

Comic and Zine reviews

Mark Pawson

Pick of the bunch this time around is the long awaited new issue of Detroit's **Motorbooty** modestly subtitled 'The Better Magazine'. Imagine a cross between *Weirdo* Comic and *Grand Royal* magazine with articles like a 'What to do when good guys join bad bands'



advice column and the something to offend everyone '100 Worst Albums of the 20th Century Chart'. The Beastie Boys were, shall we say, very heavily influenced by *Motorbooty* when assembling their own magazine... Highlight of *Motorbooty* #9—the *Graphic Violence Issue* is editor Mark Dancey's comic strip about the Insane Clown Posse (a band). These fellow Detroit residents revealed themselves to be even stupider than their name implies when they took exception to a mildly satirical *Dancey* comic strip about them that appeared in SPIN magazine, and instigated a hate campaign against him, and the publisher, thus generously providing *Dancey* with material for a much more critical follow-up comic. Both are reproduced here, and you'll learn much more than anyone, anywhere needs or wants to know about the Insane Clown Posse...

Other *Dancey* highlights this issue are a merciless set of 'Unoriginal Gangsta Trading Cards'—efficiently demolishing every White Rapper you've ever heard of and a few more besides. The story of the 'Louvin Brothers'—genuine mandolin-smashing hellraisers, in the 'Illustrated History of Pants' centrespread is an inspired mix of ridiculous trousers and social history, which deserves to be printed as a full-size poster. Almost-believable is the piece on the punkrock gig re-enactment scene, organised along the lines of Civil War re-enactment Societies, authentically complete

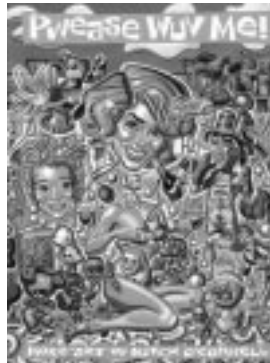
with police confiscating compact discs and mobile phones!—now all 5,000 people who claim to have attended seminal gigs that took place in 200-capacity rock-'n-roll toilets can be there!

Somehow *Motorbooty* and its hometown of Detroit have escaped the grip of Spice Girl Fever, which on the evidence of **Spice Capades** seems to have affected the rest of America! In this totally unauthorised 48-pager, a plethora of comic artists and zinesters explore their hideous fascinations with the all-conquering Fab Four (or Five) and provide their own reinterpretations of the Girl Power message. The rather obvious monster/sci-fi stories are as unnecessary as *Spice World—the Movie*. With such strong material to start with, the best comics are the true-life ones, grown men desperately trailing round branches of Toys'R'Us trying in vain to find a Scary Spice to complete their sets of Spice Girls Dolls, and New York Punk scene vet Peter Bagge taking his daughter and a car-load of screaming prepubescent spice-alikes to a Spice Girls stadium concert, and thoroughly enjoying every minute of it!

For a glimpse of Comics' History check out a few **EC Comics** titles. The complete reprint series of seminal 1950's EC (Entertaining Comics) Comics have been coming out steadily over the last few years, and are still as fresh and exciting as they must have been when they were originally published. I would have loved to have my mind warped by these when I was a kid! Full of time-machines, spaceships and gooey slime-oozing tentacled alien invaders, **Weird Science** seems to contain the plot-line of every Sci-Fi film ever made. The magnificently grisly EC horror titles, **Tales From the Crypt** and **The Vault of Horror** were cited as inducing



moral panic, leading directly to the introduction of an over-censorious Comics Code in the USA. Undaunted, EC sprang back with a whole library of 'New Direction' titles; Aces High, **Valor**, Piracy and Tales designed to carry an Impact. Particularly worth looking out for currently are **Psychoanalysis** and **M.D. (Medical Drama)**—two totally inspired original series which, surprisingly, only survived for a few months. Nowadays the EC formula of obligatory surprise twists and shock endings feels dated and gets predictable after a couple of issues, but I'm sure I would have been a total EC fan if I'd ever seen these comics as a kid. Maybe I should buy extra copies to hand out to schoolkids.



Pwease Wuv Me—More 'Art' of Mitch O'Connell, is the second collection of Mitch O'Connell's hyper-kitsch Paintings, Illustrations, Comics and Tattoo designs. M O'C is quite obviously an Image Junkie in the advanced stages of addiction with an insatiable appetite for images of Betty Page, Tiki God Statues, Big-eyed Waif Kid paintings, Cheesecake Pin-ups, 60s and 70s Baby Boomer toys, Mad Magazine, Wacky Packages bubblegum cards, Hippie memorabilia, Beatnik Poodles and just

about every other manifestation of kitschy, cheesy pop culture forgotten by the rest of society. Taking this over-sugared array of source material M O'C lusciously redraws it into a multi-layered fruit-cocktail, trifle-like designs crammed full of bright rich goodies, and best served up in small portions, its all just so darn pretty to look at! Self published, I can't help thinking that this exhausting to look at visual feast could just as well have been published by Dover Books as one of their clipart collections.

In James Kochalka's **Quit Your Job**, Magic Boy, his goofy elf-slacker alter-ego character trips up in the snow and misses his bus to work. Whilst fretting that he'll be in trouble for missing work he finds a magic ring in the snow. His head reeling with thoughts of what he can use the ring for, Magic Boy enjoys a day of unexpected freedom from work and fun in the snow, never actually getting round to using the ring's powers. This whimsical story is drawn in Kochalka's loose relaxed style, using large panels mostly taken up with giant snowflakes. Everything's back to normal by teatime, Magic Boy realises he's happy enough without needing a magic ring, and returns home to find an answerphone message from his boss telling him to take the day off work anyway!

Also currently available from the prolific J Kochalka are *Monica's Story* (yes that Monica) and various issues of *James Kochalka Superstar Comics*.



Japanize is a good old fashioned A5 photocopied comic, put out by Toko whilst she's been living in the UK, containing her impressions in a distinctive kid-die-manga style of such quaint British activities as chanting along whilst watching the Jerry Springer show, taking worthless pieces of junk along to the Antiques Roadshow and eating bread and (baked) beans! 'The Hayashi Corporation' is a loopy meandering tale of a multi-ten-



tailed dutch-husband supplying business and there's some traditional manga-style sex and violence thrown in as well, plus a cookery page. *Japanize* issues 1-4 seemed to come out at weekly intervals, but Toko's visa has run out and she'll have to return to Japan, so passport-sized *Japanize* #4 may be the last.



Dishwasher ...one guy...fifty states...lots of dishes...plenty of time...

Dishwasher Pete's chosen job allows him the freedom to roam around the USA in the knowledge that wherever he fancies staying for a couple of weeks he can easily find a job. In *Dishwasher* issues 14 & 15 Pete's long term quest to wash dishes in each of the 50 American States takes him to Louisiana and New York City together with a detour working on an Oilrig. We also get his account of 'appearing' on the Late Show with David Letterman, 'appearing' because media-shy Pete wasn't in the slightest bit interested in being on television so he obligingly let a friend go along instead, as a Warhol-style stand-in! Dishwasher also has plenty of dishwasher related press clippings, cartoons, book extracts and movie reviews, with a particular focus on dishwashing in literature and Labour Activism among Dishwashers, past and present.

Can't find a decent cravat anywhere these days? Want to catch up on all the latest styles in cable-knit sleeveless pullovers



Contacts

Motorbooty , £4.50
Available from Tower Records
/Disinfotainment
www.motorbooty.com

Spice Capades , Fantagraphics,
£3.75
Available from Comic shops
www.fantagraphics.com

EC Comics , various titles
Available from Comic shops
www.gemstonepub.com

Pwease Wuv Me , £12.95
Available from Disinfotainment
www.mitchoconnell.com

Quit Your Job , \$6.95
Alternative Press
www.indyworld.com/altpress

Japanize , £1.50
Probably available from GOSH
comics, Gt Russell St, London,
WC1
or c/o 37 Stephendale Rd,
Fulham, London SW6 2LT

Dishwasher
Available from Disinfotainment
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