



NEW YORK CITY (May 6, 2010)—The Rakehells guitarists Mike Devigne and Howard Stock square off over which of the following classic albums most inspired the Rakehells' sound on the new album *Please Yourself; or the Devil in the Flesh*, set for release in September.

The Rakehells, who also include James Roe (vocals), Johnny Lowe (bass, vocals) and Patrick Paredes (drums), are available for interview on a broad range of topics, from pop culture to music to technical discussions regarding what equipment they use/recommend.

#### **Mike Devigne's Top Five Albums (in alphabetical order)**

##### **Bob Dylan *Highway 61 Revisited***

Dylan ditches the pussy folk scene, picks up an electric guitar, and becomes cool. Because of this album I'm almost certain that he began banging much hotter chicks. It would be the perfect album if *Subterranean Homesick Blues* was on this record instead of his next. By the way, *Subterranean Homesick Blues* was the first hip hop song ever written. Yes, hip-hop was invented by a Jewish guy from Minnesota.

##### **Guns'n'Roses *Appetite for Destruction***

The quintessential hard rock album for any person who believes that rock and roll should be tough and badass. Though this album doesn't sound like any Stooges record, I believe that its rawness and attitude display a modernized interpretation of that classic band. I've always thought that you should be afraid of the guys that wrote these songs.

##### **Metallica *Kill 'Em All***

What is so great about this album is that the songs are so goddamn heavy without sounding too prog. Many of the guitar riffs are the blues played at 100 miles per hour. This being Metallica's first album, it is obvious that they are hungry and very pissed. Needless to say, the sound of the band progressed throughout the 1980s only to become used toilet paper ever after. But *Kill 'Em All* remains the bridge between blues-based heavy metal to technical thrash and over-the-top distortion.

##### **The Ramones *Pleasant Dreams***

If punk rock was not invented in Detroit circa 1969 by the Stooges, then it was invented in Flushing Queens, N.Y., circa 1975 by the Ramones (not by the Sex Pistols in London). *Pleasant Dreams* was released in 1981 right after *End of the Century*, which was produced by Phil Spector, and a failure of a record in my eyes. The Ramones got back to basics and write silly, catchy tunes with a hint of romanticism via Joey Ramone. Not many people share my opinion, but I believe that this record defines the pinnacle of their penmanship.

### **Neil Young & Crazy Horse *Ragged Glory***

I pick this mostly because Howard hates Neil Young. What he doesn't understand is that Neil Young is right up there with Hendrix when it comes to guitar playing. If I were to hear an unreleased/never-heard recording of a Neil Young guitar solo, I would be able to identify it as him immediately because his tone and expressive capabilities are so unique and identifiable. This can only be said about a handful of guitar players throughout the history of rock and roll.

### **Howard Stock's Top Five Albums (in alphabetical order)**

#### **Mr. Bungle *California***

Mr. Bungle's peculiar brand of rock is perfect for shorter attention span—songs turn on a dime, usually in totally unpredictable directions—but it wasn't until *California*, the band's final album, that the band put together a record that wasn't too much of an aural trial to make it a regular player. Much of *California* is, surprisingly, quite beautiful, and rather than fall back on slapstick, many of the lyrics verge on the profound. There is so much going on beneath the surface of *California* that it's actually rather difficult to sum up, but it somehow combines manic humor with melancholy, creepiness, terror and hip-swinging *joie de vivre*. That, combined with the band's effectiveness at plundering multiple genres to pull off this feat, should put *California* on everyone's list of top albums.

#### **Motley Crue *Girls Girls Girls***

Say what you will about hair metal, but any genre that encourages you to get out of your bedroom and into someone else's is all right by me. Nobody nails it like Motley Crue, and this album has a special place in my heart not only because it is fucking awesome, but because it contains the first proper rock tune I ever heard—the Crue's cover of *Jailhouse Rock*, which I heard on some other kid's Walkman in science class. Sure, there are a couple of sappy slow ones—in its defense, the one "ballad" is actually about violently murdering one's girlfriend—but apart from a couple of minor missteps, listening to this album makes you feel a whole lot better about absolutely everything.

#### **Sex Pistols *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols***

The Sex Pistols may not have invented punk, but they certainly put it on the map—and in doing so created a market that made it possible for bands like the Ramones to exist. Hell, they even saved squalid noiseniks The Stooges from their rightful place as an obscure footnote in rock's spotty history. Still derided by the ignorant as a talentless boy band (Sid Vicious notwithstanding), *Never Mind the Bollocks* is an album that successfully repackages the scattershot suburban rage of the disaffected 1970s youth with solid-as-a-rock riffs and a sackful of pop hooks to hang its choruses on. Culture has yet to see anything more cynical—or truer to the punk ethic—than this album.

### **Social Distortion *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell***

Combining dive-bar blues with the outlaw mythology of rockabilly, Social Distortion embodies the self-pity of the addict, the impotent rage of the drunk whose only real outlet is a fistfight he can't win. And nowhere are those last shreds of dignity in the face of self-inflicted squalor more apparent than on *Somewhere Between Heaven and Hell*. There isn't a bad song on the album, it never loses its groove, and who couldn't love a lyric like this: "It was a hot summer night in mid-July. I had a hangover and a black eye. Her mother said I was a loser, a dead-end cruiser, and deep inside I knew that she was right." Rock gold.

### **The Wildhearts *Earth Vs. The Wildhearts***

The Wildhearts are the best rock band that nobody's every heard of—and I do not say that lightly. Often described as combining the heaviness of Metallica with the Beatles' pop sensibilities, what hits the jackpot for me is the band's ability to laugh at life's little indignities, as is bountifully apparent in such songs as *My Baby Is a Headfuck*, *TV Tan* and *Love U 'Til I Don't*. This album has got me through more than its fair share of heartbreaks, disappointments and general malaise, and for that I tip my hat to this heavy, catchy, wryly amusing masterpiece. It took me a couple of listens when I first heard this album, but I've been a rabid fan of everything this band has put out ever since.

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