

like the “*Twilight of the Idols*” b/w “*Spit It Out*” 7” had a manic exuberance to them, *Burning City* feels darker. The exuberance is still there hiding beneath the surface, but it is tempered by a sense of gravitas, as in songs like “Departure (Letter by Letter),” and the title track. Much of this gravitas is carried vocally, with Matt McDermott delivering his finest vocal performance of any Doctors recording to date. Musically, he and the rest of the band are equally on point. The trio, McDermott (vocals, guitar), Luke Nally (bass, synthesizers and electronics), and Dan Shields (drums), have increased the dosage of both songwriting and musicianship on this record. The result is not only some of the most nuanced tracks in the Doctors catalog, but a host of catchy earworms sure to infect your brain with contagious tunes. While three of the songs on *Burning City* appeared on the previous *Re Animate* EP, as a whole, this album feels like a new evolution for the Bad Doctors. –Paul J. Comeau (FDH, thebadoctors@gmail.com)

#### **BAD IDEAS, THE / RED KATE: Split: 7”**

Right off the bat, The Bad Ideas’ frontwoman dominates the mix, wielding a reverb-drenched howl à la Siouxsie Sioux to great effect. The anarcho-leaning gothy sound is complemented by discordant riffs and blunt, driving drums. “I’m Stuck” mixes in some well-placed ranting, delivered in that perfect sarcastic riot grrrl sneer. Not usually my jam, but this band nails it (despite the mystifying refrain of, “Wussification of America!” which sounds like a misplaced Glenn Beck segment). Red Kate’s tracks on the flip side are less immediately arresting, but subdued might be what works best for them anyway. “On My Mind” has a plaintive ‘90s alt-rock feel that overshadows the more punk, less memorable follow-up track. All in all, a worthwhile slice of Midwestern punk rock. –Indiana Laub (Mills, millsrecordcompany@gmail.com, millsrecordcompany.com)

#### **BARBATOS / RAPEGOAT: Split: 7”**

This split took quite a few spins, it just wasn’t grabbing me. I sat down and gave it another shot today. Side A is two songs from the Japanese metal band Barbatos. I haven’t really listened to metal consistently since sometime around the late ‘90s. Today I can finally hear it. Barbatos is of the stuff that melts faces. They have screeched and squealed their way into my heart. I had no idea they’ve been putting out recordings since ‘98! Rapegoat opens with an original by the name of “Ass

Blood.” It’s what you’d expect of a tune by that name. For their second ditty, they cover Celtic Frost’s “Into the Crypt of Rays.” They play it a little slower and a little simpler but a great cover choice for them. I don’t know how these two bands got hooked up, but it’s a cohesive little split. –Jackie Rusted (Mystery School Records, mysteryschoolrecords.com)

#### **BASTARD CHILDREN: *To Kill in Cold Blood*: LP**

Bastard Children were an excellent 1990s political hardcore band that reminds me of The Pist. This LP contains two of their cassette-only releases from 1996 and 1998, as well as an unreleased demo. Members of Bastard Children went on to play in better remembered acts including Religious War, Wehrmacht, and Poison Idea. National Dust keeps putting out these amazing reissues of little known or forgotten bands. Anyone who ever played in an overlooked hardcore band should know that someone, somewhere might end up rediscovering them. Something as great as these Bastard Children tapes will never die, thanks to an uncommonly enthusiastic label. It’s not just sentimentality. This potent shit is legitimately worth archiving. –Art Ettinger (National Dust)

#### **BATON ROUGE: *Totem*: LP**

Artfully crafted, spacious, modern, wide-awake-dream-sequences with Slinty Jehu influences. These songs sound so meticulously assembled; it would only seem natural that members of this band were architects. Mapping out the album with AutoCAD-like precision. These are as much blueprints as songs. This is music that fuels your mind. Just throw it on and let the guitars sustain your brain. –Daryl (Adagio 830 / Purepainsugar / Bakery Outlet)

#### **BEACH SLANG: *Who Would Ever Want Anything So Broken?: 7” EP***

My first blush, knee-jerk reaction to this was an admittedly obscure one—”Piles”-era Alter Boys as interpreted by the Psychedelic Furs. Several subsequent listens later, I stand by that assessment. What’s it mean? Four tunes comprised of mid-tempo rhythms, quasi-raspy vocals, and meaty, punky pop hooks buried under a gorgeous wash of ringing guitars. These cats would’ve been revered in the underground of the ‘80s and worshipped as indie-pop gods in the ‘90s, and they would’ve deserved every accolade laid at their feet. Given the roughly twenty-year “what’s old is new”