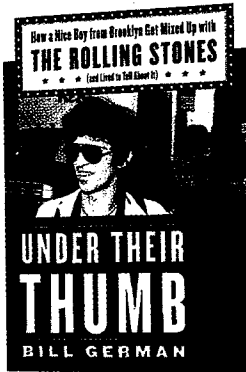




THE GOOD PART

WE READ BOOKS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

Under Their Thumb (Villard)
By Bill German



"If the queen has a food taster, then [personal assistant] Svi was the Stones' drug taster. In every city, Svi would chat up the local dealers. He'd summon a few to Keith's suite, and then they'd sit in the foyer. Keith would look them over and pick one. 'You, in the red bandanna. In the kitchen with Svi.' Svi would determine the quality of the guy's wares. If he liked it, he'd walk out of the kitchen and flash Keith a thumbs-up. If he didn't, he'd flash a thumbs-down. Like Siskel and Ebert."



WARNING: DJ'ING
MIGHT BE HARMFUL
TO YOUR POSTURE
Eero Johannes
and V.C. in Finland

Skweee's Play

Scandinavian DJs get high, invent new electro genre

ON A LATE autumn night in Turku, Finland, in 2003, Finnish DJs Randy Barracuda and Mesak met up with Swedish DJs Daniel Savio and Pavan to drink beer, eat blood sausages, and name their baby. "We couldn't come up with anything good," recalls Savio, "and then I remembered that the dogma for the music we invented was to squeeze as much out of our crappy equipment as possible. So I suggested we call it *skweee*." And thus the Scandinavians' intentionally rinky-dink, improbably funky instrumental hip-hop hybrid was christened.

France, England, Spain, Russia, and the Netherlands are now home to labels and musicians devoted to the sound, characterized by squiggly melodies, chopped-up beats, and grimy synth runs (think *The Chronic* dubbed onto a cassette with R2-D2 improvising Arabic melodies on top). The music recently has taken steps across the Atlantic: Boston's DJ Stickem released his *Double Dog Dare* EP, the genre's first American album, in February, and skweee club nights are popping up in L.A. and San Francisco. Far from mainstream, but skweee definitely has outgrown its humble, stoned beginnings.

"I used to get high and watch Missy Elliott videos on MTV," says Barracuda (né Perttu Häkkinen, 27), "and I'd think the music was cool but the vocals were shit. So I tried making my own superfunky instrumental version of that sound using cheap synths." Meanwhile, Pavan (a.k.a. Frans Carlqvist, 33) was more concerned with tempo, producing his own tracks set to a relaxed speed (skweee rarely rises above 110 beats per minute).

In 2004, Pavan released seven-inch singles on his Flogsta Danshall label. Soon after, Barracuda launched Harmönia Records, inspiring other DJs and producers to take up the mantle. Skweee made further inroads in 2007, when *Museum of Future Sound*, the genre's first widely available CD compilation, caught the ear of trend-sniffers such as BBC DJ Rob Da Bank, who played some of the featured artists on his show, and

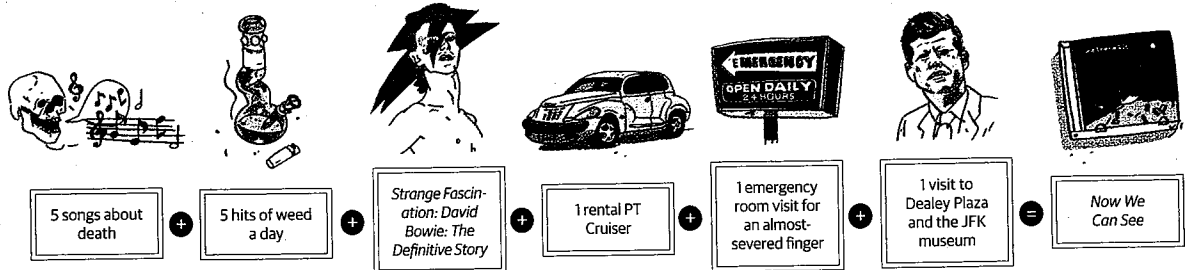
Allan Horrocks, co-owner of San Francisco indie record store Aquarius. "It sounded so fresh," says Horrocks. "Customers loved it."

The Turku four couldn't be happier. "People everywhere are getting into something started by Scandinavians who drink too much," says Barracuda. "It's amazing." DAVID MARCHESI



THE ALBUM RECIPE

The Thermals' Hutch Harris reveals how they cooked up **Now We Can See**



"We wanted to make a wider, bigger, louder record. I think it's slightly more hi-fi than our last one, but it's not polished, for sure. Our records were getting a little weighted down by politics and religion, so instead we wrote about classic things: water, air, earth, love, life, and death."