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**Volume Control**

**Verbena**  
Into the Pink  
Capital Records

**The Dark Fantasy**  
The Dark Fantasy  
Up Records

Verbena may sound familiar — chronic MTV watchers may recognize the band from their recent video-debut on "120 Minutes." Or perhaps, Foo Fighter fans may recall that it was Verbena who opened for the 1997 Foo-tour. But if you have never been graced with Verbena, the trio is an ex-Merge band, resonant of early 90's garage-grunge. This style is most likely due to the fact that the Capital Records album was produced by Dave Grohl, ex-drummer for the long, but not lost band, Nirvana.

It is no coincidence then that the album sounds much like the infamous grungers; beginning with the opening song, "Lovely isn't Love," Scott Brody croons in a strikingly Cobain-esque pitch, we may get caught, but we'll never be found... not until we're on our knees.

The album does not remain so calm, however. With "Into the Pink" and "Baby Got Shot," bassist Anne Marie Griffin gives the album a Pixie-ish appeal as she and Brody bellow endless heys and yays in perfect Dixie drawl.

Despite *Into the Pink's* heaviness, the album is also equipped with soothing slower melodies. Cobain-mourners can close their eyes and materialize their god with "Prick the Sun," "John Beverly," and "Big Skies, Black Rainbows."

The drag: Grohl could have been less conspicuous.

Despite the uncanny, Griffin's sugar-sweet vocals help trademark the album and keep it a little more pink around the edges. (Grade: B)

— Heather Brondy

Screaming Trees faintly smile again, because former drummer Mark Pickrel has deavored on a new project. The album, *The Dark Fantasy*, is a dreamy soup of sound for any lovesick Pip.

Starting dramatically with heavy-breathers, Pickrel and Jesse Roberts in "I'm Not" and "Protected By Their" are two fast-paced tracks. These two fast-paced tracks stretch consistently through the album and leave even the most piest hipster aching for a wish in.

"In Love With You" takes the album into a softer single-sadness and is a perfect fit for those in the heat of a quieted passion.

From here, the album takes its moody procession into dark with Roberts slow drawl ululation and Martin's eerie keyboard.

The album picks the beat again with "Valentine," a Beatle-esque love song, and "Shadow's Theme," a tune for a carnival freak show.

As a bizarre antithesis to entire album, listeners should be tuned for the hidden track: teen.

Working similarly to a car after sex, this up-beat track is as snap-crackle-pop.

Mark Pickrel will definitely press the independent market with his dark and mostly latest. (Grade: A+)

— Heather Brondy

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\* INTERVIEWING NOW \*

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