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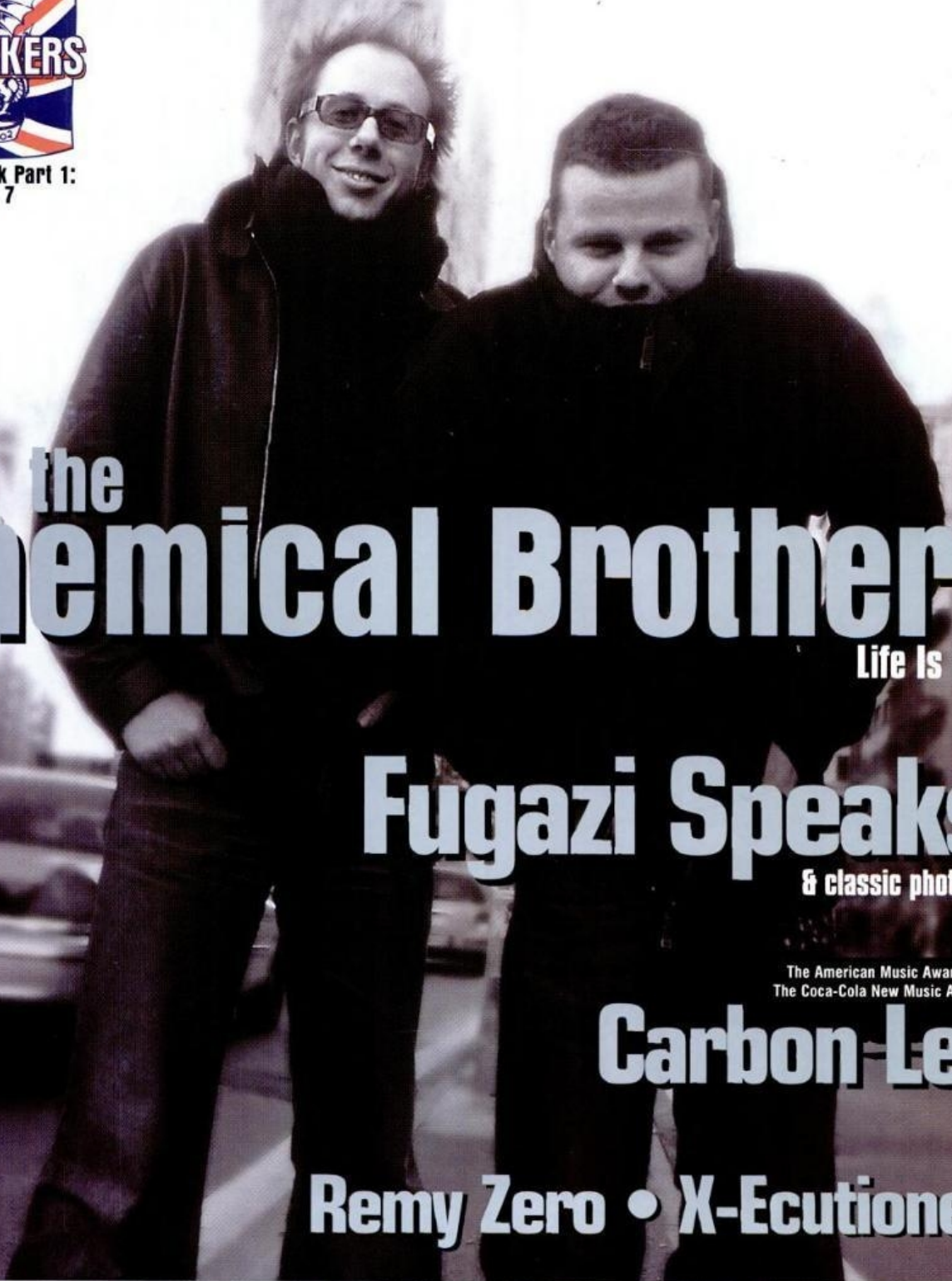
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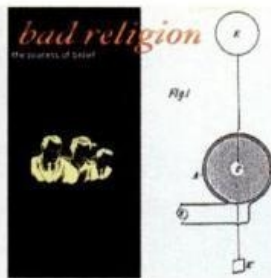
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REVIEWS



BAD RELIGION

The Process Of Belief Epitaph

Although the 21-year-old Bad Religion has undergone some drastic changes in the past year—their drummer since 1992's *Generator*, Bobby Schayer, sustained a career-ending injury, the quintet became a sextet with the return of original guitarist Brett Gurewitz and the band returned home to indie powerhouse and Gurewitz's own label, Epitaph—these absurdly prolific punkers have managed once again to barely stray from the sonic style of their previous releases. On their 12th full-length, newly enlisted stick-wielder Brooks Wackerman (*Vandals*, *Suicidal Tendencies*, *Pressure* 4-5)

anchors the band now, making Bad Religion heavier and tighter than ever before, especially on blink-and-you'll-miss-it speed rockers like "Can't Stop It," "Prove It" and "Supersonic." But like every album since their superior 1993 Atlantic debut, *Recipe For Hate*, *The Process Of Belief's* hyper beats-per-minute yield to poppy gems. This time around, singer Greg Graffin hits those same sweet notes on the anthemic "Epiphany" and on the head-nodding tempo of "The Defense," which is propped up by staccato call-and-response vocals. Microscopic alterations from 2000's *The New America* aside, this is no doubt a Bad Religion album replete with the same melodic, lyrical and thematic ingredients they've had since their inception in 1980. "Oozin' Aahs" still wrap themselves around Graffin's stark commentaries—the way they always have, the way they always will. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO



BEATLESS

Life Mirrors Ubiquity

Broken beat is a new genre (or quasi-genre) centered in West London, although its central protagonists—4 Hero's Dego McFarlane (of 2000 Black Records) and New Sector Movements' IG Culture, who runs the Main Squeeze imprint—have shied away from both the generic and geographical pigeon-holing. This brings us to the debut album from Beatless, which is being touted as one of the first domestic releases to fall under the broken-beat umbrella, due to its explicit attempt to forge classic American soul with U.K. breakbeat traditions. While Beatless (*Talkin' Loud*

A&R officer Paul Martin and versatile techno-jazz producer Alex Attias (who also goes by the names Mustang, Catalyst and Plutonia) shares its allies' interest in '70s soul, '80s electro-funk and '90s breakbeat science, *Life Mirrors* stands very much on its own. The singles "The Truth" and "Love From The Sun" have already stood out for their unorthodox incorporation of gospel choruses, deep-house chords and two-step-inspired swing. But tracks like the Quasimoto/Madlib-fronted "Dominant" and "Rock On" show that Beatless also have a handle on an uncategorizable brand of hip-hop. The chant-and-flute-driven "I-Wa" is spacious, studio-born Afrobeat in the vein of Tony Allen And Doctor L—lush and mind-expanding. Six further tracks plant their feet firmly in earthy, avant-R&B (witness "Revival") but remain just as starry-eyed. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE