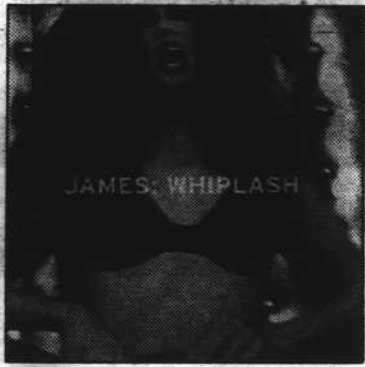


CD Review



James
"Whiplash"
Mercury
Grade: A-

1993's hit single and title track. Awash in pop popularity, a tour-weary James faltered soon after its appearance at Woodstock amid financial disaster and musical claustrophobia. Lead vocalist Tim Booth departed to record with American composer Angelo Badalamenti in New York, leaving James to heal on its own.

Booth returned to a famously emotional band in the midst of musical reincarnation and discovery. The result is an instrumentally challenging and beautifully composed album of carpe-diem pop, politically-oriented musings and flashes of nonchalant techno tinkering.

As with "Laid" and 1994's questionable release, "Wah Wah," Brian Eno plays a heavy hand in production, and his fingerprints are all over several of the tracks, accounting for the techno textures and cascading vocals.

Tracks such as the bass heavy "Play Dead" and the sullen "Watering Hole" contrast sharply with many of the pop gems on the al-

bum. "Play Dead" is a distinct European techno mix with a sensitivity that only James could contribute.

The album's first single, "She's a Star," is strongly reminiscent of the energy and yearning that propelled "Laid" up the charts. Following in this vein are a couple of guaranteed hits including the stringed inspiration, "Tomorrow," as well as the bouncing and urgent "Homeboy."

However, techno and bass are not particularly new frontiers for James, nor is the yearning sentiment of its emphatically energized pop songs — what "Whiplash" accomplishes is the successful co-existence of the two.

Techno and pop are divided on some tracks but more frequently are fused, redefining the band's sound without losing its style. "Whiplash" is the statement of a band re-focused, impassioned and uncompromising in its identity — looking forward but not forgetting the past.

— Bret Schulte



Widespread Panic
"Bombs & Butterflies"
Capricorn Records
Grade: B-

precedented "alternative" level they are getting into the very roots of modern music.

Within the past few years acts such as The Black Crowes, Counting Crows, Sheryl Crow, (is there a pattern here?) and The Wallflowers have reaped considerable success by playing straight-ahead rock 'n' roll. The band Widespread Panic is taking its music to a similar level with its album, "Bombs & Butterflies."

The album is a consistent collection of country, blues and southern rock. The guitar stylings of John Bell and John Keane are complimented by the soulful organ of John Herman. The overall sound is a synthesis of Georgia style rock (The Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Georgia Satellites)

and the Memphis R&B sound of the '60s (Booker T. and the MGs). The chemistry of the band can best be heard on the tracks: "Tall Boy" and "You Got Yours."

While the band is very tight and instrumentally talented, there is very little new ground covered. The music is played confidently, but it lacks a sense of youthful energy behind it. There is really nothing on this album that can be identified as being purely unique.

The band's solid sound will insure its longevity. But without a little innovation, this band will not live up to its name of being "widespread."

— Patrick Kelly

Thack's incredible



COURTESY PHOTO

From Staff Reports

If there are any fans of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix in this town, they should be at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., tonight and Tuesday to check out Jimmy Thackery and the Drivers.

A 15-year member of the legendary blues-rock band The Night-hawks, guitarist Jimmy Thackery has been on his own for nearly a decade. He tours with his two-piece back-up band the Drivers, consisting of bassist Wayne Burdette and drummer Mark Stutso.

He's been featured in issues of CMJ, Blues Revue, Guitar and Guitar Player magazines, and has four solo albums out on Blind Pig Records: "Drive To Survive," "Empty Arms Motel," "Wild Night Out" and "Trouble Man."

He's been compared ad nauseum to the late great Stevie Ray, and with his raw, gritty, blues-and-rock guitar prowess and trademark black hat, it's an easy comparison to comprehend.

Thackery and the Drivers take the stage about 9 p.m. There's a \$6 cover charge.

Shooting claims second rapper in six months

SHOOTING from page 12

The shooting comes six months after Shakur was shot in a drive-by attack in Las Vegas as he rode in a car with Death Row Records president Marion "Suge" Knight. Shakur died six days later.

Wallace was considered a rival of Shakur, who had accused him of involvement in a 1994 robbery when Shakur was shot several times and lost \$40,000 in jewelry.

Wallace, who denied any involvement, was conspicuously absent from a high-profile "rap summit" in Harlem last fall, called to ease tensions between West Coast and East Coast rappers after Shakur's slaying.

Wallace most recently lived in Teaneck, N.J., in a gated community where most residents were reluctant to comment on his death Sunday. But one girl who used to live near Wallace remembered him well.

"He always said, 'Hi.' He was really nice," Christine Girado, 13, said. "We would get all excited."

The rapper had brushes with the law in both New Jersey and New York, including his arrest in Teaneck last summer for alleged weapons and marijuana possession.

Also, he was arrested in June 1995 for allegedly robbing a man and breaking his jaw in Camden, N.J. In March 1995, he was arrested in New York after allegedly using a baseball bat to deter would-be autograph seekers.

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