



band du jour  
**Urge Overkill**

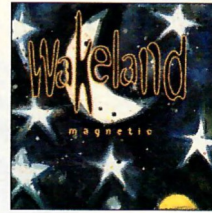
I'd never met a rock star I could bond with over the virtues of polyester... until I met Nash Kato, leisure-suit lover and lead singer of Chicago's supersuave trio Urge Overkill. But then, UO has always had a reputation for appreciating the stylish and campy things in life, like cocktails, *Hawaii Five-O* and, of course, Neil Diamond (yes, UO made Neil cool again with its sexy cover of "Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon" on the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack).

When hanging in their clubhouse, the guys in the band like to spin inspiring discs by artists like Combustible Edison and James Brown and record new songs, some of which are on their latest and, in our opinion, greatest CD, *Exit the Dragon* (Geffen). Compared with UO's earlier, more choreographed tunes, *Dragon's* 14 songs are rougher—"more spontaneous," says bassist and avid *seventeen* reader Eddie "King" Roeser. "And darker," adds Nash, with a tinge of pride. Well, spontaneity and gloominess never sounded so good! P.S. Nash also wants you to know that polyester clothes are very low-maintenance. —Amy Talkington

record reviews

rating the discs

- Not a cloud in the sky
- Mostly sunny and mild
- Overcast, chance of rain
- Smog alert



**Wakeland Magnetic** (Giant)

**Sounds like:** a massive sugar rush. **Song you'll want to send to the guy you like:** "Falling Again," about the thrill of a new crush. **FYI:** This Oklahoma-based group called itself Wake until learning that a Cincinnati band already had the name. **Final notes:** 12 pop ditties—but don't be shocked if the buzz lasts only as long as the one you get from a box of Chuckles. ●●

**Guru Jazzmatazz Volume II: The New Reality** (Chrysalis/EMI)

**Sounds like:** Music spilled out of a jazz club meets the funky grooves of the street. **Song your parents will appreciate:** "Watch What You Say," a warning to rappers about the messages in their music. **FYI:** Guru and his partner, DJ Premier, have been mixing jazz with rap since the '80s as the group GangStar. **Final notes:** This record's cool vibe will put some major hip in your hop. ●●●●

**Letters to Cleo**

**Wholesale Meats and Fish** (Giant)

**Sounds like:** Juliana Hatfield pumping iron with heavy pop guitars. **Song you'll want to dance to after you ditch that jerk of a boyfriend:** "Awake," one of the catchiest "See ya, wouldn't wanna be ya" songs around. **FYI:** This Boston band got its name from letters that singer Kay Hanley used to send to her pen pal, Cleo. **Final notes:** A strong follow-up to *Aurora Gory Alice*, this CD should help Letters to Cleo put its stamp on the pop landscape. ●●●

**Blind Melon Soup** (Capitol)

**Sounds like:** Led Zeppelin left out in the sun too long (call it sorta overdone). **Song you wish more guys were writing:** "New Life," about a guy who wants to be a responsible dad when his girlfriend gets pregnant. **FYI:** Singer Shannon Hoon's first video costar was—no, not the Bee Girl—Axl Rose in Guns N' Roses' "Don't Cry." **Final notes:** These guys have MTV clout, but to stay at the heights they buzzed to with their last album, they may need more of the Bee Girl's charm. ●● —Kim Ahearn

navel academy



**Belly**  
The band's name rolls off your tongue as easily as lead singer Tanya Donnelly's mellow pop vocals roll into your ears.



**Echobelly**  
This Brit pop quintet loves the b-word so much, they also put it in a song, "Bellyache," which hit the U.K.'s top 10.



**Leadbelly**  
Huddie Ledbetter (aka Leadbelly), who was hip in the '30s and '40s, influenced Kurt Cobain.



**Redbelly**  
With a Seattle sound (they're actually from New York) and a "belly" name (they were formerly Tractor), this group is *abs*-olutely trendy. —Emily Eagar

sneak peek



Word is that *Empire*, the new movie about coworkers at an indie record store, is awesome—but that's not the only buzz we hear: It's also the sound of the clippers that hairstylists used daily to maintain actress **Robin Tunney's** Sinéad-like 'do. (That's Robin, left, seconds before she shaved her own head, on camera, in one take.) Look for the cropped-top actress next as a wigged-out witch in *The Craft*, along with Neve Campbell from *Party of Five*.

Urge Overkill photo, Lisa Spindler; Belly, Stephen DiRado; Leadbelly, Collection of John Reynolds; Tiny Robinson and Stephen Deutch; *Empire*, James Bridges