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Reviews

The Battalion

Guns N' Roses' latest provides Bon Jovi delivers contrasts, trademark energy show for all ages show for all ages

G N' R Lies Guns N' Roses **Geffen Records**

By Keith Spera

REVIEWER

"THE SEX, THE DRUGS, THE VIOLENCE —THE SHOCKING TRUTH!

The tabloid-mocking cover of Guns N' Roses' recent release, G N' **R** Lies, promises an exclusive on these and other titillating topics. A story tracing this band's involvement with such vices probably would be way too long to include in an album's jacket. Perhaps because the news media has been more than happy to report the sordid details of the band's personal life, Guns N' Roses has skipped the written biographical information and chosen to let the music tell the tale.

The tale that is told is one of contrasts. The first four songs were originally contained on the EP Live *!\$¢ Like a Suicide, released in 1986 on the colorfully-named Uzi Suicide **Re**cords. Here is a portrait of a band with the attitude of a hyperactive child, having a whole lot of energy, but no idea how to use it.

Their energy is evident in the two breakneck speed rockers that kick off the album. Although the lyrics are mostly indecipherable, the titles

do provide basic summations of their lyrical contents, which don't exactly offer new insights: each of the band members leads a "Reckless Life," and they are not exactly "Nice Boys." The guitar sound of South-ern rockers Molly Hatchet's classic 'Flirtin' With Disaster" is admirably built on by the Gunners in "Move to the City." The highlight of the old material is the grungy remake of Aerosmith's "Mama Kin.'

The second half of G N' R Liesis far more interesting. The cliches, the slam-dance rhythms and the raw power are put away for a trip through acoustic-guitar-and-imagi-native-lyric land. If Side 1 was the drunken brawl, Side 2 is waking up the next morning with a hangover. and some funny anecdotes about the previous night.

The pretty and gentle "Patience" does not offer the typical hard-rock solution to male/female problems (i.e. jump in the sack). Instead, vocalist Rose pleads "take it slow, and things will be all right/ you and I could use a little patience." The Gunners recently performed this ballad at the American Music Awards, with Rose turning in a fine performance on harmonica. Just so no one thinks Axl, guitar-ists Slash and Izzy Stradlin, bassist

Duff McKagan, and drummer Steven Adler are a bunch of pansies, the thoughtful and tender "Patience" is followed by the hilarious and dark and confusing "One in a Mil-

irreverent "Used to Love Her (But I Had to Kill Her)." This is a fun little tap-your-foot song, complete with tambourines and lyrics so ridiculous that they are obviously a spoof. had to put her/ six feet under/ and I can still hear her complain" and "I knew I'd miss her/ so I had to keep her/ she's buried right in my back yard" are the types of lines that only a very demented person could take seriously. This is the sort of song that a bunch of guys horsing around in a studio come up with as a joke, but then don't release to the public. Guns N' Roses has chosen to let the rest of us in on their boys' club humor.

Another gutsy move is the inclusion of an alternative version of the hard-driving "You're Crazy," which appeared chock-full of distorted gui-tar on Guns N' Roses' 1987 smash al-bum Appetite For Destruction . Even though that version is familiar to the six million or so people who bought Appetite, the band decided to offer another perspective on the song, which was originally written on acoustic guitar. The song is played here on electric guitar without distortion. Rose's firestorm vocals strain against the calm backdrop of the ringing guitar, providing a strik-ing contrast. The guitar tries to cage him in, but he's struggling and screaming at it.

Rounding out this collection is the

lion." It kicks off with acoustic guitar and somebody whistling, giving it the feel of an old western movie's soundtrack. Then a brooding fuzz guitar kicks in, and Axl tosses out some rather rough lyrics. The singer is looking for "some peace of mind, some peace of mind that'll stay."

He is going in search of his peace on a Greyhound, and he warns "(I) just need my ticket/ til then won't you cut me some slack." Of course, he is not left alone, and is tormented by various groups. He does not mince words when naming them — "immigrants and faggots/ they make no sense to me." In the chorus, he changes his attitude and says that 'you're one in a million/ yeah that's what you are/ you know we tried to reach you/ but you were much too high

Is the street kid (which most of the band members were at one point in time) regretting, if only for a fleeting moment, that he is not, and could never be, a perfect kid? He has little time for reflection, as the realities of his predicament force him into a fighting posture once again. They all know they cannot go back — they are destined to live the rock 'n' roll

From a musical standpoint, as this album shows, it is good that Guns N' Roses cannot go back — they have evolved into what could be the 1980s equivalent to the Rolling Stones. Their future, if they live to see it, can be as bright as they want.

By Keith Spera

REVIEWER

Three songs into the Bon Jovi concert in Houston this past Sunday, Jon Bon Jovi made a profound statement about the nature of the show. He had started to tell a story about the band's weekend adventures. He got to the part where, after a hard night of drinking, they ar-rived at "an irreputable kind of a place." What happens next, Jon? "I can't say it ... this is a family show.' With that, he giggles and then launches the band into "You Give Love (A Bad Name).

A Bon Jovi concert may one day replace the circus as the traditional family outing. The show in Houston was a definite step in that direction. Parents and young kids were everywhere; the youngest ones were sitting, wide-eyed, on their dads' shoulders. Packs of junior-high girls roamed the lobby, abuzz with the excitement of being at a concert; their shrieks and cries of "We love you, Jon!" actually drowned out the music at points. A 68-year old female usher said that she was having a

"great time." It isn't surprising that many par-ents would let their kids attend this show, and even go with them. There was nothing frightening or dangerous about this concert. There weren't gangs of hoodlums wearing studded jackets and spiked brace-lets; the most popular form of metal were braces on kids' teeth. It was tough to find evidence of drug us-age; backstage passes contained the message "Say No To Drugs." Bon Jovi's songs are composed of harmless phrases and textured guitar. They won't offend anyone, incite the kids to riot or hurt parents' ears.

Because all of Bon Jovi's sound equipment was hung above the stage, each audience member was afforded an unobstructed view of the band's performance, featuring the energetic Jon. Clad in tight black eather pants and a sleeveless black he shadow-boxed, he T-shirt, strutted, he crawled, and he pretended to faint; the crowd loved it. The Aggies in the audience were de-

Reverend compiles book about shelter for street children

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cal attention.

By S. Hoechstetter

lighted when he wore, for about minutes, a Texas A&M cap that tossed onstage. He even brought action to the fans at the back of arena when a catwalk descen from the rafters, allowing Jon, tarist Ritchie Sambora and ba Alec John Such to tour the circ ference of the floor at a safe heir of 20 feet.

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Musically, the band delivered actly what was expected of them: curate versions of their chartwon a Pulitzen ping songs. Bon Jovi's tried and radio anthems translated well Memorial in V concert sing-a-longs. Starting with "Lay Your Hands on Me, following it with their first hit," naway," the band concentrated the songs from their last two abu on Suribachi th corded by Staf Keyboardist David Bryan shined "Runaway." "Born to Be My Ba ery, a Marine whom Rosentl hightlighted drummer Tico Tom pounding drum sound. The ended with "Livin' on A Prayer": a host of explosions.

Naturally, the band came back for an encore, which featured "Wam Dead or Alive." A rousing version "Bad Medicine" ended the hour 40-minute show.

This concert did not break a new musical ground, nor did it on vey any deep messages. It was sin a good time rock 'n' roll show. band (who have started referring themselves as "the Brotherhood was obviously having fun. The au ence was happy to see their he and to sing along. Louis Messina president of PACE Concerts co-promoted the show with St City Attractions), was obviou happy as he stood at the entrance the dressing room area. He sh be; his company would reap the efits of a capacity crowd of 17,0 paying \$17 apiece to see the show. In fact, the only person I spon having a had time uses I does

out the name having a bad time was a 14-year first-time concert-goer, who was first grain of most brought to tears when couldn't find his ticket stub. A bu usher wouldn't let him back onto his choice of floor of the arena without it. han his Su boy's dad came over and waited which was ma he finally found it, crumpled u vision, on C. the bottom of his pocket under wad of one-dollar bills. Then, fat and son walked to their seats, to joy the evening together.

mire put h shaded with posters, one and the other He set out orn kernels, nany states N n the election

Ted ate th e number "I'm the bi ever was," Fr thought, 'The publican on n Since then free of drugs, prostitution, and winners of b

Female rockers score with nostalgia-pop

Let It Bee Voice of the Beehive London/Polygram Records

By SHANE HALL

REVIEWER

During the past two years, the quality and quantity of female talent in rock has increased. Once you get past the Tiffanies, the Debbie Gibsons and other teenage stage props, you'll find some female performers with substance. From the socially conscious folk of Tracy Chapman to the psychedelic pop of the Bangles, some of today's best rock has been made by women.

Although not an all-woman band, England's Voice of the Beehive can be included as part of the new wave of female talent. The band is led by sisters Tracey Bryn and Melissa Brooke Belland. Let It Bee, on London/Polygram Records, is the band's debut album. The record contains 11 songs of catchy, 60s-oriented pop and rock that is similar to the Ban-

gles' music. A look at the

one fear that Let It Bee is going to be the work of one of those all-styleand-no-substance nostalgia bands. A listen to the material, however,

reveals that Voice of the Beehive has musical and songwriting skills aplenty to go along with their campy "summer of love" look. Vocalist Bryn and guitarist/vocal-ist Belland write most of the lyrics.

One of the album's best songs is the ballad "Sorrow Floats," a warning against drowning your sorrows. "The only thing that you will drown is yourself/ 'cause you see my dear, sorrow it floats," Bryn sings.

Most of the songs deal with relationships in some form or an-other, most of them bad ones. On There's A Barbarian In the Back of My Car," Bryn sings about the guy who drinks all her beers and won't spend any money. "He's giving me a headache but I still think he's divine," she says.

Bryn's ideal love is revealed on 'Man In the Moon." Against a folk background of guitars and mando-lins, she sings of the man in the moon, who doesn't talk "so we don't

fight.' The Beat of Love" ("it's a its Day-Glo shades of blue and pic-tures of the band members covered light of *Let It Bee*. Driven by the with flowers, beads, multi-colored ribbons and chunky jewelry, makes and guitarist Mike Jones and a sled-



gehammer drum beat by D.M. Bee a fine album. Unlike Tracy Woodgate, "The Beat of Love" is a Chapman or Michelle Shocked, Bryn and Belland are not concerned ample of the band's ability to blend the structure of contemporary songs with the style of the mid-60s. with activism and making statements, but with having fun. Af-Simple lyrics that say much and ter all, fun is a part of what rock 'n' catchy hooks combine to make Let It roll is all about.

its Day-Glo shades of blue and pic-

Throwing Muses falls below 'el stinko' rating

Hunkpapa **Throwing Muses** Sire Records

By S. Hoechstetter

REVIEWER

Your assignment for today is to read and memorize this: Hunkpapa by Throwing Muses is bad. Not good-bad and not cool-bad, but rotten, as in unfavorable. El stinko. Comprende? Now just remember that.

Blowing Fuses — I mean, Throwing Muses is an angry band with a warped concept of what music is. They did take an interesting approach to writing their songs for this album. I think they drank some really bad tequila one morning and wrote the band's guidelines. Here's a list of

what they probably wrote: 1. Always play the guitar loud enough to drown out the vocals.

2. Don't sing any notes that are in a reasonable vocal range for you

 Screech a lot.
Make sure that the only people who will understand anything you say are drug addicts and pseudo-intellects.

5. Only play extremely simple drum combos. 6. Make sure all notes -

whether sung or played — clash horribly with everything else being heard at that moment.

7. Create dissonance. Get the point? To be more specific, there's a song called "Dizzy." It's about being in Texas (it even mentions the Palo Duro Canyon) and the chorus is, "It's just that mean old Texas sun, it makes me dizzy, dizzy in my head." Brilliant lyrics!

The people who contributed to making sounds on this album include Kristin Hersh on guitars and piano, Tanya Donelly on guitars, Leslie Langston on bass and David Narcizo on drums and percussion. And they all use their voices too. Of course, the names of the artists may have been changed for their own protection, but we'll never know that for



"The Burrow" is my favorite track on the album because it only has 28 words in it and then it's over

Unfortunately, the rest of the songs are not so short and sweet. "Dragonhead" is so ridiculous it's funny. The lyrics are some of the best on the album with lines like, 'Too much mascara runs when you sleep, he lies awake raising the creeps, opens the door, I swallow creepy things." How profound!

I'd like to be optimistic and say maybe this is just one of those bands that expresses itself better live. But I won't hold my breath.

Unconvincing charm hurts 'Three Fugitives'

"Three Fugitives" Starring Nick Nolte and Martin Short transform himself into a compassio Directed by Francis Veber Rated PG-13

By Shane Hall

REVIEWER

"Three Fugitives" is a movie with funny moments and fine performances by its stars, but it falls short because of an overreliance on charm.

The farcical comedy stars Nick Nolte as Lucas, a convict determined to go straight. One hour out of prison, Lucas goes to a bank to open an account when the bank is held up by a panicky bungler named Ned Perry (Martin Short).

During Ned's inept holdup, everything goes wrong: his stocking mask rips, the satchel of money gets caught in the chandelier, and he faints when the police arrive. What's more, Ned takes Lucas as a hostage and accidentally shoots him in the

leg. It turns out, though, that Ned pulled the robbery only to provide for his troubled six year-old daughter, Meg (Sarah Rowland Doroff), who hasn't spoken in two years.

"Three Fugitives" gets off to a hilarious start before being hampered by weaknesses in director Francis Veber's script. The character play between Lucas and the irresistably cute Meg is one of the film's unconvincing parts. Why Meg speaks her first words in two years to the surly Lucas, who constantly tells her to get away from him, is hard to understand.

It is equally hard to understand

how this ex-con can almost instantly nate fellow full of concern for the troubled girl.

Despite the script calling for instant transformation of his character from nasty to nice, Nick Nolte is excellent as Lucas, the gruff old bird with a soft spot in his heart. Martin Short is hysterical as Ned,

the man determined not to lose his daughter. What makes Short's performance even more admirable, however, is the convincing way he conveys Ned's feelings of desperation.

"Three Fugitives" also boasts some hilarious scenes that will make your sides ache. One of the funniest moments features an elderly veterinarian (played by the late Kenneth McMillan) who operates on Lucas' wounded leg, all the while mistaking him for a dog.

It is the charming Sarah Rowland Doroff, however, who steals the show. The camera's numerous closeups show that she is undeniably adorable. Unfortunately, she is not quite enough to carry the entire movie.

Rating Key

- A classic. Not to

- be missed. **** — Excellent.
- *** Good. ** Fair. * El stinko.

REVIEWER

"Sometimes God Has a Kid's Face" is not a fun book to read. It is a

book about reality. The book is 121 pages of Father Bruce Ritter's chronicles of his ef-forts to help the homeless children on America's streets.

The book doesn't take a long time to read, but it takes a long time to stop thinking about — which is exac-tly why Ritter wrote "Sometimes God Has a Kid's Face.

"Kids' faces are supposed to be happy and open and excited and al-ive," Ritter writes. "Their eyes should be filled with trust and innocence.

But the kids he writes about are not children at all.

Over the years, as more kids came

The shelter is now called Cove-

nant House and is open 24 hours a day to homeless children and adults

under 21. Five U.S. cities have Cove-

nant Houses, including Houston

The privately funded organiza-tion has set up a 24-hour toll-free hotline (1-800-999-9999) for run-

aways and their parents and chil-

dren who are thinking about run-

writes about what the children face on the streets every day and how he

has attempted to show them a life

Throughout the book, Ritter

to Ritter for help, the shelter grew to

try to accomodate their needs

and New Orleans.

ning away.

The book is filled with real experi-

It doesn't take long to murder a child. Three months on the street is a very long time. Six months is forever. A year? Then they're just breathing in and out but dead inside."

Father Bruce Ritter, **Covenant House founder**

ences Ritter has encountered since 1969 when he began providing shel-ter for runaways and other kids in the streets of New York City.

personal resource and monetary nations to Covenant House or an other program that helps runaway get off the streets.

"They're good kids," Ritter with "Not good maybe the way you kids are good, and not nice may the way your kids are nice. But goo kids. What happens to them should not happen."

ook is not yet available in mo bookstores but can be ordere through the mail for \$3.

Checks made out to Covena House are tax deductible and can sent to: Covenant House Texas, P. Box 66330, Fairview Station, Hou ton, TX 77006-3823.

For more information about # organization and how to become volved, call (713) 523-2231.

Piedmont, S. his dad's ins build a new h week vacation "I persona could do it, Smith said northeastern 49 residents.

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Bowl games. "It doesn't take long to murd child," he writes.

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very long time. Six months is ever. A year? Then they're

Job placement is available older children and young adults

they can learn to be independent.

cational centers and churches.

Ritter says he expects that than 15,000 children and

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Covenant House also offers

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for help in 1989. Ritter's book includes pleas

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