

ROCK CRITIC'S CHOICE



**Valient Thorr
 ... and More**

~ VALIENT THORR ~

It's easy enough to impress people when you're from North Carolina and you can do a letter-perfect MC5 shtick. But Chapel Hill's **Valient Thorr** goes just a little bit further out there (and we do mean *out there*) by concocting a strange origin story that finds the band's five members scheming away on their home planet of Venus to take over Earth through a combination of stealth, dual guitar leads, and '70s-era beards and 'burns. Funny thing is, there's nothing really all that funny about the group's debut album, *Total Universe Man*, or its gut-kicking stage show, but fans of primal, loud sounds will still have reason to smile. Opening for ever-jolly ska 'toons the **Aquabats** along with punky Australians **Goons of Doom**, the group should succeed in its mission to bring the "roll" back to rock 'n' roll (Fri., El Rey at 8 p.m.).

And this is quite the week to rock, anyway, no matter how you slice it. There's Maryland's mighty **Clutch** at the Roxy (Thur. at 9 p.m.); **Social Distortion** launching another extended home stand at the House of Blues (Sun.-Mon. at 9 p.m.); and **Queens of the Stone Age** wrapping up another tour by pleasing the loyal homers (Mon.-Tue., Wiltern at 8 p.m.). Such a week as this, an appearance from the **Eagles of Death Metal** (Wed., Troubadour at 8 p.m.) is simply the icing on a very sweet cake indeed.

—Joshua Sindell

For info, see *Rock, Pop, Acoustic listings*.

LISTINGS

Times are p.m. unless otherwise indicated. Listing order does not necessarily indicate billing order. All events subject to sudden (hopefully not violent) changes.

Hand-carved for the holidays

The Mission Hills hot spot **the Lucky Tiki** is having a "Tikis and Tinsels" holiday bazaar on Sunday with hand-carved art. . . . Intergalactic headbangers **Valient Thorr** brings its twisted rock show to the El Rey Theatre on Friday. And **Alan McGee**, founder of influential Creation Records, was in town. On Sunday he checked out the set by ex-**Ride** singer-guitarist **Mark Gardener** before adjourning to the Echo, where McGee DJ'd at the Part Time Punks dance night.

— HEIDI SIEGMUND CUDA,
 WITH KEVIN BRONSON

