Up" coming in close second, along with Blink 182's sole shining moment, "Dammit," it captures the era well enough, and that will be enough for anyone who will have fond memories of the movie. ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

All For Nothing Nothing For All

Released 9/2/97, Reprise Records 46807-2, Time = 105:40, double CD with enhanced video

Left Of The Dial / Kiss Me On The Bus / Bastards Of Young / Here Comes A Regular / Skyway / Alex Chilton / The Ledge / Can't Hardly Wait / I'll Be You / Achin' To Be / Talent Show / Anywhere's Better Than Here / Merry Go Round / Sadly Beautiful / Nobody / Someone Take The Wheel / Can't Hardly Wait (The Tim Version) / Birthday Gal / Beer For Breakfast / Till We're Nude / Election Day / Jungle Rock / All He Wants To Do Is Fish / Date To Church / Cruella DeVille / We Know The Night / Portland / Wake Up / Satellite / Like A Rolling Pin / Another Girl, Another Planet / Who Knows / All Shook Down



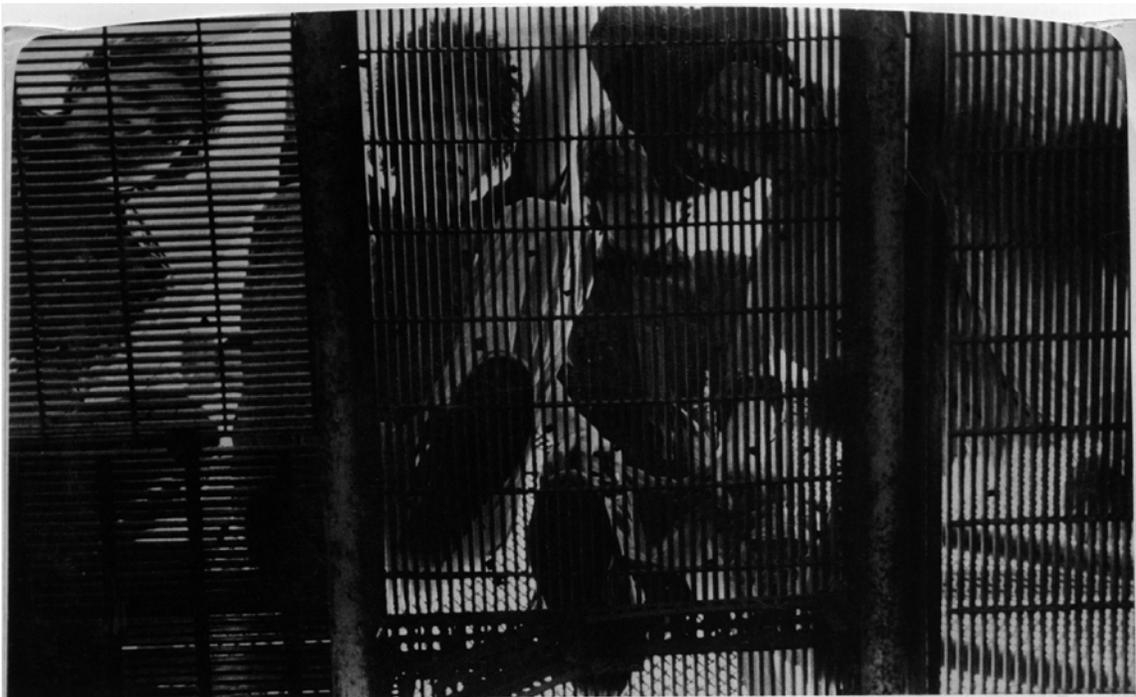
AMG EXPERT REVIEW: The standard line on the Replacements runs like this: they were one of the three great American underground bands of the '80s (the other two were R.E.M. and Hsker D) that influenced a generation of alternative bands with their ramshackle, ragged rocking and Paul Westerberg's heart-tugging songs. In short, they were the band that no-one heard except for the young guitar-slingers that went out formed bands of their own, inspired by the Mats records. All for Nothing / Nothing for All, a double-disc set comprised of one disc of "hits" and one disc of rarities, is supposed to offer proof of the group's influence, but it actually inadvertantly dismantles their

legend. For legal reasons, the hits disc *All for Nothing* couldn't feature highlights from their *Twin/Tone* releases, which means their rawest recordings and gems like "Within Your Reach," "I Will Dare" and "Androgynous" aren't here. Instead, four songs each from their Reprise albums -- *Tim*, *Pleased to Meet Me*, *Don't Tell A Soul*, *All Shook Down* -- are featured, and while most of the obvious suspects are here ("Left of the Dial," "On the Bus," "Bastards of Young," "Alex Chilton," "I'll Be You," "Someone Take the Wheel," etc.), they make the Replacements sound down-right traditional; based on these tracks, the only '90s bands the 'Mats influenced were Americana groups like Wilco and the Bottle Rockets, not indie-punk and grunge outfits like Nirvana. And, surprisingly, the Replacements don't even rock that hard on these Reprise Records -- the production, as many longtime fans have claimed, tames their wilder tendencies. Nevertheless, many of the songs on *All for Nothing* are among Westerberg's finest and prove that he was a talented songwriter, especially since the filler that plagued every Replacements album has been saved for disc two, *Nothing for All*. Comprised entirely of B-sides and unreleased cuts, there's a couple of gems on the disc, particularly the early Alex Chilton-produced take of "Can't Hardly Wait" and the Tom Waits-assisted raveup "Date to Church." ~ Stephen Thomas Erlewine

I'm In Trouble b/w If Only You Were Lonely 7"

Released 8/7/81 Twin/Tone TTR-8120





The Replacements are:
BOB STINSON: lead guitar
CHRIS MARS: drums
PAUL WESTERBERG: vocals
rythm guitar
TOMMY STINSON: bass

engineered by STEVE FJELSTAD
produced by PAUL WESTERBERG
STEVE FJELSTAD and PETER
JESPERSON at Blackberry Way
cover photo: LAURIE ALLEN
back photo: GREG HELGESON
design: BRUCE C. ALLEN

Twin Tone
RECORDS

Twin Tone Records 445 Oliver Ave. So. Mpls., Mn 55405

TTR 8120

Twin Tone
RECORDS

IF ONLY YOU WERE LONELY
(P. Westerberg)

45 rpm
TTR 8120b
2:32
B

The Replacements
© 1981 NAH MUSIC, BMI

Twin Tone Records 445 Oliver Ave. So. Mpls., MN 55405

***I Will Dare b/w Twentieth Century Boy & Hey
Good Lookin' (live) 12"***

Released 8/24/84, Twin/Tone TTR-8440



THE REPLACEMENTS
i will dare / 12-inch 45

Kiss Me On The Bus b/w Little Mascara 7"

U.K. W8679 928 679-7



Kiss Me On The Bus
b/w Kiss Me On The Bus 12"

Sire PRO-2412 (white promo cover)

(no artwork available)

Left Of The Dial b/w Swingin' Party 7"

U.K. W8727 928 727-7 (white promo sleeve)

(no artwork available)

Alex Chilton b/w Alex Chilton 12"

Sire PRO-2761 (w/ cover picture of Alex Chilton

(no artwork available)

Alex Chilton b/w Election Day 7"

U.K. SAM 369

(no artwork available)

The Ledge b/w The Ledge 12"

Sire PRO-2727 (white promo cover)

(no artwork available)

The Replacements E.P. 7"

U.K. Warner Brothers W8297 928 279-7

Alex Chilton / Nightclub Jitters / Election Day / Route 66

(front)



(back)

W8297
928 297-7

A

ALEX CHILTON
NIGHTCLUB JITTERS

PRODUCED BY JIM DICKINSON

TAKEN FROM THE LP
'PLEASED TO MEET ME'

B

**ELECTION
DAY**

**ROUTE
66**

PRODUCED BY
JIM DICKINSON

THE LP & CASSETTE
'PLEASED TO MEET ME'



© 925 557-1  925 557-4



SIRE

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The Ledge double 12"

German #920 707-0 (w/ red altered *Pleased To Meet Me* cover)

The Ledge / Route 66 / Election Day / Alex Chilton / Tossin' n' Turnin' / Jungle Rock

(front)



(back)

925 707-0 (D)
Phonon 90 27

THE REPLACEMENTS

SIDE ONE

THE LEDGE
Available On The First Album
"PLEASED TO MEET ME"

SIDE TWO

ROUTE 66
(PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED)

ELECTION DAY
(PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED)

SIDE THREE

ALEX CHILTON
Available On The First Album
"PLEASED TO MEET ME"

SIDE FOUR

TOSSIN' N'TURNIN'
(PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED)

JUNGLE ROCK
(PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED)

Produced by Jim Dickinson



» PLEASED TO MEET ME «
LP 925 557-1 · MC 925 557-4

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& Warner Communications Company
In Vertrieb bei S&A Musik GmbH, Neue Medien und Entertainments

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Can't Hardly Wait (remix) b/w Cool Water 7"

Sire 7-28151



Can't Hardly Wait b/w Can't Hardly Wait (remix)
12"

Sire PRO-A-2863 (white promo cover w/ sticker)

(no artwork available)

Can't Hardly Wait b/w Can't Hardly Wait 7"



I'll Be You b/w Date To Church 7"

Sire 22992-7 (w/ picture sleeve)



I'll Be You b/w I'll Be You 12"

Sire/Reprise PRO-3419

(no artwork available)

Achin' To Be b/w Achin' To Be 12"

Sire/Reprise PRO-3606 (white promo cover)

(no artwork available)

***Achin' To Be b/w Another Girl, Another Planet
(live) 7"***

Australian 7-22815 MX304204



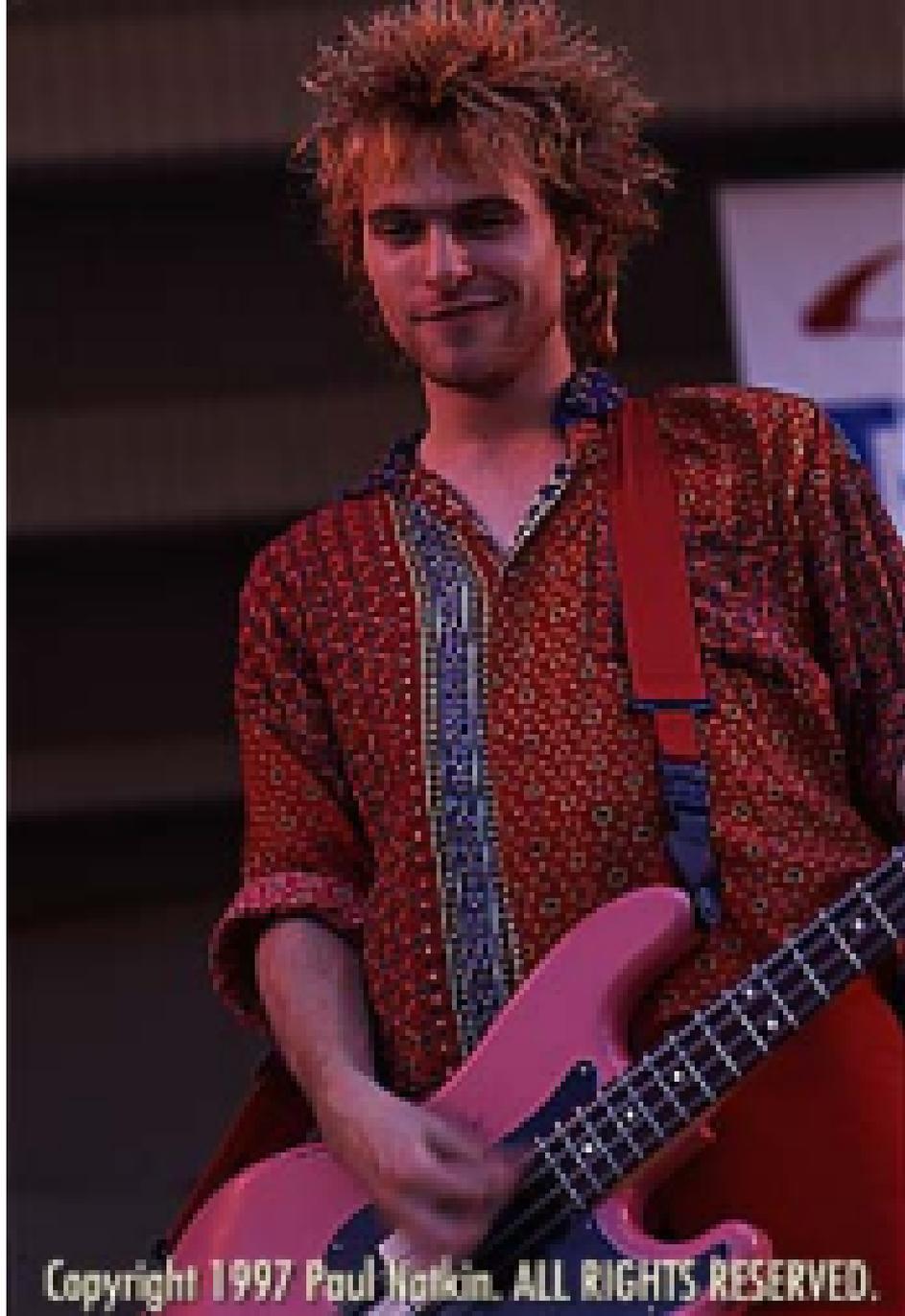
When It Began

CD

(no artwork available)

Happy Town (edit) b/w Happy Town (album version) CD
1990 Sire/Reprise PRO-CD-4574

(no artwork available)



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