



FUSE VJ STEVEN SMITH TAKES US BEHIND THE SCENES OF HIS UNTITLED ROCK WORLD.

# STEVEN'S UNTITLED ROCK COLUMN

THIS MONTH: Something old, something new...

**MY JOB'S PRETTY DAMN COOL**—I get to say things like, "I was talking to Joan Jett about Ian MacKaye last week..." It's true, Joan stopped by Fuse to talk about her new record, *Sinner*, and her upcoming appearance on the Warped Tour. After the interview, we talked about the music that impacted us most. For me, Minor Threat changed my life. It was as if the skies opened and I said to myself, "I get it." I'm sure people felt that way when they first heard Joan. I really got to thinking about what I wanted to write in this month's column, and I decided to write a Top 10 Artists I Think You Should Be Aware Of List.



Steven gets up close and personal with Joan Jett.

## FIRST, FIVE WHO NO LONGER EXIST:

### 1 JAWBREAKER

My favorite band of all time. I first saw the band at a church in Washington, D.C., with Jawbox. I was sitting on the stage, completely enthralled. Each lyric is poetry coupled with humor and a deep sense of irony. Start off with *24 Hour Revenge Therapy* and work your way around. The track "Indictment" is the most brilliant anti-scene song ever written. It supports and attacks punk-rock ethos.

### 2 ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT

The greatest live band ever—and I've seen U2, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Neil Diamond. Their songs are fun-rock with horns and ass-kicking guitar. If you never witnessed them, grab *Scream*, *Dracula*, *Scream* and exalt in the power that was Rocket From The Crypt. I cried at their last show; I really did.

### 3 FUGAZI

They are the DIY torchbearers and one of the strongest ensembles to perform for our unworthy asses. I've seen them on both coasts in the biggest venues to the smallest of rooms. Their evolution from post-hardcore stalwarts to the true definition of alternative rock is akin to Tom Waits' rise from crooner to experimental-music madman.

### 4 THE PROMISE RING

Fans of AP know all about the Promise Ring—I am one of many on their incredible bandwagon. I saw the guys live supporting *Nothing Feels Good*, which is the record I would suggest buying first.

### 5 GUIDED BY VOICES

They are definitely an acquired indie-rock taste but worth mentioning. Singer/songwriter Robert Pollard, the wellspring behind the group, is one of the most prolific songsmiths in history. GBV have too damn many records; I recommend picking up a greatest-hits compilation. (It's cool to have greatest hits when you've never even charted—that's what it means to be indie.) I also recommend *Isolation Drills* for the first-time listener; if you dig it, grab *Alien Lanes*. Bob still tours on his solo records, so there's a chance to hear some GBV. Be sure to watch him drink beer.

## NOW HERE ARE SOME GROUPS MAKING MAGIC RIGHT NOW—BEHOLD THEIR AWESOMENESS:

### 1 STRIKE ANYWHERE

I strongly believe these guys channel Bad Brains when playing live. Not only are they nice guys, but they produce the most truly raw punk sound I've heard since forever. You've probably seen them on Warped Tour. They're political, practice what they preach, and live and die rock 'n' roll. Their new disc, *Dead FM*, comes out this fall, but we have *Exit English* and *Change Is A Sound* to hold us over till then.

### 2 KILL HANNAH

Why this Chicago band aren't huge is beyond me. Their album, *For Never And Ever*, is riddled with poppy hooky endeavors reminiscent of My Bloody Valentine and the Cure. Their new record is coming soon, and it's incredible. They're touring right now—go see them and tell them I said hello.

### 3 THE RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS

Please rush out and buy *To The Confusion of Our Enemies*, then go see them play with X and the Rollins Band this month—you will thank me profusely. The band, straight out of Denton, Texas, have a vengeance against all who mistreat rock 'n' roll.

### 4 BENJY FERREE

Benjy is a singer/songwriter who writes songs you feel you've known forever. His debut, *Leaving The Nest*, isn't punk and it's not rock—it's music, and it will bury itself in your soul. Be warned: His melodies may uncontrollably escape out of you via hum or whistle without your knowledge. Benjy's funny as shit, too, but that's beside the point.

### 5 THE EXPLOSION

Why this former Boston, now New York-based band isn't massive is incomprehensible. *Black Tape* is one of the best records of 2004. When asked who we wanted to be the first performance on Steven's Untitled Rock Show, the entire team answered, "The Explosion." No discussion. They are in the studio now, and you can hear the anthems solidifying. Listen. **alt**