

## **The Wrap-Up (Part One)**

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### **What's up, what's not...**

If I hear the word 'Napster' one more time, I'm likely to do serious damage to something or someone. What a fuss over nothing. Let's face it: the major record labels will eventually get their act together and work out some sort of deal with these innovative little start-ups. They'll simply have to. A better way to vent than mine is to visit the [napstermania](#) website, which has, among other things, a message board with some amusing entries. State your case and then shut the hell up.

The last few weeks have been unusually good for live music in Atlanta:

First off, **Tracy Bonham**, as expected, was a delight, and should have headlined, instead of the much-hyped **Catherine Wheel**. Bonham is best known for the song 'Mother, Mother' but she has much else to offer. Her fine new album, *Down Here*, (Island) will probably be overlooked, and that's too bad.

Other live events worthy of mention, for whatever reason:

**Deftones** were loud and nasty, and rocked considerably. They're destined to be around for a while. My teenage daughter loved the gig, even though I wouldn't let her anywhere near the mosh pit...

A private showcase took place with **James Michael**, an impressive young singer/guitar player with a healthy attitude. (Just you wait, buddy. The music biz will soon take care of that).

**PJ Olsson**, at the Cotton Club, was annoying and pretentious. The label rep for Columbia Records advised me NOT to listen to this guy's album before seeing him live, because, he said, it might put me off. Not exactly a ringing endorsement. As it happens, it made no difference whatsoever.

Attended a succulent luncheon for **DJ Magic Mike**, who did his thing with the turntables and impressed all and sundry. I imagine a club setting would be smokin' with this guy. The CD he's plugging is 'Groove On' (Restless).

I missed **Josh Rouse**'s show at the Echo Lounge, but did get to see him in Austin a few months ago. I strongly recommend his Ryko album *Home*.

**Patti Smith** played at Variety Playhouse, and seemed in fine fettle. How fortunate for us that she's a survivor. And if you haven't heard *Gung Ho* yet, what are you waiting for?

Saw **Joan Armatrading** again, for the umpteenth time, (going back to 1973 at the Marquee in London) She's always good. Every time. Now appears to be label-less and will join the growing number of 'established' acts who are putting out their own records. Good for them. More info on her forthcoming release can be found on her [website](#)

A rare concert guaranteed to put a smile on your jaded face: **Brian Wilson**!! This guy NEVER tours. It's unheard of. So he shows up, orchestra and ten-piece band in tow, and delivers the goods. That means a bunch of hits and the entire *Pet Sounds* album. Spine-tingling moments: 'Sloop John B,' 'God Only Knows' and a sublime cover of the Ronnettes' 'Be My Baby'. Wilson was chatty but poker faced, and managed to hit most of the high notes! Hey, he's alive, right? We could have done without the Disney-esque overture before he came on, not to mention the friggin' rain. A live album is available through his own [site](#). Rhino has just announced the re-issue of the 1988 *Brian Wilson* album, with extra tracks. I remember it well. Of course, *Pet Sounds* itself is out again as well in any format you could possibly want.

The *Girls Room* tour made its way through town, and not a lot of people noticed. Shame really, because it was very, very good. The ladies in question are **Shannon McNally**, **Kendall Payne** and **Amy Correia**, all of whom have albums out on Capitol Records, which is funding the entire enterprise. Correia did a stunning version of Edith Piaf's 'La Vie En Rose' and all three of them got together for James Brown's 'It's A Man's World' which closed the show. Quite amazing. In each city the artists present local charities with a check. The tour continues for a few more [days](#). See them and support great talent.

Atlanta's own Brit-Pop expert, Iain Bluett, from the band **Film**, put together a compilation for me of the latest and supposedly greatest tunes of that genre. On closer inspection, most of the tracks turned out to be by **Idlewild**, which is not necessarily a bad thing. More interesting, though, was the band **Coldplay** who's on the shortlist for the prestigious Mercury Prize. Their CD *Parachutes* just came out in the UK and if we're lucky, some US label will put it out here. ([Stop Press!!](#)) For all the Mercury Prize nominees, hit [this](#). **Film**, incidentally, is part of the Lucky Strike Band To Band Talent Search, round two, along with **13 Stories** and **Blacklight Posterboys**, which takes place on Friday, August 4th at 10.00pm at Smith's in Atlanta (Call 404 875 1522). The prize is a hefty \$100,000 to various winners...

Listening to: **Bellrays** *Let it Blast* (Vital Gesture Records); an as yet unreleased **Rickie Lee Jones** album of standards (Artemis); **Dan Hicks & the Hot Licks** *Beating The Heat* (Surfdog) with a slew of big-name guests; **Clem Snide** *Your Favorite Music* (Sire); **Andy White** *Compilation* (Thirsty Ear); **Morcheeba** *Fragments of Freedom* (Sire); **John McCusker** *Yella House* (Temple) featuring the delectable **Kate Rusby**; & **Dave Alvin's** *Public Domain: Songs From The Wild Land* (Hightone). Not a single dud among them.

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