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# MUSIC REVIEWS

## FEATURED REVIEW



**ALPHA REV**  
*The Greatest Thing I've Ever Learned*  
(Surefire)

★★★★★

Following up 2006's self-titled EP, Alpha Rev recently released a strikingly ambitious full-length record, *The Greatest Thing I've Ever Learned*, cementing the band high on the list of artists to watch in 2007.

Led by Casey McPherson (formerly of Endochine fame) on keys, guitar, and vocals, the group assembles some of Austin's best musicians with bassist Drew Walters, guitarist Zak Loy (both from Damesviolet), violinist Brian Batch, cellist Dave Wiley, drummer Dorian Colbert (also with Lomita), and vocalist Candy Sanders. Together, these exceptionally trained and experienced musicians bring McPherson's musical visions to an immense live show that translates in all its detail and elegance on the record.

Opening track, "China Sunrise," immediately establishes the tone of the album with soulful mix of melancholy downtempo piano parts and inspiring wall-of-sound polyrhythmic choral elevations building in intensity over complex, straight-to-the-spine drum beats. Following tracks, "Wedding Day," "Though I Walk," and "Phoenix Burn," could easily be hit singles with their addictive, flowing melodies crescendoing on top of each other.

Overall, *The Greatest Thing I've Ever Learned*, offers a succulent multi-course sonic feast orchestrated by a talented songwriter and some incredible players.

— *anatol ziega*



**GIRL TALK**  
*Night Ripper*  
(illegal art)

★★★★★

Mash-up artist Greg Gillis has come to prominence with his third release for the label Illegal Art, *Night Ripper*. As Girl Talk, Gillis is becoming increasingly well-known for his live performances as he is for his music – a Girl Talk show may feature Gillis stripping down to nothing as attendees take to the stage and turn a performance into a party.

Live antics aside, Gillis has made a resplendent, confusing kaleidoscope of a record in *Night Ripper*, and it's also probably the most hands-down fun album to come out last year. Right off the bat, *Night Ripper* bounces to life with "Once Again," which features Ciara and Ludacris mingling over a Boston lick that morphs into the Ying Yang Twins breathing heavy over The Verve's "Bittersweet Symphony." It gets weirder. Gillis is no slouch when it comes to rap, but his use of 60s soul classics, indie rock, and what may best be described as soft rock (James Taylor, Steve Winwood) add a unique touch to Gillis' fray.

A surprising album that is as funny as it is creative, "Night Ripper" is not to be missed.

— *adam schragin*



**TWO GUY TRIO**  
*Self-Titled*  
(g-force records)

★★★★★

In their first song off their latest EP, a raspy "whoa, yeah" immediately jumps off the notes and settles into your veins. Suddenly, you have the urge to swing your head and sing a few "whoa yeahs" yourself.

Two Guy brings a much needed pop to the rock scene. They aren't a band you listen to when reminiscing about heartbreak or your lonely suffering. This is rock with a coat of sugar-pop; music for cruising down the road on a sunny afternoon or when you want a pick-me-up after a long day.

Two Guy's latest has a hint of Weezer in their melodic brand of rock, but it is definitely a sound of their own. Featuring unexpected and fun lyrics, this band produces songs that stick in your head long after they are over.

— *juliana king*

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