

# CULTURE CLUB

EDITED BY KATE WILLIAMS



## SUNSET RUBDOWN

*Random Spirit Lover*  
(Jagjaguwar)

Somehow, between recording a new Wolf Parade album and juggling his duties as a member of Frog Eyes and Swan Lake (which also features Dan Bejar of the New Pornographers and Destroyer), Spencer Krug has tapped into his seemingly endless wealth of both brilliance and spare time to record *Sunset Rubdown's Random Spirit Lover*, one of the most daring and remarkable albums of 2007. Alongside Jordan Robson Cramer, Michael Doerksen, and ex-Pony Up member Camilla Wynne Ingr, Krug replicates the dramatic bravado and intensity of his work with Wolf Parade in music that is also completely different from his other projects. Krug maintains his signature warble and penchant for catchy melodies, but throws pop sensibilities out the window in favor of denser and sometimes almost frenetic arrangements. Each song sounds drastically removed from the next, but the album plays through without seeming disjointed. As with any other Krug project, *Random Spirit Lover* is not an album that you'll immediately fall in love with. But by the third listen, any Wolf Parade enthusiast or forward-thinking music fan will have made room in their heart, and on their iPod, for it.

JOSH SMITH

## BOOKMARK: DEAD CHILDREN PLAYING

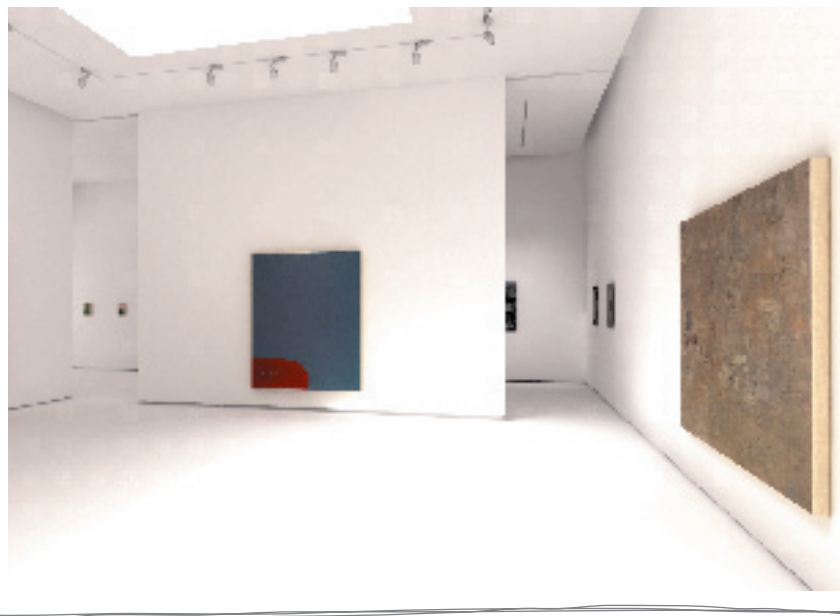
There are the bands whose members are content to slap a glossy picture of themselves on their album cover and call it a day, and then there are those who believe the artwork for their record should be as carefully crafted and lovingly executed as the music itself. Radiohead has always fallen into the latter category, thanks in great part to lead singer Thom Yorke. Yorke, who in the art world prefers to be referred to by his alter ego, Dr. Tchock, has collaborated with artist Stanley Donwood to create some of Radiohead's most memorable album covers—from 2001's *Amnesiac*, for which Donwood won a Grammy for Best Packaging to the colorful, stacked typography of 2003's *Hail to the Thief*. Now the pair have teamed up for *Dead Children Playing* (Verso), a captivating collection of artwork and commentary. The book's art might look, at first glance, like the type of stuff a junior high teacher would report to the principal as "troubling." But as those of us for whom school is a very distant memory know—the kids with the "troubling" art often grow up and do great things. FV



## SPACE INVADER: NEXTSPACE GALLERY

Sick of packing up a year's worth of work and lugging it around to galleries and potential buyers, artist Stephen Walker (who happens also to be *NYLON's* photo director) had an aha! moment and created [nextspacegallery.com](http://nextspacegallery.com), a 3-D, an online virtual art gallery. "The idea is really that people who can't get to, don't want to, or don't have time to go to a gallery can all use it as a tool for quickly visualizing artwork in a realistic space," Walker says. A painter who also studied 3-D

imaging while in art school, Walker has indeed created a space—complete with virtual track-lighting—that is surprisingly realistic, sans, of course, the annoying crowds. "Artists who show work here are amazed at the way it looks with the daylight and white walls," he says. To date, the gallery, which has been 'open' only slightly more than a year, has exhibited work by Andrew Baron, Dionisio Cortes, Suzanne Kammin and Leticia Ortega, among others. "I'm not opposed to having a traditional nextspacegallery some day," Walker muses. "It would be kind of cool to see it come about in reverse..." TINA RIOPEL For more information, see [nextspacegallery.com](http://nextspacegallery.com).



## SCOUT NIBLETT

*This Fool Can Die Now*  
(Too Pure)

When British-born singer-songwriter Scout Niblett takes the stage, her perfected antagonizing wail is divisive enough that, upon first listen, you will absolutely love it, or completely hate it. On her fourth album, *This Fool Can Die Now*, Niblett has tempered her signature shriek just a bit, and is at her best when paired with Will Oldham, who pitches in on four charmingly rustic duets. *This Fool* veers from those songs—such as "Do You Want to Be Buried With My People," where the hymn-like melodies are straight out Southern Gothic—to the bare-bones experimentation of "Moon Lake," with Niblett's pitch-imperfect vocals soaring above a lone drumbeat. And on the rare occasions when her voice suddenly cracks into melody, it's so out of line with the rest of her wild delivery that it seems almost unnaturally caged in. It's when this happens that you realize that for Niblett, sounding "right" is actually sounding all wrong. LINDSAY MILLER



yo majesty illustration: nyan waller



## YEASAYER

*All Hour Cymbals*  
(We Are Free)

"Sunrise," the first track on Brooklyn-based Yeasayer's debut album *All Hour Cymbals*, opens with a falsetto chorus of "ooooohhs," accompanied by handclaps and drums. Even without closing your eyes, you get a vision of white-robed shamans, methodically moving across a sun-bleached desert on a quest to bring forth enlightenment, even to those who don't want it. Yeasayer's alchemic sound conjures Genesis, solo Peter Gabriel, and Roxy Music, and with several members frequently singing at once, the result is a mystical, chill-inducing album that sounds bigger than just the band itself. Stevie Nicks would be right at home dancing to the jangling tambourines on "Waiting for Summer," yet the standout track is "2080," which prompted buzz as a single with its bleak, apocalyptic lyrics burnished with rainbow choruses that build to a tingling climax. While *All Hour Cymbals* does lose a bit of steam after the first few tracks, Yeasayer still manage to create a stellar sound that is at once evocative and totally their own. KATE WILLIAMS



## YO MAJESTY

These girls are the kind of royalty we consider worship-worthy: Three rappers from Orlando, Florida—Shon B., Shunda K., and Jwl B.—became MySpace sensations with their single "Club Action," which includes the hard-to-forget chorus of "fuck that shit." Nor is their live show any more demure, as the trio gets crazy, and often even topless. Here, Shunda and Jwl's picks for a *NYLON* mixtape reveal that the only thing these ladies love more than rapping is, well, Jesus.

JWL B.:  
**JAMES CLEVELAND**  
"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"  
(*The Best of Rev. James Cleveland*)  
"Because I live the words of this song, and Jesus is my friend."

**THE CLARK SISTERS**  
"You Brought The Sunshine"  
(*You Brought The Sunshine*)  
"Because I grew up listening to them, those girls can sing and they love the Lord just like me."

**BOBBY BROWN**  
"Every Little Step I Take"  
(*Don't Be Cruel*)  
"I like the old Brown and his shows back in the day were the shit. Reminded me of when I was a lil' girl lovin' life."

**PATTI LABELLE**  
"You Are My Friend"  
(*You Are My Friend: The Ballads*)  
"She is an angel from God."

SHUNDA K.:  
**H TOWN**  
"Don't Sleep On The Female"  
(*Ladies Edition*)  
"They are the realest R&B group to ever live. I watched God turn these

boys into men and just their maturity level from their first album through their latest one is phenomenal!"

**BBALL & MJG**  
"Its All Real"  
(*Space Age 4 Eva*)  
"These niggas are the definition of Southern thug love, showing that teaching the people is just as important as flossin' ice and 22s!"

**OUTKAST**  
"Elevators"  
(*ATLiens*)  
"Wow...these guys show me that it's OK to talk about any and everything I want to. This song I can relate to even more now, 'cause I'm on the road touring, walking in my destiny and wealth!"

**LINK**  
"Sex Down"  
(*Sex Down*)  
"One of the sexiest R&B songs of all time. Holla back ladies! I got chu!"

**DAT GIRL**  
"Life Goes On"  
([betarecords.com/dat\\_girl](http://betarecords.com/dat_girl))  
"That's me...this song is what's real and brings awareness to the people."



## BOOKMARK: RICHARD MISRACH: ON THE BEACH

The photographs collected in *Richard Misrach: On the Beach* (Aperture) illustrate the very beaches we dream of when we're stuck in traffic or landlocked at our desk: not crowded or trashed with litter, but pristine stretches of sand that we have all to ourselves. The largest book that Aperture has ever produced, *On the Beach* measures 16 by 20 inches, and the huge format makes Misrach's pictures positively captivating. Using aerial photography, he captures swimmers and sunbathers dwarfed by the sand and water that surrounds them—one photograph, which covers two pages, shows only a pair of legs pointing up from the sea as someone does a handstand. Some of the most beautiful photos are human-free, and just show sunlight glinting off the rippling water, while ones of more crowded, colorful beaches appear like a real-life *Where's Waldo?*. Misrach, an American photographer born in Los Angeles, took the series of untitled photographs over a span of three years, as he notes, following September 11th, and though breathtaking, many have an ominous feel. Unburdened by wordy essays or descriptions, the book features only a T.S. Eliot quote, "This is the way the world ends/ Not with a bang but a whimper," and a brief paragraph by Misrach, who writes "Paradise has become an uneasy dwelling place," suggesting that perhaps he does actually not think life's a beach. KW

