

Brainwashed - BRAIN IN CMJ

Written by Staff

Saturday, 29 July 2000 19:00 - Last Updated Friday, 29 July 2005 21:22

Brainwashed was mentioned in a small article in the College Music Journal's August 2000 issue, sandwiched between articles on loads of craptacular major label bands who get marketed to mediocre college radio across the country and top the Billboard Hot 100 while posing as "alternative." Save the \$6.98 at newsstands and read this excerpt: *"21st Century Fan"* by Tamara Palmer. - (2nd paragraph)

"The people have taken charge," declares Jon Whitney, Webmaster of the East Arlington, Massachusetts-based Brainwashed.com. "Access is to the world, which includes bands too--they get on these [fan mailing] lists as well." His four-year-old umbrella site is home to more than 35 independent artists and five labels, and receives 100,000 hits per day. Whitney also maintains an array of separate sites for labels and bands, including Thrill Jockey and Kranky, and artists like Meat Beat Manifesto, Cabaret Voltaire, Throbbing Gristle, Aerial M and Wire.

Long established fan clubs now rely on the Web as a primary locus of operation, and thousands are strictly online affairs. "there are mailing lists and newsgroups which act as a forum for all members," Whitney notes. "Legendary Pink Dots, for example, don't have a 'fan club' but would like to consider the e-mail list Cloud Zero a 'friend club'--they're very personal with their fans."

The LPD's site is warm and inviting even to the outsider, augmenting the typical tour and release data with valuable advice for musicians trying to break into the business. "Chances are, there will be an innocuous sentence telling you that the contract is valid for 'the period of the copyright.' Don't sign it!" they caution. "We did, to find out that [former record label] Play It Again Sam's publishing wing (SC Confidence) apparently has us under contract for 70 years after our deaths. We are making trouble about this." Their insight may save new jacks some heartache -- which is one of the most positive outgrowths of fans gathering online. On the best of cases, there's a true mutual exchange that takes place between artists and their audiences.

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"One of the downfalls, however, is the validity of information," warns Brainwashed.com's Whitney. "Years ago, you could trust anything that came from an authority. Now there are 5000 Web sites devoted to Tori Amos, making it hard for most Web surfers to distinguish what is current, accurate or official." But a little research into the origins and creators of a site can help guide your judgement on the truthfulness of the information. The Rockinfreakapotami, otherwise known as the Red Hot Chili Peppers Fan Club

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(www.redhotchilipeppers.com), always knows it's getting the premium news and as much direct access to the band as possible, since the organization is run with love by Blackie Dammett, Anthony Kiedis's father.

"The most rewarding think is the feeling that I'm doing something that matters to people," says Whitney, echoing thousands of Webmasters all over the globe. "We're a link between the fans and the bands. We're not a record label site which will only showcase the newest album and ignore a history with other labels and releases. I have met nearly all of my idols and have become somewhat of a friend to many. It's more rewarding than my times working for labels when I was just a number, a cog in the huge industry machine."

Thanks to Dave Piniella for typing that one in!! Note: brainwashed is no longer working with Aerial M or Thrill Jockey.