

Ozzy plays hide 'n' freak.

## The Wisdom of Oz

The five secrets of life that keep Ozzy Osbourne—the madman behind OZZfest—rocking. (Did he bite the head off the Energizer bunny?)



the hard-rock mountain to learn Oz Almighty's five secrets of success:

### 1 GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT

Even his first real band, Black Sabbath, was more calculated than occult. "We wanted to be successful, y'know?" Ozzy explains. "We used to rehearse across the road from a movie theater, and our guitar player said, 'Isn't it amazing people pay money to get scared? Why don't we start writing scary music?' And that was it, man."

### 2 BE SHAMELESSLY CONTROVERSIAL

From the notorious 1981 bat-chomping incident to last year's OZZfest—which drew picketers protesting Marilyn Manson—Osbourne has a history of well-publicized troubles. Though he swears he has "never made a song with the intention of harming anybody," some say tunes such as the bouncy "Suicide Solution" contain backwards-masked suggestions on how to go postal.

### 3 WORK LIKE A DOG

Except for a short-lived retirement in 1992, Ozzy has never really stopped touring. "I

can't retire," he says wearily. "I own seven or eight houses around the fuckin' world. We just got another dining table and these two different chairs, and my wife asked which one I liked better. I said, 'It don't matter to me, darling, 'cuz I'm not going to be here to sit on the fuckin' thing. I'm going to be bustin' my ass on the road!'"

### 4 KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN

He may be a workaholic, but that's Osbourne's only remaining addiction these days—he even gave up his beloved Cuban cigars recently. The one-time wild man stays clean by adhering to one simple maxim: "If you don't want to fall over, don't hang around slippery places."

### 5 MARRY A WOMAN SANER THAN YOU

Believe it or not, Ozzy is a family man and credits his success to wife and manager Sharon: "When I'm at home, I'm a parent. People think I sleep hangin' upside down in a Bavarian fuckin' castle. But, really, I have to do fatherly duties." Which may just be Ozzy's scariest gig yet.

**Tony Robbins?** A big-toothed fake. The Dalai Lama? A chump in a dress. If you really want to learn the ways of wealth and inner peace, listen to Ozzy Osbourne. After all, metal's baddest boy has been ridin' the crazy train for 30 years without going insane, and his OZZfest tour is packing in rabid fans for the third summer running. How does he do it? **Dan Catalano** climbed

faded. Altogether, this *Stunt* seems like just what the Barenaked Ladies need to hit it big: a collection of engaging tunes that leaves you dying for another listen.—**Charles Coxe**



### Drain S.T.H. Horror Wrestling (Mercury)

■ OK, so it sounds like every guy's wet dream—four Swedish bombshells who rock out like the Spice Girls on speed-metal overdrive. Unfortunately, Drain S.T.H.'s appeal doesn't stretch far beyond the band members' obvious assets. Hardcore headbangers will probably go gonzo over this full-throttle assault, but the rest of us won't get much past the glossy CD booklet. Full of chugging mega-ribs and shrieking vocals (think Alice In Chains with a helium-junkie lead singer), *Horror Wrestling* pretty much sticks to metal's basic themes: pain, isolation, and stinky things. When you listen to the likes of "Serve the Shame," "Stench," and "So I Will Burn (Alone)," it quickly

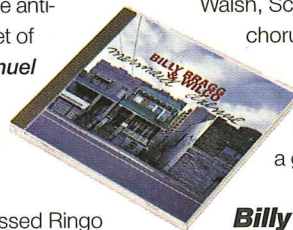
becomes obvious that these anti-Spice gals are just a new set of wannabes.—**Greg Emmanuel**

### Ringo Starr Vertical Man (Mercury Records)

■ The rock gods have blessed Ringo Starr. After playing the clown to John's arty rebel, Paul's cuddly pop star, and George's muddled mystic, he's managed to carve his own little niche, perpetuating the "What, me worry?" strain of Beatleness. Since his nasal voice can't carry an entire album and even his best drumming sucks, Ringo wisely surrounds himself with top-notch musicians. All the inevitable Fab Four comparisons apply here: The title cut, featuring Ozzy Osbourne on backing vocals, is a grown-up "Magical Mystery Tour." In a clever nod to rock history, Ringo and Steven Tyler sing a honky-tonk version of "Love Me Do" (the first Beatles hit that featured Starr on drums). But the best tune, "La De Da," is quintessential Ringo, featuring Tyler, McCartney, Joe



Walsh, Scott Weiland, and an infectious chorus: "La, la de da/Like *que sera, sera*/Whatever/La de da." Not so deep; but a fun, finely produced rocker, which is all you can ask of a graying moptop.—**John Tessitore**



### Billy Bragg & Wilco Mermaid Avenue (Elektra)

■ Roots rockers worship Woody Guthrie, and rightfully so: The folk legend's plaintive picking and hardscrabble politics sowed more than a few acres of today's blooming alternative country field. Now English lefty rocker Billy Bragg and alt-country firebrands Wilco have worked up new instrumentation for 15 of Guthrie's unrecorded songs. Even weirder, they pull it off. Though the disk starts off shakily with the shaggy call-and-response "Walt Whitman's Niece," it soon settles into thoughtful ballads, surprisingly jolly rockers, and stirring political anthems. Heavy Guthrie lyrics ("Every year we waste enough to feed the ones who starve") sometimes weigh things down, but in the end, *Mermaid Avenue* drives home the Guthrie legacy in a whole new way.—**D.C.**