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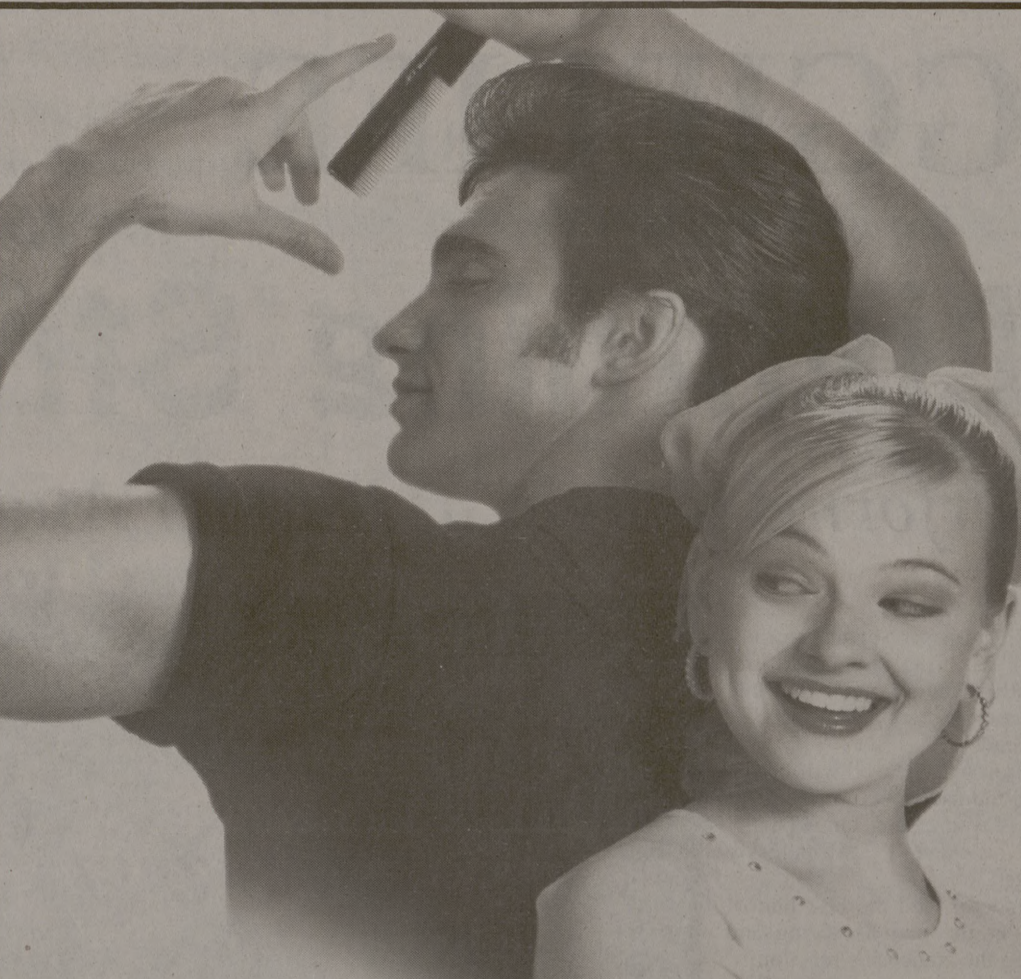
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 THE BATTALION

**VOLUME Control**

**The All American Rejects**  
**The All American Rejects**  
**Doghouse Records**

In its self-titled debut, The All American Rejects have set the bar a little higher by experimenting and utilizing instruments such as an organ, a piano and an acoustic guitar, setting it apart from other punk bands such as Good Charlotte. On "Time Stands Still," it try displays substantial maturity for a new band. Almost everyone can relate to the single "Swing," which is about getting over a breakup. The lead singer has a silky voice unlike many of the new rock screamers of today. However, he sounds like he's trying too hard to hit the high notes at times.

The All American Rejects is a great new band with a refreshing sound. Fans of bands such as Saves the Day, Hometown Hero or Third Eye Blind should definitely consider buying this CD.

★★★★☆ —Chris Elmi

**Allister**  
**Last Stop Suburbia**  
**Drive-Thru Records**

The Southern California punk band Allister has a new CD that is better than its last album. This album's youthful energy possibly comes from the band's extensive Warped Tour touring this summer. On this album, both vocalists harmonize better than on their debut album, "Dead Ends and Ex-Girlfriends." Production quality has also improved. However, with the exception of "Somewhere on Fullerton," there are no stand-out tracks. The CD still deserves a listen because all of the songs are decent.

The tracks follow the traditional punk code with tons of power chords and palm muting-on the guitar. Although this album could be listened to repeatedly, most listeners will probably never know the songs by heart. The lyrics need refinement to make the songs more than average. It will take a little bit more for Allister to make a successful album, but it displays a valiant effort on its sophomore CD. Allister is reasonably priced and resembles bands such as New Found Glory and Fenix Tx. However, it is not quite-up to par with the aforementioned bands.

★★★★☆ —Chris Elmi

**Paul McCartney**  
**Back in the USA Live 2002**  
**Capitol Records**

Live CDs can be a blessing and a curse. The good: all of an artist's best hits, often with fun variations. The bad: screaming crowds and variations of songs that sometimes render them unrecognizable.

Paul McCartney's album "Back in the USA Live 2002" is benefited and hindered by all of these elements.

The album contains two CDs and includes 35 individual tracks. It features some of his best solo music, as well as unforgettable Beatles' classics. "Back in the USA Live 2002" is one of the most comprehensive albums from McCartney one could hope to find.

There is also something fun about a live album because the music has its own sound. Concerts are always worth the money to not only see the artist, but also to hear the music as the artists want it to sound – not as the producers want it to sound. Plus, hearing songs such as "Eleanor Rigby" and "Hey Jude" live today are a treat that needs to be appreciated. "Back in the USA Live 2002" affords listeners the chance to enjoy these hits anytime, anywhere.

While the ukulele version of "Something" is a fun tribute to the late George Harrison, it's not the same as the original. Live CDs don't capture the essence of the originals.

"Back in the USA Live 2002" is a great CD set for McCartney and Beatle fans, however, casual fans probably won't be enamored with it. Such is the fate of most live albums.

★★★★☆ —Denise Schoppe

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