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subject: **Reducers outshine Replacements**

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A quasi-szine is differentiated from a szine mostly in that it is free for the asking. If you want to see this anymore then just tell me, otherwise I may drop you on whim. I should note that my USOS publication *Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus* is now available by subscription for \$.25/issue or I'm willing to negotiate all-for-all trades.

I'm also going to start a new variant game called "Spy Diplomacy". The rules will be spelled out in detail next issue (really and truly this time), but I already have one person signed up, rules unseen. Now, do I have any volunteers to be standbys? Please, pretty please? I know that someone volunteered, but I can't recall who it was at the moment.

## Concert Review Section

Last week was a big week for concerts around here. Blancmange was here on Monday, The Replacements and The Reducers played a twinbill on Wednesday, and Plan 9 landed on Thursday. What a tough decision! One part of the decision was made for me. I spent Monday night in Crawfordsville, Indiana. What made me do a fool thing like that you may ask? Well, nothing is more important than rock and roll, but I ignored that and accepted a job interview at Wabash College. Boy, are my priorities screwed up (for those of you that don't know, I am in the middle of a search for an elusive college teaching job and I really can't afford to be passing up job interviews to go to rock concerts). Blancmange has three albums out and only the first one is any good (it's called *Mange Tout*). The latest album from them (*Believe in Me*) is decked out in garish yellows and blues and is especially bad. The current video from the album, *Lose Your Love*, lacks any spark as well, so I wasn't too upset about having to miss that concert. Unfortunately, all reports I heard said that it was great. They have a vocalist, a synthesizer player, and (most importantly) a sax player. They concentrated on great early stuff (that uses the sax heavily) like *Blind Vision*, making the other songs bearable. If they shoot through your neck of the woods, check them out for me and see if you agree.

I'd been looking forward to seeing The Replacements on this tour. They have a "bad boy" rep for dinking around on stage and not listening to each other. In other words, they are not a "tight" band, but I get bored by the macho posturing of rock stars in tights. I prefer the enthusiasm of a loose live show and that's what these guys are known for.

I headed down to my local club (one block down the street) around ten. I usually don't bring Charlotte and didn't this time either (my fiancée does all right with concerts like Richard Thompson or pop groups like The Bongos (I'll plug them any chance I get), but she finds the heavy rock crowds too pushy (hormonal males see socially semi-acceptable ways to...uh, cop a feel)). By the way, our wedding date now is officially set for April 27th. I'm really looking forward to it. Anyway, as I was walking down to the Living Room (name of the club), my friend Paul pulled up in his car. He's the one who gave me the report on the Blancmange concert and is my best source of current information on bands in Providence. Paul always is dressed to the hilt in current new wave fashions while I am usually a slob (after all I'm not looking for pickups). This night was no exception, but he also had a surprise for me...a free pair of tix from one of the college radio stations! That saved me a few precious bucks for beer. As we went in, the third band on the lineup (this was actually a four band bill), The Reducers, were already on stage and the place was packed to the gills. The Living Room is in a 19th Century industrial complex and looks something like an aircraft hangar except there are lots of poles to block sight lines. It's just an open floor...no seats. The bar partly divides the room and the far side of the bar isn't very crowded, because you can't see the stage very well. We watched the rest of The Reducers' set from over there so we could get some beer.

The Reducers were sizzling. They are somewhat local (New London, Conn.), but they have three albums out on their own label (Rave On). The last two (*Cruise to Nowhere* and *Let's Go*) are especially worth picking up though I only have the latest one (*Cruise...*). The title cuts of those two albums were the highlights of the set. They have been accused of being stuck in the early Clash, Jam, Buzzcocks, etc. time warp, but to me their energy makes up for all that. As good as the 'Mats show turned out to be, I thought Hugh Birdsall's soaring leads were the highlight of the night.

One of the reasons it was very crowded was that this was being billed as an "All Ages" show. The drinking age in Rhode Island is now 21 as I guess it is in most states (Vermont just gave in, so all of New England is going to the higher age limit), but kids want to see the bands. The bar owners are trying to save their fragile businesses, so they let everyone in. Now they are supposed to only serve the "adults" liquor, but I've never been carded at the bar. I suppose my greying hair and thick beard are a giveaway...but what about potential abuses? A young woman/girl (?) approaches Paul as The Reducers are going off and wants hard liquor! She hands Paul some money and asks him to go to the bar for her (she picked him and not me because of his fancy duds, of course). The bar is very, very busy, though the crowd looks very, very young. While Paul tries to get someone's attention at the bar, one guy orders two pitchers and takes a dozen cups. Paul's "girl" gets impatient and grabs her money back. She approaches another guy to get her a drink. Since we were up at the bar anyway, we finished up and ordered two more beers. I paid, to thank Paul for the free admission, and we got served before she finally got her drink. Bars can be horrible like that, good bartenders who can follow who was there first are hard to come by. That is another disadvantage of dressing scummy most of the time, you don't get served as quickly.

About that time The Replacements wandered up on stage unannounced. They fiddled around for awhile like they were part of the road crew and then kicked into gear around 11:15. Paul and I tried to fight our way to the other side of the bar so we could see better and got separated by the crowd. Pushy women are the worst and I'm too nice...I let them go ahead of me. I found a space behind some high school girls, next to a pillar (out that late on a school night, indeed!). It was good to be behind them because they were short and easy to see over, but they also smoked up a storm. I hate cigarette smoke and usually can ignore it among the excitement, but it always comes back to haunt you when you get home, ugh! The smell follows you like a shadow. If they banned women from the clubs, the smoke would be much less of a problem, but I don't suppose that would go over very well.

The band was good, they were even playing together! I checked out the crowd (at least half the fun at these things) as I looked around for Paul. One person had long hair...I don't know if it was naturally blond or dark, but it was dyed so that the top half was dark and the bottom half was blond. The dividing line was nearly perfect! At first I thought it was a "he", but it was a "she". Strange! The Replacements introduced a song as *Freebasing on the Shuttle*, but I'm not sure if that was just a sick joke. The crowd is beginning to go nuts and the short people that get no respect are craning to see. I feel a little sorry for them as an over six foot person. A waitress comes by with four cups of beer on her little tray, trying to hold

it above the crowd. I stepped aside to let her through, it's a tough job she has. Then the band kicks into their cover of Kiss' *Black Diamond*. I have heard it before (it's on their *Let it Be* album) and really is a one time joke. The girls in front of me start fidgeting (I'm not sure if it's good taste or if their necks are tired) and start to head for the back. Just then The 'Mats charge into *I Will Dare* and the place erupts. The girls stay and pogo (after which they did abandon the crowd) while the waitress goes by with four beers (the same ones?) again.

The band keeps the tempo up for awhile and then stops and calls for requests. As everyone is shouting out songs and the band is taking a break, I spotted Paul one pillar back. The band accepted a request that I didn't recognize as I made my way back to Paul. Then they asked whether we wanted something fast, something slow, or something mellow. We all screamed for something fast and Paul Westerberg said, "OK, mellow it is", sending them into a version of *Yummy, Yummy, Yummy, I've Got Love In My Tummy*. It was fast...the waitress was down to two beers, but had begun to prop her arm up with her other hand.

As they headed for their finale with new songs, Paul and I were struggling to make out lyrics. Neither of us had *Tim*, their first major label release out on Sire and The 'Mats have a tough but funny approach to pointing out their own trials and tribulations in finding maturity. It is a classic rock and roll theme that sounds pretentious in the hands of a clumsy lyricist, but Westerberg most emphatically is not clumsy even though he keeps singing about his faux pas. Paul said that if he had a 15 year old this would be one album he would be sure the kid was listening to. I agreed. I prefer a raucous bar band like The Reducers with tons of cliched guitar chords and lots of energy when I go out, but The Replacements' message of "what the hell, let's have some fun while we're figuring out how to deal with life" is directed more toward adolescent audiences. I went out and bought *Tim* yesterday for Charlotte's 15 year old son. They haven't given in to commercial pressure from Sire. They still have the "garage sound" and there is no video (yay!). I understand that the band said that they would do TV appearances in return for not having to do a video, thinking that Sire would not be able to book them. When Sire got them on Saturday Night Live they supposedly were not thrilled and showed it on stage, oh well...

At 12:30 they went off and the crowd began cheering for the obligatory encore. The waitress went by with no beers on her tray, looking much relieved. One of the encores was a neat version of *Nowhere Man*. We saw another friend of ours (Matt) on the way out. Paul is flashy, but Matt has him beat by a mile. Matt's thing is weird hats (he's got a great beaniecopter) and he has a paisley one on tonight. Matt loves the scene and the crowds. Unlike Paul or

I, he doesn't have a record collection, but he's always at the concerts and parties. He's a great dancer too.

Well, that's about it for my report. Anyone else is welcome to send in a concert review. I like to hear who's hot and who's not so I can spend my concert dollars wisely. I skipped Plan 9 the next night. Paul went because one of his housemates is in the group that warmed up. Plan 9 is another of Rhode Island's hottest bands at the moment, but they'll be back with Eugene Chadbourne later this month. Chadbourne is supposed to be really nuts in concert, but I'm not sure if that's good or bad. I'll let you know.

This city is "Minneapolis-east" this month as Husker Du was here this Wednesday (the 5th) and Sussman Lawrence comes through next Friday. I missed Husker Du while on another job interview (at Union College in Schenectady), but I understand it turned into a slam dancing exhibition. Husker Du has been trying to shed the "hardcore" label without success. I think I've rambled more than enough...now do you see why I don't charge for this rag?

## Letter Column Section

This is the part of the quasi-szine where I will print your letters. It will make for some space filler, but I also hope to see some comments on recent albums you may have bought. First up is Pete Gaughan: "Dear Jim, I find yet another Nylons fan! (Steve Knight, me, and now Hanson) I've got all my friends here hooked on them, but we can't get our hands on a copy of their first album. ((can anyone help Father Peter out? You know, I'm ashamed to say that I've never heard The Nylons, though I've heard of them. I think it might be time to venture a purchase)) Of the 24 albums you list as 'top', I have heard exactly zero. I've heard of three (Dylan, U2, and Katrina...). My big stars at this point are Jazz artists (Sade, sure, but several male solo vocalists are hot too. Quiz time: whose album is called, simply, *Voice*? Great stuff.). ((See? We have a communication problem that is partly a result of location. Does the Dallas public radio station still have that great jazz show on in the evening? Although I liked and knew classic jazz from my years as a college DJ, listening to that show when I lived in Dallas was what really turned me on to modern jazz. Believe it or not, there aren't any good jazz shows around here, except those in the middle of the night when I'm in bed. Your quiz draws a blank from me.)) But why not an art issue? Ansel Adams finally gets the recognition he deserved; Judy Chicago drops out of sight (thank the gods); and Matisse's *Jazz* (no relation) is finally released in a paperback we can afford. Happiness and health, Pete."

Thanks for the letter, Pete. I am in wholehearted agreement with the direction that the art world seems to be going, except for the new government patronage

system that is leading to "art by committee" in some places. Even a good Episcopalian such as myself, who has put together a Wedding Committee to plan his wedding, cringes at such a thought. My favorite medium is modern sculpture, a medium that is popularly identified with Christo's island wrapping projects, because it can stop people in the middle of their daily routines and make them think. It is not confined to the museum to be "experienced" as a necessary result of an active decision to take in some "culture". There is a good article in the latest Newsweek (the one with the big explosion on the cover) that takes a look at some of my favorite sculptures. Maybe I will have an art issue sometime as my interest is returning. Charlotte has her degree in studio art and, after a fling at being practical, her dislike for dealing with people (a very common trait among artists) is sending her back to the art world. Next up is the missing man, Mark Luedi: "Dear Booby, I'd still like to get your quasi-szine. Maybe I'll even be a standby. I'm still here, in a sort of shadowed involvement. *TMoBR* is only waiting for better financial environs...Not a Pats fan, are you? HA-HA-HA (sorry, lunch's fault). Anyhow, good to hear from you and thanks for having the courage to send mail into a void. See you somewhere, sometime...you playing United anywhere? Take care, Mark." ((No, at the moment I'm trying to cycle down my game involvement, but my hobby interest is picking up again, so who knows how long that will last. I'm really not much of a sports fan at all lately. I like the rules for United, though. It was good to hear from you, I'll send mail into your void anytime))

Our last letter is from Brad Wilson: "Dear Jim, I would like to get *The Boob Report*. I'll send you *VERTIGOs* just so it doesn't seem like I'm getting something for nothing (something for not much, maybe). Put me on your standby list. ((Ah, ha! I knew someone said that!! With the magic of word processing, I can go back and change my earlier comment, but I don't think I will. The paragraphs on the first page balance out nicely as they are. Thanks, Brad, though my next standby has been grabbed from another field...see the game notes...)) On the basis of your Super Bowl pick, don't plan to make a career out of sports betting. ((I won't, believe me! Now comes Brad's best of '85 in no particular order. He lists labels (in parentheses, like this) to help you find the independent releases. These were also listed in *Midlife Crisis* where Brad has his subszine.))

Robert Cray Band, *False Accusations* (Hightone)  
 Uncle Bonsai, *A Lonely Grain of Corn* (Freckle)  
 Tom Waits, *Rain Dogs* (Island)  
 Richard Thompson, *Across a Crowded Room* (Poly)  
 John Blake, *Twinkling of an Eye* (Gramavision)  
 Husker Du, *Flip Your Wig* (SST)  
 Blasters, *Hard Line* (Slash)  
 The Beat Farmers, *Tales of the New West* (Rhino)  
 The Hooters, *Nervous Night* (Columbia)  
 Art Ensemble of Chicago, *Third Decade* (ECM)

I know what you mean about trying to keep up with all kinds of music. It's not easy! Best, Brad"

Thanks, Brad. Helping each other keep up with music developments is part of my purpose in doing this. You mentioned in a previous letter that our musical tastes "aren't that similar", but we all

overlap somewhat. There isn't any style of music that I know of that I would dismiss totally except for the efforts of people like Barry Manilow and Neil Diamond and even they are good for a laugh once in a while. I celebrate diversity and relish being knocked out of ingrained listening patterns once in awhile. Now to the game.

*Personal Note to You:*

Dear Larry,  
Can we trade Xenogogic  
for both my "azines"?  
I'm not sure how long  
my X sub runs, just  
let it run out & I'll  
send you everything  
in the meantime.

Take care,  
Jim

headlines of the day:

## AUSTRIANS FIND NEW LEADER WHO SAVES THE ARMY GERMANY FINDS BIG MOUTHED NEW LEADER IN COSTAGUANA

*Summer 1906*

RUSSIA(Oaklyn): has f BAR, a UKR, a RUM, a STP.  
FRANCE(Henry): has a TUS, f WES, a TYO, f ION, a MUN, f TUN, a VEN, f GOL, a PAR.  
AUSTRIA(Ozog): R a rum-GAL, has a VIE, a BUD, a GAL.  
ENGLAND(Olsen): has f SWE, a EDI, f NWG, f KIE, f BAL, f NTH, a NWY, a FIN.  
GERMANY(CD): STANDBY CALLED, has f BER.  
TURKEY(Gaughan): has f NAP, f AEG, a BUL, f EAS, a SER, f ROM, a ALB, f GRE.

THE DUE DATE FOR FALL 1906 IS FEBRUARY 27TH, 1986!!

### *Addresses of the Participants*

RUSSIA: Bernie Oaklyn, 13412 Brackley Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20904-3225, (301) 384-3557  
FRANCE: Ed Henry, 31507 106th Pl. SE, #S207, Auburn, WA 98002, (206) 939-0128  
AUSTRIA: Eric Ozog, 1526 N. Lawler Avenue, Chicago, IL 60651, (312) 237-4650  
ENGLAND: Bob Olsen, 6818 Winterberry Circle, Wichita, KS 67226, (316) 686-7935  
GERMANY: Standby is Stephen Wilcox, 5300 West Gulf Bank #103, Houston, TX 77088-2906, (713) 820-6038  
TURKEY: Peter J. Gaughan IV, 3121 E. Park Row #165, Arlington, TX 76010, (817) 633-3208

### *Game Notes:*

1) You get no map this season. In general, you get maps after spring and fall adjudications.

2) I want to thank Eric for sending in Austrian standby orders, he has taken over the Austrian position. Conrad von Metzke produced an interesting roundtable discussion in the latest issue of *Costaguana* containing the following comment from one Stephen Wilcox: "I have seen too many one- and two-center powers placed into civil disorder, only to break the only stalemate line available in the stop-the-leader alliance attempting to be formed. Whenever possible, call a standby for any one-center power. If none are available - call me!" Well, here we are! I agree with Stephen completely. Although I could call Brad Wilson for the German position, I am interested to see what Stephen can do with it. Hee, hee, hee. Seriously though, thanks Stephen! You all may put me on the record as being willing to accept any one or two center standby position in a similar situation. Two of my favorite all-time games have been Italian positions deemed to be hopeless by the infamous Daniel Scott Palter. I turned one into a draw and have the other up to three centers in a crucial powerbroker situation.

3) I had no choice but to reluctantly accept Carl Russell's resignation. I will print Carl's statement in its entirety and then comment at the end: "Dear Jim, I'd laugh at the game results except that I'm too pissed off to. I daresay that Bernie Oaklyn would never let a player screw himself, especially when the player's intent (to have an army in Trieste) was fully known. If you believe it to be GM interference to

point out to me that retreating to Trieste would annihilate my army, *but* it isn't GM interference for you to call three players to get orders from them or for you to accept orders after the deadline has passed. That is hypocrisy and I won't stand for it. If you see my point, place my army in Trieste where it belongs and I will continue to play in this game. Otherwise, I will not continue in the game." I'm sorry, Carl, but I must accept your resignation. This is one of those cases where I suffer from not having house rules. I think that it is a very different thing to accept orders after the deadline compared to changing a player's orders on suspicion of intent. I make no secret of the fact that I call for NMR insurance, frequently after the deadline. I always accept orders up until the time an adjudication goes out in the mail. I just believe that all units should be ordered. As far as your mistake goes, I would feel worse about this (and I do feel badly about it) if I hadn't been listing retreat options. I listed your retreat options *and* your build options. Those options were listed correctly and you tried to do something that was illegal and not listed as an option. If you were a novice, I would point out the rule (probably), but don't try to claim ignorance of the rules. There was a correct way of ordering your units to get an army in Trieste and you didn't make it. Since you gave me your orders over the phone that made it doubly difficult. I thought you were making a mistake when you gave me the order and I read it back to you, but I wasn't sure. I didn't have the game in front of me as I was taking the order down. It would not have been fair for you to gain an advantage as a result of calling in orders instead of writing them. I say all this to defend my decision, but I realize that it is not a clear cut case. You have a right to your opinion and you have the right to resign given your

disagreement. I have the right not to delay the game since the above complaint was received *after* I sent out the Spring adjudication. I tried to call you many times, but couldn't get through. If I had talked to you before I sent out that adjudication, you may well have convinced me to delay the game and consult an ombudsperson, but by the time I received your letter it was too late. Again, I'm sorry.

*Press:*

(BOOB-WORLD): All "game-oriented" press is held for the fall.

(ORC-PUDGE): I'm surprised to see you here. I thought it was anathema for you to be in the same game with the Old Toad. ((He's becoming a cutthroat ratings player, this may vault him to the top of the Dragontooth Standby Ranking))

(OLSEN-BOOB): So much for your peerless prognostications, or as Pete Axthelm said at half time, "It's boys against men". Let's face it, the Bears were by far the best team in football this year--as good as any team that's ever played in the Super Bowl. They also have more personality on that one team than the

whole rest of the league put together. Of course, the one I'm really happiest for is Sweetness--he's waited SO long and finally got what he deserved for all his years of faith! No, not Walter Payton--I was referring to myself! Hyork!

(FRENCH MUSINGS or, "FINALLY! I TOLD YOU SO..."): At least the Patriots didn't blow it with just minutes to play. ((I'm convinced that they wouldn't have. If it had come to that point, the Bears would have been the ones to pull the El Foldo. The Bears had to win big like they did)) I thought the game said a lot about quarterbacks, too. Not so much the fact that they call their own plays, but more of an indication of what can happen when you get to throw out an obviously ill-conceived game plan. Still, I found the going to be somewhat tedious, to say nothing of stupor-inducing...((I'm lucky, I missed it. I was flying the friendly skies to Indiana. All I saw was the beginning, when the Patriots were ahead.)) Rather than going on and on (after all, I would have liked to see the Pats beat the Bears, too), I'll have mercy, and stop here... ((OK, see you all in three weeks, lots of blank space at the end!))