

Written by **Drew Tewksbury**

M R O I Z O
L A M B S A N G E R

<ED BANGER>

If Justice built the house of French dance thrash, Mr. Oizo tears it down on *Lambs Anger*. Deconstruction is nothing new for France's *l'enfant dancible*. Mr. Oizo's (pronounced WAH-zoh) cut-and-paste musical process first lit up the radar on the international scene in 1999. As a music-video director, Quentin Dupieux, aka Mr. Oizo, wrote a song for a



Levi's commercial (starring a yellow puppet named Flat Eric. Google it!), then dropped it ("Flat Beat") into his experimental breakbeat album, *Analog Worms Attack*. In 2005, with his second album, *Moustache (Half a Scissor)*, Dupieux pushed his sound forward, marrying fragmented samples with hyperkinetic synth tracks that could have crawled out of a Casio keyboard. Mr. Oizo seldom fits into the musical zeitgeist, choosing instead to forge new genres—and *Moustache (Half a Scissor)* did just that as the prototype for the French revolution waged by Justice and other Ed Banger Records alumni. On *Lambs Anger*, Dupieux births a bizarre little baby. The record reveals influences from Afrika Bambaataa, Daft Punk, and vinyl deconstructionists like Kid Koala, but overall, the bizarre production of the album—chopped-up funk samples, cheese-ball analog keyboards, and tongue-in-cheek vocal snippets ("Bruce Willis Is Dead")—distinctly brands *Lambs Anger* as none other than Mr. Oizo. By far his most listenable album, it dispenses with julienned beats in favor of constant pumping of

the French House kick drum (see, also, Daft Punk's "Da Funk"). "Cut Dick" is a hilariously corny funk song that, somehow, is totally satisfying with its ridiculous keyboard-sax solo over the unceasing bass drum. Partially engorged with huge rave sounds of the mid-'90s, "Pourriture 2," "Pourriture 7," and "Gay Dentists" improve Euro-House synth licks and super-reverbed-out drum machines with wiggle-inducing rhythms. Many of the album cuts could be club singles on their own, but the minimalist, electro cut "Steroids," featuring Paris-based, bratty-rap wunderkind Uffie sorta rapping over soul claps and booty bass, proves to be one of the most strangely sexy dance tracks of the year. *Lambs Anger* has so much going on, including an irresistibly silly remake of "It Takes Two," that it is nearly impossible to process it all now; reflecting upon it in a year will prove that *Lambs Anger* was the prime mover in a generation of something new. And something truly *weeeeeeird*.

D Ä L E K
G U T T E R T A C T I C S

<IPECAC>

My Bloody Valentine would have no analogue in the rap world if it weren't for Dälek. The New Jersey-spawned hip-hop duo, producer okt0pus and MC/producer Dälek, occupies a musical space that defies categories. Shoegaze rap? Noise hip-hop? Darkwave-grunge-grrriot-guys? Not quite. Regardless of their phylum in hip-hop's family tree, *Gutter Tactics*—released on former Faith No More member and current avant experimentalist Mike Patton's label, Ipecac Recordings—takes the duo's songs deeper into the moody chrysalis of layered, fuzzed guitars, breakin' beats, and politically charged lyrics. On "No Question," the moans of what could be a thousand guitars put a blanket of warm noise under Dälek's flow and the sped-up Portishead beat. As with the best rock songs, Dälek and okt0pus have a verse-chorus structure that eschews much of contemporary hip-hop's rambling lyrics laid over



infinitely looping ten-second clips. It is in this void of lazy creativity, so often masked behind a thin veil of postmodernism ("Man, this shit's recombinant!"), that hip-hop's third decade festers, marked by mind-numbing copycat-ism. Dälek isn't the future of hip-hop, but an appealing alternative to the superficial flotsam of today's chart toppers. Unlike pop-rap, Dälek's thick, evocative soundscapes—essentially an orchestra of noise laid over classic hip-hop breaks—function as melancholic movements and head-nodding soundtracks for introspection.

T H E D R O N E S
H A V I L A H

<ATP>

"In Vino Veritas." In music, there is truth, too. Like a drunken

night that puts everything on the table, The Drones' fourth album, *Havilah*, exposes ugly and beautiful truths with its twisted visions and demented cast of characters. The Australian band's songs inhabit a darker side of California folk-pop and the psychedelic '60s. The gentle guitar plucks of "Careful As You Go" fight with the twang of Gareth Liddiard's snarling voice and the drunken cadence of his Australian accent. Liddiard's bellowing and playful growls recall the works of creative madmen, such as Roky Erickson, Neutral Milk Hotel's Jeff Mangum, and even Charles Manson (whose musical experiments are actually pretty good. Part-time maniac Dennis Wilson agrees.). On "I Am The Supercargo," Liddiard's preacher-with-fever-dreams howls evoke Nick Cave at his most psychotic. After all, we want a little madness in our musicians; they are the ones on the forefront of consciousness, blazing trails through emotional spaces we're not ready, or willing, to explore. On *Havilah*, The Drones tumble into these darkened realms, swaggering with delightfully sloppy guitar and tumbling drums, as the record brims with the urgency of a confession from the gallows.

