Get Bothered

The Red Hot Organization spins again

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"I was seriously obsessed with music, but until *Red Hot*, I'd never worked in the music industry," says Paul Heck, the 28-year-old co-producer of *Red Hot + Bothered*, the sixth project from the Red Hot Organization.

Red Hot + Bothered is designed for a sexy young new generation less interested in old definitions of straight and gay life. Eschewing the hit-them-over-the-head approach to AIDS issues -- "the issue is hard to deal with straight on," says Heck -- quality music with a message is a red hot priority. Eighteen new groups including Freedom Cruise, Liquorice and Built To Spill provide the bothered music. Careful attention to the lyrics of "Empty Yard" with the Grifters is revealing. "If we wait for others to remember there'll be no one left." Their Memphis musical heritage, mixing otherworldly guitar scrapings, cello and overlapping vocals, makes for a haunting message of awareness and responsibility. "Rex's Blues" (an old Townes Van Zandt song performed by duo Jay Farrar and Kelly Willis) is a slow, elegiac folk blues of farewell which implores: "Tell my brother to watch his own."

Singer Lisa Germano, whose smoky-voiced delivery is reminiscent of Warhol star Nico, is a standout. "The Mirror is Gone" is the voice of a vulnerable teen: "Would you like me more if I gave and gave, would you like me then?"

Next up for the group is *Red Hot + Rio*, because, says Heck, "We want to be responsive to the path of the epidemic." The album is inspired by the bossa nova and will reflect the situation is Brazil. "I wish we could do one that would address the issue of AIDS in Africa, a record with African musicians who are there," says Heck. "And I just love African music."

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