



- **COPERNICUS "Chichen-Itza Elvis" (Nevermore) (7:58)**  
 The Grandma Moses of uncivilized performance art, Copernicus is part poet, part psychodramaticist, part musical genius, and wholly entertaining. Already a sensation in France, Joe Smaikowski (alias Copernicus) is penetrating the American underground with his unique powers of observation and maniacal delivery. A devout existentialist, Copernicus' third LP reveals a sensitive, tortured artist breaking free, improvising with literally dozens of musical poses and hundreds of storytelling gestures, making for an apt title in *Deeper*. "Chichen-Itza Elvis" includes 13 footnotes on the record's original liner notes referring to various Mayan and Indian cities, and was supposedly conceived "spontaneously, in six minutes, in 1980." Copernicus is one of modern music's most shocking and brilliant wizards.

## CMJ New Music Report, December 18, 1987

# JACKPOT!

Essential New Music—As chosen by NMR's editorial staff. These records *demand* your attention.

**COPERNICUS** *Deeper* (Nevermore, P.O. Box 170150, Brooklyn, NY 11217)—In today's world Copernicus is not a Polish Astronomer but a New York (via who knows where) performance artist and manic orator who has taken beat poetry and fired it up with as much raw energy and vein-popping intensity as Henry Rollins (Black Flag) at his fiercest, or a gospel preacher. Copernicus rages about how nothing exists, how humanity is enemy of the earth ("Atom By Atom"), and Contra aid ("Son Of A Bitch From The North"); he also continues his tale "The Lament Of Joe Apples" with the equally gripping "The Death Of Joe Apples." His ensemble players (at least 25 musicians contributed) put his concepts in motion; the music, which is generally a loosely structured variation on art-rock loft-jazz, is usually in line with the compositions—"Son Of A Bitch From The North" has stalking, ominous war scene sounds. But sometimes he surprises by contrast: "Chichen-Itza Elvis" has a jalopy backbeat, combining everything from a charging horn chorus and violin to background singers adding bits from "Hound Dog"; on "Disco Days Are Over," the calm musical setting features strings, saxophone and piano, while Copernicus waxes philosophic. Either way, each is well thought out and precisely executed. Ya just gotta love him.