

00:00:00	Jesse Thorn	Promo	This message comes from NPR sponsor Odoo. Is your old software making it impossible to keep up with demand? Then it's time to switch to Odoo. Odoo is a suite of business applications designed to streamline, automate, and simplify any company. Odoo has apps for everything: CRM, inventory, manufacturing, sales, accounting. You name it, Odoo's got you covered. So, stop wasting time and start getting stuff done with Odoo. For a free trial, go to Odoo.com/bullseye .
00:00:35	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:37	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:00:48	Jesse	Host	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. Time now for <i>Canonball</i> .
00:00:52	Music	Music	"Canonball" by the Breeders, which ends with a series of cheers and a splash of water.
00:01:02	Jesse	Host	<i>Canonball</i> is a chance for us to take classic albums—or albums that should be considered classics—and find out what makes them great. Joining us this week is Aaron Carnes. Aaron just wrote a book called <i>In Defense of Ska</i> . So, I think you can guess where this is going. Aaron's books champions not just the critically acclaimed punk-adjacent two-toned bands of the late '70s and '80s or the pioneering Jamaican bands from the '60s. <i>In Defense of Ska</i> offers a full-throated defense of ska's third wave. That means Reel Big Fish, Operation Ivy, Fishbone. You get what I'm saying. When we asked Carnes if he wanted to elevate one ska album into the canon of great pop records, he didn't go for any of that. He picked a band that, unless you're currently wearing black and white Vans, I'm willing to bet you've never heard of. That band is MU330, and the album is called <i>Crab Rangoon</i> . I'll let Aaron take it from here.
00:02:07	Aaron Carnes	Guest	You might expect me to pick a record from the two-toned catalogue, like The Specials or The Selector, who put out amazing records. Or, if I was to pick something from the '90s, maybe something more commonly known like Reel Big Fish, <i>Turn the Radio Off</i> , or Mighty Mighty Bosstones', <i>Let's Face It</i> . But in my opinion, the best ska stuff in the '90s, the stuff that has gotten the least amount of attention is the stuff that was not on the radio and was less popular. Because the music wasn't taken very seriously, no one's really taken the time to see these hundreds of great records that happened in the '90s. <i>[Music fades in.]</i>
00:02:45	Music	Music	And of those records, I would put <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330 at the top. "Ireland" from the album <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330. <i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue and then fades out.]</i>
00:02:52	Aaron	Guest	'90s ska is commonly referred to as third wave ska and I feel like ska, in the '90s, has been unfairly stereotyped as being one thing, and that thing tends to be silly, goofy music. And the bands that

revived ska in the third wave were mostly kind of goofy kids from Orange County.

Underground ska from 1980 to 1995 was extremely popular, was extremely healthy. You had several bands that were making a living off of being DIY bands that were putting out their own records. So, when ska became popular and major labels started signing bands, they were pulling these bands out of a healthy underground scene that had existed for a decade and a half. And then presenting it to the public as though it were, you know, the flavor of the month. And for the people that weren't in tune with the underground scene, they digested it that way. And then a couple years later, when the flavor was no longer popular, people moved on and a lot of people felt really embarrassed about this trend that they perceived to be kind of silly. Kind of nerdy. And kind of superficial.

00:04:01 Music Music

"X-Mas Card" from the album *Crab Rangoon* by MU330.

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue and then fades out.]

00:04:07 Aaron Guest

MU330 are a band from Saint Louis, Missouri. They formed in the late '80s. For the first two albums, they went through several lineups. Dan Potthast was not the singer in the first two albums, though he was the primary songwriter. MU330's *Crab Rangoon* album was a ska punk album that came out in 1997, which was the same year as a lot of the big, mainstream ska punk albums came out. But not only do I feel like it's one of the best ska albums of the '90s, but I feel like it perfectly encapsulates the thesis of my book, and that's ska is not only goofy music, that it has a whole array of qualities to it that go beyond people's stereotypes of it. This particular album was primarily a heartbreak album. This was written after the lead singer, Dan Potthast, had ended a five-year relationship and was going through all the sort of conflicting emotions that one goes through in a really bad breakup.

00:05:08 Music Music

"Tune Me Out" from the album *Crab Rangoon* by MU330.

*You tune me out
It's so romantic
You and me and your TV
We made dinner with candles
Bagels with lox
And we watched cops
I think I forgot
What your eyes look like
When they're not reflecting 90210*

Turn it on, turn it on, turn it on...

00:05:29 Aaron Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

So, the opening track on *Crab Rangoon* is "Tune Me Out", which was the band's attempt at having a hit single. They shot a music video for this. I think the budget was somewhere in the range of two to three thousand dollars, which was way more than they'd ever spent before or after. The song is about—it comments on how, in a relationship when things are starting to go sour, you pick up on signals. Like, in this case, it's couples not paying attention to each other and instead watching TV. That's kind of the crux of the song.

00:06:02	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>Turn it on and tune me out You don't need intimacy Turn it on and tune me out You've got big screen TV We sat hand in hand I watched you watch your TV You fell asleep to Baywatch Mitch saved babes as I watched the clock</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:06:21	Aaron	Guest	<p><i>Crab Rangoon</i> is a combination of ska, a lot of like indie rock, a lot of different shades of alternative. Weezer is a heavy influence on this record, which is pretty unusual. At the time, there was a couple bands maybe doing similar stuff, like The Impossibles, out of Texas. They were pretty Weezer influenced, but Weezer's <i>Pinkerton</i> is now considered a classic by most people. I mean, critics hated the album, but what happened was by—I wanna say early 2000s, all these like new bands started namedropping it. They started saying, "<i>Pinkerton</i>." And so, then critics started to revisit it and then they're like, "Oh yeah, this is a classic album."</p>
00:07:03	Music	Music	<p>"El Scorcho" from the album <i>Pinkerton</i> by Weezer.</p> <p><i>I asked you to go to the Green Day concert You said you never heard of them (how cool is that?) How cool is that? So, I went to your room and read your diary: "Watching Grunge leg drop New Jack through a press table"</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]</i></p>
00:07:22	Aaron	Host	<p><i>Pinkerton</i> is all about, you know, the lead singer of Weezer going through a breakup and sort of going through all of his different complicated emotions. So, when Dan heard that album when it came out, he was going through his breakup, and it just hit him.</p> <p><i>["Fragile" fades in.]</i></p> <p>That was at a time when nobody cared about Weezer's <i>Pinkerton</i>. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> Yet you had this ska band really being overtly influenced by it, lyrically and musically.</p>
00:07:48	Music	Music	<p>"Fragile" from the album <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330.</p> <p><i>I'm fragile just like you The secret's out and I'm through hiding it It's no use hiding it</i></p> <p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p>
00:08:00	Aaron	Guest	<p>"Fragile" is a pretty straightforward song, lyrically. Basically, all Dan is saying is that, "I'm sensitive. I'm sensitive like you." And in one level, there's not really much to it than that. It's just like, "I'm not a bad guy. I also feel pain too." But I could just see that being said in earnest in the middle of a fight. It's very easygoing. Yeah, it's got an easygoing vibe to it, but it's a painful song. That's a lot of what I like</p>

about this album, it's that it's a painful album, but it's a fun listen. It feels cathartic. You feel like singing along. I like to drive around and listen to these songs and, you know, it feels good to sing them even if they're painful songs. You know? A lot of sad music doesn't feel good to sing along to. It makes you feel sad. But I don't really feel sad listening to this song.

00:08:53 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

*... you
I'm fragile just like you
I'm fragile just like you*

[Music ends.]

00:09:00 Aaron Guest
00:09:04 Music Music

"Understand" I think is one of my favorite songs on *Crab Rangoon*. "Understand" from the album *Crab Rangoon* by MU330.

00:09:19 Aaron Guest

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]

I wanna start and talk a little bit about the horns on this particular song. It's true for the whole album, but you can really hear it on this song. MU330, on the first two albums, had a standard ska horn section, which meant a combination of trumpets, trombone, saxophone, which kind of creates this full sound. They lost their saxophone player and their trumpet player, and they were left with only their trombone player, but then Skankin' Pickle—a band that they loved and were friends with—their trombone player left the band. His name's Gerry Lundquist. He's a amazing guy. He's a great trombonist and he's just the funniest guy to hang out with.

And so, they were like, "Well, we gotta get Gerry in the band. And because we love Gerry, like, it doesn't matter what Gerry plays. If Gerry plays tuba, we want Gerry in the band." But it just so happened that Gerry played trombone, slide trombone, which is the same instrument that their one last standing horn player played.

00:10:17 Music Music

[Volume increases.]

[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]

00:10:26 Aaron Guest

It creates this almost like effect where it's full, but it's like a little—a little dissonant in the sounds, especially when they play in unison. At first, people might be a little like put off by it, but I think it creates really unique sound where it doesn't have that brass marching band sound. It has this like weird, like flanger kind of sound to it, and I mean I think of like when I talk to younger bands like Bad Operation or Catfight—even some of the bands that have been around a decade, like Kill Lincoln or We Are the Union. I would say that MU330, being a cult band in the '90s, has had a longer staying impact on a lot of the newer ska bands than even the more popular bands.

The more popular bands probably got a lot of people into ska. Like most people who were younger in the '90s got into ska through Mighty Mighty Bosstones or Reel Big Fish or Save Ferris. But then it's sort of like if you really like it a lot, then you start going deeper into it and you find out about bands like MU330 or Hepcat. Animal Chin or Blue Meanies. You know. You learn about these bands, and

00:11:45	Music	Music	<p>I would say most of these bands were better bands, even though I do like the mainstreams bands as well. And they had more interesting influences.</p> <p>“Neighbor” from the album <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330.</p>
			<p><i>Don't talk about your neighbor I don't want to hear his name He's built like a barrel And his arms are large And my arms are skinny I really fear your neighbor</i></p>
00:12:05	Aaron	Guest	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>“Neighbor” is a great song about experiencing jealousy while you’re in a relationship. And I really like the—I really like the music. It’s got that kind of mid-tempo ska feel to it. The trombones have an interesting melody that accents the vocal melody.</p>
00:12:21	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p>
			<p><i>He probably owns a gun But doesn't need it</i></p>
00:12:29	Aaron	Guest	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>“Now” is the final track on <i>Crab Rangoon</i> and it leaves you almost optimistically in a bittersweet kind of way.</p>
			<p><i>[“Now” fades in.]</i></p>
			<p>He’s—Dan Potthast is talking about feeling, you know, that he wants to feel positive, that he wants to stop whining. “Now” is a song that seems hopeful for a person who’s in the middle of feeling terrible. You know? “I’m gonna feel positive.” Definitely the kind of things that people who are not feeling good say. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> If you already felt that way, you wouldn’t be saying it. So, it’s a good—it’s a good sing along for sure for people that are going through something, even if it’s not a breakup.</p>
00:13:09	Music	Music	<p>“Now” from the album <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330.</p>
			<p><i>Get your chin up Get your lead out Get your woah, woah, Get your lead out Get your chin up Get your woah, woah</i></p>
			<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.]</i></p>
00:13:17	Aaron	Guest	<p><i>Crab Rangoon</i> is an important album because it shows how interesting and eclectic ska music was in the ‘90s. I think—you know, a lot of people think of ska as one thing, as this sort of goofy, pop-punk infused thing. But bands did all kinds of things with ska in the ‘90s, and so the best way to show people that ska is so much broader than they think it is, is to give them examples. And I think <i>Crab Rangoon</i>, as an album that’s about heartbreak, that’s influenced by Weezer, that has a horn section of two trombones—this is a great way to show somebody, “Hey, everything you think</p>

00:14:17	Music	Music	<p>about ska—that it’s goofy music from the OC—is not true.” There was plenty of bands doing different things with it and they existed at the same time as mainstream ska did. And, of those records, I think MU330’s <i>Crab Rangoon</i> is one of the best.</p> <p>“Around You” from the album <i>Crab Rangoon</i> by MU330.</p> <p><i>So, it seems you’ve sent a message Well, I sure got the message Not a happy message</i></p>
00:14:31	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>Aaron Carnes on the album he submits to the canon of great pop records, MU330’s <i>Crab Rangoon</i>. Aaron’s book, <i>In Defense of Ska</i>, is available now in paperback. You can grab it at your local bookstore or through the publisher, Clash Books.</p>
00:14:49	Music	Music	<p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p> <p><i>... up to you (Now I see) Well, I see right through you</i></p>
00:14:55	Jesse	Host	<p><i>[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]</i></p> <p>That’s the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i> is created out of the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California. Here at my house, my daughter has just informed me she’s working on a new film. It’s called <i>Creepy Tales About Movie Studios</i>. And it’s based on the book by Grace Thorn—that’s my daughter’s name. We’ll see how that comes out.</p>
00:15:57	Music	Music	<p>The show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our producer is Jesus Ambrosio. We get help from Casey O’Brien. Our production fellows at Maximum Fun are Richard Robey and Valerie Moffat. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks to them and to their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use that. Watch out for The Go! Team’s new record, just around the corner.</p> <p>You can keep up with <i>Bullseye</i> on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews in those venues. And I think that’s about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p> <p><i>[Volume increases.]</i></p>
00:16:02	Promo	Promo	<p><i>[Song ends.]</i></p> <p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p>
00:16:09	Promo	Clip	<p>Music: Dreamy, relaxed music.</p>
			<p>Speaker: Legendary oceanographer, Sylvia Earle, has spent eight decades exploring underwater and she has good news.</p>
			<p>Sylvia Earle: Areas that are protected, you can see recover.</p>
			<p>Speaker: How we save the ocean, part two of our series on <i>The TED Radio Hour</i> from NPR.</p>

00:16:24 Promo Clip

[Music ends.]

Music: Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.

Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!

Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott.

Allie: And we're the hosts of [Round Springfield!](#)

Julie: *Round Springfield* is a *Simpsons*-adjacent podcast where we talk to *Simpsons* folks about non-*Simpsons* things.

Allie: That's right. So, in the past, we've gotten to talk to legendary showrunners and writers, like Al Jean, Bill Oakley, Josh Weinstein, Dana Gould, Mike Reiss, and David X Cohen.

Julie: Voice actors like Maurice LaMarche, Maggie Roswell, and Yeardley Smith, *[excited]* the voice of Lisa Simpson! *[Chuckles.]*

Allie: So, we've been away securing guests for our final five episodes and we're super excited about them. We're gonna talk to Mike Scully, Jeff and Samantha Martin, Jeff Westbrook. And guys, our final episode, we got to interview Matt Groening.

Julia: We're so excited to share these final recordings. So, check out our new episodes of Round Springfield starting June 21st.

Allie: On Maximum Fun or wherever you get your podcasts.

[Music fades out.]