

you'll be impressed. (My only hope is that "johnny g" and "johnny c" are some obscure lyrical references to commonplace lyrics and chord structures, but I bet I'm grasping at straws.)

What's disappointing about Perfect, however, is the songwriting. I anticipated every change before it happened. Every progression, every melody, and sadly, every lyric was in my head before it hit my ears. Great musicians can rearrange musical ideas, release them, and have their fans saying, "I know I've heard this," but the fans never pinpoint the musical origin and the song becomes a smash. The flipside of the coin is when artists compose songs that are too obviously derivative.

The liner notes on Perfect hail: "It's not about money or fame, it's about music and dreams." I hate when bands write this. I mean, duh! I've never seen a musician besides Doctor Dre who claimed otherwise. In fact, I kinda find it hard to understand how bands like Poison and Stone Temple Pilots can say similar things. Their dreams must really suck. (Aaron L. Sarlo)

## AMANDA'S DIRTY SECRET

Skyrocket Records  
Pony Rides and Parties 10-Song CD

I used to think the name of the band had something to do with Heather Locklear's character on Melrose Place where everyone's secrets are usually dirty (otherwise there'd be no reason to watch the show), but the band

is led by guitarist/vocalist Amanda Jost and I don't know what her secret is. They sound like an edgier version of the Breeders. At times Ms. Jost screeches like she's got the P.M.S. princess blues (and she's "gonna kill for the candy") while at other times, she coyly croons like a "pink dress preschool piñata girl." The opening track, "Ravenous," meshes layers of guitar gobbledygook with bristling bass lines and hard-hitting percussion. There's enough tempo-shifting from song to song so you never feel like you're being crushed under an avalanche of guitars. My favorite track is "Andy's Ride"—a '50s-influenced psychobilly joyride. Maybe Amanda's Dirty Secret is that they're one of Boston's best kept ones (secrets, that is).

(J.Lianna Ness)

## ELSEWHERE

Rogue Records  
Outbound 8-song CD

In the Phoenix 1997 Band Guide, Elsewhere bill themselves as "progressive punk fusion with progressive rock and indie-punk." Well, they definitely have an indie-punk aesthetic (I wouldn't be surprised to see them in heavy rotation on MTV's Buzz Bin with other current indie faves such as Nada Surf and Nerf Herder) but there's nothing really progressive about this sound. It's more regressive in the sense that it has a very elementary "garage" feel—Husker Du meets the Seeds (come to think of it, I've been hearing a lot of bands lately who sound like the Huskers). It's heavy on the bottom end

with jangly guitar fuzz, but the drums sound too hollow and paper-thin. The singer shouts in a bratty whine that sounds kinda cool at first but then starts to get on your last nerve after about the third song. The title track, "Outbound," is about the commute to and from work on the Green Line, which the band seems to have a fetish for. So go ahead and ride a few stops on Elsewhere's train—it's easier than walking, the fare on the Outbound side is free after Fenway and the scenery is nice. (J. Lianna Ness)

## TOTARO

Spank Dawg Records  
Christmas Carols 12-song CD

As I listened to Totaro's Christmas album, a rockin' kinda record, I found myself constantly referring to three specific recording artists who have done either a Christmas record, something remarkably similar, or both: Mojo Nixon, John Lennon, and Alex Chilton. To expediate the reviewing process, I came up with an easy-to-read guideline for readers who are interested in what this record sounds like. To each of the aforementioned artists I have assigned a primary color. Mojo Nixon=Blue, Alex Chilton=Yellow, John Lennon=Red. Subsequently, each track on Christmas Carols will be defined by the inspired color or mixture of colors.

1. "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree"—Blue-Green. 2. "I'll Be Home For Christmas"—Yellow. 3. "Peace Of Mind"—Red-Violet. 4. "Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer"—Blue-Green (The Alex Chilton ref-