

From the **WUSC** **DESK**



Various artists
"DFA Compilation #2" (DFA)

Roller skates. Cotton candy. Fluorescent strobe lights. These are a few of the DFA's favorite things. With an eye for wonderfully tasteless retro kitsch, the production team of James Murphy and Tim Goldsworthy has made quite a name for itself in the past few years. Picking and choosing their spots like trained audio assassins, the two are directly accountable for some of the most infectious-yet-heady dance records in recent memory. Working with everyone from sassy funk-punks, the Rapture, to avant-garde noiseheads, Black Dice, the DFA knows just who to nestle up with. This compilation is a bottomless fanny pack (that's three CDs' worth for you uninitiated) packed with banging synthetic sounds, thumping basslines and mind-snaring pop hooks. The first disc races off to the dance floor, opening with the debut single from Black Leotard Front, an enigmatic band of nymphomaniac Francophiles intent on unleashing your wild side. The Rapture makes their presence known with "Alabama Sunshine," a previously unreleased song brimming with post-punk booty jams and contrastingly shrill, atonal vocals we have come to expect. Delving into the second disc will reveal an innocent, cloud-like expansive offering from Black Dice and Pixeltan's inevitable car commercial sound bite "That's the Way I Like It." Disc three is a seamless, head-bouncing DJ mix of material on the previous two discs. For fans of dance music with an indie edge, look no farther than this compilation from the DFA.



Eyes Like Knives
"Slow Distractions" (Dopamine)

Comfort is a valuable thing. People find it in a variety of ways: movies, music, alcohol. Boston's Eyes Like Knives are comfort embodied for many indie rock fans. Initially, their sound is strangely familiar but it's hard to put your finger on. You don't know exactly how it is nestling so warmly against you, you just know that you like it. The band's debut full-length roars loudly with a hard rocking, post hardcore-informed sound reminiscent of many current heavyweights of the indie circuit. Equally combining grit and grace, Eyes Like Knives mixes the driving, intelligent crunch of Hot Water Music with the heartfelt sentiments and spacey guitars of Sparta. Distortion plays a big part in the album's power; vocalist Scott Toomey's wail always mirrored by powerful, dissonant vocal effects. His perfect foil is found in the shape of Rebekka Takamizu, as her voice is a warm and welcoming change of pace; sample the track "Summer Song" for her Kim Deal-like dreamy musing. Comfort and familiarity aside, Eyes Like Knives is a band that stands on its own and rightfully deserves to take its place among better-known indie rock acts.

By **JORDAN REDMOND**
WUSC Music Director

Le Tigre sinks its claws into fresh musical styles

By **CHUCK MYERS**
KRT CAMPUS

These cats don't purr. They roar, but always with electrifying charisma.

With a blend of electronic pop and punk music, and progressive-minded lyrics, Le Tigre (Johanna Fateman, Kathleen Hanna and JD Samson) dispenses relentless sonic energy. When the threesome hits the stage, there's no question that the dance floor will be soon set ablaze.

Formed by one-time "Bikini Kill" band member Hanna and former art-zine writer Fateman, the New York-based group staked out its claim on the music landscape with a dynamic self-titled debut album in 1999. Samson joined the Le Tigre prior to its second record, 2001's "Feminist Sweepstakes."

On the heels of its recent third effort, "This Island" (Strummer/Universal), the band has reached a new creative plateau, and feels confident about its artistic direction.

"Right now, we're just really excited to have produced the record that we did," said Samson. "We feel like we grew a lot from the first album to the second album, and a lot, especially, from the second record to the third record. ... A lot of people want us to make the first record over and over again. But it's like we want to grow up, and we want to mature (musically)."

"This Island" expands on Le Tigre's interest in a pop format instilled with buoyant lift. The band really extends its music claws however, when it comes to its lyrics, which reflect strong feminist and culturally liberal viewpoints.

Opposition to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq provides the inspiration behind the processional force that drives the "This Island" number, "New Kicks." A fervent punk spirit fuels the raging "Seconds," while the rock-driven "TKO," conveys the band's frustrations with the slings and arrows of landing major label fortunes. "Viz," a number written by Samson, celebrates lesbian dignity and distinctiveness.

"I wrote that song ('Viz') because I felt like there needed to be a conversation about freedom of gender expression," said Samson. "That's something really important to us in the band."

The album's tenor takes a less issue-oriented turn with a remake of the 1982 Pointer Sisters classic, "I'm So Excited." Le Tigre integrates a few well-placed reggae dashes into the tune's famous ebullient tempo, giving it a refreshing new pace.

Hanna, Fateman and Samson split the vocal and instrumental roles in the studio and at their vivacious live shows. This division of music labor has allowed the group greater flexibility to explore different creative interests and avenues.

"All three of us have very different musical backgrounds, and likes and dislikes," explained Samson. "That's really apparent in this record specifically. Something we really wanted to do, and one of our goals in the past, was to make a record where we felt like each song could be by a totally different band. So we're really into the way everything sounds so different, and that there's a

hip-hop track, and a super pop track like 'I'm So Excited' and a punk song like 'Seconds.'

While Le Tigre attained major-label status with "This Island," it maintains close ties with the indie/underground music scene. The trio remains firmly committed to their musical approach and the issues it feels strongly about — and having a good time.

"I think that the beauty of our band is that we don't really try to create some sort of middle ground," observed Samson. "It just exists. Part of that is just because we're political people, and that's how we wake up every day, and that's who we are. We can't change that about ourselves. But we also really want to enjoy this time that we have, creating music for our community. ... It seems impossible for us not to be too political or dancy or fun because that's exactly what we want to do."

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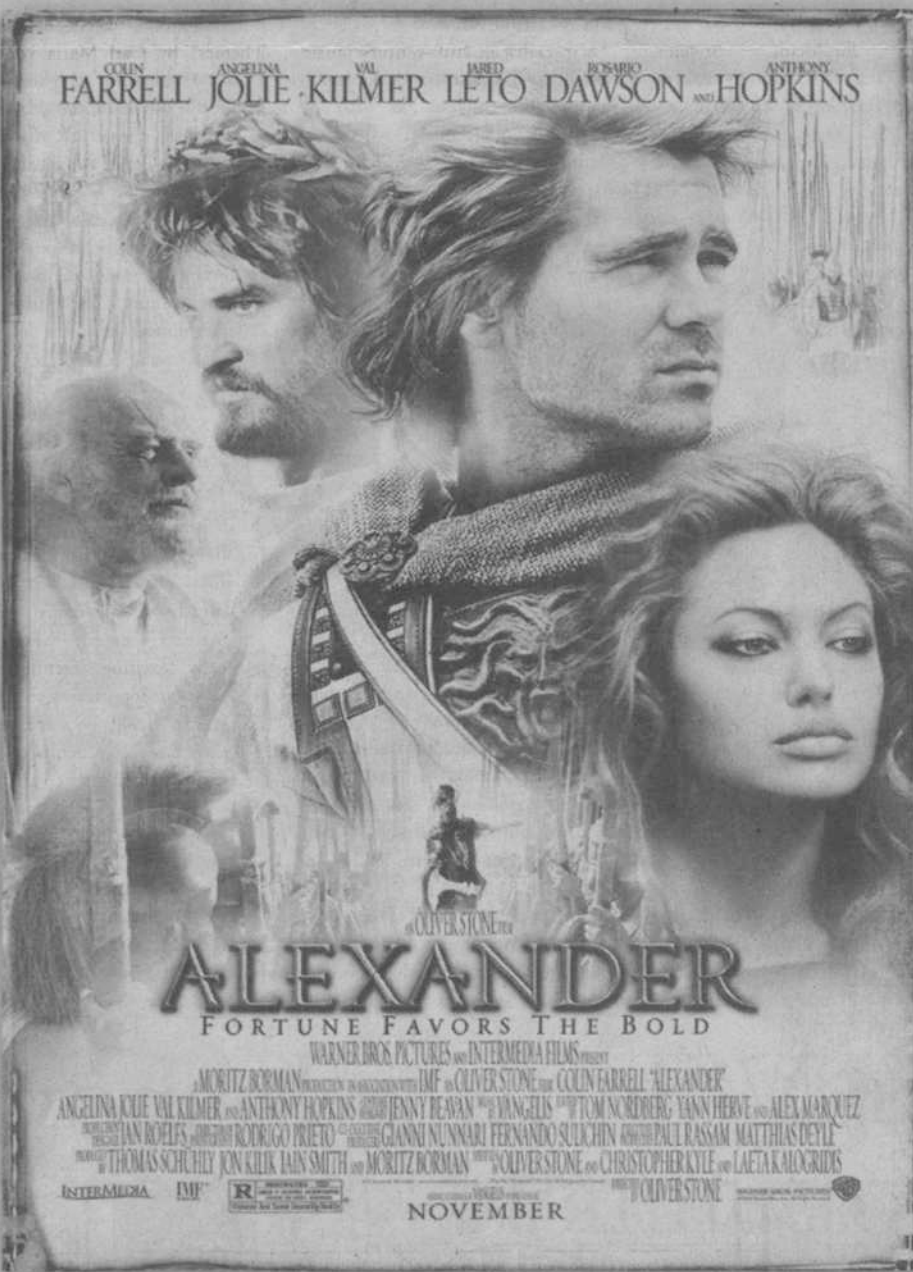
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