



# The El Paso Wind Symphony Returns to KTEP 88.5 FM

Beginning Tuesday  
August 17 at 8 p.m.  
with your host,  
Norma Martinez



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## Local: Speaking Rock's Heavy Metal flashback

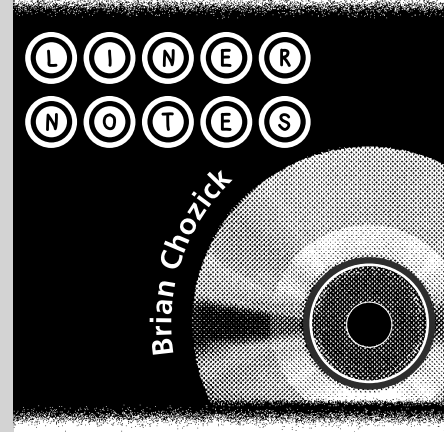
One venue in town has truly upped the ante when it comes to booking shows. Speaking Rock Entertainment Center is gambling on those who are addicted to live shows. The powers that be are placing their biggest wagers on heavy metal, with five out of the next seven shows sharing that common bond. The first up, on Aug. 3, is Great White, a band that had a string of hits in the late '80s but are almost known more for their 2003 Rhode Island tragedy, when 100 people were killed due to pyrotechnics that ignited an inferno in a nightclub. They have tried to move past that incident and have released two albums of original material since. Later in the month, the offering is Candlebox, who broke it big in the early '90s with their songs "You" and "Far Behind," and who were last seen at our Downtown Street Festival. The following months promise more head-banging delights with Ratt, L.A. Guns, Dokken and a return visit by Great White. Speaking Rock certainly knows how to turn back the metal clock and rock.

## National: Black Francis, "Nonstoperotik," Cooking Vinyl

It has been more than five years since Frank Black revisited his original stomping grounds with the Pixies. It is a venture that he is still a part of today, although the hoopla surrounding the reunion has died off, most likely due to the lack of new material coming from the collective. This isn't the case when it comes to genius front man Frank Black, or Black Francis, whichever era your allegiance lies with. In 2007, he returned with an album with an express theme of Dutch painter/musician Herman Brood. In 2008, it was a fixation with Irish mythological figure Cúchulainn. This year, the subject matter is pointedly focused, but in a very much unexpected way from a man who isn't soon to grace the cover of Men's Fitness. This time, Frank's got sex on his mind and it's consuming his every utterance. The majority of the material features his signature guitar sound but more distortion infected than usual, with plenty of melodic hooks and a surprising piano-driven ballad. "Nonstoperotik" won't make you need to spark up that cigarette with its conclusion but it will bring about a very satisfied Pixies glow.

## Powderfinger, "Golden Rule," Universal Australia

The Australian star that is Powderfinger is still shining brightly in the land down under, but is somehow just a mere faint blip on the radar of American audiences. This has been magnified only recently with their latest release, "Golden Rule." They remain without a record label in the United States or even a distributor, which is blasphemous. It is beyond perplexing how a band with seven proper albums, three EPs, a live disc and a greatest hits could be so far off the map for such an enormous music-buying population. Don't let that scare you away from hitting the Internet and scoring this gem. This group got its name from a Neil Young song and cut their teeth performing his music, but they are still incredibly void of any comparisons, and that is a good thing for these guys. Nevertheless, they are in a category by themselves. There is a blues base, but twin guitars fire on all pistons; pounding percussion keeps the train barreling down the tracks; a Southern groove threads throughout; and on a few occasions they decide to turn the dial down. This is when they bring in the strings, horns and The People's Choir to help them master the softer side. Remember when it comes to Powderfinger, there is one simple "Golden Rule" — "With Powderfinger, don't hesitate; you know it's going to be great."



## Sponge, "Destroy the Boy," Three One Three Records

The record industry has made many musicians famous beyond their wildest dreams whether deserving of it or not, and they have also destroyed just as many who were worthy of so much more. Ever since this band's sophomore effort, the powers that be have made things a nightmare for Sponge. It was well over a decade after the smash success of their debut that their empire started to crumble, from label bankruptcies to indie distribution problems to drug abuse. They have had the full platter. They somehow managed to weather the storm and have just released what could easily be deemed the best music of their career. "Destroy the Boy" is the latest and hits hard with their patented blend of classic rock and '70s glam, their hometown influences with a slant toward the Stooges, and enough pop sensibilities to keep it cranked up past acceptable decibel levels. It is as if they've taken the radio friendly "New Pop Sunday" and deliberately smashed it into the aggressive nature of "Rotting Piñata," creating a new tier of Sponge excellence. The only issue here is they have almost destroyed this boy by making it a mere six-song EP instead of a full album. I need a bigger Sponge fix, and I need it now.

## Collectibles: John Mellencamp, "On the Rural Route 7609," Universal Music

It is hard to imagine that the kid from Seymour, Ind., who has spent a good deal of his career talking about small-town America, would be able to make a living out of it. He started out close to 35 years ago as John Cougar. In what was perhaps an effort to be taken more seriously, he added "Mellencamp" to his name, and for the past two decades it has simply been "John Mellencamp." In his later years, he has been better-known for his focus as a social activist and songwriter. This was something that was always bubbling up in between cuts of many of his biggest-selling discs but tended to get overshadowed by his hits. It is both of these achievements that are being celebrated with the release of "On the Rural Route 7609," a lavish four-disc, career-spanning box. This collection is unlike most of these all-encompassing compilations in both look and sound. The four platters themselves are actually part of a 72-page hardcover book-style package, packed full of photos illustrating his musical journey. The set also abandons the chronological format, instead going with a theme for each CD that allows each one to stand on its own. There are 54 tracks and for those who think they already have everything, there are 17 cuts making their debut here with plenty of rarities and demos on board. It doesn't matter if you take a rural route, or hit the Internet super highway, be sure to pick this one up.

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