

Terminal!

NO.16\17

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**DOUBLE
ISSUE**

**BLACK
FLAG IIII**

**EINSTURZENDE
NEUBATEN
RAT AT RAT R
MINUTEMEN
BILL BRUFORD
HOLGER CZUKAY
TRIGGER & THE
THRILL KINGS
HÜSKER DÜ
DAVID BORDEN
ALFRED JARRY
TEST DEPT.
LIVE SKULL
LOS LOBOS
BUTTHOLE
SURFERS
VIOLENT
FEMMES
DANCE FACTOR
AND MORE!**

Odds Are You'll Read All of This

Terminal!

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Editorial Statement:

Terminal! The dictionary defines it as pertaining to, situated at or forming the end or boundary of something. With this in mind, the staff of this magazine has dedicated itself to providing its audience with material that covers all boundaries...and knows no bounds. This may mean touching on a controversial issue during the course of an article or interview as we strive to give equal coverage to the many subjects that come our way. PLEASE NOTE: all opinions expressed within the contents of this magazine are wholly those of the author, or, in the case of interviews, those of the person(s) presented, and not the opinion of the magazine staff.

In one of our last issues, a group called the Screwdrivers presented some ideas which may have been offensive to some people. At no time was it **Terminal!**'s intention to deliberately create controversy or promote propaganda which might be detrimental to any minority groups. The magazine was merely presenting the band, its comments, and its views in the hopes that the reader would be intelligent enough to realize for himself/herself that such an article would not be representative of the magazine's feelings as a whole. Our apologies to those whom we might have offended by not making this clearer when we ran the article.

--The Terminal! Staff

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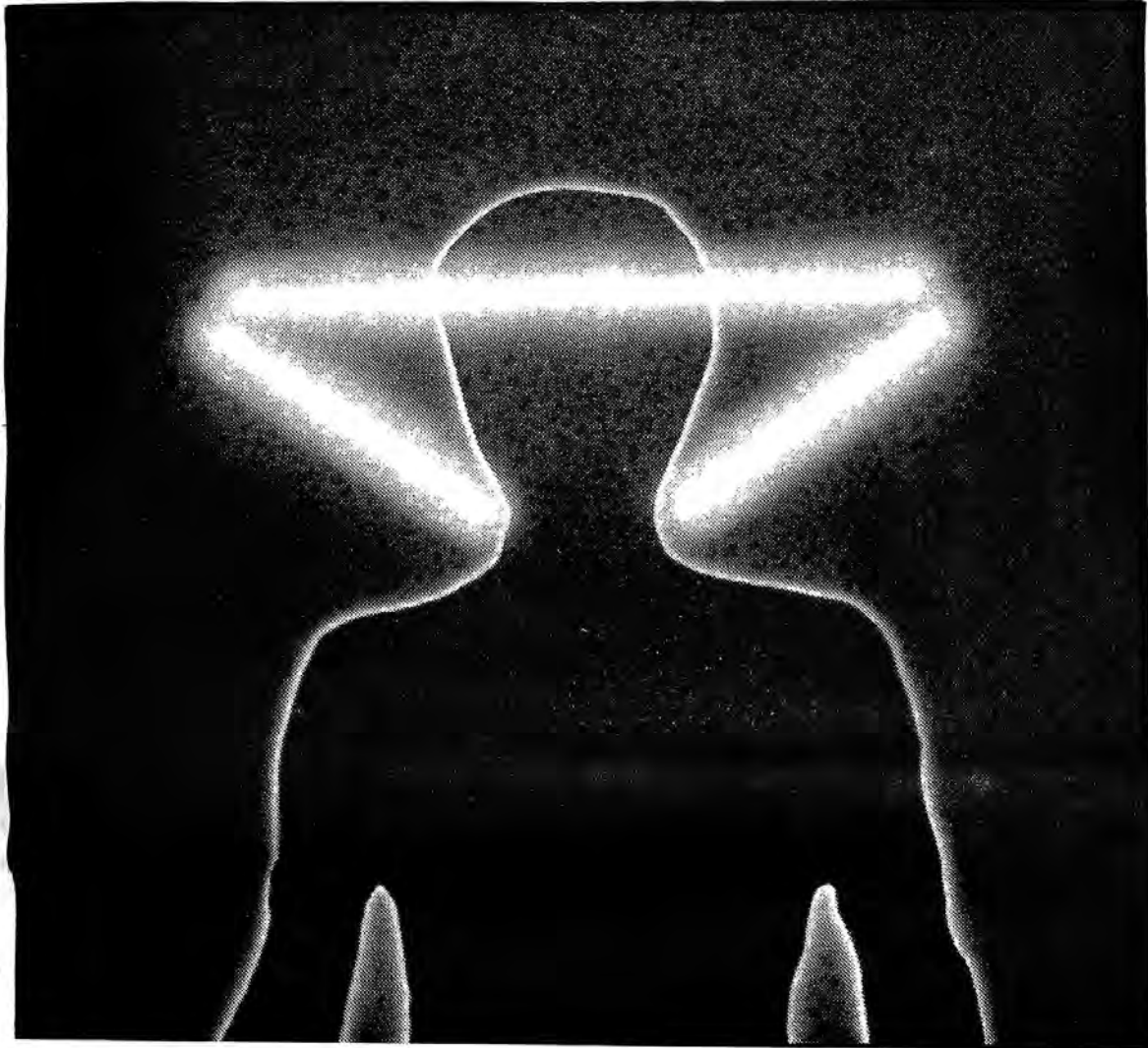
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EDITORIAL:

Buying Into COOL

--by John Green

Phila. is a big club town. The Hot Club had punk bands way back when. All the big English bands played here: PIL, Killing Joke, Souixsie, Bauhaus, ad infinitum. There has always been at least one major new wave club and at least one new wave paper. There has always been a radio show, something NYC doesn't even have. Why hasn't any new music band from Phila. made it big?

The problem is that people in Phila. are into buying things, not selling them. They buy records and videos and clothes. Then they buy tickets to the cool show and worry about how to get backstage, all the time pretending that it's all such a bore, right up to the point when they buy their friendly out of town rock star a drink.

Club owners here keep in business by putting on the hippest bands from out of town, not by making their club the place to see new things in Phila. Why should they? Everyone's afraid to be caught liking something that isn't already accepted as cool. They want to buy into cool rather than make it themselves and sell it to everyone else. No one is willing to say "here's my new band and they're the coolest thing on earth." The closest Philly gets to that statement is something like "here's my new band and we're playing with the hottest thing from London. Hipness by association. That's what I call buying."

To sell something you have to believe in it or at least do a good job of convincing yourself. That means deciding something's cool, and then showing someone else that it is. The seller doesn't wait for someone to come along and tell him that his band is cool because he's decided it already. He's become, in a sense, the person who decides what's

accepted as cool, at least for himself. If he wants to make it, then he goes on to convincing someone else, eventually club owners, record companies and the general public. That band that played the East Side last week convinced their home town they were cool, then the club owners, record companies and the general public. The general public included people in Philadelphia. They heard that the cool band from London was coming and they paid their dollars and went to see them.

It would have happened the other way around except that deep down inside we all believe that cool bands don't come from Phila. because none have in the past. In the same way we do believe that cool bands come from London because so many have done before. In the beginning no place is really cooler than any other, but when a band decides they're cool and a couple of other bands from the same town do likewise, then naturally people are going to say that that town is a hip place. This makes it easier for bands from that town to follow. Club owners and record companies see that there are popular bands around and keep their eyes out for more.

The average person doesn't really want to deal with second best and just by the fact that more people turn up for an out of town band than a good local one, people in Philly are admitting they feel second best. They'd rather buy into the hipness of the proven out of town band than start a new kind of cool with the local one.

It's a vicious circle, because no one has come from Phila. and no one really believes that anyone can. So far no one has been willing to take the chance. Everyone here seems to be hip to what's going on around the world but no one seems to be hip enough to know that they're hip, and that the world should be following them.



©M.DINETTE

WIRED!

WRITE!
WRITE!

WIRED!

Dear Terminal!

I should be content with having had my say in the article last issue, but being unable to keep responding to something I feel needs an opposing view, I must reply to Paul Evalds ranting and raving that also appeared in the last issue.

The whole concept of Paul's comment was symbolic of the Philadelphia scene's greatest problem--the cliques, backbiting, and intolerance of the participants. Paul starts at the beginning by calling the Hot Club a "fashion show." Well, maybe it was. But the important thing to remember is that it was the beginning. Bands approaching rock from a different angle, people dissatisfied with what they were fed by FM radio, people who were just curious--they all combined to create the scene's infancy, and if much of it was "fashion," it was only an attempt to identify with the excitement happening across the ocean. All structures have a foundation, and the scene here looked to Britain out of necessity, just as the British scene was an extension of the NY Dolls-Patti Smith-Iggy Pop-Ramones nucleus.

With regards to the actual punk rock genre, Paul seems to gloat over the downfall of the Anarchy and BYO groups and attempts to force their ideas on the scene. While I agree that their preaching and ideas were often misguided, do I have to remind you that when they were doing shows there was nothing else happening on the punk scene? Sadistic Exploits virtually singlehandedly brought punk back to life in Philadelphia. Despite all of their political ideas, their hearts were in the right place and they spawned another generation of bands. And while the BYO did present a holier-than-thou-we-know-what's-best-for-all-of-us attitude, they were the only people at the time to get off their tails and put on shows. These people did the best they could, and without them punk in Philadelphia might have died out altogether.

Turning to the hardcore scene, I couldn't agree with Paul more that stage diving and slamming is now often a meaningless ritual. And I also agree that the "if it's not a million miles per hour, it sucks" people are incredibly closed minded. But on the other hand, Paul's comments demeaning everybody who hasn't listened to the Dils and the other bands from hardcore's formative years are too extreme. Those records are independent releases from years ago, and are next to impossible to obtain. Paul tries to make you feel like a moron if you haven't heard them--why not say "these bands were great--if you ever get a chance to hear them..." He makes it sound like you should pass a test before you can "really" like hardcore--hey, Paul, homework's not required! People find the roots out of curiosity, not guilt.

Returning to the world of Philadelphia new music in general, Paul has some comments on clubs and local bands. You're right Paul, the emphasis on videos as opposed to live shows is not a healthy trend, but if there's rarely an alternative to the video club, people will go to the video club than a hardcore show--well, musical taste is

up to the individual, regardless of their motives or reasons for being involved in the scene in the first place.

Finally, the "established" local bands. According to Paul, the Stickmen were a "disgrace." If Paul's so concerned with individuality and artistic integrity, how can he dismiss a band that had a sound that was truly their own--a brilliant mixture of tense funk sparseness and total abandon that sounded like absolutely no one else. Paul sees Bunnydrums as "art-damaged dark disco" music, a band that blew its chance at making Chrome and Cabaret Voltaire sound mainstream. But maybe that wasn't their ambition in the first place--maybe they like the controlled churning forces found in their current material (it sounds good to me!). And Pretty Poison is a band that has matured within the scene at the Hot Club, Omni's and the East Side Club. They also have the opportunity to reach a lot of people, which is a primary reason to even be in a band. Wasn't your band ever influenced by the style of music you like, Paul? So what if Pretty Poison's material is dance oriented? They work hard at playing it well and that's the type of music they like and do you justify calling Jade a "bitch"? Wise up Paul, because even though you hate these three bands (which is your prerogative), your smug/viscious attacks only make you look bad. Don't act like you know what music the rest of us should love or hate unless you can prove that the powers that be have given Paul Evalds the holy voice of truth.

Paul's article concludes with "at least I'm doing something," and he certainly is. He's promoting the negative and ignoring the positive. Philadelphia's scene is far from perfect, but I'd rather enjoy the good aspects that I can find than surrender to self-imposed hatred and bitterness. Paul's no better than I am, I'm no better than he is, but I know my opinion is just that--an opinion. There is no such thing as good or bad, right or wrong in music...it's all how you perceive and react to what you hear. But the music is what created this scene, and the one thing that the people in it have as a common bond. If the good points can be used to build upon, it can only get better.

Your Pal,
Frank Blank

Dear Paul Evalds & Terminal!

Your critique in issue #15 of Philadelphia's cool people was right on.

Philly is for the dogs who desire it. the Philly coolites, where ever they come from, wait to worship only the "established" gods of passing stardom. No hero, fashion or daring art was or will be created in Philly town. Short live any land of small minds.

Also, I thought CRANK was for the busy and ambitious. What's all of Philly speeding about?

Sincerely,
Mark Garbarino
Ex-Philly Suburban

PS: Mr. Hazard was a hippy and is a billboard, and the Kennel Club and its hotel lounge clientele should take a hike to Iowa, where someone might think their "scene" is boss.



You Always Wanted To Be In A Poem.

She lives in the strobe-lit world of me
 Surrounded by layers and layers of her own
 sticky flypaper creation
 Built around her, swirling like
 bugs in summer heat.
 A quick fearful glance into the mirrored wall
 of the showroom.
 Wait--more lipstick--
 Her real face showing.

Yet, late at night, when the crowd of would-be people
 have left to hang in the closets'
 She unwraps herself
 Pulling out hair and flesh like removing bandages
 From a stale wound.

Spinning, spinning, spinning
 Like a child's toy lost in its own motion
 Does even she see the illusion?
 Colors fade, pale skin turns black and falls to the floor.
 Snake skin shedding.
 ...A sightless eye gazes at the mirror again;
 Until tomorrow night.

-Johanna Gendelman



If Einstein Were Alive...He'd Say...

Implement progress
 through honesty,
 arrange infections
 as cures,
 weave the spirit
 without
 tearing the thread,
 swim in a tidal wave
 without
 drowning,
 add to culture
 without
 making the green
 meadows yellow,
 depth and mobility
 through honesty.

-Mark A. Lerario



In a Galaxy Far, Far Away

You stood by my front door,
 With that certain look on your face
 that said it's all been done before.
 A cynical glimmer in your distant eyes.
 Whose benefit was that for?

It was as if:
 Thick alabaster hands (hundreds of them)
 had moved out from the wall.
 They sought your flesh,
 Pinning you with their deadened fingers
 You became as white, as flat as a line
 on an endless highway.
 Anonymously, your features became absorbed.

I wanted to pull you back from that vision
 A hesitant touch on your shoulder--
 Cold numbness traveled up my arm
 From that point of contact between us.
 A look of surprise was the last I recall
 But was it on my face or yours?

-Johanna Gendelman





Ears of the Overworld



--by Bruce McClelland

It's time to harp on an old subject. You see, I had a hell of a time getting this column together. Just 800 words, give or take a few, but I started it any number of times, and quit when the attempts weren't going anywhere. I couldn't figure it out, but writing this column was becoming like schoolwork; like all of those essays I had to write on subjects that didn't interest me. And that was exactly why I was having trouble writing. Here I was writing about music, and it dawned on me that music didn't excite me much anymore.

It's not that I don't still love music. I do. Or that I no longer buy much music. Believe me, I do. But the romance is over. The passion is gone. It's the morning after, and popular music is in a monstrous dead zone, like in the pre-Beatles 60's or the pre-Punk 70's.

I believe this in spite of the fact that there's still plenty of good music around. There is always good music around. But in one-niner-eighty-four there isn't much great music. There's plenty to please, but little to challenge, to stimulate, to advance the cause, as it were. I mean I like the new China Crisis LP but I can't exactly write 1,000 words on how it's going to change pop history, and changing pop history is what Terminal is all about.

Elsewhere I've chosen what I consider to be the best LP's of 1983. Making the list were records by Pylon, R.E.M., Talking Heads, Madonna, New Order, Tom Tom Club, Monsoon, Avengers, The Cramps and Cyndi Lauper. That I felt artists of the mainstream bent were making much of the best music in the last year says a lot about the state of things nowadays.

(Okay, so maybe you think all that my choices say a lot about is the sad state of my personal taste. I'll deal with that later.)

Three bands in my top ten no longer exist. One, Avengers, haven't existed for five years. Their posthumous collection, from a time when punk, Malcolm McLaren aside, was still unassuming, still fresh, still gloriously unspoiled and naive, stood out from its modern descendants like a Van Gogh original amidst paint-by-number copies.

Talking Heads are rather typical of the New Music survivors, in that they've reached a level of comfortable excellence. (Well, maybe the "excellence" part isn't so typical.) Their Speaking In Tongues album shows a band settling down to a life of domesticity. As for the Cramps, whose live Smell Of The Female was their first new recording in nearly three years, well, suffice to say that it's 1984 and the Cramps are still the Cramps. And the Fall are still the Fall. And the Dead Kennedys are still the Dead Kennedys. If you can think of any more, let me know.

The band in my top ten that's closest to anything like a "new sound" is REM, and they aren't likely to lead the record industry into anything resembling a new promised land as their commercial horizons, like those of most American New Music bands, are pretty limited.

And I'm sorry, but commercial potential is at the root of the matter. I realize that I'm denying the reason of this magazine, which is to deal with the music underground (forget the word "underground"—SF). You know. Fuck the pop mainstream. Fuck the top ten. We've got our own music. But if that's all it is, hardcore or the latest British independent is just "our own music" then they can never mean a damn thing, because they're just isolated pockets of energy

that will, as time passes, burn themselves out and die.

Surely you can see that this is just what's happened. Just look around at the closed clubs. Listen to the eternally unresponsive radio, and then tell me that things are any different than how I say they are.

Look, the point is that music has to touch (or be allowed to touch, or be given the chance to touch) the mainstream to have any cultural meaning. And I hate to throw England at you all the time but the fact is in this country Laurie Anderson is a critically acclaimed performance artist. In England she's somebody who had a hit record. And the truth of it is that popularity validates. It's only popularity that, as far as Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen are concerned, indicates a viable alternative.

What I'm saying is that a Laurie Anderson, as is, is a "weirdo freak." But a Laurie Anderson on Entertainment Tonight is a "maybe there's something to it."

So does that mean the problem is not in the music itself but lies simply in the age-old struggle for acceptance? Not entirely. What's the most obviously exciting form of contemporary music, and the most obviously misunderstood? You've got three seconds. It's hardcore, right? Well here's where the matter of my personal taste comes in, for while I do find that hardcore is idiotically misunderstood by the world at large, I've also got to say that I don't find there's a hell of a lot there to understand, musicwise. Unlike punk, which drew upon all manner of pop sources, hardcore is a deliberately self-limiting form, doomed by its extremeness to preach only to the converted. The best hardcore bands (Husker Du, Minutemen, Meat Puppets) aren't really hardcore at all, yet they bear the stigma and thus are doomed to be cultural footnotes. There's just no way in hell that bands sounding even remotely like them (see X) are ever going to be popular in this country. Their sound never has been and never will be, media push or no media push.

So maybe hardcore may be interesting but except to its fans it doesn't mean (i.e. influence through its popularity) anything.

No, even at this time of New Music breakthrough things are dead. (And the breakthrough that began with nothing more than electro-pop is trickling down to the esoterica. It's just five years or so too late. The great stuff is gone.) There's too much calculation now. Pop is great or exciting in inverse proportion of the extent to which it is work (i.e. perceivable calculation) or self-conscious "art." Which is why such artists like Cyndi Lauper and the Tom Tom Club can make my top ten list. The evident ease and freshness of their music counts for a lot.

Time, and life, in the music business, will wear anybody down. And most of the bands in the New Music vanguard are either giving up or giving in. Consequently there's less to inspire new bands. Hence the dead zone.

Inevitably, of course, something will come along to stir things up again. And to me what's most interesting about this as yet unknown New Music is that it will put to the test the persistent desire of those raised on punk and all that followed: "not to end up like the hippies." The test of this generation will be, whatever the nature of the next music, whether or not they receive it with greater understanding than the hippie nostalgists and AOR-heads accorded to theirs.

Yes, it should be very interesting.

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TEST DEPT.

LUNCHBREAK AT THE COLLECTIVE STEELYARD

-by Andy Darlington

Thirty-seven hours ago...

A rainy night at the Wakefield Hellfire Club, grainy drizzle tamping it all down to non-event. And I'm watching a collapsing new aesthetic.

The speakers spit out the crunch at the end of the universe. A flailing avalanche of infrasonic pressure detonating in metallic clangor. A sound like an army of ATAT's (All Terrain Armored Transports)...out of *The Return Of The Jedi*, dummy) stripmining the moon. A metal beast of abstract beat, rhythm structures and hard sounds that sing and yelp, reducing all tonal elevations and electronic discharges down to one uniform level. Numbers extend like they're passing through some Einsteinian time dilation, "numbers" shock-full of savage gestures, not one of them made for charm's sake.

Test Department have a one-step-beyond style. If Red Guitars' "Good Technology" brags "machines that sound like symphonies," then Test Department retaliate with symphonies that sound like machines. Not the clean computer dream of a Kraftwerk machine, but a nasty grating gritty white heat of a technological revolutionary machine. They're a rhythm section looking for a band. Four drummers who HIT things. Things like springs and objects of a generally ferrous nature, to generally stomach-wrenching effect.

I'm craning my neck to dislocation point, pondering life, love and the pursuit of happiness.

Thirty-six hours ago...

I'm sitting on a trestle that's littered with polaroids and posters, and we're crammed in a pocket-sized dressing room coming down through stages of explosive decomposition. A barrage of bass-heavy Disco-Funk bores holes through the wall, effectively inhibiting advanced verbal communication. They're hostile, not necessarily at me, but I'm convenient. I get to be the target of an interlocking grip of voices in a brainstorming session. Like I'm a stand-in for a non-reacting audience. A personification of an audience who found Test Department not exactly the most successful attention grabbers since Genghis Khan.

"It was sickening tonight. It was hardly worth doing. It was pure punishment. It was like total confrontation," in grouchy tones fighting for audibility.

So what kind of reaction DO you expect from audiences?

I get the impression that the audience were not so much antagonistic, or even apathetic, but they just didn't KNOW how they were to react.

"Oh, chuck 'im out someone." A guy in Trotsky cap and wire-rim glasses hollering from the back. The guise of some Raskolnikov come Bolshevik come nihilist. He hand-rolls cigarettes, and just might be called Jack.

Doesn't your relationship with your audience mean much then?

"Yes, it does."

A relationship?

"That's how it works when you're in a place like THIS."

But when it's working REALLY well there's a total focus between you and the audience. What you get then is..."

"...a real magic comes through," from someone called Paul.

"For a lot of people it's obviously too much for the first time. But I think, OK, you're really slamming it, an awful lot, in people's faces. But I think at least the DO take a lot away of them, and there's a lot available there for them. Instead of it being the dull ritual of coming and getting pissed and dancing to your favorite band, people come and they appear very passive, but all the work is going on INSIDE THEM. Inside their bodies. Inside their heads. When we play it's a gut thing. The music goes straight for the body. And maybe afterwards they go away and use their heads and try and understand what that experience has done for them. And it it's working well they'll utilize it in their own lives. If it's going badly then it'll make them feel that much more desperate. Because it hopefully makes people face up to some of the harder realities. Which are the harsher elements of living."

Noticeably, through exorcism, tension is evaporating. We relax a little further--perhaps from eight to seven on a scale of ten.

Test Department are based in New Cross, South London, but personal details are hard to cadge. "We're totally anonymous" say the vocalist in the peaked PVC cap and the off-white string vest. He might be called Angus. "We're a collective unit. A collective entity. We speak with one voice, so we don't see the need for having our names, or our personalities, in the band. We are just, like, Test Department, and what we say is Test Department talking. Not one individual personality and ego. We think that's a better way of going about things. It presents people with a stronger sort of idea."

They've been together about two years battering onto "basically the same format. When we started, originally, we used to use bass, but the idea we had eventually made that redundant. So we gave it up, and just decided that what we were using was strong enough on its own. So we just use metal. We're not a band in a conventional sense of the word."

So far, as such an attitude might indicate, recorded evidence is slight. They contributed their "Shockwork" to the Batcave compilation. They consume tape-time on *The Last Supper*, a C70 cassette from the *Adventures In Reality* people. Their 12" single "Compulsion/Pulsations" came through Some Bizarre/Phonogram, with some slight Stevo connivance. "He heard about us. He saw us play. He liked us. So he signed us."

"Also, rather than just the single and album we're gonna put out a live tape, of us--live, just to keep things moving. That'll be available through Some Bizarre. So if anybody wants a tape of live stuff just bung a couple of quid to them. It'll be through outlets as well."

There's a time-lag in the Disco beyond the wall. It cues into the Door's "Love Me Two Times."

Barriers come lower. It's snap-time at the foundry. Lunch-break on the collective steelyard. Circa 1917. Conversations spin out in endless circles. Politics. Ludditism. Struggle. Minimalism. Tonal extremism. Sweat. Dialectics.

To me, what you're doing is like a reconstruction to the physical senses. "It's beyond the physical. It's fucking gut work. It's real fucking hard work." His nails are cracked and broken with traces of violent impact. He nibbles at the edge of rough skin. Worries at it until a tiny crimson bead of blood eases up out of the wound.

To what extent is your set predetermined? Do you start out with a clear idea of what you're going to do? "If you start that way you can never do anything that's got genuine guts to it. This is something that has to grow. A sympathy between four different people working over an amount of time. It's structured to that extent."

"We work week in and week out. Until each one of the four of us just sympathetically feels what the other one is doing, without ever saying it. And when it works properly it just merges into one huge rhythm. Not a tune. Nothing really obvious. Each of us just link, just gradually link together as a component of a huge machine. And that's what we always strive for. Later you can put little breaks into it, and structure it by putting points of interest in. But the basic thing is always the same--it's just four people striving to get the hugest..."

"...striving to get bigger and harder, until those wheels just crash down HARDER!!!"

But do you see that concept developing towards a fixed objective?

We fight around the edges of noise until it pieces together in my head, from fragments. Test Department are political, but only to the extent that "politics is the lowest common denominator of everything." They are revolutionary, but in a sharply unfocussed Bakunin sense of the word, the sense in which the spontaneous unleashing of revolutionary release is an end, or an ideal in itself. "Revolution in its pure form. That pure moment of change." They use the concept of "purity" a lot, to advocate instinct over intellect, action over passivity, immediacy of the senses. To Test Department, revolution is not a historical event, but a state of mind. It is the "festival of the oppressed" as it was when Germaine Greer celebrated it.

The essence, the spirit of what Test Department are striving for in their performance, is the kind of purity found somewhere in that definition. "There are chosen goals. There are goals that we keep to ourselves...that we are striving towards, otherwise it wouldn't be worth a turn. It HAS to develop, because unless you put imagination into things they become stagnant. They become formalized, formulaized..."

"...which, like, sums up this place!"

Do you see Test Department as a long term project? "It will last as long as it's interesting." He inclines his head and black peaked PVC cap in the direction of the door

(Continued On p.9)

LIVE SKULL



John Chimples

--by Dirk Difficult

Here's a band that picks its singers by the heat of their nasty mood. In other words, the angriest member gets the call.

Marnie Greenholz is not the emerging lead vocalist, she's just sick, was sick, was hospitalized, is recovering, so lately she's been doing most of the songs. You have to like a group that operates like that. No pun. It's a democratic anarchy that squares the performance on no one person's shoulders. Everyone gets a crack at songwriting and singing. There is no leader.

There is no pattern in an expressionistic band. What did I say? Expressionistic? Not my word, I'm the reporter not the author.

It's the sort of come-from-the-knees earthy bass tones and gravel voices that mark a unit of unknown musical association. Plus poison pen lyricism to boot. Oh Christ let's not dwell on it, another movement or label we don't need. Suffice it to say it comes from heavy, like cement mixers rolling down a quarry road. Heavy like you made fettucini Alfredo with white russian instead of skim milk. These ain't no Hershey Kisses. Put this music in your belly and watch your dugline rival the Calcuttan rickshaw driver's.

I'm being difficult. What I want to tell you is this is not a music of convenience. Certainly not smarmy either: "I came down on your car/push my hands through the windshield/fill the dashboard with skin/grab your throat shove it toward the wheel/stick my tongue deeper in" ("Sparky").

And such nice people. There we are, coffee in a NY loft, all smiles around the table, and they tell me about their first gig in a sleazy singles palace on the upper east side, when a former lead singer of theirs threw a cinder block at the crowd when the sound man put them on hold, canned them mid-set. They were chased in the street and only luckily got their equipment out.

Notoriety pursued them and they began a series of dates at the Mudd Club before it went the way of the earth shoe. They've seen the demise of the S.I.N. Club, closed Magique that wretched glitz disco I just mentioned. Devastating. Shake-down music. They tread where Italo-Americans dare.

Live Skull came together nearly two years ago when Tom Paine and Mark C., guitar players both, were taking a break from their band, Body. They had moved to NY only recently to form Body and be part of a musical environment that seemed more appealing than the San Francisco one that they left. Marnie was playing in an all girl band and doing slide shows for other acts. She, Tom and Mark began simply rehearsing together. When the gig at the singles palace popped up, originally for Body to perform, this pre-natal Live Skull accepted, hastily found a singer and drummer, rehearsed them and did the show. That was that. The singer eventually went off to pursue other brick-tossing ventures, and the thought of replacing her became less important as the three took turns at the mike. Finally James Lo came along to be their full time percussionist and the band was set. Right now their first EP is out and they are living and playing in NY.

I said that it was tough to stick a name on the music or even if I thought to, but one of its basic tenets is an

idea that Tom calls density. Not a low rumble, but a grounded sound, pre-eminent bass with a sharpness of guitar and drum cutting through. The vocals are kept in the cellar optimally, so as not to intrude. It's something that the band wants to avoid despite the best efforts of every sound man in the city. They all agree that the vocals are just another instrument, not the leading edge, and if you treat them as an equal partner you don't limit yourself in either writing or performing around them.

"The traditional way is music in the background, vocals up front," says Mark, "it's so old." Bring your lyric sheets to the show, when they get their way the vocals come up from the floorboards.

As the band has matured in the last year and the group identity unfolds more steadily, more cohesively, the members are getting more critical and writing better songs. Marnie says they've put a lot of the early stuff behind them; they're more pleased by the newer stuff.

"We're editing ourselves better," says Tom, "relying less on intuition and more on definite ideas."

Most of these ideas are a bit unconventional. Indeed, the band shies away from any element that smacks of overuse or standardization. They give out bottom-heavy music, with no refrains or catchy riffs, vocals that go in the blender and come spinning out with all the rest. I wonder then how it will go over. Can music this new find a large audience without any of the old tricks?

At present hardcore fans find Live Skull intriguing, but this is no hardcore band.

Mark says it's true the band wants to avoid cliches and traditional songmaking, but insists they're not doing it for the sake of breaking the mold. He says they play the way they sound the best. James added that mass taste is not a static thing, it's sometimes progressing, sometimes lapsing, but there are no set formulas for tapping the market. He cited rap music as a perfect example. No melody, no chords, just drumming and talk, yet it found or perhaps created, its own audience.

"Does that mean if you keep sounding the way you sound best that you and mass taste will eventually collide?" I ask. They study me quizzically. It is not in the least of their collective concern.

I caught their first gig in three months, since Marnie's illness postponed the band's other outings. The energy level was high and the set forceful.

"We're louder and angrier these days," said Mark.

They used the Danceteria show to unveil their first cover, Curtis Mayfield's "Pusherman," which owes nothing to Curtis. The show didn't go on until 2:30 on a Wednesday morning but that's for people with jobs to sweat. Those of us who could stay enjoyed the hell out of it, and it was nice to see they hadn't lost any ground or that Marnie didn't keel over.

This year they should be coming to a town near you. They want to get back into the studio and do an album, but that's later. So if you get a chance, see what it's like to get hit by a cement mixer, wrap your palate around a Kaluha carbonara. Bon appetite.

(Continued)

where sounds are drizzling in incessant pulses of disconnected dance rhythms, shattering and piling up through the flimsy woodwork. "It just fills up floor-space doesn't it, basically?" The anger's now tempered with something I can't quite identify. "It just fucking bogs your head down in a huge wall of total crap. A huge wash of totally fucking manipulated mindlessness. It's pure escapist shit. This has actually got no reflection on what you do, the way you live, the way you see yourself. It's so...we're up against a total wall, and you can't change it. You're in

it. You're fucked because it happens so fast and it's beyond your control. But you've GOT to try. You've got to try and have the confidence to say 'at least I'm gonna try and do something that is raw, and is gonna cut through all that'. It's almost a futile statement, and yet we DO get a power out of doing it. It's just that, sometimes, I feel fucking DESPERATE about it, you know? You're getting through to people but, at the same time...I don't know.

You give so much, and you just really want things back. And...sometimes they just don't come back fast enough..."

As though there's some kind of moral ratio that balances these things out. As though sincerity of intent, and intensity of commitment can communicate purely through the power of that earnest desperation. There's something both naively idealistic and oddly impressive in that clean wound of Test Department that never comes quite as clear to me as it does at this moment.

Then, "Rock and Roll has been going on for 30 years." It snaps back into frame. He hand-rolls a cig, tugging meandering strands of unevenly distributed tobacco from each of the lumpy white cylinder. "It's DEAD. I think we're way behind the Africans..."

Hoots of laughter drown the sound system as it begins cranking out the Reggae "Coronation Street."

"Have you heard this? It's great this."

The singer who might be called Angus smiles oddly wistful. "How appropriate, eh? Song of the night, this."

HÜSKER DÜ AGAINST ENTROPY

-by Steve Fritz

Did you know that Grant Hart can really sing if he felt like it?

The drummer for Husker Du, best known for his screaming ('er, "impassioned") intensity on such songs as "In A Free Land" and "Diane" has a beautiful a capella ('scuse me, doo-wop) tenor. Probably one of the best to ever surge forth from the lips of a white man.

He's singing away after another tremendous gig with the Minutemen while loading his kit into the van; harmonizing with himself on a long-forgotten classic from the Gee record label. In general, winding down.

"I've told that guy I don't know how many times that if he's got a voice like that" Minutemen guitarist extraordinaire D. Boone asks, "why the hell does he keep on destroying it singing the way he does?"

Realizing the question was rhetorical, D. shrugs and answers himself, "guess he's afraid of losing his audience."

Bob Mould, of the Huskers, no mean slouch on the guitar himself, sits quietly in another van that's already packed.

"Ready to go?" he asks. I hop in. Jeff Jenkins, riotous DJ and generally nice guy, also gets in. Both bands will be crashing overnight at his place, and someone has to let them in.

The cruise was truly restful after the monumental energy released at the show. First on, the Minutemen. A non-stop salvo of 2 1/2 minute bursts of pure adrenalin that lasted for well over an hour. Can this band do anything that doesn't challenge your senses, if not take them over? I have not known of anything yet.

Then Husker Du. The demolition men of the power chord, they were a power trio gone nova, bursting forth and searing everybody with unrelenting heat. The audience soared with the likes of "Eight Miles High," thrashed like crazy to the likes of "Everything Falls Apart" and were stunned by the live version of "Out On A Limb" (I mean hey, now we did find out that it was Mould's guitar doing the solo (with the aid of two compressor boxes) instead of a soprano sax giving its last primal scream as might have been in the recorded version on Metal Circus).

Bob was tired. He needed rest. But he didn't mind talking either...

The Huskers have changed quite a bit since their younger days. Witness their new album, Zen Arcade (SST). Gone are the days of being the fastest thrash band in the world as they were on their first LP, Land Speed Record (New Alliance). Although they can still rev up like they used to, listen to "Masochism World"; they've moved to newer terrain. They've even recorded an instrumental that's (ye gods!) nearly 14 minutes long! An bitchin' bolero, it shows as much in common with Jeff

Beck as it does Greg Ginn (without putting Greg down either).

The line-up's still intact. Bob and Grant are still ably aided by the bass of Greg Norton, but now the 60's influences that Bob has admitted to have loved so much in past interviews has become as major an element as the 80's. And Husker Du sound all the better for it. But anyone who's been watching this band, from the second LP, Everything Falls Apart, through Metal Circus would have seen the writing on the wall. The song "Real World" stated "I don't care about Anarchy" and it meant something.

In what would be his bedroom for the night, Mould chuckled over that. "Anarchy's not sacred," he begins. "That song basically came out of the kids we talked to as we toured. They wear all the anarchy symbols and they talk about it all the time. But they don't know what they're

really talking about. There are people out there who do, and more power to them. But then there are these kids whose heads are up there in the blue skies and still come home to their parent's house and lock the doors at night to make sure that no one comes in and steals all their worldly possessions. They're not really into anarchy, because they're not into sharing. The kids are really very materialistic and capitalistic. 'Real

You can never freeze water with water. Also you can tap all the resources in the world but it always takes more energy to make only some energy. The world's resources are going down. It's a finite system and we have to conserve."

In past interviews, Mould had told us that the music of Land Speed Record had its drawbacks (see T! #12), the biggest of which was that playing at this breakneck pace was not only stifling the band, but making them sick as hell. No human creature could keep up the pace that the Huskers played at for too long a period. The Huskers did so for several years, then they began to realize that the older stuff they loved didn't always go on overdrive.

Also, the white heat anger that was stock for the band in its early days had changed. Over the years a general sense of dread came out with each new release.

"Well, take the song 'Life-line,'" states Bob, "I don't think that anyone ever wants to go through life alone. You think you have something that's so good, that makes you more significant than others. Then it all tumbles down and all you can say is 'oh shit.' That's the emotion that's there and it can be interpreted differently by different people."

Including the music of the band?

"After a while all that

ing music, y'know. Barry Manilow can do what these hardcore bands can do.

"You can be real idealistic and all, but you have to keep in mind the attitudes of the audience. They don't want a fucking history lesson. What I consider what we do is tell stories."

And the big story for this band is their latest release, Zen Arcade. A double record set, it's a big project for an independent band (or any band for that matter, Mould chuckled). And yes, it's a concept album (Remember them kiddies? If not, ask your parents... they'd remember).

"We had an overabundance of material" Bob explains, "and a number of the songs that Grant and I had written had a common theme to them. Without going into detail, it's about a kid who runs away from home and then goes through a number of experiences in order to try to stay alive and just keep going. A lot of the songs just deal with the challenge of trying to do just that...and the fun of it."

"The nice thing is that with Metal Circus, I had written 5 of the 7 songs on there, and Grant had written the other two. This time it was more a 60/40 split between myself and Grant."

As we talked more about Zen Arcade, it came out there were other advancements for the band. Acoustic guitars and pianos had been added. And for once, Grant doesn't scream out a song ("Never Talking To You"), although he doesn't let his tenor out either.

"Our growth has been pretty logical. There's always one or two songs that really stand out as being different. But we still have the fast, crazy stuff. If anything, I think it's more aggressive than anything we've done in the past. I like that kind of stuff... it's like trying to read a painting, you can only see so much of it at any one time as your eyes keep having to move across the canvas. I wish we had the money to experiment with tape loops, that's what I want to do next."

"The hardcore world can really be experimented with," he concludes. "It's a real open field. I feel really bad about the bands that limit themselves. They're going to lose their audience, even everything, after a while."

So we talk a little more. The M-men and the rest of the



-Naomi Peterson

World' is a very strong statement, and I can think you can decipher the message from it."

"The angry and the scared and the young and the restless..." Bob sighs wistfully, "...I think maybe that's it. That's the emotions that are in our music."

"Did you ever read the book Entropy?" he asks me.

No, I hadn't, just heard of it.

"Good book," he comments. "It's about using resources.

thrashy stuff gets to be like a straight-jacket...really limiting. You just can't sing those songs. A lot of the energy that's there is in the rush and that's about it. It's like doing drugs, real immediate and you're gratified. You don't have to think about it."

So would Husker Du still call themselves a hardcore band?

"That term is dead" he announces. It's beat. We're just rock and roll now...just play-

party has returned home by this time. We can hear the noise. Bob thinks it would be a good idea to grab a beer and then sack out. I agreed. We do.

Since that time, I've heard that the Huskers are already recording again. Thinking about what Mould said, and the records that came out, I'm really interested.

After all...maybe this time Grant will get the chance to harmonize with himself...

WORLD DOMINATION BY 1999... PLANNING WITH DANCE FACTOR



-by Sandra Garcia

"We've got five albums planned, and a couple of world tours, and we're gonna be the first band on the space shuttle, but that's in the planning stages--we'll give you a date later!"

Isn't ambition wonderful?

That quote sets the tone for the next few hundred words, and, like the TV show, *Outer Limits*, we have the band Dance Factor, a classy group of sharp musicians destined to fight their way out of the local band scene. Their sound is a healthy mix of funk and pop, a vibrant forceful sound that, as bassist/vocalist Ben Baker observes, "encourages people to get off on themselves, to have fun."

Their music surely encouraged enough of the normally bored poseurs at the East Side Club to fill the dance floor, something I've rarely seen! When a band can generate enough power to have people cease worrying about their make-up running (gasp!)--well, that's quite a feat!

Before the outer limits of Dance Factor takes over completely, a few words to the uninitiated about their background. The band consists of the brothers Baker (Ben and Craig; bass and guitar respectively), synth/guitar Bob Bell (since departed--ED) and drummer Ed. Together and separately they have waded through many a band to get to Dance Factor. Such names as Club of Rome, King of Siam and Der Mond are probably familiar to a Philly club band follower. The current line up of DF has been stirring up things in town for a year, and their well-thought-out music is definitely gaining popularity throughout the area.

Craig explains the attraction of their sound: "We think it's good music. With a lot of bands people stand about and watch, not because they're getting into a band but because there's nothing else to do. But people can dance to us at clubs, or people can also stand and listen because there is more going on, more than just dance rhythm tracks or mere dance pop--there's more layers of understanding."

At this point the "outer limits" syndrome set in, as right near our cozy hole backstage at the East Side, the opener for DF decided to begin their soundcheck. Craig wraps up his concise reasoning "There's a lot of layers of intelligence in our music."

"There's also a lot of layers of stupidity" comments Ed with a laugh, as Bob cynically concludes: "We appeal all the way from Neanderthal to the semi-genius to the down right morons...a true cross of society."

Personally I was beginning to feel that there were a few hundred members of society just on the other side of the wall as the terrifically loud drumming set in from beyond. Control was becoming difficult, chaos seemed close, but we tried to regain some seriousness.

As we continued shouting to each other, I asked the band how they felt about the rapidly shrinking Philadelphia club scene. Ben recaptured his composure long enough to express that "the club scene in Philly, due to its smallness, is more supportive, more intense. On the whole, there are less people involved in music but those who are involved are truly dedicated to it."

Craig adds: "The audience situation is a really good thing--we feel, say, in bad weather we can still draw a dedicated crowd easier than a big draw could, as we have an intense following. We'll have a helluva lot of people come out for us in the middle of a storm! We're generally happy with where we are right now, being able to create a buzz, excitement."

As Craig reflects on his second serious speech of the night, Ed discloses, "Yeah, like the last time we played Filly's, I think there were ten or fifteen thousand people trying to get in to see us but actually for some reason they only let in about twenty..."

Bob quickly interjects: "Ed exaggerates...it was only about five thousand, tops..."

Thunderous bass lines mix with the drums to rattle all composure, but after the assault dies down Bob picks up his thread of discussion: "Actually, we're glad to be a Philly band--we'd like to say to our fans that when we're rich and famous we'll stay here to support the club scene...give lots of free concerts, give money to starving bands..."

"Yeah, much the way Robert Hazard has" thrusts Ben, becoming animated anew: "I just saw him on *Dancing On Air* the other day...He was propped up!"

"I like Robert...he's a nice guy" grins Ed slyly.

"Yeah, but you don't see him on TV--he's miming the words to 'Change Reaction'...his new single."

"I like Bob...Bob, I love you!"

"Who else can we put down in the area?"

As a generally disruptive flurry of comments follows, we try to get back to reality. The topic of video is brought up; choked laughter and odd moans is the reaction.

Ben once again jumps in, proclaiming: "Actually, there are posters out in the street

advertising a video show at the Kennel Club next week or next month...I dunno but its of local bands...and it has our name on it! We've never heard about us having a video!"

I'm looking at this poster, and our name is second from the top, you know, as advertising this thing--like they are using our name and I've never seen it! I guess I'll go!" He laughs, extremely amused at it all. "We are going to have a video for the single we just completed in the studio."

Does the band like to watch videos. Craig reveals that he likes to watch them more for the way they're done than for the content, and that he does appreciate the special effects Ben remarks: "Yeah, well, I watch a lot of TV and I think videos are good."

"I watch a lot of TV's" counters Bob with a cryptic smile.

"At once!" exclaims Ed.

"I watch three TV's at once --you can print that!"

The night begins to slip away again, more utterly overwhelming noise pinning back our tongues. Once the brain cells cease vibrating the subject of video is chased anew.

Bob's voice drifts over the battle of soundcheck. "Our own video will be a sort of funk fantasy."

"Sort of based on *Ulysses* by James Joyce...it's like an hour long video that takes place in a millisecond" grins Ben. Well, that's wonderful...it sounds like some demented grad-school drop-out's dream, eh?

Actually, art school does come to mind. Perhaps there's a connection here somewhere--aha, both the Bakers went to art school! Bob helpfully volunteers that he went to music school, while Ed fondly remembers nursery school. But once again Ben rescues the subject, declaring: "Yeah, I get into video because of going into art school, but we're all visually oriented as far as I'm concerned...we do the music but we think of it more visually as a 3-D type of entity..."

Bob steps in at this point in his best droll scientific

voice "It's a multi-dimensional, all-encompassing life matrix..."

"Jive bullshit!" suggests Ed amidst the ensuing outburst everyone deciding to go off in different verbal directions, Ben grinning "We like Chinese food too...our favorite soft drink?"

Since this isn't a 16 magazine interview, the reading public won't get too excited over such, and could probably care less about the make of their underwear. But they may be interested in future plans, aside from the space shuttle.

"I got a suitable answer. World domination--basically in 1999, summer" reveals Ben. But wait, this seems like an awfully long time to wait, so we kick about the idea of what if the world was destroyed by then?

"It won't make any difference" grins Ben "because we'll still conquer the world, whether it's still there or not." OK, right. I wisely decide to let this pass, the night is growing long. But perhaps there are still a few last gems I can mine in this interview?

"Just say we're an awesome band to see live--an awesome live band..." enthuses Ben.

"Strictly from awesome" deadpans Craig, as Ben gets caught up in his thinking. "An all-American band."

"We just want everyone to love us" laughs Ed, as Ben agrees "we want them to love us and have fun."

"And give us money--let's be honest" concludes Craig, thus giving all the important last words.

I could go on to describe the wonderful photo session that followed, where many titles for this article were graciously suggested, my favorites being "Win A Date with Dance Factor and They'll Take You Out Behind the East Side Club!" and "Getting Bail Was Easy With Dance Factor!" But I'll let you imagine the rest.

Let's just conclude with the following advice: better book your seat on that special space shuttle as soon as possible, because if this band lives up to its potential, reservations will be filled in no time!



-Sandy Davis



BRUFORD

-by Jim Meneses

After a particularly bizarre version of "Dig Me" from their new LP, *Three of a Perfect Pair*, Adrian Belew of King Crimson commented to the audience "Hey Robert, they like this weird stuff!"

The 'weird stuff', from the 'right' side of the new LP, is some of the most adventurous music Crimson has recorded and performed since the loose structures and improvisations of *Lark's Tongues in Aspic* period. I was struck at how this large audience of rock & roll fans related to their improvisations: with wild enthusiasm.

Of course some of the other highlights of the show were "Sleepless", the single, a powerful, sledgehammer dance tune, and the sharp, delicate structure of Belew and Robert Fripp's guitar duos in "Discipline" and "Frame by Frame".

But the group really came alive during "Industry", a dark brooding piece of music, about fourth in the set, which seemed to wake up a till then sleepy Bill Bruford, and got all the musicians playing together and listening to each other with great force and intensity. The power of the group grew through to the end, a killer "Lark's Tongues Pt Two", and their three encore numbers: "Discipline", "Elephant Talk", and a particularly smooth, beckoning version of "Heartbeat", the misplaced single from 1983's *Beat*.

Through all of this, I was keeping an eye on Bruford. He's using a hybrid kit of acoustic snare, bass, roto tom, floor and mounted bass drum along with a drum shop's worth of Simmons Pads (electronic drums both around the kit and mounted, as a tuned gong tree might be, behind him), as well as miscellaneous cymbals and percussion instruments. There's also a set of Simmons pads set up and played like a marimba, which Bruford and Belew teamed up to play together in the intro to "Waiting Man", (visually reminiscent of Steve Reich's 'drumming').

Belew joined Bruford a bit later in the set, playing a straight ahead style rhytm on a smaller, standard drum kit, allowing Bruford to play on top of it, throwing odd times and accents around like a crazy monkey.

TI: My questions seem to all be about drumming.
BB: We can talk drums if you like, although most of this stuff about what drums do and what they're for is mostly applicable to a wider thing...

TI: You mean the music itself...
BB: And that's on the whole more interesting than what sort of drum heads one uses.

TI: Well, I was going to ask about your snare sound - I've been enjoying it for quite a few years now...

BB: It changes, that snare sound. Tell you the truth, I just set it up and play it, you know...many people think wow, God, the secret of the snare drum sound... I just whack up the snare drum, and when it sounds pretty good, I'm happy with it.

TI: It has a livelier sound on the pieces on the second side (of the new King Crimson LP, *Three of a Perfect Pair*).

BB: Well you're right in observing that when the full set is being recorded like in "Industry", and "No Warning" (two of the pieces on side two), then there will be more overtones due to all the other mikes around - everybody's going down everybody else's amplifier, so acoustically it's a mess.

TI: Was "No Warning" a preconceived improvisation?
BB: "No Warning" was not preconceived...we recorded it as a quartet, and we released three or four improvisations...

TI: And then you selected from...

BB: That's right. We edited a little bit out, and then...what happened...everybody was happy with their thing, and I said, "Look, I want to do one more shot at this. Just let me go right out there now, erase what I did, and I'll do one more. So I actually tracked the drums on "No Warning" to (the recording of) the other three musicians, having heard it once before in the studio - they fed it

back to me and I did another one and they kept it. "Industry" had the image of a little symphony snare drummer who started this thing..

TI: That 123-12123 pattern...

BB: Yes, and while that drummer had a steady pattern, I wanted to 'squiggle' like a child does with a pencil and paper between the bass phrases and him.. so that's how that came about.

TI: It has the effect of a growing menace.

BB: That's one of King Crimson's standard territories; one of the things we do best...so we varied on *Three of a Perfect Pair*, there's no one way of working. If there's nine tracks, as there were, somebody puts one thing down then maybe something is added. We play as a quartet or maybe we don't.. every conceivable way of doing it we've tried. There's no set way of doing things.

TI: It flows nicely from the pop material on the first side to the more difficult things on side two.

BB: It's one of King Crimson's continuing things, this ability to be able to do both and enjoy both. It's not something we do because we feel we have to, or that somebody instructs us to do. We cover a broad range of material, probably a wider range of material than most other performing electric bands.

TI: I remember reading that you felt lucky to be able to do the stuff you were doing and stay at a decent hotel...

BB: (laughs) It is hard to balance it, because you tend in this business to be either earning platinum or be completely out of it altogether. We're in a position that's terribly helpful; it's on the whole better to exist in a creative twilight. King Crimson has been able to carve out for itself this peculiar place in the rock industry which seems to be subject to none of the rules of the rock industry, and we're basically left alone to do it.

TI: More so than...

BB: More so than a lot of jazz people, for example...

TI: Because they can't draw that kind of audience...

BB: That's right--and since nobody seems to know what it is that people like about us, the record company can't keep coming up to us and saying 'do more of this, everybody likes it': we keep doing different things.

TI: What do you think of the new Yes album?

BB: I can't say I've heard the album, to tell the truth I have heard the single, of course, which is wildly popular, and that seems to be marvellously commercial. I think it's fine, the band obviously knows what it wants, which is to be a commercial, hit record selling act, and they do that very efficiently I don't mind anybody pursuing what it is they want: what I don't like is people running around doing one thing a little bit, badly...doing things badly is just a bad idea on the whole. And they seem to pursue that with great vigor. They got the most commercial guy in England, Trevor Horn, to produce it. And that's how you do it. That's how you get hit records, and that's terrific. Sometimes I think King Crimson should do it and sometimes I don't think we should do it. But at least they pursue it with a singlemindedness.

TI: Well, you got Bob Clearmountain to do the "Sleepless" thing...

BB: That's true.

TI: It's got a great sound.

BB: Yes, it has indeed. It's got us a lot of new friends, too.

TI: Are you listening to any of the rap or funk records?

BB: Somewhat. Tony Levin is actually your expert in that department. He initiated all this dance mix with the "Sleepless" business. Robert had nothing to do whatsoever with it. As far as he was concerned, he'd recorded an album, left, and that was that. The next thing we knew, Tony was juggling the bits about, making it into a dance record, and everybody liked it. It's not as though we're as

(Continued On p.13)

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pure and controlled as people think.

TI: There's a lot of great music coming from the dance floor; it comes from people who are saying and doing for a reason.

BB: I agree, and I like the idea that music has a certain function, and a certain worth: it's to get people up and dancing, and that's great. There's always been dance in every culture...it's a great shame that we didn't have more dancing in the 70's...dancing was "out."

TI: It must be interesting to look back on that period, being a part of that movement...

BB: It is interesting, on a number of levels: number one, how fast fashion changes, and how easy it is to sneer at what was trendy five years ago, it's of course now laughable. We will no doubt in two or three years time sneer at the latest dance trends right now. It's easy to go around sneering at the past, but it's amazing how quickly people forget. I think the danger of modern drummer is that you've got to switch fashions; it's like clothing. The difficulty for the growing drummer is to somehow weather out all these fashion changes and stay abreast of things. And I think it's great that musicians who helped create a whole movement in the 70's, pop up again in the 80's with fresh, shining teeth and short haircuts and actually be happening again! I think that's great...and people don't want to lynch us (laughs). Actually some people do want to lynch us...we're just one of those bands people like to fight about.

TI: Have you heard Jamie Muir's new duo album with Derek Bailey? (Jamie Muir was a percussionist who worked with Crimson during Lark's Tongue)

BB: (Surprised) No, really? I'll have to pick up a copy when I get home.

TI: I guess this signifies his return from monkdom...

BB: Oh he's a real nice man, I love him a lot...yeah, he's been away in a monastery for six or seven years.

TI: I know that you were very influenced by what he was doing, as he was coming from that particular school of British improvisors...

BB: They didn't think of themselves as jazz improvisors...like Americans do. They moved straight from rock to chaos. And there was this hole which Americans understand as being jazz and jazz scales. The European don't mind so much about that, jazz being not such a strong part of their heritage. They didn't mind moving straight from rock to Stockhausen.

TI: Do you find yourself referring to the ideas you worked on back then?

BB: Only in the broadest sense. Jamie's approach was a bit like character acting; you would combine this posture with this tune...even combine it with dress, you know. He used to look ferocious, like a wild man...and so that idea of treating each tune differently, and not something that you threw your paradiddles at, but something that you descriptively

came up with, like a character actor--I think that rubbed off. To this day I still view each tune I come up with as being something different, to locate the essence of the role of the drummer in the thing. It may be that silence is best, so you don't do anything at all.

TI: You're not working with a hi hat now?

BB: That's correct.

TI: There's an incredible hi hat sound on the opening cut ("Three Of A Perfect Pair").

BB: Yeah, that's a Simmons hi hat. Actually, it's a wretched little pedal. It's hell to play, and in a way I'm sitting there playing that thinking why on earth don't I just record with a regular hi hat and just modify it some way...but we went with the idea of not using it. Adrian's got one on his set though

TI: How's Dave Stewart? (The keyboardist formerly with Egg, Hatfield & the North, and National Health... who worked on all four of Bruford's solo releases prior to his return to King Crimson.)

BB: Well, he's OK, but he's kind of turned into a terminal studio case. He's been in the studio for about two years constantly recording and remixing some tunes off an album that didn't get accepted by any major record company. It's a very good, straight ahead pop album--he's obsessed with the idea of making the perfect pop record.

TI: Well he's had some success towards that...

BB: He had two huge singles in Europe...absolutely huge. They weren't big in the US but they were enormous there, which created huge sums of money to enable him to afford this kind of thing. He's doing very well, but sometimes I think I wish he'd come out of there, get back in the real world and play to people sometimes.

TI: He's a great player.

BB: Yeah. He's a great player, always had great ideas. He's very obsessional, dedicated, and when he sets his mind on something--by god, he goes for it. If it's the perfect pop single you want, you'll get it. Now he's got the means to be able to do that; it could go on for a while, but it's just that I worry about him. So do all his friends, saying "Come out of there, Dave."

TI: The label that released the singles didn't pick up on the album?

BB: That's correct. Which shows you just how fickle the English scene is. I mean he had two platinum singles over a period of six months. Then one missed. At the end of this you're no better off than if you had no platinum singles in the first place. In other words, you can't necessarily go and play Liverpool and attract more than 40 people on a rainy night. You know, you're not suddenly guaranteed a huge audience of thousands of people, like Rick Springfield would be here...and not the name Dave Stewart doesn't mean anything to anybody...

TI: Unless they're talking about the Eurythmics (who has a totally different musician named Dave Stewart...that must piss him off!

ILLUSTRATED MAN Hugo Burnham

-by Mike Yonkausk

Randy "Now" (WTSR The Other Side, Wed. 6-10 PM), formerly of City Gardens fame has got another venue which shows real promise for the fall of '84. The sign says NY South, and it sizzles. Under this the marquee reads Illustrated Man, 4 PM TODAY.

Although the show, from a promoter's point of view, was a flop, it was far from that on a performance level. Take Roger Mason, keyboards (formerly of Tubeway Army), Rob Deane, guitar (Japan), coupled to the main drive of Gang Of 4, Hugo Burnham and then add vocals and bass of a virtually unknown from under, Philip Foxman, and you have the makings of a 45 minute, knock your socks off show. Before show time I was able to take Hugo away from one of the many arcade games at the hall and we talked about the tour and future plans for Illustrated Man.

TI: Since your leaving Gang of 4 back in '83, what have you been up to?

HB: For a while I played sessions with Nona Hendrix and Stan Ridgeway of Wall of Voodoo until I met Phillip, beside developing other interests.

TI: Phillip who?

HB: Phillip Foxman, our bass and lead vocalist.

TI: We know about you and the rest of the band, but where did Phillip come from?

HB: Well, first of all, Phillip is from Australia and you and your audience, well they've probably never heard of any of the bands Phillip belonged to down under. He came to England with several songs he had written with the hope of being signed by an English label. EMI showed interest in his work and said if he were to get a band together they would be interested in recording his music. Thus Illustrated Man was conceived.

TI: You mentioned that the music was Phillip's. Where does that leave you and the band, from a publishing point of view? Let's face it, publishing rights are what this game is all about. Isn't it?

HB: Yes it is. However, the initial writing was Phillip's, but the music as a whole is published by Illustrated Man. One of us comes up with an idea today and we all kick it around until the music is right. Then Phillip puts the lyrics to the music. So you see, we all have a hand in what Illustrated Man puts out. Phillip is more into the poetry side with a funk feel. Phillip's original music is what sparked the interest with EMI and collectively we were able to please them to the point where a US record deal was signed with Capitol Records.

TI: What sort of deal?

HB: A very shitty sort of deal, as a matter of fact. They (Capitol) put quite a bit of money into the record and it's only a three song LP. A mini-album. I think you re-



fer to these kinds of recordings as an EP. Very inadequate support, for this tour. I find that at 28, the \$110 a week is barely adequate to live on. Phillip has got more from them because it is or was his project, and that's what we all agreed to. This is our first time over as Illustrated Man and back home we've only gigged about 12 times.

TI: How important is this tour to you? And the support you talked about?

HB: Well, it's really a learning process. 17 or 18 cities from Rochester NY to the West Coast. We don't expect to get rich from this tour. We elected to bring our music to the public first rather than waiting for the record company to hype it at radio stations. When our second album is released later this year we hope to be on a support tour with a much better known act and those who saw us the first time out will remember who we are and will buy our records.

TI: Obviously college radio will, as in the past, be a major factor in introducing your music to the young, as it did with Gang of 4, seven years ago. Do you feel that writing your music for the young is the way to go?

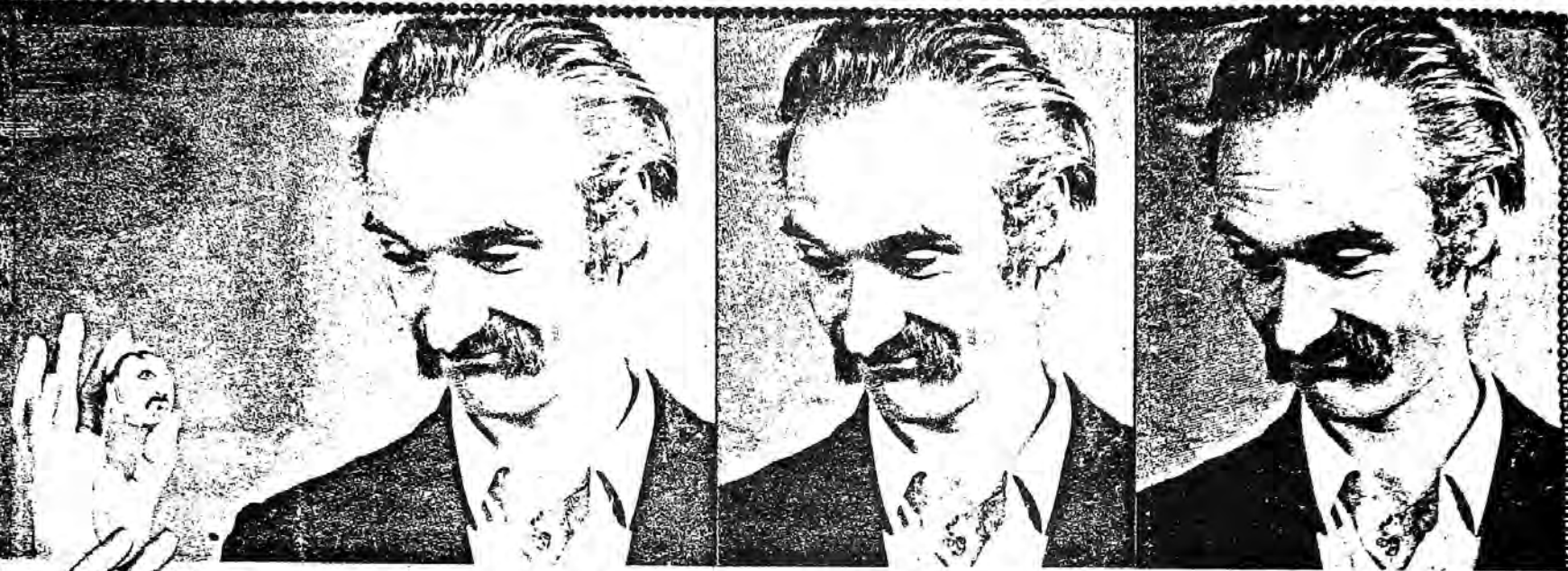
HB: No. We write to please ourselves, just as Talking Heads write what they want to without compromise. If they had written for the young market they would have sounded like Kansas or Boston and joined the ranks of the dinosaurs. So, too, are we writing what we want to and presenting it to them. I do what I'm doing and present it in the best way I know how; This is the 80's, not the past.

TI: What do you look for from this tour?

HB: As I said before, to get our name known, learn more about ourselves. We have only been together as a band for the past year and a half and it takes time just as when I formed Gang of 4, seven years ago. I was 21 then and I spent those seven years learning my trade, so to speak.

TI: Where do you see Illustrated Man six months to a year from now?

HB: Well, I believe in what we are doing and I want something as strong as Gang of 4. If I didn't think we could do just that I wouldn't be wasting my time. I could be doing session work or something along those lines if I didn't believe in this band. We will continue to write and hopefully the public will buy it. Well, I hear the opening band so let's go see what they are about.



HOLGER CZUKAY

-by Andy Darlington

Holger Czukay deals in scrapbooks of sound. He's possibly some kind of manic genius, the mad scientist mixing and matching racks and retorts of tubes, wires, and odd chemicals of noise into phantasmagorias of aural sorcery. He looks the part. Bewhiskered, absent-minded, undeniably Germanic, he emphasises in huge surges of energy that assault the listener, defusing tension with mischievous sparks of Einsteinian eccentricity. Sometimes he seems to be sending you up, but it's such a vastly entertaining experience you enjoy the ride.

His personal bio-file extends back as far as the final twitchings of W.W. II, and up through the tutelage of odd-ball electronics composer Karlheinz Stockhausen; but Holger's first real ignition point--as far as recorded history is concerned--was Can (Discounting a joint effort between him and Rolf Dammers, Canaxis--ED). It's only now, when PiL's dense barrages of sound get reviewers scuttling back to early Can as the only place to find suitable comparison, that the German band is being re-assessed and fully credited with the significance of their torturous innovations.

Richard Kirk (of Cabaret Voltaire) told me "we really respect Can, and particularly Holger Czukay's stuff. He used to use old radio sets on stage. That was when he'd actually stopped playing the bass with them. When we saw them he was just standing there in the middle of all this equipment. He was surrounded by a mass of tape recorders and radio receivers. It was nice to see somebody using that solely as their instrument."

Can evolved around the summer '68 with Holger playing bass to drummer Jackie Liebrecht, keyboardist Irmin Schmidt, and guitarist Michael Karoli. A first album, Monster Movies, was recorded on primitive 2-track equipment in their own hand-made Cologne studio. The sound was a concentrated sonic mugging with vague Velvet Underground cadences, solid acid-riff sequences overlaid with jazz doodles of improvised sounds and part-spontaneous sometime scat sometime sublingual vocals. Signed to UA, they followed it with Tago Mago, high on the ESP weirdness scale, the stark seismic Ege Bamyasa, Future Days, and a succession of fine albums. With a variety of peripheral additives, crazed vocalists, telepaths, percussionists and underground movie scores; Can was the dark primal intuitive side to Kraftwerk's clean

hygienic New German society.

Holger's currently working in a variety of settings. He plays with Jah Wobble (who he calls Shah Vo-Bell) on the critically acclaimed Snake Charmer mini-album--a favor Wobble returned by contributing to Czukay's entrancing On The Way To The Peak Of The Normal set. He has a stop-gap single, an off the wall, idiosyncratic "Cool In The Pool/Oh Lord, Give Us More Money," consisting of edited extracts from his own Movies LP; while he's now allegedly preparing new material in the Inner Space Cologne studio. Work reportedly including a 7-minute version of the Chinese National Anthem! (Now released as the LP Die Ost Ist Rot--ED).

I talked to him at considerable length in London's EMI house during an extended promotional trip:

TI: Is Can definitely dead now?

HC: No, I wouldn't say that.

TI: Because you've all played on each others subsequent solo projects?

HC: We still work together, but not as Can. Jackie said "Can has made a kind of cellular division"--do you say that?

TI: Cellular division--yes.

HC: That's what Can did. For me this is what life is. A group one day gets born, it's an organism, really an organism. One hand works with the other, 'hand in hand' we say in Germany. So OK, Can made something important I think, and then, after a while it died.

TI: What category would you place your music in now?

HC: Categories don't mean anything. I say--just use EVERYTHING. There's NOTHING that should prohibit you. You contribute what your spiritual power is.

TI: Is a sense that was the philosophy behind Can. Jackie use to play with jazzier Manfred Spoof, you came from avant garde electronics; you all came from different musical disciplines and created something unique out of that.

HC: Can's only chance was that everybody would reduce themselves as far as they could with what they did, ya? Otherwise, it would have been a group of four egos, and no one likes to listen to that. Music is also something made out of privacy, it's just sheer privacy. Therefore, when it comes to the production of my albums, for years they are private. Then I say 'it is ready'. And then I take people and invite them to listen to it, and I listen with their ears. Nobody has listened to it before, and in this way I'm listening to it for the first time myself. I know

immediately when they like or when they don't like something. And when they don't like it I ask myself "why don't they like it? Is it something really necessary what you have done? Does it really make sense?" And I think about it very strictly. Perhaps they were right not to like it. Sometimes they don't dare to say it but I can feel it. Then they go and I work again and play it again until at last I don't change anything. I listen every day for at least one month. Then I say all right. And this is the first time the record company can listen to it. Because now it goes public.

TI: Jah Wobble plays on your current album, and you play on his. What was it like working with him? Is he a good musician to work with?

HC: He's extremely good. He's one of the best musicians I can imagine because he gets this quality where he reads your mind without you speaking it out. And that means music--have a telepathy towards the other members. That's what he has. One of the most sensitive persons I have known, and a person who has a strong identity when he plays. You see, there are thousands and thousands of bass players and they all are fantastic, on albums and records all bass players play good. But if you listen to him you know after the second note that this is Jah Wobble. And that means something; to have only such a little note, one note, but he puts everything into it, and it shows his whole personality. That means for me that he has got the secret, he has found it. He's young, and he'll learn how to take that secret out into all kinds of dimensions to make music. He's playing bass with two hands, OK? But he's also playing with his whole body. And when he's sitting at the recording or mixing desk he will have more than two hands, and he knows it. He's well aware of it.

TI: The first PiL records (on which Wobble played) were immediately compared to Can.

HC: They found out later. They just went on doing what they did, and found out later what it was.

TI: Early Can and PiL share a quality of intense aural violence.

HC: That is right. That is exactly a quality of Can in the early days. We have such a big archive of material out of those days. We made recordings we never dared offered to a record company. But today times have changed. Now it makes sense what Can

were doing during '68 when we were on FULL POWER. That is something of the live quality the group had. Being somehow heavy, very heavy, so they could destroy just everybody, somehow. To destroy something is the beginning of building something, and if you can manage to get these two aspects together then you make an interesting live act. Ya?

TI: Ya. In the early days Can were also working with film soundtracks and were putting music to TV. It's been a continual theme on your solo albums too.

HC: That comes out of my personal attitude towards listening to music. I love concentrating. Listening to music makes it a real event, an event of time, how time is condensed, how it makes something with you. People call it magic, whatever that is, but actually it is the flowing of time. Music is time, somehow it is lived time, or condensed time. On The Way To The Peak Of The Normal is two years compressed into 18 minutes. Also I like to have silence; silence and music belong together. My attitude is very similar to that of Public Image. They are very strict about that kind of music. They are uncompromising, they are being not so helpful with the people, ya? That means they make no "oily" music. They are quite strict about it, and that's why I love them. I love to listen to them. And Jackie (Liebrecht) especially is fascinated by Public Image more and more. Metal Box he didn't like so much, but he was flipped out by Flowers Of Romance. He was saying "fantastic how they use the drums." He really likes to listen to it, they are very strict in their way, that is the quality. That is real listening quality.

TI: Do you intend to work more with film?

HC: The reason I like to make a film is because music is like a film event. It is also condensed time. It is because I like to listen that I like to watch movies. You see a fascinating movie and you are banged on the screen, you don't dare to look left or right. Whereas what you usually do when you listen to music is to use it as a background for all kinds of housework. That doesn't happen when you watch a movie. So I say "I make this kind of music where people listen again." That is completely different I respect that.

TI: The technology of making

(Continued On p.15)

Snake Charming In The Cool

(Continued)

films is far more accessible now than it was, say even 10 years ago.

HC: But think about how it was 30 years ago. Remember when you see an old Hollywood film of the '30's or '40's, the film media was at that time not highly developed. It was imperfect. They had to be very skillful with everything that they did. No zooms for example--how wonderful!--they had to move the camera, and they were BIG cameras. But look at how the picture is coming out on the screen--it's not just simply photographed or filmed, it is painted on the celluloid, really painted. Those people had to put so much into their work. That's why I say, the more the technology gets perfect--the more you can use it EASILY--the more the Kremlin aspects come into it. The eyes of the Kremlin, if you understand what I mean, the grey administration, the Company or whatever. It makes everybody just the same; grey, depressive amounts of walking weed. That's what I HATE! The spirit is gone. When I see modern pictures, television--when they put the cameras on something, let's say a street scene, a Volkswagen comes by and I switch off immediately. I

say "thank you, a Volkswagen I have of my own." Better I drive it or touch it, but I don't want it on the screen. Then I see how an old movie is done--how a car comes off the camera and disappears. It is a real poem. It is this quality in the music that also sometimes gets lost. The New Wave music is good because people want to be direct, but I wonder about those people. Maybe because they are young they don't know about the quality of meditation. What I mean in meditation is just thinking clearly about something. That's why I am editing--it takes such a long time, and that is a meditating process. And I love it when that quality is in because it means it has the ability to survive.

TI: You have worked with TV music though. Can's German hit "Spoon" was the theme for a TV serial.

HC: That's what I learned from Irmin (Schmidt).

TI: Do you enjoy working to an audience? You haven't worked live for some time.

HC: I felt when I was on stage for ten years, sometimes I felt I was not ready for it. You feel responsible after a while in front of the audience, and I thought "I'm not ready to feel that responsibility." Therefore I wanted

to explore the media first, and find out about myself. When I'm ready for it I'll go on stage again. It would be impossible for me to perform "Ode to Perfume" live. This is something ridiculous; it wouldn't work. But when I go on stage I know it will be somehow like the early Can days.

TI: I remember you on the "Top Of The Pops" show lip-synching to Can's hit "I Want More." You could do a video for "Ode To Perfume" that way.

HC: I have already decided that this is what I will do. I'll name it "Cool In The Pool." I thought what will you do if they ask you? Could you do it? And I thought "no, you couldn't." So I borrowed a video recorder and I put myself in front of the camera as if I were a Pop Star, ya? Like let's say, Tom Jones--but even worse than that! And when I watched myself on the screen I said "my god, that is IMPOS-SIBLE!" But I knew somehow that there is a solution. Then I went on recording for months, but all the time thinking that there is a task, and you have to master that. You have to get "Cool In The Pool" over, and make other people fascinated by it. How do you do it? That depends on your fantasy! So

I developed it out more and more, then I made a video out of it to show to some people, and somehow it's funny. I studied W.C. Fields and especially Charlie Chaplin at that time too, because he had this quality. I knew that. These are people who have everything in their own hands. Charlie Chaplin edited, he was standing behind the camera, he was standing in front of the camera, he was writing the scripts and making the music. That is something I thought--you have to be those hundred hands. To get that special quality out. W. C. Fields, the same thing, the same thing. He fascinated me. It took me a long time until I understood why. That quality of his, I did not understand it all in the beginning. But now I EAT HIM like crazy. I can watch his movies--"Never give a sucker an even break"--I can see that 1,000 times and laugh always about the same things. And I say "why is it you're able to laugh 1,000 times at the same thing?" That is something where the humor goes beyond the joke. And that's what I like to achieve in my music. Exactly that. That people can listen to it after 20 years, in the same way that I enjoy watching W.C. Fields.



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SAFE FOR SEPTIC TANKS



USE
TWICE
WEEKLY

-by Dirk Difficult

I'm playing a Chock-Full -O-Nuts can in a band called "You Suck" on stage at the Pyramid Cocktail Lounge in Manhattan. We open with the Bacharach standard, "Close To You," and then the lead singer, John, interrupts with a nary rendition of the Mary Tyler Moore theme song. He gets to the chorus and loses interest. The band, professional as they need be under these circumstances, stumbles for a moment; no, flounder is a better word. Then, as if by magic, the Suckettes transport us with another verse of "Close To You." Oh I get it, it's thematic.

"Enough of this petty shit," snaps the xylophonist behind my ear, "let's kick out the jams." We break into the You Suck original, "Get The Fuck Off the Stage," an audience participation song from their first and only single. Trouble is, this audience isn't that rancid, slow bastards, probably too wired to enjoy a ripe piece of parody. Shit, they have no idea what's coming down. Still, it's not that field-of-startled-cricket audience (very quiet) that You Suck members have deftly learned to grapple with, torment, and later ridicule at the bar. No, it's not that bad yet.

We've been on stage now for no more than four minutes and already it's too hot. The Pyramid's a small venue and the band is of unwieldy proportion. I'm not sure how many of us are playing at the moment, probably fifteen. There are two Suckettes, the up front girls, twitching their asses only inches from my nose. Someone's sitting off stage to my right, heavily baubled and coiffed, but clearly out of audience sight-lines. The xylophone is poking me in the neck, and assorted

chords, mike stands, riff raff and paraphernalia are heaped about. This guy named Steve climbs out from behind his tubs at the inevitable winding down and patented falling apart sound that marks the end of every number. Steve dons an acoustic guitar and heads toward center stage amidst howls of derision, mostly from the band. He sings a sad song about being from Scarsdale and being Jewish and taking acid and fucking his girlfriend who his father wouldn't approve of, only he doesn't get to the fucking his girlfriend part because he's forgotten the words, and the only reason I know is because I heard this number during the sound check. So Steve, decides to go back to the drums. I can hear a lot of nervous laughter in the audience, which puts us about where we should be at this juncture. This is a band for people who hate bands, for people who have a deep and abiding distrust of music. The fact that these nimrods are still watching us proves that. Thankfully, lead man John retakes the mike and hisses his way across Karma Kameleon. "Let me just go on record here and now," he told me before the set, "when I do Boy George I'm not ridiculing him, I'm celebrating his style." Why don't you celebrate this.

The girls in front of me have cleared a peep hole to the audience, so I get a good shot of the utterly complex emotional turmoil we've whipped into them. Many are headed downstairs, others to the bar. But there's that cricket constituency, numbered in the middle of the floor. They can't or won't move. Chilling is not the word.

Two fella's with indian pins are juggling in the pit before the stage. I don't think anyone is watching us. The jugglers have talent and that's dirty pool. "It's ok", someone

tells me, "They're with us."

When the Culture Club thing is done I sense a letdown in the band. I notice this guy on my left I'd never seen before who looks like a library science major holding an African thumb piano like it was a loaded roach motel. He's got this terrific Ralph Nader-driving-a-Pinto grin on his face. Its scary. People who sleep with members of the group and those who freelance, punctuate the interminable silences between songs reminding us of our name. We're really dying up there, so John introduces a guest artist, Cindi Lauper herself. It's that overly made up bimbo that's been sitting next to me all this time and I didn't even notice. God, do I feel stupid. This goes over great with the nimrods. She belts out Girls Just Want To Have Fun with the heat of a horny jackal, skillfully blended through the calamitous urgency of a band that wants to leave the stage and take a communal piss. The audience approves and hoots go up for another Lauper tune, but John ruefully reminds them that she only has one.

Bianca, the credible bass player, knows she's got a tough nut to follow and a hostile crowd before which she must sing a brand new You Suck song, "The Cow Goes Moo." It's a pithy number about animals and eating them. The refrain is complemented by an elaborate synth device that starkly recreates the essence of braying cattle. It's no bigger than your average stash box but turn it over, wait a second and wham, this moooc comes out. It's a hit, the moo that is. The song doesn't come apart like the others, it vaporizes. Little wisps of kidney beans in my coffee can, a broken chord, a misplaced rim-shot, then quiet. I glance back at the xylophonist who's got a crib sheet spread across the ribs of his machine. Lots of top ten and TV themes.

"Why do you do so many crap songs?" I ask no one in particular at the interview.

"Because when we formed, only one person could play an instrument, so naturally we couldn't write any on our own," said someone.

Ironically this lack of talent, or commitment, has burgeoned to a carefully planned assault on consumers and club-goers. The idea being that under this format they alone have the potential to

appeal to all audiences. The logic runs like this: By covering music people hate, the audience is palpable.

Say, for example, you like Pere Ubu's "Chinese Radiation" and You Suck doesn't play it; then you just saw a good show. It's a clever marketing scam designed by a bunch of too-smart art school, wise-ass kids who went to college and throw off lines like: "Our influences are Jarry, Duchamp, John Cage, Spike Jones and the Fugs," and "We don't make statements, we're an artistic vacuum."

Discovered a year ago at an open audition at CBGB's by producer Mikel Board; he jumped up and told them they were the worst band he had ever seen and offered to record them. Board can't make a living like that, but he tries, and the result is this first single. If it sells, and apparently it is doing well, it's due in large measure to the cover which brandishes a humanoid of dubious sexual affiliation puffing on someone's johnson. Board isn't even watching the show, he's in the basement slavishly hawking the 45.

I'm sitting under the heat lamps next to the library scientist, Lauper and the asses. My mind wanders. I'm thinking about the sound check and the horror on the sound man's face, about how I was asked to play with them this night because they didn't know who would show up, about how they never rehearse thereby beating rock and roll at its own game.

"The way it works", says John, "is that most bands end up spending more on rehearsal space than they take in at the clubs. We figured the way to really clean up is not to rehearse at all." "Yeah", says Steve, "we rented a studio once, we'll never make that mistake again."

And I'm thinking about the gig they did at the diplomats estate in D.C. for the diplomat's daughter on her birthday, and they played Green Acres and everybody left. It's that sort of confrontational miasma that makes it all worthwhile.

Christ, it's over. My day-dreaming kept me out of the finale. The band is pulling off stage, the audience has been squelched, and the MC is calling us mellifluous. That word's not even in my dictionary. So I know it must be good.

TRIGGER & THE THRILL KINGS



--by S-I Rodriguez

"Understand that it takes so long
I'll move on, I'm so strong
Strong enough to take the blame
Nothing's left but naked shame"

--"Shame"--copyright 1983
Trigger & Thrill Kings

The setting is one of New York's larger rock clubs, you know the sort of place; opens at 10 PM, admission half-price till 11 PM, band goes on around 2 AM or whenever the bar has sucked up most of the available cash. Careful not to touch anything, I contemplate the millions of polyesters that died to serve this terminally tacky lot. The DJ works ferociously not to excite the crowd and succeeds. What can be expected from a club whose first floor is a video arcade?

I slink along the shadows of the walls and pause to chat with the few familiar faces I stumble upon in the dark corners. It's the usual blah-blah, woof-woof with the exception of everyone's sincere excitement over Truus de Groot and Jim Scluvanos (hubby & wife) being back on the scene after months of recording in Holland and working with guitarist Jim "Buck" Duckworth down in Memphis. There is the sense of something good in the air. The DJ mercifully stops, the lights dim and people

emerge from the woodwork. Showtime!

The sparse drumkit appears dwarfish next to the very tall, very blond, very serene Jim Scluvanos (Teenage Jesus, 8-Eyed Spy, Panther Burns, Lydia Lunch, TNT & Sonic Youth). Next on is good ol' rockabilly boy--Jim "Buck" Duckworth (Alex Chilton, Panther Burns, Gun Club). Upstage left, someone in black and white is curled up like a baby chick. A few amp adjustments, a couple of mutterings in Dutch, and then a flash of red hair, as the figure rises up transforming into a swan. The knowing grin, the sapphire blue eyes, and the electric bass belong to Truus de Groot (Excorsisters, Numa, Nasmak, Plus Instruments, TNT).

Everything is set, and the band explodes into "St. Louis Blues," a gritty, honky-tonk number. Truus' voice is clear and strong, occasionally descending to a low, husky depth. Duckworth provides some fancy strumming here. He is an absolute ace on guitar and on songs like "Moaning Low" proves to have the fast-est, hottest hands since Dave Alvin (The Blasters). He brings a new vitality to the classic "Dead Cat" and is flexible enough to deliver the dark, ominous mood of "Horrible." There is a hyper-southern touch in everything he plays; he is a Memphis boy and can't help himself.

Jim Scluvanos, "King Voom"--as he is referred to down at the malt shop--is the

backbone of this power trio. He plays his drums strong and steady, has a sense of time and keeps everything running smoothly. He also proves extremely agile, playing both drums and synthesizer simultaneously on "Possessed."

Though there is a democratic balance between the members, the ears always revert back to Truus. Buck and King Voom collaborate perfectly with the singer they have affectionately nicknamed "Trigger." The magnitude of Truus de Groot's talent is evident in her variety of styles: her tough, gutsy vocals on "Horrible," her feverish articulation on "Possessed," the 60's girl-group whine of "Shame" and on "Don't Forget Me, Baby" Truus' moody wailing exemplifies the voice as an instrument. Truus becomes so passionately engrossed singing that her slight imperfections on bass are readily forgiven.

Trigger & The Thrill Kings played a solid, high-energy forty-minute set. Afterwards, I stopped off backstage to say my piece amongst the hustle and bustle of family, old friends and newfound fans.

In the midst of conversation, Duckworth notices his jacket is nowhere in sight. His concern edges towards panic upon remembering that his Bible is in one of the pockets. After scanning the dressing room to no avail, in search of the missing garment, he excuses himself and dashes out the door. Ten minutes later, he returns vic-

torious with both Bible and jacket in hand. "It was backstage. I'd be upset if I lost this." He flips the prophetic literature over in his hand and smiles. I set up an interview, finish my beer and hit the street. Outside, freedom, in the form of fresh air, slaps me in the face.

A few days later, at a dilapidated cocktail lounge in lower Manhattan, I sat down to talk with this plucky trio. Contending with the jukebox, the loudmouths, the laughter and the two-cents vendors, the rest is history:

Td--Truus de Groot
JS--Jim Scluvanos
BD--Buck Duckworth

T!: How did the three of you get together?

Td: In 1981 I took a break from the band Plus Instruments and came to the US. I returned to Holland for a few months and then came back to the USA and then to Europe. I was moving around every few months and then finally I met Jim and stayed here. That was in '82 on The Kitchen tour. I was playing guitar with Rhys Chatham, just for that tour because he needed a guitarist.

JS: You were singing and playing guitar.

Td: Rhys is an artist who composes mostly multi-guitar instrumentals. The fact that he let me sing was pretty remarkable. I got good reviews and it was unusual for him to get reviews that talk about a girl singing in his band. (Laughs) I don't know if he was pleased about it, but he should be.

T!: So when did you start with Jim and Trudy on TNT? (Trudy Koby also worked with Jim and Truus on Plus Instruments).

JS: Actually Trudy and Truus started together. Buck and I came in on the same thing a little later on. Buck was involved in TNT as well.

Td: Oh yeah, from the earliest stages.

JS: Not corporally.

BD: I was on the cassette tape (grins) which is the best way to have me.

Td: A month after Jim and I had gotten together. Buck came to town to play with Panther Burns. They didn't have many gigs so we hung around playing together. We realised at the first session, that this was to be the band of our lives. The problem was that Buck was in Panther Burns and then Gun Club. We did play on a tape with Buck, and always had the idea that we would be a power trio.

T!: When Buck went back to Memphis, how did you hook up with Trudy?

JS: She was just there. TNT was only a blueprint for this band.

Td: It was a very blue, blueprint. Trudy was there. Jim, Buck and I knew that the three of us had to play together, but it was financially impossible at the time.

JS: TNT was a way of biding time. We broke up TNT when we left for Holland last year with Annene Kaye and toured with Plus Instruments again.

T!: Did people remember Plus Instruments?

Td: Basically people remember me as Truus de Groot formerly of Nasmak and Numa but there were some who remembered Plus Instruments. When Gun Club arrived in Holland to gig, Buck went around screaming "Do you know Truus de Groot?"

BD: When I got to Holland I grabbed the first kid I saw and asked if he knew her. Each one would say that he knew she was in Nasmak, a punkette in Numa, Plus Inst. ...etc; but didn't know her personally. Everyone knew who Truus was, but not how to reach her.

T!: OK Buck, so how did you originally meet Jim?

BD: Jim and I met working for Alex Chilton. Then I suckered Jim into joining Panther Burns and he fell for it.

JS: And I fell for it in a bad way (rolls his eyes). That lasted for about a year.

BD: Then I made some tapes with Jim and Truus, then I

(Continued On p.17)

(Continued)

went to Europe with Gun Club, and back to America with Gun Club and finally home without the Gun Club.

TI: What made you decide to leave Gun Club?

BD: Lots of bad business and evil personalities amongst corpulent lead singers in that band. Also, the unwillingness to do anyone else's material other than Jeffrey's. It was just another tyranny like the Panther Burns. I had a real problem with Panther Burns too. They wouldn't even listen to a song Jim & I wrote that is now a hit for us.

TI: Are you referring to "Moaning Low"?

BD: Yeah. We gave it to Panther Burns last summer while Jim, Truus and I were working in Hoboken. They wouldn't even listen to it.

TI: Why hasn't Zick Zack released "Moaning Low" yet?

JS: They've decided to release a mini-album instead. All the cuts have not been determined yet. We will record more material in either Germany or Holland this summer when we'll be touring Europe.

TI: How's the management situation?

JS: Much to our disadvantage, we don't have an agent at the moment. We're setting everything up and doing it all on our own.

Td: I don't think it's good being too personally involved in the business.

BD: You need an intermediary between the band and the place where you're playing.

JS: The hardest part, of handling the business, is to keep up a friendly reputation. Clubs always try to make you feel as if they are doing you a favor. There are plenty of clubs to play and there will always be some guy around the corner who wants to start a

new club. We don't feel obliged to suck up to anybody; on the other hand, we don't want to alienate anybody. We like a lot of the clubs and want to keep playing them. It's a hard balance to strike.

TI: Are you unhappy with Zick Zack?

JS: We're unhappy with them for postponing the release of our record. There is a big communication problem. Our label is in Germany and we are here. News travels back and forth pretty slowly. We'd prefer to be with an American label, either independent or major. We'd rather deal with people who speak English. We will be looking for a new label. Zick Zack is by no means the end of the line.

TI: How is the material written?

Td: Jim and I have been living and working together for quite some time, and Buck really gets into the writing with us. Things just evolve, it's the progress of three people.

JS: The composing is fully integrated. Buck came up with the whole song "Moaning Low" on guitar, basically.

TI: How about the lyrics?

JS: Truus and I come up with most of the lyrics right now.

Td: But, if Buck comes up with lyrics, that's fine too. We're not restricted.

TI: Anything in particular trigger off "Moaning Low"?

JS: Probably. I'm not telling BD: Dogs play a significant role in the Thrill Kings universe.

JS: We just saw a woe-begotten dog on the corner. He was desperately moaning low.

BD: Looking for a friend.

Td: We have a lot of songs about animals; they are everywhere.

TI: How come you have a moaning dog and a dead cat?

JS: It's pretty sad, the plight of many of these creatures of God, and we are all creatures of God.

BD: One thing about Panther Burns...they got real nervous when we started talking about religion. Those guys had nothing to say about religion, what-so-ever. And Gun Club? Oh, forget it!

TI: Was their attitude anti-religious?

BD: It was a nothing-religious attitude. It's always been the case in R-n-R, that if you don't have anything and you want people to latch onto you, you can pull out some satanic crap, or just simply imply it a lot, and give people something to write about. Jeffrey lives with his mom in "Leave It To Beaver" land. Jeffrey walks in "HI MOM!", pours himself a glass of milk and sits watching TV. Anyone who has seen his mother doing his laundry and stuff for him...

JS: ...knows how evil he is.

BD: It's all a load of crap. Oh, Satan! Lookout! You can make that devil stuff up in ten minutes, but it never lasts.

TI: Why are you based in Memphis?

BD: It's my fault. They can't get me out of there. I will not leave Memphis.

JS: So we're based in Memphis. We like it there.

Td: Besides, we have lived in New York for a while and it is really getting quite expensive. Why not Memphis? The music is all there and the climate is good. I like it.

BD: There are two important groups coming out of there at present, ourselves and The Modifiers.

TI: I haven't heard of them.

BD: You will. They have John Densmore of the Doors, and a guy formerly with Fear is also

working with them now. They are making a lot of noise on the West Coast.

Td: They're working the West Coast, we're working the East Coast. And we'll meet somewhere in Kansas City someday.

BD: Actually, we want to tour together as a Memphis package. We have played with them several times and it really works well together.

Td: They have a similar element in their music. That southern accent.

BD: It's hard rock on top of roots; country, gospel, rockabilly. It's all there in Memphis. We can go have biscuits at Charlie Feather's house, or over to Paul Brooks to play with Johnny Burnette. You can see any of those guys, like Sonny Burgess, they're all there.

TI: "Dead Cat" sounds totally different now. It's a real rockabilly number.

Td: It had a very different arrangement before.

BD: We honed it out while gigging in Memphis.

TI: Is "Possessed" about celebrity killing? Or rather, fan obsession that can lead to that?

Td: It's all about being in love with a celebrity and unable to touch them and so caught up in them that you don't even want to touch them.

TI: For fear of what it might unleash? Disappointment?

Td: Some people might see a celebrity they love and feel like running away from them 'cause they are scared to death. Their feelings are just too much.

TI: What's your idea of success?

ALL: To live in Voodoo Village, in a boat, with lots of dickel horses.

Remember folks, you heard it hear first.

GUN CLUB

-by Joe Bliss

Jeffrey Lee Pierce has expressed the desire to have these words on his tombstone -- "He tried his best but he could not." This writer's own deep empathy with that epitaph found new meaning again on the day following my conversation with Pierce when the interview tape was destroyed by a bad machine, resulting in the following attempt to paraphrase what would have been no doubt a killer (I swear) verbatim interview.

The Gun Club are very nearly a physical manifestation of Jeffrey Lee Pierce's Big Vision. Gun Club members have come and gone with each new recording, yet the core remains because the core is Jeffrey Lee. He writes all the band's original material and sings with one of the most consistently convincing voices around--in and out of key and control, practically gushing the qualities of strength, weakness, perverse mystery and not-so-subtle irony that the songs celebrate. Run it all through a filter or pure Americana and you got the Gun Club.

The Las Vegas, The Gun Club's new LP on Jem, seemed a logical main point of interest and a good place to begin our conversation. Jeffrey Lee seemed relaxed though maybe just a bit overdefensive about some criticisms of the record

as being too "smooth" or "calculated." He admits that this record is a departure, although not radical or even conscious, from the last one, but insists that it is different primarily because he made this album for himself. Worrying too much about who his audience was and what their expectations were led to product like *Death Party*, a record that Pierce does not see as being much more "advanced" than the record before it. When he matter-of-factly says "I had to sap all that (worrying about what the audience wants)," you believe him, contrary to much public and private opinion pointing to the new LP as a bid for larger commercial success at the expense of sacrificing some of the band's most intriguing qualities.

Jeffrey Lee says none of these criticisms are true. He admits the new record is more "broadly colored," that there is more variety of styles, but insists that any "slickness" real or imagined is just the result of having more time to work out the arrangements. The quirky guts of The Gun Club ("modal qualities" as Jeffrey Lee says) are still intact.

It's interesting to look at *Las Vegas Story* as the first record he made for himself. He flatly tells you that he likes everything on this record, from the jazz meanderings of Pharoah Saunders' "The Master Plan" to the popish whimsies of "My Dreams". All of these strains and more have been present in the Gun Club's approach since they began playing, but now they present themselves in a more pure and undiluted way. There is no "Sex Beat" new wave-cum-rockabilly or fashionably perverse "She's Like Heroin To Me" theatrics to veil these new songs. *Las Vegas Story* is a highly eclectic collection of intensely personal takes on American music in many of its forms. There is a stronger, less apologetic link to Tradition here than ever before (even more so than with the most country and/or bluesish

cuts on *Miami*, the last real Gun Club record before it).

Pierce's own tastes are at least as eclectic as the many styles represented on the new album. George Gershwin's "My Man's Gone Now," which appears on the record, is apparently just the tip of an iceberg of other torch ballads Jeffrey would like to do, just as "The Master Plan" is the forerunner of much jazz-related activity to come (John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" has long been a high point of Gun Club live shows). Jeffrey still listens to a lot of jazz, particularly Eric Dolphy and many of the old Bop players; yes, plans ARE underway for the forming of a Free Jazz blow band within which Jeffrey too will



be blowing. Auditions are currently being held, and taking your instrument to seriously will probably be held against you. In a way.

What Jeffrey listens to now is "A lot of different things," most recently Peruvian music and some things

from an Ecuadorian children's marching band, which he finds very surreal and beautiful.

Already it seems there is too much material to deal with, too many directions being staked out simultaneously. An acoustic piece that didn't make it onto the album (but will be available on the cassette version) spurs Jeffrey to begin seriously considering a Gun Club double LP in the near future. But what about all those sick, stupid Time/Money considerations, and a double album of WHAT anyway?

Pierce believes the one common quality of the bands he used to listen to...that he liked...was that they were unpredictable. You could see them any number of times and they'd be different every night (NOTE: Not just good as opposed to bad, or the set changing, but the nature of the band itself would change). Face it--a lot of us know (or we think we know) way too much for our own good these days. Our collective attention span dwindles every second. The only good band is a dead band or one that constantly redefines enough of itself, staying with the audience just enough to remain in touch but enough ahead to keep them guessing. Jeffrey Lee Pierce seems to know all this, so he'll probably be all right; but it's going to take a lot of unpredictability to invest all those past forms and quasi-traditional references with enough new meaning to satisfy that audience...but I guess that's something Jeffrey Lee won't be worrying about.

ADDITIONAL INSTANT QUOTES:

1. "LA is a horrible place."
2. "I write best when I'm bored."

And again, apologies to Jeffrey Lee for my not being able to include some of his comments in their entirety, especially his very interesting and eloquent explanation of "Brother and Sister," his favorite song.

-by Steve Fritz

Sonda is away, visiting her family in Harrisburg, PA. Dave, John, Victor and I are eating at the local falafel shop. We're broke (as usual), but the shop is cheap, so nobody's complaining.

Next door, a new gallery's just opened. The patrons are gnoshing it up by invitation only. It doesn't bother the band that the people are getting fat for nothing. What does get them is what's hanging on the walls, which would normally go well with the latest Ambient soundtrack at your local up and coming dental clinic.

At that time, Dave Tritt is the darling of his 9-5 job. The boss of the demolition company he works for has given him run of the place. Victor knows this.

Victor grins menacingly, "Don't you have the keys to the supply room?"

Dave smiles back. Flashes of red paint, dead vermin and smashed cinder blocks on the gallery floor dance inside John's head. I'm always up for interior decoration of this nature.

Quickly finishing our meals, we slip back into our jackets and book outside. As we pass the gallery, Victor pauses and gloats at what's on the other side of the window. Then he pauses.

"Nah" he frowns.

I'm caught off guard, "why?"

"They'd probably think it's another performance," he closes.

We turn our heels and move back to Rat Central.

"You paint a picture and you put it in a gallery, right? Then it's dead," Victor states in his all too cramped room. "Sometimes people will get a reaction from it...and then they leave. It's a stagnant thing."

"Even my own paintings, I rip them down off the wall, tear them apart and then color on top of them."

"When you go to an art show or performance," continues Sonda, now back from her family, "people come in, browse, and sip wine. When Rat At Rat R get on stage, it's HERE, NOW THAT WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION." And, she warns, "we will have your attention."

"My view of rock and roll is like a living art," Victor comments. "It's instantaneous. It's the only art form that's not static."

"Kind of a left hook..." Dave acts out.

"...like a boxing match" finishes Victor. "It's an art form that the artist has no control over. That's the fun of it. It's the idea that on stage, rock and roll can get away from you. Anything can happen, and you have to be ready for it."

Victor Poison-Tete, his wife and bass player Sonda Anderson, drummer Dave Tritt and guitarist John Myers form a synergistic unit named Rat At Rat R (meaning: art to the third power in 4/4 time...I won't be any more explicit). They are a rock and roll band.

They're also establishing themselves as poets, painters, performance artists and whatever else strikes their collective fancy. They also unflinchingly call themselves artists (remember that word?). Only one of them has had the schooling...

"I played classical for about three years," remembers John. "Then I went to Berkeley (School of Music) and was really disillusioned. When I went to school, there was this big thing between rock and jazz, and I didn't know rock."

"As a result, my whole approach to rock guitar is indifferent, especially after going to Berkeley."

Sonda laughs. "Victor had to teach him how to bend a note!"

"I didn't know a note could be bent!" John laughs back, a little in self-defense.

"All I knew was to experiment. Eventually I did learn how to incorporate all that stuff in, but it was my own way of learning. I didn't know the standardized licks that everyone else knew."

"We're both inadequate as guitarists" Victor points out. "While John was studying Segovia, I was deeply impressed by Keith Richards and Tom Verlaine. So the only way that John and I could do it was like two heads becoming one; welding things together, learning how to play 'rock' together. This also includes Dave, because John and Dave were playing together since they were kids in Harrisburg."

"I don't think of myself as a solo player, I consider myself as part of a unit" John closes. The band all nods in agreement; they remember how long it took them to come to this point...

In 1977, Victor, John, Dave, and a bass player named Steve formed XCV9. Sonda, already married to Victor, became manager when, after the first gig, Victor handed her the cash and drafted her to this position.

But living in the depths of Harrisburg is fine for a band if you like doing lots of time in your garage...lots and lots of time. No real gigs, a steady turnover of band members (eventually including Dave and John), Sonda realized that she had spent a lot of time in Philadelphia, and that now many of her friends were involved in the growing club scene.

Gigs were soon steady, but the band member problem remained, especially on bass. XCV9 soon went the way of many other Philadelphia bands...distant memories with almost no one remembering them.

In '81, the first Rat At Rat R was conceived over a new year's eve party and maybe a few too many braincandies. For this band Sonda was drafted to the bass ("I didn't pick up any bad habits from Victor. I learned to play the instrument the way they wanted me too.") Andy Prossack (later of Final Conflict) was, on drums, Michael Gross (now of Experimental Products) on keyboards and someone was found for guitar. The sound was somewhere to the left of noise, and the right of inspiration.

The Rat At Rat R sound was underlined in Victor's manic vocals, guitar and violin while it was secured by Sonda's then primitive bass. But Andy was always a heavy metal drummer and Micheal's pop leanings were already beginning to state themselves. As for the guitarist, he was heavily into Fripp chordings and seemed to always be in opposition to the rest of the band (and that took some doing).

At their second show, Andy called in to say that he couldn't make it just before the gig. With no forewarning, the rest got on stage anyway, and Charlie Hanson (now of the Vels) and Joey Bruno (now managing Dance Factor) stepped up on stage to take over Andy's parts. Seeing that Philadelphia wasn't going to do them any better than Harrisburg (especially after Omni's burnt down), Sonda and Victor packed what they could into a van, sold off the rest, and made way for New York.

By '83, John had dropped out of school and had also drifted into New York. It didn't take him long to reach the other two ("We never really lost contact" recalls Victor). It took even less time for John to contact Dave ("I just got a call from John saying 'hey, come on to New York.'" Dave did.) After a trial run at a party, Rat At Rat R Mach II made their official debut in May '83 at the now gone S.I.N. Club. The audience was over 80% musicians. Reaction was quick and word spread fast. It's easy to see why...

Another gig at the East Side. Sonda announces the band by stroking her bass with a drum stick. John starts building walls of feedback while Dave begins pounding a tribal beat.

Victor sits atop one of the amps, smoking a Tarryton, surveying the audience. Eventually his eyes go beyond the front to an imaginary point behind the bar.

As the band flails away, Victor leaps off the stage onto the back of one of the listeners. Catching his balance, he cannonballs through the crowd, scaring the hell out of one prominent DJ (who then watches the rest of the show from the comparative safety of behind a pillar). Within seconds, Victor is behind the bar, much to the tenders consternation (which they carry to this day), jumping up and down like an amused child. Seeing a girl he knows, he kisses her so hard that his lips bleed. Then, he barrels back to the stage to sing out the first verse of "The Plague."

In response, the band thunders out the first chords.

"It's like telepathy amongst us" explains Victor. "Dave and John have played together since they were kids, so they've developed their own language pooled from common interests. John and I learned guitar together, and Sonda was trained by us, so we also developed a language. We don't have to explain anything to each other."

"When I'm playing my instrument and Victor is out there screaming his lyrics..." Dave pauses "...I understand. I know the lyrics and they're all dear to me. So when I'm playing, what I'm actually doing is counting out the words. In other words, each one of us acts as one instrument."

"Victor doesn't have to tell us what to do" Sonda adds. "Instinctively we just know."

"It's like learning how to fall ten stories and landing on your feet like a cat" adds Victor. "Even now there are little things, notes we play, signs to each other that make us laugh on stage. No one else

rat at rat r

Mark Landau



Mark Landau

could notice them, but little things inside the band."

"We call them wrenches. They're like when you look into someone's eyes and you just know" continues Dave.

Victor resumes. "We do a lot of improvisation on stage. That's the way rock and roll should be, an exorcism of feeling, like they gave you a punching bag and you took a few good whacks at it. Then you feel much better. You get together for a collective tribal kind of thing and give that big primal scream against all the things that bug you and makes your face break out. After you're done, it feels great."

"I came to this because of Radio Ethiopia by Patti Smith and reading Duchamps at the same time. Duchamps was talking about the mechanizations of speech, the idea that any word or thought is an abstraction. In different cultures a word can take on different meanings, so all communications are vague."

"So Duchamps said that the only time you can rely on something was when it was a guttural response. If you listen to 'Radio Ethiopia' there's a point where Patti breaks down into mumbling and you'll go 'I really can't understand what she's saying, and she's saying it way to fast...' but the thing is to cut through it and take it to pure emotion. Then you come up with that kind of delivery. That's rock and roll, a medium that goes to the point where someone who doesn't speak the language, doesn't own a car, doesn't know the latest trend, is just going to automatically identify with the emotion."

"I just think about making a note and getting across what I have to say" Dave continues. "I think the biggest problem with the world today is misinterpretation, so when I'm on stage I'm trying to reach out and say 'NOW, you listen.' I want to have impact, not shock value. I want our message to come through."

"I'm more concerned with the feel" John chips in, "and getting that feel to the audience."

"I see us as entertaining in the sense that we're like walking down the street of some bad neighborhood" Dave rebounds. "Rock and roll is so boring because it's so tame. It's become like living in a nice, safe suburb. And people have become so bored with it they'll walk through a bad one where anything could happen."

"That's what relates to Rat At Rat R. You don't know if you're going to get hurt...or

you're going to find something you've never experienced before."

"You'll never know" Dave threatens.

"We have to allow a looseness to our show because we ourselves don't know what we're going to do from one show to the next" adds Sonda.

"I mean everything should be considered part of the performance" resumes Victor. "If the cops come in and bust the place, then it's part of the performance. If the PA shuts down, don't throw your hands up in the air, make it part of the show."

"It becomes a wrench" summarizes Dave.

"At any particular point" warns Victor, "someone is going to come in and invade your space. You have to know how to deal with it, turn it around. You have to be an acrobat on stage."

Victor could also have added that the stage could be anywhere...

* * *

I wasn't there for this one, but I heard it from enough sources to believe it, and wish I was.

To commemorate an opening of Victor's artwork at the Life Cafe, the band staged an outside performance. A reading, Victor had prepared some new poetry involving Egyptians and rights of passage (I think). Sonda also read, while Dave pounded the four corners surrounding the Cafe with a ten pound mallet and John did something strange with a bucket of water.

Whatever they did, it drew quite a crowd...including five squad cars.

Now New York's finest weren't too fazed by the goings on. They had more important things to worry about like rapes, murders, arson and armed robbery; not some artists making a lot of noise in the Lower East Side.

They asked Victor what he was doing. He told them. They decided that being there was nothing of a seriously illegal nature going on, they'd join the audience and watch.

Victor then finished the performance, and eventually the NYPD got the call to be elsewhere...

* * *

Rat At Rat R incorporates all forms of performance" states Sonda.

"We're definitely a hybrid medium" acknowledges Victor. "But we know the differences between reading poetry and playing rock and roll. Like after years and years of having this wall of sound behind you to actually go out and read poetry with no one behind you..." he stutters "...it's



Chris Egan



so easy.

"Yet when you come back to do your music, then you see that if you can be strong with just the word, when you throw music in it as well you really expand on it. If you write a short story, it's really the preparation for a novel. One time John and I did a performance at the East Side, it became (the song) 'The Plague.'"

The readings we did at Life Cafe," John adds, "were loose, spontaneous things. It releases us and gives input to grow. We never wanted Rat At Rat R to be just another band."

"It encompasses everything" summarizes Dave.

"It encompasses all performance, both individual and as a group," clarifies Sonda. "We all read poetry, we all paint...we're all artists."

* * *

After we'd finished, John and Dave left to score a meal. Sonda, Victor and I thought that wasn't a bad idea ourselves.

As we went through the outer door, we see that hallway a-block away from the oversized roach motel that Sonda and Victor lovingly call home,

another group of well-dressed, die-haired people are gnoshing it up again, spreading the ceremonial cheddar cheese on Ritz crackers and while drinking the blood of white wine grapes in plastic cups.

"Another gallery!" moans Sonda.

"We're going to have to move out of here" she bitches. "Have you heard that they're actually going to open one on the first floor of our apartment building?"

I think back to the interview. One thing Victor pointed out was why he hated these galleries so much.

"They're all the same!" he protested, "Like rock bands, all they try to do is entertain."

"I mean we also try to entertain" he admits, "but I mean SOMEHOW we try to leave you with a little bit more... just not waste people's time for 45 minutes."

...SOMEHOW I don't think Rat At Rat R ever will.



Chris Egan



EINSTURZENDE WHAT'S IN

-by S-I Rodriguez

Einsturzende Neubaten translates loosely and coolly to mean "Collapsing New Buildings," a name inspired by a rather ironic incident that occurred in Berlin. It seems that the American built, clam-shaped building, Congress Hall, while standing as a symbol of American-German relations, one day literally collapsed. "It was a new technique in building..." explains pale, witty, dark haired bassist, Marc Chung "...and it collapsed on it's own after ten years. The Americans are planning on redoing it. It's going to be completely useless because inside the building are just meeting rooms which Berlin already has twice as many as it needs. Concerts could be given there, but, there are much better places to perform, really."

Men of Means By No Means

The band as a whole, as well as singularly, reflects the impecunious side of the world's economy. An impoverished state some of us know all-too-well and succumb to far too frequently. Speaking in a low, calm voice, painfully gaunt vocalist Blixa Bargeld tell how economics have had an effect on the music of Einsturzende Neubaten. "We started to play on metal because our drummer was out of money and had to sell his drumkit. We then had to go on to other means of percussion."

Lack of traditional equipments enhanced rather than inhibited the work of Einsturzende Neubaten. Claiming all objects and elements around them as their instruments; their sources range from trash to flesh.

A smile flashes across the face of intimidatingly solid Mufti Einhart, as he speaks of the machinery used to perform. "We travel with the smaller road drill. The long twelve foot metal slats (used in the show I saw) were from one of the unoccupied floors in the Danceteria. The cement mixer, metal springs, discs, etc... were found at a lower East Side junkyard that afternoon." There is a short pause while Mufti acknowledges the cat. "Concrete and metal produce the best sound with a road drill. The problem with a wood stage is that the drill gets stuck. It has happened before." Mufti's gaze moves out into the corner of the room, signifying that he has finished his speaking. The corners of his mouth turn up as he quietly reflects on wooden stages past.

"Basically, it's every type of material," adds Marc referring to their alternate choices in instruments. "Artificial materials like plastic. Organic materials like meat. We used Blixa's body. I'd like to use your body..."

"Now don't get stupid," says Blixa casting a leery eye over his mirrored shades at Marc. "We have tried various sounds over the last few years such as vibra- phones and grand pianos, but, we just get bored."

And The Beat Goes On...

Due to the subjectivity and variety of materials used in their live shows, EN's works allow a great deal of room for improvisation. "We search for objects..." explains Marc "...and then we decide what is necessary for the best sound and use of that object. Our compositions can either evolve around the object or it can be..." He turns to Blixa in a searching manner

and they confer in German for a moment or two. Marc's hands begin forming small semi-circles in the air. Blixa now aware of the meaning, nods knowingly and agreeingly at Marc.

"Atmospheres" offers Blixa, turning to me.

"Yes, atmospheres," agrees Marc. "Like finding a sad atmosphere and putting that sadness down on track."

"But how we compose is different for every song, it is different for every performance, and different for every recording," claims Blixa, pointing to several paths as though battling confinement. "For example, when Lydia (Lunch) asked us to do the backing tapes for her live German performances, we just began playing with no specific guidelines. Then we listened to the tape for what was actually good. We then recorded that same song, on the other side, freestyle and it sounds totally different. Yet, it is the same song." Blixa grows increasingly animated while discussing the EN approach to songwriting. He moves forward in his chair as he continues. "Negative Nein" began when Andrew and I were playing around with a cheap echo machine. I was singing the whole time while he was experimenting with the echo. That's how the lyrics came about. Those particular words sounded very good overlapping through that echo. Later we went into the studio and I asked Mufti to put an echo on the microphone. In between gaps I just started playing with the rubber mike supports." A simple, almost absentminded idea that turned out to be very effective.

"It's quite funny" interrupts Marc. "It was a microphone usually used by vocalists, called a Big Cylinder, that is suspended by four rubber bands. The bands all look pretty much alike, but if you twitch them, they all emanate different sounds. The funny part is that this Japanese guy heard the song and immediately wanted it for his cassette magazine because, he said, 'It has Japanese harmonies'."

I am at a loss for words. I could see the cassette publisher's point. The sound is light and plucky, resembling that of an oriental string instrument. All that, from four rubber bands which were used randomly. I am not minutely surprised by the depth and freeness of their musical deceptions. Their music brings to mind images that have little or (more often) nothing to do with the identity of the object(s) being used.

Hands Off!

Einsturzende Neubaten incorporates intelligible combinations of tones, in other words, they make music. So all you over-zealous members of the audience should let them be while they perform. A pet peeve of the band, in particular Mufti (that hulk of a guy you don't want to make mad), is when the audience bangs on their objects.

"We actually dislike when the audience bangs on our metal. They stand up in front and yell 'My name is... and I'm doing something similar'. Then they proceed to show us by banging on our instruments while we are in the middle of a performance. It's annoying and gets boring" bemoans Blixa.

When asked if unwanted audience participation has happened here in the States, Blixa replies "No, but when I opened the front door this morning, someone was standing there banging a piece of metal saying he wanted to talk to me." At this story, Mufti, Marc and Blixa laugh heartily. Is this fact or fiction. Don't know.

Run, Coward, Run

Einsturzende Neubaten attracts full capacity crowds when they play, but theirs is not a dancing audience. Danceteria was near pitch black while they performed, with only the odd patch of deep colored light onstage. Visually it was very reminiscent of the Stranglers in their "No More Heroes" days. Minimal action with a whole lot of sound. During EN's show, I witnessed a sea of faces, all facing the stage, quiet and mesmerized, attentively watching in the dark with nary the physical comment of even a muscle spasm. Does it bother EN that the audience watches and listens as though they were on television?

"We like it most when they run away" quips Marc. There are grunts, smirks and nods all around confirming that statement. "The best movement I remember..." continues Marc "...was at this very crowded RCA show. We were using heavy machinery. Petro drill compressors that can go through a foot of concrete in about ten seconds. Well, we took the drill into the audience and they got really scared. Usually, the crowd moves forward for a good look, but not this audience. The people in the front row tried to move back really quickly. Since it was so crowded only the first two or three people could see what was going on. The people in the back were frantically trying to get away, and they didn't know why. It was a moment of extreme panic."

"We like that moment of life" adds Blixa. "You feel alive at moments like that cause you're feeling something intensely." I understand the theory but don't subscribe to that particular brand. I am a firm believer in those extreme, blood rushing, pulsating, electrifying moments of feeling alive. However I consider fear a negative and cheap vehicle with which to spark that feeling. Also, I don't go to see a show to feel jeopardized. One of EN's goals while performing is to tear the club/hall down.

Once in awhile, things can get out of hand, for example; Perkin's Palace, where they were unable to maintain control over the gasoline and fire that were used for visual effects. Not only did EN torch the stage, but also the jacket sleeve of someone upfront in the audience. There was no serious injury and it was not Einsturzende's intention for anyone to get hurt. Unexpected adolescent behavior from a group that offers so much creatively, still, they are really not a violence band (merely careless with kerosene), a term they were tagged with by the Sun (an English brand X sort of newspaper).

"They wrote a piece about how we used chainsaws and that somebody might get hurt. It's a terrible development because we are being plagued with propaganda" says Marc.

"And it's the propaganda that labels us" adds Blixa.

"At 70% of the gigs, nothing happens. The audience just waits for us to tear down the hall. That's the idea of the band." Marc is very serious while saying this (is he recalling

mood and throw a bright, hot, white light on a frozen moment in time. There is a great deal of singing/chanting on this album compared to the first. There is also, a poetic sense of justice between the sharp voices of angst and the odd, yearning, intricate accompaniment.

Both albums are better than good; they are thought provoking. In assaulting the constrictions of our preconceived notions (Is it a drill or an automatic rhythm?), Einsturzende illustrate the frightening truth about our inhibited, inadequate ways of observation and confirm the absurd number of possibilities we overlook and dismiss, mostly, out of sheer laziness. After all, if we look, we may have to think.

Neubaten is aware that thought carries with it the perils of confronting one's own ignorance, but if man is to improve and grow, then it must be. However, EN do not sermonize, moralize or homogenize. They cunningly creep into your brain's inner sanctum and recharge the dormant cerebral connections with sparks of life. And like life, Einsturzende's sparks are both painful and joyful.

King Of The Road

EN envision success as caterpillars, bulldozers, women, big tattoos and beer. There was talk of one or two other things accompanying success but, in the name of good taste, I won't tell.

"We'll be a success when we have our own company to tear down buildings. That's my idea of Capitalism, to tear down buildings professionally" quips Marc. Solemnly he adds, "To be available to everyone. Good distribution."

"Anything else you boys would like to add?"

Marc--"Don't go to our concerts"

Blixa--"Buy our records"

Marc--"No, don't do that!"

Blixa--"Buy our records"

Marc--"Distribute our records"

Mufti--"Don't bang our metal."

NEUBATEN A NAME?

the other 30% of the gigs?) and pauses for a moment before adding "I get a bit worried speaking about this (the violence label) in interviews because of the danger that it will strongly distract (and detract) from the music we are doing."

"I once met a guy at a concert" says Blixa in their defense. "He was showing me his bandaged arm and said 'I was at your concert last week and it was wonderful.' I wouldn't have called it a serious injury but still he was wearing his bandage like a badge." Blixa is beaming obviously impressed by this show of loyalty.

"But we are foreign to this violence thing" says Marc, looking at Blixa as if telling him he has said quite enough.

You Ought To Be In Pictures

One of EN's NY performances was taped for a local cable music show. The EN men were less than pleased with having been taped by someone. They endured it only because the cameraman/cable host was the friend of a friend. They anticipated seeing the video with a great deal of skepticism and caution.

"We don't trust the people that are around doing videos" explains Blixa. "We always think we are going to see it on this or that TV show earlier or later on in our lives. Seeing ourselves shown without any controls or rights. That's how we see video." Einsturzende Neubaten are considering a video of, by and for themselves in the future.

What the World Needs Now...

What's on the horizon for Einsturzende Neubaten?

"As I have said in interviews before 'We are going to play love songs'. There is a need for contemporary love songs." Is he serious of just saying that to take the Mickey out of me? I can't tell. Noticing my disbelief, Blixa adds "Yeah, there is definitely a need for contemporary love songs."

"There are love songs but they're not very contemporary" adds Marc. So EN is going to compose THE love song?

"Contemporary, yes" bets Marc.

"We want to write THE love song" stresses Blixa.

"That's actually our aim for the next year" grins Marc.

Love songs, huh? Time will tell but for now their album Strategies Against Architecture (Mute) is one of the most innovative vinyl orbs to land on my turntable in recent months. If you're in the market for an LP with peppy, danceable pop tunes or masturbatory heavy metal riffs, then this is not the album for you. If you're into new discoveries in sound and musical structures then Strategies will feed your curiosity quite nicely. This LP is vibrantly alive from the incredibly minimal, resourceful and poignant "Negative Nein," through the ceaseless, insistent energy of "Kalte Stern," the anguished voice of Blixa depicting life's frustrations against the constant heavy tones on "Schmerzen Horen" (Listen with pain/Hear with pain/Ears are wounds) and onto the pulsating "Stahlvision," sounding like the passage of time, if time made noise. This album is a fine work that has captured and duplicated moments of life.

Einsturzende Neubaten, their simply titled second LP (Some Bizarre) is a more structured, rhythmic expulsion of EN's manic desire to save us from our ignorantly agreeable acceptance of industrialism. On this LP, EN reveal their ability to capture a





BLACK FLAG III

-by Steve Fritz

Listening to the radio, I heard something that I thought was a real treat...

The DJ was in a manic mood. Slaughterhouse chord after slaughterhouse chord belted out of my receiver and every song was mixed so that the needle kept on pushing to the far right of my VU meter and pinned it there. None of it was the one note thrash I bet you were expecting.

Uh-Uh. Heldon followed Hendrix, Branca then blew out Heavy Metal. Then to my personal satisfaction, the pace stepped up even higher with "Red" by King Crimson. So how could the man on the other end of my radio top this? As a closer he chose "My War."

A killer set Mr. DJ. The Flag cut was the final icing on a very tasty cake.

Another thing about all those bands. Each one that he played would have agreed to the front piece of the Black Flag press kit that sits in front of me. To wit:

"Much of what passes for music in our country is, in fact, nothing more than product, the result of soulless greed and stupidity...Black Flag is another story."

"Our band is always challenging that kind of stupidity" Greg Ginn comments. "We don't stick to a thing and then just milk it. We're more into experimenting with our sounds. It's the only way to keep us interested in doing it, and the only way, we feel that we keep people interested in us."

And a long, strange (maybe you could call it interesting) trip it's been for Black Flag.

After the release of their first album, *Damaged*, everything seemed to be ready for Black Flag to break beyond a large cult status. Selling well (over 75,000 copies) on their own label, SST, it looked like the band had a strong financial future as well as a big one in the music world. The major media was even beginning to treat Black Flag as a serious band, not a teen fad.

The carpet was pulled out from them in one quick, sudden stroke.

"We had set up a deal with a distributor," Greg remembers, "who wasn't paying any

bills...including us." The next thing the band knew they were being saddled with the payment of all the pressings of *Damaged* as well as the release of their *TV Party* EP.

So Flag wound up having to go to court to collect, adding legal fees to all their newly acquired bills. Seeing that this was going to take a very long time (like two years), the band decided to release the retrospective double set *Everything Went Black*.

But the distributor had a contract with the band, which gave the company the rights to "Black Flag". The band retaliated by releasing it under their individual names. The distributor didn't like this, and sued. The court concurred with the distributor and gave Ginn two options: pay a fine to the distributor or go to jail. Greg was already broke, so...

He shrugs off his confinement as "nothing I want to talk about. I was released in a few days." Meanwhile, rather than pay all its other creditors, the distributor declared bankruptcy.

"We still haven't seen any money from them" Greg sums it up, "and I guess we never will. Now, we can only keep going."

So, by the end of '83, the band started recording their second studio album. And true to style, it caused more furor, but in a new way.

The world, now familiar with the band, wasn't necessarily ready for the LP, *My War*. For starters, all but Greg and Henry Rollins were left of the *Damaged* band. Gone were equally important, especially to the public eye, Robo, Dez Cadena and Chuck Dukowski (although he now manages the band). So for starters, Ginn overdubbed his guitar and played bass as well (under the pseud Dale Nixon). Greg is a killer guitarist, but he's not that hot on bass.

But that was minor compared to something else about the LP. Although all of side one maintained the unrelenting momentum first refined on *Damaged*, the music itself had evolved. A song like "Swinging Man" was the tip off at what was to come, with its off time guitar. It wasn't thrash.

Then there was side two. Only three tracks, they were as brutal as anything Black Flag could think up, but they

were also brutally slow. This caused the furor. The Black Flag fans started raising their heads grunting that the band had "lost its energy" or worse, "sold out."

"There's a lot of conservative people who want us to stay the same" condemns Greg. "I mean a thing you label can be vital for only a small amount of time, then it stagnates. We don't want to stagnate, so we have to move on."

"It doesn't even bother us that our album's been misinterpreted, we've been used to that since we released our first EP, *Nervous Breakdown* by the Hollywood punks of the 70's. What people have to understand is that this band likes to build something up, then tear it down. After that we start to build something up again."

"We're willing to take a long term approach to our music. Right now I'm trying our ideas that may take 2 or 3 years for me to fully understand, but I know that sooner or later, those ideas will be in the band. It's just my way of growing."

"Another thing people ask us," Greg continues, "is if we're a political band. Yes we are, but in a broad sense: the way we exist."

"We're not political in the sense of being democrat or republican" he clarifies. "We don't take up a cause. Issues are not good for songs. When you take songs down to that level, you end up with mindless sloganeering."

"We feel we're political by playing the music we play, doing the shows we do, and releasing our records. Sloganeering is insulting. If you wanted to do that, you could do it a lot better with books or pamphlets."

"Our music deals too much with emotion for that kind of stuff. The band tries to reach out on a much broader range.

and distorting more chords than he did in the past.

Henry has also changed. In the beginning his delivery was one of a volcano that never stopped erupting. Now he's harnessed more of that energy, concentrating it into delivering scathing salvos, like a young Iggy, with none of the nihilistic tendencies. And now, Henry can, if he feels like it, move faster and more powerfully than ever before.

Drummer Bill Stevenson isn't the new kid in the band anymore. A fully fledged member, not someone filling in the chair inbetween engagements with the Descendents, it's obvious he knows the score and plays it effortlessly.

Kira Roessler is the latest addition. Tiny by band standards, she doesn't bludgeon you the way Dukowski did with all his muscle. Instead she's tighter, faster and can compliment any move that the rest of the band makes.

In total, Black Flag's power has built into such an intense level (especially from the show I saw of them at City Garden's), that if they added anymore you'd think they'd go nova; physically exploding over the audience and searing the masses into a heap of white dust.

To top it, Black Flag have launched a vinyl assault as well. Six months after the release of *My War*, the band has released another LP, *Slip It In*. Here, the ideas of the last album have been honed and polished to they now burn as intensely as the live show. Now one of the best LP's of the year, this is another milestone for the band. But that ain't all.

"We'll have another album out in October," notes Greg. "It's called *Family Man*, and one half will be all instrumental, the other half will be just Henry reading his poetry



Sloganeering is purely ignorant, and you can't take your music down to that level or you end up as relevant as the Bay City Rollers or some other bands I won't name."

Greg stops for a second, "in the long run" he continues, "I think you can be just as political by staying at home and just watching TV... although I think that's pretty negative. We hope, by how we live and play, by what we release, that we're a positive influence."

The times have become more positive for Black Flag. Although Greg can't quote numbers, he believes that *My War* is selling as well as *Damaged* did in the same amount of time. Also, *My War* is available in five countries (the US, England, Germany, Belgium and Japan), while *Damaged* initially wasn't.

Also, the band is still a force to consider as a live act. Touring constantly (they've taken a total two months time off in the last six months), the band is tighter than it's ever been. Ginn's guitar style has grown to be a sharp and angular instrument, taking sudden turns

the sessions for both new LP's were done at the same time. If *Family Man* is anything near the level of *Slip It In*, it's something to watch out for.

But that doesn't finish it. Also by October, the band will be releasing a tape, *Live '84*. Taken from a show in San Francisco, this is one of several tapes that the band has done. Although the quality of the recording may not make the San Francisco show the best one, Greg pointed out that the performance was the best one.

The interview was nearly over, and Greg was winding down. "In all," he concludes, "I think we've gotten half way to where we want to be."

"We're in a position where we can do what we want to, but we aren't making that much of a living off of it."

I mention to him about the DJ and how the song "My War" followed "Red."

"Really" Greg asks, pleased to hear that. "That's one of my favorite albums."

You like being in the company with those bands?

"Yeah" goes Greg. "Because I feel that we're one of the few really progressive bands left."

- By Steve Fritz

David Borden has been called a minimalist, although he denies the term. A classical composer based in Cornell U., his music can best be described by swirling progressions of counterpoint and meter, primarily for keyboard. Compositions such as "C-A-G-E" and "The Continuing Story Of Counterpoint" (Parts 1-9) are strongly academic stuff that in page form would make the average performer dizzy.

Yet he's not like the people he's most commonly compared to, Steve Reich and the ubiquitous Phillip Glass. His writing is more academic, yet more open. He can explain it better himself.

During the 70's, he lead one of the first synthesizer only bands, Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Company. In their time, they managed to release two albums on their own Earthquake records before time and audience inertia finally took their toll. After that, he released his own solo LP, *Music For Amplified Keyboards* which displayed his highly developed sense of composition and mesmerizing tranquility. Achieving better critical recognition, the album introduced Borden to a wider audience. With the acceptance of Glass, it soon took little time for others to finally start breaking into the public eye.

On an appropriately snowy day in late winter, he introduced the latest Mother Mallard during a show that had been primarily billed as a concert for Borden himself. Now a five-piece (six, if you count the engineer, which Borden does), the three keyboards (Borden, Chip Banks (who has worked for the last Mallard as well as Chuck Berry) and Nurit Tilles) are supplemented by Les Stimmick on reeds (formerly of Miroslav Vitous) and a vocalist who had previously been with Steve Reich.

The music was pure, crystalline and entrancing. He performed five parts from "Counterpoint" and introduced a new piece, "Anatadae II." The only thing I missed was an old MMPM standard, "The Frank Sinatra Song," which would have turned average Kraftwerk buffs on their ears.

After the performance, Borden was gracious enough to give this rock and roll heathen an interview. All missing pieces of this introduction will be explained with his own words:

T!: Last time you played, I remember you commenting that you hoped that your machinery would survive the show.

DB: Yes, I remember those days.

T!: Now in the notes that accompanied the show, I noticed that you're now working with much more improved technology. Does that improve the sound?

DB: Not the whole sound. It's made pieces that I do...the polyphonic aspects of the advancement...a little different. But the whole sound isn't that much different. The difference is that when you hit a key what you think is going to come is going to come, whereas with the old Moogs, well sometimes nothing would come out. All it would take is one cord to go bad. The old models were made of hundreds of cords. Even the temperature of the room made a difference. This was no fault of the engineers because they initially designed the Moog for only the studio and thought that the keyboard would never leave that place.

T!: Have you started using sequencers and other advancements in technology?

DB: We used the prototype for one of the original sequencers in one of our earliest pieces. It was called "C-A-G-E," and that was on automatic you might say. Now we don't have those fancy se-

quencers out today, I don't have the money to have one. Actually, today if I had the money, I'd buy a new polyphonic instrument that is digital.

T!: It sounded really nice when you played "Anatadae."

DB: I don't mean to sound esoteric, but that title means "Water Fowl." It's about my return to Mother Mallard. It's also written for my friend Les Stimmick, who's an amazing player and a beautiful improviser.

T!: Are you going to be exploring more pieces where you're going to allow more improvisation in there?

DB: Definitely, and with these people. This is a fairly new group and on the record we just made we have two other people who are improvising. We didn't do it live because we didn't have enough time to rehearse. Are you familiar with David van Tiegham? (yes) He just did a piece for Twyla Tharp and he's on our new record. Actually I'm envious of him, working for a great dancer like that. He's on the "Continuing Story of Counterpoint Pt. 7," which was a little shaky tonight because the player got out Part 5. Now you see with all minimalists, the hardest part of what you play is ensemble playing. Now Nurit classically trained and she's had lot's of experience playing chamber music. She says what we do is harder than that.

T!: What did she find so hard about the ensemble playing? Just keeping the tempo, things like that?

DB: No. When we're playing together, the parts are individually written and they still have to come together.

T!: You made a comment in the notes about each piece being written in different time signatures.

DB: Yeah. For example, this one particular series of notes may last for 73 beats and during that 73 beats you may actually never come together with the other players on any accented phrases or any other part. They may all interact OK, but it takes a lot of rehearsals to just subliminate what the people do while you're playing your own parts. That's one of the things about the other minimalist composers, they don't tend to get contrapuntally adept or com-

plex. And I don't consider myself a minimalist really.

T!: That's one thing I wanted to ask you about, naturally when a lot of people hear your music they're going to compare you to, first off, Phillip Glass and Steve Reich...maybe Terry Riley. Do you consider yourself with those same groups of people?

DB: Well I was influenced by Terry Riley. That was early on in the late 60's, when I heard *In C* for the first time. So were the others you had mentioned.

T!: Well that was the original groundbreaker...

DB: So he influenced a lot of people. It was in the air; the return of tonality.

T!: In your notes that you were returning your compositions to the 13th and 14th Centuries. Could you explain a little more about that? What about the concepts of canons and fugues? Do you see any relationship with that?

DB: Canon and fugues, no. When you think of them, you normally think of baroque music and it's not quite there in that the directional harmony is only there as an aside. It's not the main thing that I build the piece on. It's there because of what I do with the melodic intervals based on scale patterns. The way I work is that we'll use notes in this scale for this period of time. Now sometimes it could get a little chromatic and sound crazy. But my work is not built on a harmonic content like fugues are. Fugues are supposed to go into different tonal areas. Canons do not. What I tend to think of my music as is a continuation of the old Cantus Firmis. Those were the old church modes where they did have one old tune that they sung very slowly, but then they would build independently on top of it. They did it all intervallically, without thought of the harmonic values. I'm a little bit rusty in describing this but if you did one voice and it's in concordance and done correctly with the rhythmic modes and the intervals, then you can go and do the next voice. Then you can sometimes have imitations with a sort of semi-canon where a third voice is made up of parts of the other two. My model for the way I write things

is the composer Machot...

T!: Excuse me on one thing, you'll have to slow down because I'm not sure of the music you're talking about.

DB: (Laughs) Don't worry about it. There are a few records available out there if you look for them. One thing that made Machot different from his peers was that he wrote in thirds, which to those ears sounded a little dissonant. His contemporaries were used to writing in fourths and open fifths. But getting back to your question, I do use all those things that are associated with canons and fugues, but I don't write canons and fugues. When Steve Reich writes, he sometimes uses a strict canon in the center of his piece and that's just strict imitation. He talks about getting more contrapuntal things and also taking more ideas from LaMonte Young (the original pioneer of minimalism, who even taught Terry Riley).

T!: OK, so to ask one last question, "Anatadae."

DB: Means "water fowl." I even went to the Cornell Ornithology department to pronounce that right. They even gave me a tape of a duck that I'm actually going to use for one of the pieces and open my show for.

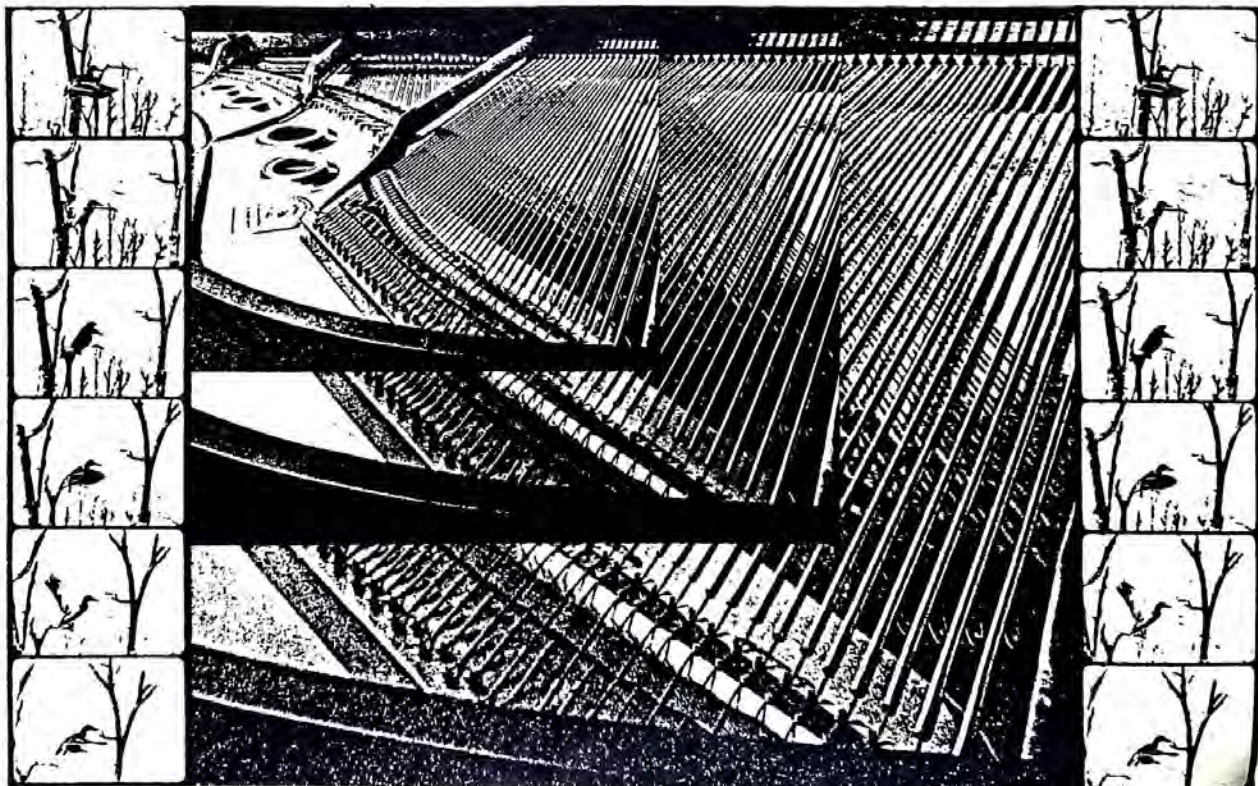
T!: And as one last side note, I remember when you did the "Frank Sinatra Song."

DB: Oh, I loved that! I would actually like to revive that piece.

T!: Didn't you get into a lot of trouble because of that piece?

DB: Well I asked a guy to check into it and he reported back to me that you could use the piece, but there was no way that you could manipulate it or screw it up in any form, because then the copyright laws get all complicated. I meant it as a very big compliment to Frank Sinatra. I always felt that he was a very accomplished musician. Plus the words he was singing has all to do with the 40's, with all the big movie stars. So then we'd put it through a sequencer and turned it into a pulse. I'd love to revive that piece and let Les and David van Tiegham get to that piece. It would sound lovely with sax and percussion through it.

DAVID BORDEN MALLARDS, MACHOT & FRANK SINATRA





-Frank Garfoni

MINUTEMEN SOFT WHITE UNDERBELLY

-by Micheal Williams

THE MINUTEMEN went on tour summer of '84, presumably to escape the LA seasonal hijinks. They played 52 dates in as many days. The Minutemen are: MIKE WATT, bass; D. BOON, guitar and vocals; and GEORGE HURLEY, drums, who was absent through most of this interview. Off mashing--Linda was traveling with the band. Their new double album, Double Nickels On The Dime, is available on SST Records (P.O.B. 1/Lawndale CA 90260).

Cynthia and Michael caught up with them in the muggy S.E.

MW: I like the hardcore dudes but the music is just too one-thing, y'know? It's like the same band following you around playing the same song. Remember for a while there all those opening bands...

LINDA: Anarchy anarchy! Don't know what it means but it feels good anarchy...

MW: Hardcore really ain't anarchy though, it's just some fast thing. It's sort of like hippy y'know? Got middle-class values and just collapsing. I think it's going to happen every cycle--like the kids will get all pissed and have parties at their Mom's house when they're gone, right? There's a lot of punkers, hardcores in our town, they live in suburbs and their Moms just give 'em money for the weekend and leave...they come from broken homes, they have parties there, piss in the pool...

TI: Orange County...

LINDA: Hahaha Orange County...
MW: For us punk was, just, you got to play your own tunes and if you grew up in the 70's, you probably did, you couldn't go out and make records and play gigs. You know me and him, we've

been playing 12 years, you know in the room--BOC, T-Rex, Kiss, learning how to play, but then we're going out in front of people...but you couldn't do it, you had to do other people's songs, and then punk rock comes and anybody can play. That is where we came from, it wasn't our parents--man, his Mom let us play in their house. We weren't rebelling against her.

TI: So what did your parents listen to when you were growing up, was it a lot of jazz?

DB: Buck Owens...

MW: No way, I turned him on to rock.

TI: No Ornette Coleman?

DB: Johnny Cash...

MW: Yeah, all the cheesiest country...

DB: Oh, I love that stuff. For a while I hated it...

MW: Yeah, you bet he did...

DB: When I got into rock I guess I rebelled against my parents on that level.

"All right, Dad, I'm going to play some BOC..."

MW: But his Dad really liked Buck Owens, the cheesiest country alive.

DB: Now I like Hank Williams, Johnny Cash--I got a tape of Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan doing a duet in 1968. It's really good...

MW: Yeah, I like that movie Deliverance...

DB: You don't really appreciate country music until you go into this bar and see all these people just drunk and sad and shit...they're all working class songs too...

MW: My Dad loved country and I grew up and I hated it--now I like it.

DB: You read about Hank Williams, he was a worker at 13 years old playing these little honky tonks and having to work on the docks and travelling--it

was a rough life if you were a musician and you wanted to play your own kind of music. And all these other blues musicians. Leadbelly, Lightning Hopkins...

MW: We're recording over Hank Williams...

TI: He was a mean motherfucker...carried a gun.

SUBTITLES:

MW: Decline (of Western Civilization) had subtitles. Declines the thing that set up all the hardcore.

TI: I've never seen that...

MW: They got subtitles under Black Flag, "I really don't care what you say"...that's lame I thought.

TI: What about the new one, Suburbia, is it bad?

MW: That's the lifestyle...

LINDA: It's cute, real real cute...

TI: Define cute.

MW: That's the lifestyle. Decline was the movement and Suburbia's the lifestyle.

LINDA: It's just like the lines are great...(she describes the scene where some kid throws a bottle at a bus and say "I hate busses").

MW: I think it's something, an old lady manipulating a bunch of naive kids...

LINDA: No, you have to see it. It's not anything that's going to edify you...

MW: It is. Kids are going to watch it and want to be like that. When they should be doing their own life and not living up to any move, or movement...that's what I say.

TI: Well, you always have to have your heroes...

MW: Yeah, I did. Richard Hell.

LINDA: There's heroes in that movie...At the end of it too. The point is nobody won, everybody lost...

MW: Shit, what an easy move.

TI: What about Aerosmith?

MW: I saw ZZ Top blow them away when I was a kid...

TI: Oh, no way! Really?

DB: I like Toys In The Attic and then they got kinda...I wasn't into the Dolls that much either 'cause it was kind of trashy. I guess it was kinda snobby in a way 'cause I studied classical and I liked really good players...

MW: He liked Buck Dharma. You know, that guy in Beefheart, Ry Cooder, he's really good. Now he's this pro dude, he did the Streets of Fire movie, I saw that. Lee Ving's in it, he goes "Come on!" He has these big parts you know? "OK!" We played with them just before we went on tour. They're still a good band, a very good band, like a cannon...We saw their first gig. That's where we're from, more from the old LA punk rock, not so much hardcore. I like the way we have short hair this tour and the kids see us and they're sure we're hardcore but the music is too different. I know it screws up their thinking.

DB: Yeah, they go you guys are the weirdest hardcore band I've seen...trying their hardest to play Alice Cooper covers.

MW: We were into them a lot too...

LINDA: Who wasn't though?

DB: Now he's an American band.

MW: Yeah, he's American...

DB: Yeah, he's an American from Phoenix, AZ of all places...

MW: "I wanna be elected..." He used to golf with George Burns. He burned and his band is real disgusting, they all flaked...I don't say the guy was great but I can hum a lot of his songs and I don't know why...

DB: It was so easy for us to play his songs. How could we not like him--Kiss, Alice Cooper, BOC...

MW: Kiss!

DB: BOC was like the hardest we could do, y'know...

MW: Yeah, they were sophisto.

DB: ...and still get away with it.

MW: Pignoses.

DB: Oh not even Pignoses...

MW: Tesco, man.

DB: Our friend down the street who couldn't play at all got into our band because he had a bigger amp than us...

MW: He had a slide guitar.

DB: We were playing "Smoke On The Water" over and over.

MW: Just that one riff over and over, and finally after about 20 minutes he goes, "I'm too loud, here you guys use this," we were going "yeah, yeah..." and in those days I didn't even know what the words were for them either. BOC had the good weird sounds with a bunch of syllables. You sent in and got their lyrics on computer paper. That's where we wrote our lyrics, if you look on our records, they all flow together...because that's what their's did. But they weren't line to line like poems. I met R. Meltzer in LA, he came to a gig we did in the desert...

TI: Didn't you put a letter from him on the back of one of your records?

DB: He liked that. This guys like afraid I didn't ask him, "Go, go ask him..."

MW: We're poachers...

DB: I go, "Hey, Richard.

What's going on..." and he goes "Hey! I love that letter on the back of that record. It was great..."

MW: He wrote the lyrics to BOC's "Stairway To The Stars." So it was magic. One time he sent me an ace of spades and goes, "One day you're going to use this. I'm you're ace in the hole." And one day we found an article on us in Creem by him...

DB: My dad goes, "Didn't you use to buy that magazine when you were a kid..."

MW: And only the big bands were in it, like the Faces and ELP. Now, they look little. They must have lowered their standards...remember in the 70's you didn't have little-shit bands in that magazine...a little band that ain't on a big label...

BIG BAND ON A LITTLE LABEL

MW: We've got 8 records and we're on 19 compilations

DB: We just came out with a double (record), Double Nickels On The Dime

MW: I think that's the best one. We made it for \$1200.

TI: I got Zen Arcade a couple of weeks ago in Minneapolis.

MW: \$1200, 45 songs, 85 minutes...

DB: Our double's kinda like competition...

LINDA: Is it really 85 minutes?

TI: Friendly competition, I hope...

DB: Oh yeah, friendly. I mean we're on the same label--It's like a dare thing.

TI: So is your's a concept record?

DB: Yeah. We have a concept.

MW: Well, we made one up--they had one for theirs, so we said "What's part of our lives?" Cars, of course.

DB: LA Cars.

MW: So each guy's got his own side and on the cover there's a picture of us in our cars. Real life.

DB: "Double Nickels On The Dime" is CB talk. It means go 55, there's a cop behind you.

MW: He wrote this country song about Mexico. I wrote a song about Mexico too.

TI: Is your neighborhood pretty Mexican?

MW: Oh yeah...

DB: She's my girlfriend and she's Mexican...

LINDA: We're the only white people...

MW: People are always looking for some kind of roots or something. If we tell people our roots, like we do in this interview--BOC, T. Rex--they'd go, "Ahh, man."

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Don't you listen to..."
T!: So American...
MW: That's American. That's really--cheesy, but we didn't know. We were young. We didn't know that was stupid. It taught us to play, though, 'cause it was real easy guitar. This hippy guy who lived in his car, Roy, very fine guitar player, found clothes and junk but wasn't filthy--He probably never has made a record and this man is fantastic.
DB: I told you I saw him and he said, "Yes, how do you make records? I'd like to make one." We ought to make a record with that guy.
MW: We made Buzz or Howl for \$50...
T!: Ah, c'mon...
DB: We did.
MW: Two-track, him singing.
DB: One-side, it was for Radio Tokyo...
MW: We do one take, probably can tell, heh...

EVERYBODY'S AMERICAN

MW: John Fogerty. I think music's for pretending, y'know? He lived in Oakland, sang all these songs about bayous. Music's for pretending--and if you want to be American, everybody's American if you're here and you're playing. There is this reaction, though. In LA, Discharge and GBH play and everybody wears the British flag.
DB: American bands won't do shit in LA, but if you're English, 2000 people show up.
MW: The mod kids, in LA, that is really scary.
DB: Which is a ripoff of college kids from the 30's... lowriders...
MW: Now if you go to Lincoln NE and there's kids on scooters.
T!: Fucking Boise ID, a school for breakdancing. Right. Everything's fast now.
DB: Interstates, Interstates.
MW: We've got a song called "History Lesson," where we talk about how we were punk rockers pogoing but it was really me and D. playing guitar. That's the last line in the song, that's all it is. Like our hero's E. Bloom, I mean who the fuck is E. Bloom? When we saw BOC remember he gave that rap, that political rap. He goes "This is America. You can change everything..." It's in Dominance and Submission. They take it real low and "...we can change the drug laws..."
DB: This guy's wearing sunglasses and he's got a beard like this...
MW: He's all leather and he goes "In America you can vote and we can get rid of the drug laws..."
DB: Yeah, "get rid of the drug laws," I tell you! Don't do hard drugs 'cause they are bad for you but you do like pot, you like to drink beer--Yeah, so do I.
MW: We can make these cops lay off, we can vote, get rid of all of it! And the guitar goes "whoa..."
DB: He drives out in a Harley Davidson...
MW: Yeah, now they're cheesy. I couldn't stand 'em anymore. I couldn't see 'em, I really couldn't. You go back--but in these lamer days, boy, in those days...those were better days in a way. They were. See this is where the hardcores blow it. They can be out there trying anything they want...Not like our days. Now we're bringing it to 'em.

GEORGE

MW: This is George.
GEORGE: Yeah, I'm mashing!! I got that word from my forman at work. He's from Louisiana. When he wants me to start the machine he'd say "mash the 'but-ton'."
MW: The only time I ever heard mash is when my Mom was mashing potatoes.

-by Steve Lawrence

It's an hour before show-time and the Jockey Club in Newport, KY has been reduced to a tin of living, breathing, perspiring sardines. "This is fucking incredible!" a stage hand hollers at no one in particular, though he's all but drowned out by the roar of more than 500 Seekers pressed shoulder to shoulder in the club's auditorium. He's heard to babble on about an all-time attendance record being broken --on a Wednesday night, to boot.

No one will listen, so he presses into the horde of mohawks, bowling shirts and leisure suits at the bar. This is no time to latch onto any semblance of Jockey Club reality. Bambl-eyed Seekers from as far away as Lexington, KY and Dayton, OH, are joining forces this sticky night for a much-publicized and long-awaited appearance by the Violent Femmes. Some critics hail this three-piece "folk punk" act as The Next Big Thing. Most agree it's damn infectious music, and a helluva lot of fun.

Within minutes, the 550-capacity club is so packed one can barely breathe. Femme percussionist Victor DeLorenzo & bassist Brian Ritchie are part of the wet throng, drawing curious stares. Gordon Gano, lead vocalist and guitarist for the Femmes has just made his way into a foul-smelling dressing room almost unnoticed. The Femmes Australian born tour manager, Ken, explains that Gano has just returned from a Cincinnati Reds baseball game at Riverfront Coliseum.

Before I can divert his attention, Gano has slipped out the door again, again no one seeming to notice. "If you can find him, I'm sure Gordon will talk," offers a soft-spoken Steve MacKay, the Femmes hired sax man for this two-month U.S. tour. In the mean-

time, a trio of Commander Cody and Iggy Pop, explains that the past year-and-a-half has seen many nights like this.

Following the Femmes' first U.S. tour last summer on the crest of their debut album (Violent Femmes on Slash Records), the trio did a brief tour of England, the sax man notes. From October through December of that year, The Femmes did a few more U.S. dates and spent the following January in Wisconsin's Castle Recording Company studios recording a new LP. Brian Ritchie pops in suddenly to add that the Femmes immediately left the studios to tour Germany, Austria, Belgium, Holland and Australia. "Now we're back in hell," he jibes.

But how can this be? A little over two years ago the Femmes were playing gigs on sidewalks, your atypical street musicians. Now every 1.5 minutes, Ritchie finds himself scrawling something unintelligible on album covers. Many are quick to point out the trio's over-published "discovery" early in 1982 by James Honeyman-Scott, late of the Pretenders, who stumbled across a Femmes gig in front of an oriental drugstore in Milwaukee.

"All I can say is our music is the universal language," Ritchie yawns. "It cuts across all barriers of time and culture. We can look at paintings on cave walls and still think they're good. It's the same with, say African music. It's from a different culture, but the music's still good. Sure, a lot of the people we've played for in different countries don't understand our lyrics too well, but they still appreciate it, they're enthusiastic."

Ritchie pauses to scribble on another album thrust in front him, pointing out that while the Femmes continue to receive a tremendous rise in record sales and popularity in the U.S. and abroad, he's convinced it hasn't had any affect on the band's original philosophy of "audience communication."

Violent Femmes

"I think it's the same whether you play for an audience of eight or eight thousand if it's done well. I'd rather play for eight thousand and really communicate with the audience than play in some intimate hole-in-the-wall and have the audience be totally oblivious to what we're doing. Success has just made it easier on us in that we don't have to work so hard any more to win an audience over--we still put on a good show."

He yawns again and says he wants to mingle, to be replaced moments later by a grinning Gordon Gano. And now is this intense little man, sporting a rubber band bandana in his greasy black hair, responding

of nostalgia brings about Gano's explanation for the late-afternoon trip to Riverfront Coliseum to witness the Reds taking a 10-4 pounding by the Chicago Cubs. "I used to really be into baseball when I was a kid. I guess over the years I got more interested in rock & roll, but when I was about 10 I knew the names of every player on every team, their batting averages, had all the baseball cards, the whole deal. I guess tonight I was feeling a little nostalgic about that, even though I'm not really that way. I just decided lately to make an effort to get back into baseball; I bought a season forecast and I've been reading



to the aforementioned SUCCESS?

"We're not just playing huge concert halls these days, y'know," he says, taking his turn at signing more album covers. "Sure, it's not the same as being on the street and having no one know you, but we're not THAT big yet. We're not Yes or Journey or Culture Club. Hell, we're not even the Talking Heads. And still, we go to these different countries now and every once in a while we'll play someplace where the people really don't know who we are and we're faced with a situation where we have to sort of prove ourselves. I know, you're disappointed with that answer," he laughs reaching for another album cover. "Wait a minute," he grins at the young man who's just handed Gano the record. "That's ME, I'm Gordon Gano." They both stare at the legible signature: Gordon Gano. The Seeker backs away, chucking nervously.

"Anyway," Gano continues, "I'm just too young to start getting nostalgic about the good old days." The subject

all the box scores. I guess you could say that's a little hard to do with all the touring we're doing." He's silent for a moment and stares down at the soiled carpet.

"But what gets me most about touring is missing the loved ones I want to be with. But with what we're doing here, I just can't be with 'em."

Ritchie pops back in and tells Gano it's time to start tuning up. "Before we end this," Gano says, "let me add one quick thing about the new album. People will wonder about us now because these songs are a little different than what they probably are expecting from us. For instance, there are a couple of country gospel tunes. People will wonder if they're just tongue-in-cheek. Well, they're not. They're just as serious as anything from the first album, say, 'Add It Up.'"

"Words to memorize, words mesmerize/Words make my mouth exercise/Words all fail the magic prize/Nothing I can say when I'm in your thighs."

The Annotated Alarm

-by Khaaryn

The Alarm: Wherein four somewhat talented, nice-looking Welsh lads tease their hair and jump on the Celtic Revival bandwagon.

The Celtic Revival: All that expansive, melodic, Lillywhite produced stuff, short on sense of humor, lofty on sense of purpose.

Sense Of Humor: What U2 don't need because their poetry is gut-wrenching, their music vast and climatic, their performances impassioned--almost evangelical. Also what Big Country don't need because they write a nice tune.

Sense of Purpose: What the Alarm borrow, in equal parts, from their Celtic Soul Brothers and Pete Townsend.

"You don't consciously pick up ideas," says Mike Peters, the Alarm's chunky lead vocalist/guitarist, "but things do come out. As Joe Strummer said, 'you can't have input without output.' Every artist reflects what they see and hear and read--the way they see things. An artist can't just stand in a stark white room and not take a crayon to the walls."

Someone way back around the time of the Beatles got cosmic and came up with the brilliant notion that rock 'n roll is art. It's a concept that led to some of rock's finest hours. It's also become the justification for every medi-

ocre band that comes along to bandy about Big Ideas instead of just playing a nice tune.

To their credit, the Alarm do not pen anthems based on the latest headlines--a tactic favored by Alarm favorites The Clash. But, Peter argues, rock is a political medium, "because it's the only medium we've got." (Author's Note: That's it. I'm out of a job.)

"People have always used art to make political statements--from Picasso to Joe Strummer to...Mike Peters. I can't see anything wrong with a band like the Clash making music into their politics. As for me, I can't find another way of expressing myself. I do it through art, and art for me is music. I have to believe in it because it's the only thing that works for me."

Wow! What noble ideas! And of course such lofty political and artistic philosophy, coupled with a one-track dedication to musical self-expression, necessarily precludes all expectations of us less-fortunate, non-political masses (read: the audience) that a rock band will actually enact their manifesto in some tangibly attractive way.

But I'm being unfair. I'm sure the Alarm feel they are playing good music.

"We live on music passionately. I never forget the moment when I first write or hear a song. We try to get that feeling every day of our lives--to make each gig our first--so we've still got enthusiasm for it."

"A lot of groups have come

and gone who 'don't want to do this, don't want to do that.' To me, a band goes on TV; a band does interviews; a band plays live. Because that's how you reach fans. And fans come from all walks of life. We try to extend ourselves to everybody, even if they're the Queen or Prime Minister."

Mike Peters: Man Of The People. This guy could write a book about "Rock's Dying Ideals and How I Saved Them." After all, he's suffered his own personal trauma at the hands of rock and roll.

"My first hero was Johnny Rotten. I first saw the Sex Pistols when they were still real--they weren't a myth, and there wasn't all that shock and horror. It was real 'change your life' stuff. And I tried to talk to Johnny Rotten after the gig, but he didn't want to know. He just snubbed me."

Just like Aesop, Peters always has a moral:

"From that day, I thought, 'I'm going to be in a band and we'll be bigger than the Sex Pistols, but I'll never let my fans feel about me what I felt about Johnny Rotten at that moment.'"

After all...

"A young kid goes through phases of hero-worship, but in the end you have to start reflecting your own personality if you want to get anywhere."

But there's the rub. At one point in their career, the Alarm turned down a record deal from EMI. "We knew we could be quite easily promoted as a package like Duran Duran.



Nancy Langford

We're all nice looking lads. But we'd have been restricted to 'writing to order.' Your audience becomes so narrow they won't allow you to experiment."

Whatever uncharacteristically lucid moment of reflection on their identity that led the band to reject the EMI offer didn't last long. Perhaps a Duran Duran-like mold was repugnant to them, but the boys from Rhyl soon discovered a much more appealing image: why not be like U2? After all, U2 has all the sense of purpose, the idealistic determination, the unabashed honesty that Peters & Co. found attractive. (Funny Thing About The Alarm #1: no matter which one you question, they'll all give you the same answer frigheningly verbatim.)

Also, the Alarm's unspectacular guitar-based hard rock, with its interchangeable, unmemorable melodies and fashionably non-specific lyrics (Funny Thing #2: no

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Butthole Surfers

-by Dirk Difficult

The Butthole Surfers took a short, sweet, long-haul vacation to New York. It was a one stop deal that had to coincide with both drummer's spring break from the University of Texas. When the truck they'd planned to buy suddenly became unavailable, they had to scrape around at the last minute. They ended up getting a ride with a friend who was moving to NY and had room among the luggage to squeeze them in. How they were getting back was another problem, but the band seemed confident that the two NY dates would see them over that rough spot.

We met in the basement of

Danceteria following the sound check. It was the first time east for the band, save King Vitamin, who had been to Missouri once. "That's not east," I corrected. "It is if you're from Texas", he assured me.

San Antonio, Texas, to be exact, where three years ago in one of the bands many incarnations, Paul Leary (guitar, vocals) and Gibby (vocals, sax, guitar) began performing in art galleries. One spring day in Austin, while skinny-dipping in the lake, they met the Big Boys who insisted they come play with them that night. Soon thereafter, they started working Austin regularly.

Those were the days when

the band was playing under a different name almost every week (Dick Clark Five, Nine Foot Worm Makes Own Food, Ashtray Babyheads). It was while they were the Bleeding Skulls and doing a song called Butthole Surfer that the name stuck.

In the past year the band has solidified. Its present lineup includes Bill Jolly (bass) and the brother/sister percussion team of King Vitamin and Teresa Nervosa, veterans of the Texas high school marching band circuit, still drumming on their feet with a cadence that would split the seams of Astroturf. There's one album out, and another due this month. September puts them in Europe for a tour, and maybe, just maybe, if things go smoothly, they will travel east again.

Not being an expert on the regional rock scene in this rather large country, I wanted to know what it's like in the Texas hardcore scene, and what sort of musical environment they hailed from. The band became fairly animated and spoke all at once.

"You mean you don't know about the really great Texas bands?", they asked in a self-effacing way. "Bands like Abe Lincoln's Bush, or Doubled Up Nun? There's this band called Ed Asner's Gay that does an acoustic set in cheap, lime-green leisure suits with cheesy padding, and they're all wearing homemade latex masks that look like Ed Asner; they're great, they run around like bumper cars."

"I heard of the tragic circumstances that led a member of Herschel Walker's Secret Pudding to kill a member of The Garland Midget Trials."

"YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT? Its wild as shit in San Antonio. Herschel Walker's Secret pudding crowd never get a gig in NY; they'd have every activist group in the city coming down."

I was beginning to feel that we don't see rock'n'roll with the same intensity as the Texans. I was told there's stuff going on out there that we can't even imagine. Like

when Gilligan's Dick Island let seven caged monkeys on crank loose on their audience and they attacked.

Wasn't there a lawsuit about that?" asks King.

"Yeah", says Gibby "but the big lawsuit was over the time the Dickie Boys made that 12-year-old girl throw up live minnows on stage."

"They had this old lady running around on stage with a shopping cart twisting a dog's tail to make him bark", says Paul. "And they taped a pzm contact mike to a tin 'Succrets' can full of cockroaches and cranked it loud as shit."

"You guys don't go in for those cheap theatrics?", I ask.

"Hell yes", says Gibby, "it ain't cheap theatrics--it's how you get a sound."

"What kind of sound do you get?" says me.

Paul: "You could call it a link between psychic space travel and bowel movements."

Gibby: "Its sort of wipe-a-billy."

Me: "You mean there's a rockabilly element to your music?"

Gibby: "No, there's more a grunt element."

Me: "But you're a hardcore band, right?"

Paul: "No we're not trying to appeal to the hardcore scene."

Gibby: "But we're not trying not to."

Paul: "We're like watching an extended bad TV commercial."

Me: "Is it the kind of music that comes out and hits you over the head?"

Gibby: "No it's the kind of music that comes out and plays with your sister."

Me: "Do you play the blues?"

Paul: "It's all the blues; well, sort of the browns."

Two in the morning, the Butthole Surfers are careening across the stage in a fury of emotional instability. Gibby is launching his voice through a toilet roll and shards of the tissue are tied in his hair but coming free with each twist and fall. Jolly seems steady as a farmhand, but

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-by Sandra Garcia

Yet another typical bluster night in the dead of winter that would have frozen the peppers out of chili. However inside the Chestnut Cabaret a truly warming act was fast stimulating the atmosphere; Los Lobos had arrived! And, far from being a pack of lone wolves howling into the night, this band treated the audience to a ridiculously good time. They turned the rather "holier than thou" attitude of the Cabaret into that of a close friend's wild party, where no one gives a damn how you act or what you look like, as long as there's fun. And this act had definitely created fun!

Before the show, the band was gracious enough to reveal some of their opinions on life, touring and their unique style of music. Cesare Rosas, half of the lead vocal team (and lively bajo sexto player) and Louie Perez, equally lively drummer, chatted briefly while accordionist/guitarist David Hidalgo and bassist Conrad Lozano basically listened. Still recovering from a nasty attack of the flu, even honorary band member Steve Berlin (of Blasters and Flesheaters fame) seemed to be suffering miserably; on stage however he displayed no hint of illness as his sax lent a terrific spice to the already heady mix.

Cesar briefly outlined the band's history, starting back in 1974 when they were playing strictly acoustic folk music: "However, this fizzled out--we had tried a little rock, then onto folk and liked it, but decided to get away from purist ideas yet tried to retain traditional elements, only now electric instruments were allowed in."

Still they shrugged, it wasn't until the decision was made to head into West Los Angeles, out of their tightly traditional Chicano sector that success began to strike when, two years ago, they opened for the Blasters at the Whiskey A-Go-Go in LA. Saxophonist Steve Berlin was quite impressed by the group and decided to sit in on their sessions. Gradually, he came to co-produce their EP... And A Time To Dance (Slash) with T-Bone Burnett.

"We coaxed Steve into producing us because he liked the band alot, and was always jamming with us--before we knew it he had been playing with us for about a year" recalls Cesar "and basically we ended up on Slash because Steve and the Blasters were on Slash, and we liked the label."

Speaking of Slash lead into the subject of T-Bone Burnett producing the band's next LP (entitled Who Will Save The Wolf). Mention of this causes much laughter among the band, Louie exclaiming "All right! Great--he doesn't know it yet! But we've been going around to all the press, telling everybody he's going to do our next album!"

"We've been telling all the press" agrees Cesar with a

broad grin as Louie continues "So he'll be embarrassed if he doesn't do it now! When we get home he'll probably call us up and yell 'WHAT!'"

After congratulating the band on their manoeuvres I asked about their current tour. "It's been five weeks so far this time--on and off since last year" muses Cesar. "We were signed in May '83, then we just started gigging and touring to support the album, we start up, go home--we might be home in March or April."

"Or August or some day" interjects Louie dryly, exchanging a resigned look with Cesar who continues "But we're getting a really good response everywhere--we're really happy with the response. Crowds are the same everywhere, except for New York audiences--they tend to be a little more reserved, but after a while they open up. We played the Irving Plaza in NYC and had a massive audience!"

Once off touring we turn conversation back to the recording contract. (I'm wondering how difficult it was to get on Slash even with Steve Berlin's help.)

Cesar takes the story up "It took a little time to get on Slash--we just had to (first) get the exposure and attention, then we got approached by a lot of record companies. But our heart was set on Slash--we held off until we were sure we could get on them."

And it obviously worked, as the EP keeps getting in the critic's top ten lists and gains compliments everywhere, even from the British press. Are the boys ready to start counting royalties? Cesar chuckles "We don't really know how the EP is doing saleswise! We keep being asked but we don't pay much attention--we like to leave it at that; it's supposed to be doing all right."

I round this absolutely amazing--a band that doesn't sit about with an accountant counting their money every night. This delicious nonchalance extends to their discussion of their Grammy nomination for best Latin American single (which they did win).

"Wow, up for a Grammy! Nominated for what song? I always have to ask Louie--I'm such a chucklehead" shrugs Cesar playfully as Louie suggests "Alselma? Yeah, that's it! Really it's pretty exciting! I'll never now how it happened but we're glad--it's kind of nice."

And it's kind of too bad that radio programmers don't seem to think we want to hear their music. But I certainly want to hear more about their music, and this brings about an intensive discussion of their style.

"We do a lot of TexMex tunes--we do old covers, no particular people--like Richie Valens, for example, and old traditional stuff."

Louie counters "But most TexMex is a real hybrid of things--we tend to be more purist."



LOS LOBOS

Cesar agrees, continuing "There's some confusion going around about TexMex--we made the mistake of saying TexMex, TexMex, TexMex--the stuff that we like to hear is Mexican artists, groups who are traditionalists, who have been around since the '40's; guys like Flaco Jumentes--he's like the Chuck Berry of the accordion. He's really popular in Texas. But there's so many slight variations and feels to all that music."

"To me TexMex is authentic music--more folk" muses Louie, Cesar shrugging "I'm still confused by that--groups are called TexMex who are just normal rock bands. I really don't just understand, just because they come from Texas? We don't play stuff like that, we're in a whole different bag--more authentic to us. We're not from Texas first of all--we're from California. But all that stuff does filter down. Our largest influences are northano trios--comprised of a rocas sextas (a large 12-string guitar tuned an octave lower), accordion and upright bass" he concludes, at last pinpointing an answer to the confusion of his audience.

The discussion was beginning to tax the band, as they were extremely hungry and thirsty. After being perfect gentlemen and thanking us for the interview they went on their way, leaving me to wait for the evidence of their words.

And any confusion I had

about the band was dispelled as I viewed them live. Be they TexMex, folk or traditional it mattered not, as the crowd whooped it up and stamped their feet. Cesar alternated lead vocals with David as David switched between accordion and guitar. Conrad added his danceable bass line along with Louie's rhythms, Steve giving his precious breath to his sax. And if it wasn't for my own attack of flu I would have been out there in the hysteria of dancing; however, fainting in public is not my style.

But Los Lobos gained a new admirer that night thru their casual almost shy personalities and their terrifically spontaneous music. I unfortunately can't predict their future as more then likely the typical American listener will never get to hear them due to no radio exposure. But they certainly deserve all the success they can handle.

I really dislike ending an upbeat article with a sour note but I have to comment on the opener for Los Lobos, namely Beru Revue. There is a band deserving non-attention as much as Los Lobos deserve attention. Coming a on cross between Ozzy Osborne and Men at Work they somehow stimulated certain college age cuties while boring to tears this intrepid writer. I certainly hope I'm never exposed to them in the near or far future, as puking in public isn't quite my style either. Ole!!

(Continued)

Leary's got a demon neck and pink face popping corpuscles. He likes to march in a staggered Frankenstein. Teresa and King hammer on the drums as a standing unit but they're going so fast I can't even hear them.

Now Gibby wrestles out of his clothes and is standing stage center in his boxer shorts. "I want to tell you about my mole", he begins.

"This is a private joke that started in Houston one night when a surge of the crowd knocked Paul from the stage and he needed five minutes to get his guitar in order. The band was just standing there and Gibby in his shorts killed time by telling the crowd about his mole with the big hair growing out of

it. He said that the doctor told him it had to be removed but his parents wouldn't give him the money. So from the circular balcony and the floor below came a shower of bills and coins. It was raining down. The pennies and dimes were sticking to their backs.

"We made thirty bucks on my mole that night", he tells me proudly. "So I usually mention it at every show." Actually that was the only night the mole made them any money and it's been so long, rather than explain, he just spits into another song.

The crowd is genuinely enjoying it. The Lower East Side has sent its contingent of dance-minded punks. New Jersey's got a load of spring-break collegians on the floor and the girl I'm standing next to says she's originally from San Antonio.

"You mean you got out alive?", I say.

"What do you mean?", she asks.

"It's wild as shit in San Antonio", I tell her. She's thinking I bear a striking resemblance to Lt. Calley and walks on.

I find someone else to pester, a band member in his own right who calls the group the most inspiring he's seen in years. I glance back at the stage and Gibby's boxer shorts though secured by a belt of gaffer's tape, are dangerously close to dropping off and inspiring us all. He told me earlier he only takes them down during sound checks in front of all-girl bands, but I'm thinking he's gonna lose these shorts.

Now why should I care? Well I don't but let's face it, fun is fun, and watching this

guy unravel himself like a roll of toilet paper, actually he is a roll of toilet paper, a thousand sheets to the wind, tumbling naked around the Danceteria, now that would be wild as shit. Nothing on the order of seven caged monkeys on crank, but we don't see this everyday. But that doesn't happen; instead a pretty oriental girl comes out and screams a few bars, then crumbles to the side of the stage with her eyes on fire. This strikes me as a reasonable substitute.

Yup, I smile, this is fun. And I'm cooking up a scheme to import the whole San Antonio experience east this some time, replete with what Paul Leary calls "the radical Tex-as bands." Activists be darned, let's have'em all out. What I need is a truck. Or a sage.



-by Nigey Lennon

We too shall become solemn, fat and Ubu-like, and shall publish extremely classical books which will probably lead to our becoming mayors of small towns where, when we become academicians, the blockheads constituting the local intelligensia will present us with Sevres vases...And another bunch of young people will appear, and find us very old-fashioned, and they will write ballads denouncing us, and there is no reason why they shouldn't.

-Alfred Jarry (1873-1907)

When I look back on the smog-ridden ennui of my suburban high school years, one surreal scene especially stands out: the vision of myself slumping on the bleachers on the football field during an obligatory pep rally, perusing *The Selected Works of Alfred Jarry* in obvious bliss even though I happened to be surrounded by several thousand adolescent Neanderthals involved in the quaint (and deafening) ritual of sacrificing their larynxes to the God of "school spirit."

I had stumbled across the book quite by accident, gathering dust in the literature section of a local bookstore. I don't know what I was expecting when I began reading Jarry's selected works, but I soon made a fascinating discovery: Jarry had originally written the play *Ubu Roi*, his best known work, when he was a brilliant but anarchistic high school student, with the primary intention of satirizing his hopelessly bourgeois physics teacher! The character of Ubu, based loosely on the aforementioned instructor, reappeared continually throughout Jarry's writing and personal mythology. Ubu seemed to typify the curious combination of greed and ineffectuality--a scathing caricature of the bourgeois ethic which, even though it had been written in the 19th century, seemed to me every bit as current as the Viet Nam War. It didn't take me long to claim Jarry as a fellow malcontent, stuck as I was in the Catch 22 world of high school, where a single curt syllable issuing from the lips of the vice principle was sufficient to demolish the life of a student, guilty or not.

There was one powerful theme in Jarry's work that struck me immediately: his bottomless hatred of the mundane. That message made a profound impact on me, trapped as I was by the enforced blandness of suburbia. Jarry's vision of a soulless middle class fiercely defending their petty avarices seemed strangely timeless; he had been writing about pre-World War I France, but he might just as well have been describing southern California in the mid and late 1960's.

Needless to say, Jarry has been an influence on lives of far more importance than mine. Born in 1873 to a textile salesman father and a brilliant but mentally unstable mother in the medieval hamlet of Laval, France, Jarry's childhood was characterized by academic excellence and personal eccentricity. After an intellectually distinguished but socially troubled high school career, he was sent to Paris, where he attended the Lycee Henri IV, hoping eventually to gain entrance to the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure. However, he was immediately drawn into the literary, artistic and philosophical ferment

of the fin-de-siecle Paris, becoming a fixture in literary salons and an increasingly regular contributor of prose and verse to forward looking publications. His play *Ubu Roi* (King Ubu) was first performed in 1896, when Jarry was only 23, and it caused the audience to riot and the Parisian drama critics to divide into two camps--one faction damning Ubu's ferocious nihilism and stream-of-consciousness structure, and the other, admittedly smaller, group praising the play as a welcome annihilator of what were seen as increasingly irrelevant dramatic conventions.

Jarry rapidly became a cause celebre, as much for his idiosyncratic lifestyle as for his innovations in drama and literature. He spoke like a robot, with mechanical uninflected syllables, lived in a dismal little flat that was squeezed between the second and third floors of a dreary apartment building (he was barely five feet tall, which made it possible for him to walk around without bumping his head on the ceiling), consumed opious quantities of absinthe, cheap wine and ether, and never went anywhere without a brace of loaded pistols and a shotgun. The message behind this seemingly incomprehensible behavior was the same message conveyed in *Ubu Roi*--alienation from, and rejection of, the bourgeois society which had produced him. In a larger sense, he mirrored the world around him; by the late 19th Century, French society was disintegrating at a rapid rate, socially and politically as well as economically, and Paris was the most decadent spot in France, perhaps in all of Europe. Although many of Jarry's fellow Parisian bohemians made a point of displaying outrageous behavior in mockery of the bourgeois ethic, Jarry was far more thorough in his play-acting. He chose to make his rebellion an art form in its own right, transforming his physical existence into a gross caricature of all he loathed. As a result, the literati of Paris were soon aping his strange lingo (known as

"le parler Ubu, or Ubuspeak"), attempting to copy his style of dress, (on one formal occasion he sported bedroom slippers, an ancient overcoat that was more holes than cloth and a fur cap, along with the usual firearms), and recounting his exploits over cafe au lait and croissants. But no one could ever beat him at his own game, perhaps his absurd act was a desperate attempt to laugh at a soul in constant torment, torn between belief and cynicism, love and hate, life and death. As he himself once wrote, "The soul is a tic." He was a sort of absurdist-existentialist with a touch of P.T. Barnum thrown in.

Jarry's cartoon of a life was not his only work of art. Despite grueling poverty, he produced a steady stream of poetry, essays, novels and Ubu plays, many of which were published during his lifetime by the important periodicals and book publishers of the period. Unfortunately, Jarry's chronic abuse of alcohol and ether (both used as skeleton keys into the infinity of imagination), along with his poor diet (often consisting solely of the fish he was able to catch in the Seine) severely undermined his health, and his last few years were marked by physical deterioration. He died at the age of 34, too weak to fight off a case of meningitis. His dying wish was for a toothpick. It was a logical conclusion to an irrational existence.

During his brief lifetime, he had made many important friends among artists, writers and musicians. If nothing else posterity will remember that he was the sole champion of the paintings of Henri Rousseau at a time when all of Paris seemed to be laughing at "the Douanier." Jarry encountered Rousseau when both were living in neighboring buildings on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. Discovering that Rousseau was a fellow Lavalais Jarry moved in on the Douanier when he stopped being able to pay the rent on his own apartment. He helped Rousseau get his paintings into the juryless exhibition at the Salon des Independents, and wrote



positive reviews about him whenever possible.

Another important friend in the arts was Pablo Picasso. As a wide-eyed youth in the midst of Parisian artistic life, Picasso encountered Jarry and was so impressed by him that he began carrying loaded pistols around in admiring imitation. In later life he acquired a valuable collection of original Jarry manuscripts, which prevented them from vanishing into oblivion the way their author had done. Picasso's early art, including his work in the cubist style, shows unmistakable traces of Jarry's chaotic influence.

The poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire remained close to Jarry until Jarry's death, writing a long and perceptive article on him in 1909 which at least partly ensured that the creator of Ubu wouldn't be forgotten too quickly. In the course of that article he described Jarry as "the last sublime debauchee of the Renaissance"--a man who found his inspiration in many places, from the sublime to the utterly debauched. When the surrealists, supported by Apollinaire and led by Andre Breton, set up shop in Paris, they immediately claimed Jarry as their spiritual progenitor for his previous experiments with the dream state in literature as well as for his steadfast refusal to repress personally disturbing or disgusting images from his work. These were to be important elements of the surrealist style, and the founders of the movement were correct in crediting Jarry with discovering its basic principle.

Jarry's influence on the arts in general continued to be felt after World War I cast its shadow on the new century and Jarry's ideas began to seem less extreme. In 1927, Antonin Artaud founded the Theatre Alfred Jarry in Paris, vowing to "contribute by strictly theatrical means to the ruin of theatre as it exists today in France" and citing the absurdist humor of *Ubu Roi* as its guide in such matters. Artaud's theatrical concepts included the use of film, then a fairly new medium and one which Jarry, with his megalomaniac tendencies, would probably have appreciated.

After World War II, English translations of Jarry's writings began slowly to appear; perhaps the figure of Hitler had lent a new and infinitely more disturbing meaning to the fundamentally bland viciousness of Ubu. In 1949, Jarry's memory received tribute of sorts when the College de 'Pataphysics' was formed in Paris ("Pataphysics" being an imaginary epiphenomenological system invented by Jarry to make sense of the senseless, and vice versa). The College has issued two series of publications by and about Jarry, the *Cahiers* (Notebooks) and *Dossiers* (Files). These remain the most valuable Jarry publications available in French, although the College tends to look down its nose on correspondents, no matter how serious they might happen to be.

A spate of American "Ubu" productions appeared in the rugged-individualist 1950's, followed by a series of articles on Jarry and some of his contemporaries in the *Evergreen Review*. Existential philosophy was very much the vogue, and many existentialists found that Jarry's philosophy was not at all incompatible with theirs--although his humor may have been a little discomfiting, since life is not supposed to be funny.

(Continued On p.29)

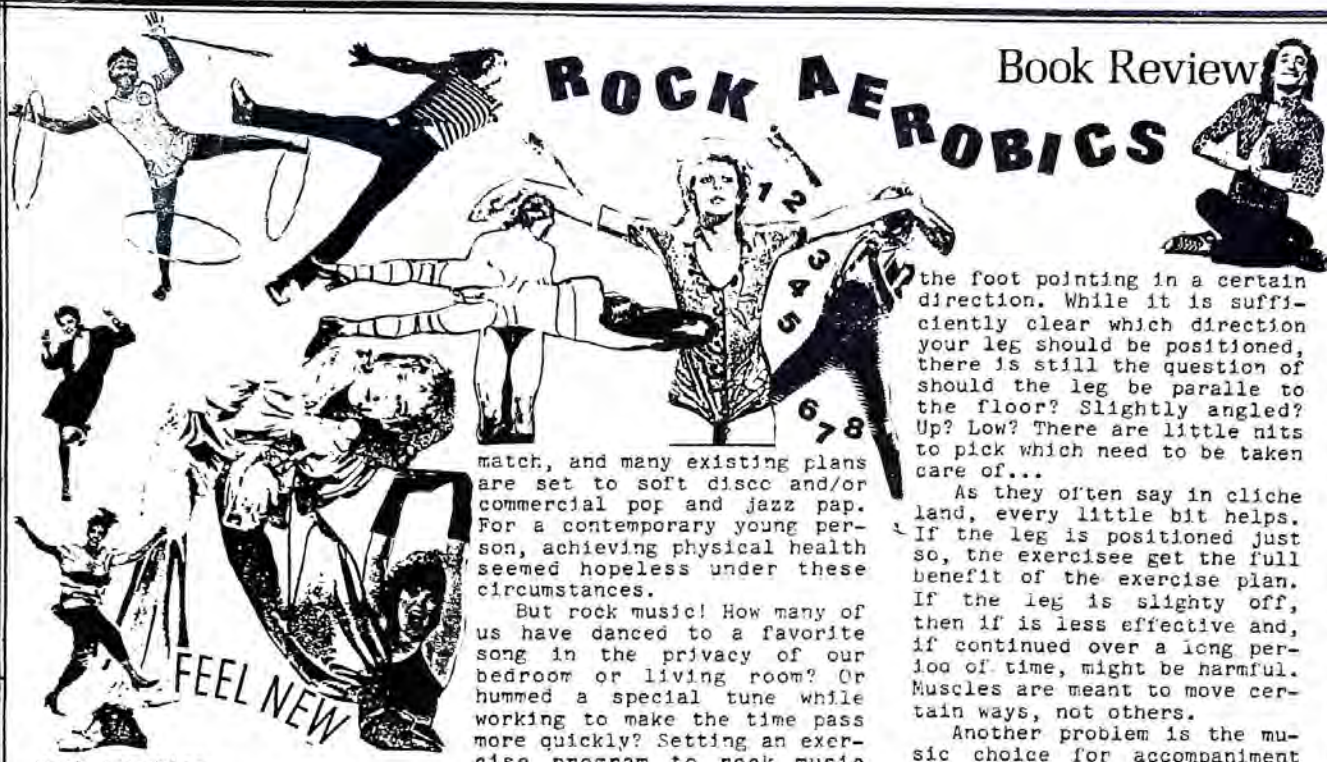
ALFRED JARRY



FIRST SUBLIME HUMORIST
OF THE APOCALYPSE



Versatile portrait of Monsieur Ubu



Book Review

ROCK AEROBICS

Rock Aerobics

by: The editors of Rolling Stone/exercises by Joanne Brown (Rolling Stone Press)
Reviewed by: Carol Schutzbank

Ready...and...BEGIN!
It's one, two, three, four,
Turn that page--let's do
some more!
Five, six, seven, eight
Isn't rock aerobics great!
Nine, ten...we won't give
in!
Shape up with rock--you're
bound to win!

Yes, boys and girls...for
all you flabby groupies, par-
tiers, concert goers, laid
back listeners and hip dudes,
it's time to get in shape! Not
just any ole way, but the Rol-
ling Stone way with ROCK AERO-
BICS!

That's right! Just when you
thought you were doomed to a
life of exercising with Jane
(Fonda) and Jack (LaLane), a-
long come the editors of Rol-
ling Stone to save the day. No
more see Jane jump, watch Jack
jog... Now it's push-ups with
Prince, stretching to the
Stray Cats and bobbing to
Blondie. Rock & Roll Aerobics
offers a complete set of
exercises to rock and roll
albums.

In theory, this is a great
idea! In this age of super
people who eat right and take
their vitamins, exercise is an
important factor in any health
program. And for many, exer-
cise has been a problem. Not
the actual physical act, but
the incorporation of said phy-
sical act into a busy schedule
to provide for an effective
program. Jogging, be it in the
city or country, is not always
beneficial to your health
(whether you're dodging dogs
or cars, it's still a hazard!)
workout spas are often expen-
sive and require outfits to

match, and many existing plans
are set to soft disco and/or
commercial pop and jazz pap.
For a contemporary young per-
son, achieving physical health
seemed hopeless under these
circumstances.

But rock music! How many of
us have danced to a favorite
song in the privacy of our
bedroom or living room? Or
hummed a special tune while
working to make the time pass
more quickly? Setting an exer-
cise program to rock music
would seem to be as natural as
putting bean sprouts on your
salad. The music lifts the
spirits and makes moving a-
round more fun. Voila! Now
you, too, can join in the Jane
generation.

In practice however, as if
often the case when distinguish-
ing between the dream and
the waking reality, the idea
of rock aerobics as demonstra-
ted in this book leaves some-
thing to be desired. For an
exercise program to be benefi-
cial and effective, all of the
movements must be done prop-
erly; if not the program is just
as unhealthy as not exercising
at all. When Jane kicks her
legs and Jack bends his back,
you can be damn sure they know
not to aim too high or bend
too far, lest they pull or
throw out something, which
would only result in twice as
much work in the long run.

The descriptions as featur-
ed in this book are not thor-
ough enough in demonstrating
how each movement should be
performed. The pictures are
small wallet-sized photos,
which means they may not al-
ways be easily studied for
instruction. In addition, the
directions are often incom-
plete. For example, during one
warm-up exercise the reader is
practicing leg lifts. At one
point during this maneuver,
while on hands and knees, the
instruction reads "raise your
leg to shoulder level, bend
your knee." The picture shows
a girl bending the knee with

the foot pointing in a certain
direction. While it is suffi-
ciently clear which direction
your leg should be positioned,
there is still the question of
should the leg be parallel to
the floor? Slightly angled?
Up? Low? There are little nits
to pick which need to be taken
care of...

As they often say in cliché
land, every little bit helps.
If the leg is positioned just
so, the exerciser get the full
benefit of the exercise plan.
If the leg is slightly off,
then it is less effective and,
if continued over a long per-
iod of time, might be harmful.
Muscles are meant to move cer-
tain ways, not others.

Another problem is the mu-
sic choice for accompaniment
to the program. The selection
consists primarily of top 40
pop and rock for the bubblegum
market. Those with more eclec-
tic tastes will find little to
no representation of psychede-
lic, punk or experimental rock
music. This, coming from Rol-
ling Stone, is a disappoint-
ment. Not that there's any-
thing wrong with Duran Duran,
Toto, the Go-Go's and Hall &
Oates, among others, but it's
equally as easy to warm-up to
the Psychedelic Furs, Peter
Dinklage, U2 and Led Zeppelin.
And that's just to name a few.
There is a whole scope of ta-
lent the editors of this book
could have had fun with, in-
stead of settling for the same
old thing.

Not only is the music
choice underwhelming because
of its uniformed homogeneity,
but it also may have psycholo-
gical drawbacks. This is the
music that is played every
day, ten times a day on most
prog rock stations. It floats
through your window from the
streets as kids walk with
their radios, it wakes you up
in the morning if you have a
radio alarm clock, it blares
from cruising cars, it enve-
lopes clubs and dance floor...
in short, it surrounds you at

every turn. With a routine
exercise program, is it wise
to have a routine music selec-
tion? Wouldn't it be more be-
neficial to choose music a bit
more obscure in the general
sense of rock, than go for the
usual? After all, if I have to
do something every day, the
very least I'd need to keep me
going would be something to
keep what I'm doing entertain-
ing. Maybe for some the top 40
music fits the bill, but for
others it leaves a big debt to
the ears.

Overall, this book would
have been a lot more effective
if more attention had been
paid to detail. The idea of
rock aerobics is a catchy one
--and there is a large audi-
ence out there whom it would
appeal to. With all the re-
sources and reservoirs of ta-
lent, there could have been a
field day with the suggestions
for music to shape up by. It
is a shame that, like the very
performers they cover, Rolling
Stone felt obligated to "go
commercial" to sell a book (It
seems the attitude of the sub-
ject has infected the writer;
where's journalistic objectiv-
ity when you need it?). And,
on a more sobering note--many
instructors at gyms and spas
have reported that the major-
ity of injuries occur through
unsupervised, poorly performed
exercise. Just because some-
thing has the label aerobics
does not mean it's an instant
fitness plan.

Jane and Jack may not be
glitter rock, but in this
case, maybe plain Jane has
something going for her after
all.

Nine, ten, eleven, twelve
This book is best left on
the shelf
Thirteen, fourteen...geeze
such trash
What comes next? Aerobic
thrash?



(Continued)

Roger Shattuck's book The Banquet Years came along in 1955, and was a landmark in that it introduced Jarry as a persona to the general reading public. Finally, The Selected Works arrived in 1965, enabling the non-French speaking curious to see for themselves just who the writer behind Jarry's absurd and outre disguise really was.

Both The Selected Works and The Banquet Years provided a whole new generation of future artists and writers with exposure to Jarry. Growing up in the 60's, cowering under the shadow of Viet Nam and faced with increasing meaninglessness in daily life as a result of rapidly changing social patterns, this group, like myself, has found Jarry to be a forerunner of the present age: the patron saint of modern irrationality. His influence is clearly visible in a great deal of the writing, music and art we encounter today, as the

60's generation gives way to the 80's.

For example, a Jarryesque flavor often permeates the work of cartoonist Bill Griffith, whose best known character is Zippy the Pinhead. Griffith was an art student during the 60's, innocently planning a future as an appropriately poverty-stricken abstract expressionist, when he encountered Jarry in The Banquet Years. He became an underground cartoonist and began to focus exclusively on depicting the baffling irrationality that characterized modern life. He has used Jarry as a recurring character in his various strips, has done missionary work for Jarry's questionable cause in the form of a pictorial Jarry biography in Raw magazine, and illustrations for a forthcoming Jarry biography.

The punk and post-punk gang seem rather Jarryoid with their scorn for the suburban (neo-bourgeois) ethic and their defiant disregard for

sartorial convention (Jarry might have appreciated some of the niceties of punk garb), although one suspects that their forefather's all-encompassing intellect: Jarry was fluent in classic Latin and Greek, whereas the average punk tends to relate to life on a far less cerebral plane. As a writer of poems which were frequently satires on the popular ditties of his day, Jarry could, I suppose, be considered an early punk, although I can only surmise what his reaction would be to the music of the present-day band which presumed to call itself Pere Ubu. Jarry was, after all, a master of vitrol, and rather indifferent to where he happened to be flinging it.

Today, as our lives become increasingly mechanized and irrational, Jarry's absurdist can be sensed in the very fabric of existence. Not surprisingly, "Ubu" performances are legion; one production ran in Los Angeles and lasted for more than six months, playing

to capacity crowds, and other productions crop up with regularity, sometimes in highly unlikely places (Bill Griffith recently saw an announcement for a limited run of "Ubu" in a neighborhood Catholic church in San Francisco). There is even an FM station in Santa Cruz, CA which calls itself KUSP--"Pataphysical Radio."

Assessing Jarry's impact on my life, and the lives of many others, I would have to say that Apollinaire got it all backwards. Alfred Jarry was not the "last sublime debauchee of the Renaissance," considering what went on before him, he was the first sublime humorist of the Apocalypse.

Nigey Lennon is the author of Alfred Jarry: The Man With The Axe, a biography of Alfred Jarry (Panjandrum Books) with illustrations by Bill Griffith

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plan 9

-by Steve Lawrence

"Do you remember that first record you ever bought, maybe it was by the Archies or something? Don't you ever find yourself going back to those first few records and, once you've stopped feeling ashamed, saying to yourself, 'Hey, this stuff's good!'" Eric Stumpo found himself in that position from about 1972 until about 1977.

But in his vast record collection, it wasn't an Archies 45 he went digging for. They were these bizarre albums that only the real heavies were ever into: Painted Ships, Shadows of Knight, Love. Stuff that made your Close and Play gag and sputter, made you stay up all night shaking your head all around and making your parents wish they'd sent you off to military school long ago.

They called it psychedelia, and still do. Stumpo, looking today like a younger Jerry Garcia with his Grizzly Adams mane and flowing beard, has spent most his life gathering up this stuff, playing it over and over, and by some fortunate coincidence, not going stark raving mad. He'd picked up an electric guitar as a young man and learned to make it screech and howl like so much bad craziness. By the time he was 30, he'd taken to teaching the art to a bunch of young men from around his South County, Rhode Island neighborhood.

But South County was never any place for a band. There are no clubs, no pool of musicians, no nothing. Just an Elks Lodge. Yet some twist of fate brought Stumpo together with a frizzy-haired blonde named Deborah DeMarco, who played a cheesy vox organ. They knew they would have to form a band, despite the odds. And not just any 'ol garage band would do. This band would have FIVE guitars, creating a swirling, mesmerizing tidal wave of sound. Those students of Stumpo's became his guitarists. A bassist and a drummer were soon located, and Plan 9 was born thereafter in Stumpo's water-logged basement.

Almost from the start, Stumpo's eight piece band chose a motley assortment of 60's garage-punk covers, which they reworked as best they could. Still, while at least three of Plan 9's original

lineup were old enough to have actually grown up when these tunes were first recorded, at least one member, bassist John Florence, probably "was still saying goo goo when the Music Machine were screaming 'Talk Talk', as 'Musician' writer David Fricke so delicately notes.

"Why 60's music? Well, the 50's would've been too raw for us, the 70's were horrible and I refuse to get a mohawk, so the 80's are out," maintains Stumpo.

After about a year of basement rehearsals, Plan 9 taped a demo and mailed it to Bomp, unaware that label had sent out a nationwide call for such demos for a Battle of... compile LP. Bomp dug the sound and had Plan 9 cut a 12-inch EP, Frustration, which received critical acclaim in 1982. Oddly enough, the band had played only two gigs by that time.

In the summer of '83, a small East Coast label called Whiplash financed a Plan 9 45, "5 Years Ahead of My Time," an eight-minute "live" studio recording which quickly sold out its limited pressing. In support of the single, Plan 9 did a 2-month cross-country tour that fall. The group not only had a sizeable following, but also caught the attention of such national publications as Billboard, Trouser Press, Musician, OP, and New York Rocker, all of whom gave favorable reviews of Plan 9's emergence in the so-called "psychedelia revival." Stumpo says Plan 9 was excited by this sudden response, but adds that somewhere along the way, people were starting to miss the point.

The point? "We'd already been around for a few years by the time this revival thing started happening, so in our minds we aren't and never were a part of that deal. All we are is an '80's rock band with psychedelic overtones--period. That sounds like a stock reply, I know, but that's all there is. We're just doing our own thing."

Plan 9 isn't fighting off the "psychedelia" label in a very persuasive manner, and Stumpo says the band probably won't for a time to come. He's well aware of the capitalistic ways of music promoters and accepts labeling as "the way things go in the music business."

"If you want to give a style of music a name to make

it easier to identify with, that's fine for you. More and more we see kids coming to see us with the paisley shirts, mini skirts, skinny ties, all that. I think it's good if that's what they're into," he notes.

Stumpo wonders if he's coming across as feeling negative about Plan 9's reputation as a revivalist act. "I'm really not. But, we're no longer intending our songs to sound like 60's stuff now and don't want that 'psychedelia' label anymore. And we're not too crazy about some of these revivalist bands going around doing verbatim '60's material. It just makes it more difficult for people to see that we're not into verbatim revivalism."

Music business big-wigs, meanwhile, glibly-gabble nervously over an emergence of a "neo-psychedelia" revival, and the marketing possibilities thereof.

"It could be, the way that radio is going, there will be a backlash against the dance stuff.... and then the new psychedelia could make it into the mainstream," notes IRS Record wiz John Quarrierd in

Billboard last fall. Plan 9 aren't holding their breath.

The top concern on Plan 9's cloud lately, Stumpo says, is the national and international response to the band's latest LP, Dealing With the Dead (Midnight), released in mid-May. This nine-song effort represents a maturing Plan 9 and contains only one cover ("hopelessly obscure," at that), "Keep On Pushing" (Human Beinz). The production is fluid--not terribly slick at times, but an accurate portrayal of what is Plan 9: the whirlpool of guitars, Stumpo's pinched sneer (ala a young Mick Jagger), the droning organ and some extremely effective--though simple--compositions.



The album's compositions pretty much run the sex-and-drugs gamut, with the exception of the title track, which begins with a Rod Sterling-esque narration: "...the blanket of eternal night carresses them, the last shred of hope eludes them, voices of the dead live on."

Stumpo: Ya, our song topics are the usual stuff. sex and drugs.

Debbie DeMarco: But sex and drugs are fun!

Stumpo: It's how you say "sex and drugs" that counts. Then, some of our songs are about things like dead people, too.

DeMarco: Tell 'em about "Dealing With the Dead!"

Stumpo: (irritated) People who are dead, y'know? Or, people who might not be dead. Let's just say it's about a couple of friends of mine who've died. I don't want to go into it.

The idea to get across, Stumpo insists, is his earlier statement, "That we're an 80's rock band with psychedelic overtones. All there really is to this band is what you hear on our records. We don't

have an 'image', that's for sure. We're slobes. Besides, our age difference is pretty great, 19 to 35, so how the hell are we all gonna look the same anyway?" Stumpo glances about the room where a few other Plan 9 members sit listening. All nod in agreement. "Hell, we're just average Americans, right? Me, I think the world is basically fucked up, too many people -- we need a holocaust," he laughs. "But I'm talking reality, and if it sounds gloomy, then reality is gloomy."

(Author's note: For Plan 9 information write c/o Midnight Records, PO Box 390, Dept. 0, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011.)



THE DEAD MILK MEN

-by Carol Schutzbank

"We are not P.O.D
We are not Little Gentlemen
We are not Seed of Terror
We are not McRad"***

You can say that again. Although the name seems to be the usual attempt of a local band aspiring to make their mark in punk rock history, that is as far as the comparison goes. The music is another story.

"We are not Blunder Boys
We are not Circle of Shit
We are not P.O.D
We are not an art fag band"***

The Dead Milkmen are a group of four likeable guys (Rodney Anonymous --vocals, Jack Talcum--guitar, backup, Dave Blood--bass, Dean Clean--drums) who play truly likeable music. There are none of the culture/counter culture political soapbox diatribes that some bands aspire to, sending them over the edge into an abyss of repetitious boredom (Plato's Law of Despair: the quality of music is inversely affected by the quantity of mediocre philosophy crammed into one song).

Instead this music is fun with a capital "F". There is a sense of humor in what the band does. The music is spirited and forceful. The titles of their two releases: Death Rides A Pale Cow and The Dead Milkmen Take The Airwaves are a subtle warning to let the listener beware--this is not music for a serious midnight discussion. This is music for

a good time.

How can you resist a band that sings "I Hate Myself" with vigor and vim equalled only by the enthusiasm of a group of winos discovering a half price sale on Night Train? Then there's the all-time favorite "Bitchin' Camaro." And for something completely different..."Rastabilly"

For those who are concerned about lack of substance, rest easy. Topics such as culture ("Ich Bin Ein Junkie, Was?"), politics ("Beach Party Viet Nam"), and education ("Violent School") provide the daily minimum requirement of societal criticism essential for a band to grow and an audience to relate to.

The Dead Milkmen inspire high spirits with their music and their off-beat approach to their material. It is refreshing not to feel guilty because you're having a great time at a show while a band sings about starvation and desolation.

"We are not a local band
We are from outer space
We don't even give a damn
We will probably smash your face

WE ARE THE MILK MEN
WE ARE THE DEAD MILK MEN
WE ARE THE MILK MEN***

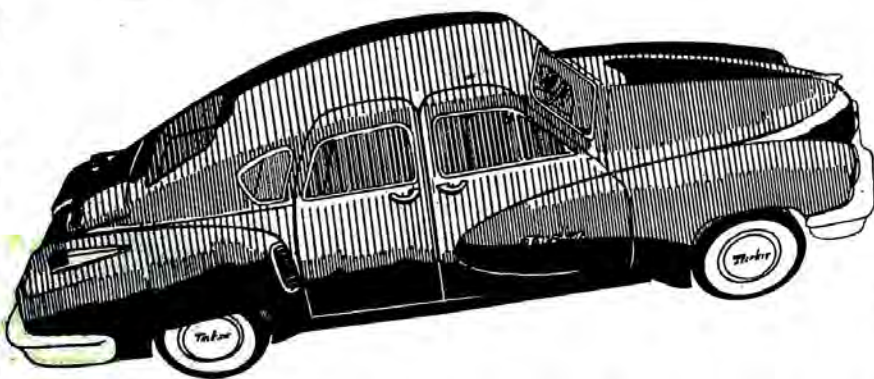
They certainly are...and don't you forget it!

Tapes are available by writing to The Dead Milkmen/POB 58152/Phila., PA 19102-8152

**Lyrics from the "Milkmen Stomp" c Golfpro Music.



CORVAIRS



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by Dirk Difficult

The Corvairs are a transplanted western band living and playing in NY. With the release of their new EP, they are poised to travel the east coast with their band of surf, blues, cowboy, psychedelic, contemporary, mystic rock. Call it "Peyote Music," the band won't disagree. They have a familiar American sound in the best traditions of Gene Pitney, The Ventures, Airplane and Hendrix. That's not to say that it's 60's music, or even revved-up 60's music, but the influences are undeniable.

"A lot of it is based on a twelve bar blues progression," says guitarist/vocalist Phil Gammage, "and the surf feel isn't your California type, it's drifted up, more Detroit. Our music has a lot of hooks, bits and pieces from the 60's and from the 50's and 70's as well. I use feedback and echo."

But, he hastens to point out, these elements are all a part of his vocabulary, not a deliberate attempt by the group to write songs that re-echo a bygone era. It's 80's music and those old fragments are a natural, personal result of having listened to, and enjoyed, what's been around the past 20 years. What they have come up with is a sound that is particularly evocative of the southwest.

"We stress the spiritual side of western music," says Phil, "it's not for cowboys."

Gammage met Jon Cormany (bass) in Colorado in late 1978 and began playing around Boulder. They went to San Francisco, initially to do a few gigs, and wound up staying six months. Then the band moved to NY and played another six before breaking up for reasons no one seemed anxious to discuss. There was a two year hiatus that saw each member pursuing other ventures. One year ago they reformed, and in the past months they have added a new drummer, Dan Reich. Winning favorable response, the band is finding a steady diet of club dates in and around NY.

"And it's growing," says Phil, "we feel good about the shows and anticipate a lot more work."

"Everyone seems comfortable with just three members as it affords them 'less hassles and less egos.' They have resisted the temptation to add a fourth person, yet will occasionally use a sax player in performance to round out a particular song or two. "We like that raw edged minimal sound," says Phil, "it gives us space to work in."

"Minimal", I say, "is misleading; you have anything but a plinky-plunk Dada style."

"Yes, but we're not going up with a wall of sound either; granted it's not lightweight stuff. It's minimal in the sense that we're only three pieces, two voices, no synthesizers or keyboards, no tits and ass..."

"And", says Jon, "we take care to fill in without being excessive."

The Corvairs are rightly proud of their new six song EP, *Temple Fire*. Most appealing is its honest representation of their stage work. They like sounding on record as they do in performance.

"Even if we'd had the money, we'd still want that rawness, with the rhythm tracks recorded and minimal overdubs as opposed to a big production with a lot of overdubs; otherwise it becomes slick or sterile," says Phil.

"You start punching in two notes here, a phrase there and building a sound in a patchwork, you start to sound like Toto or Queen or something",

adds Jon. "The one production number, the title track "Temple Fire", where we used the studio as an instrument itself was fun and it gives the record depth, but we don't do that song live."

Doing the EP on their own was a lot of work, but they learned from it. Now that they're playing the bigger clubs and pulling down more money, they look forward to going back to the studio.

"We've got plenty of material for an album now. We'll either do it on our own or with someone else paying for it, that doesn't matter. I'll tell you one thing," says Phil, "it won't take as long and it will be even better."

Literally the songs are quite simple. They are based on personal, psychic, drug addled experience rather than ranting political, or pleading for a piece of ass. It's not boy/girl music. The song "Jua-rez", for example, is the story of Phil's six week odyssey in a Mexican prison. They see the music as a vehicle for the poetry, which is essentially imagistic, often surreal and highly imaginative. This tends to throw them in the heap of neo-psychedelic bands, a label they are resisting. In large part this has come from many of the gigs they accepted with purist psychedelic groups that are legitimately recreating that sound.

Jon says that a lot of the songs are inward looking about escaping the material culture, and feeling more in touch with yourself. This tends to fly in the face of current trends and is reminiscent of the 60's idealism. You couple imagery, a subtle anti-material message with some echo and feedback and you're bound to be labeled a psychedelic act. I asked them then, if all this running against the grain is a conscious effort to present the opposing view to rampant consumerism, or to ignore the rarified political atmosphere. Is the poetry a panacea for what ails the state? Do you feel obliged to play this music?

"Why do you ask so many fucking questions," they say, "we play this music because we like it and we play it well." So much for idealism.

I watch the Peppermint Lounge show on St. Patrick's Day here in Manhattan. They opened, as they always do with an instrumental, for the instrumental is considered any rock band's challenge and as a bridge between the inevitable Grace Jones tune that precedes their arrival on stage with the bulk of the material to come. Bouncing around and working in a little swinging guitar choreography, they told me they used to dance a whole lot more, but set it aside to just play the music. Now they think it might be time to dust it off.

Here comes a song called "Hands of Time," that western tilt, mystical, Mayan mojo. Cacti and Castaneda. Twentieth century rock in an Aztec mode; all fairly disorienting in the swirl of youthful Brooklyn drunks on St. Patrick's Day in the rotten apple. Don't see this band if you're an acid casualty; instrumentals, dance steps, nifty guitar work, image song poems, twists you right up. Makes you think about the mornings you drank Mezcal for breakfast with the old man in the reed hut after the night on the beach when your tongue turned into a fruit bat and got stuck in a sand fence. You know what I mean.



Henry Rollins
The Pyramid/NYC

In my collection of odd things and aural curios I have a poetry compile, *English As A Second Language*. If it stands as anything important (I think it does), it's for the proof that there are some musicians and singers who can stand up there with "poets" with performance-oriented "artists". The biggest cases in point are Dave Alvin (best known as the guitarist of the Blasters) and Henry Rollins (vocalist for Black Flag).



-Mike Yonkausk

Henry's reading on the comp was made of two listings from his diary. One, the DC Henry of SOA & Straight Edge daze was double tracked with the other, the Henry of the present recording, vocalist for the Flag and countercultural (if unwilling) symbol. For a guy who wasn't schooled in this stuff (as opposed to Dave A.), it held my attention, made me listen. The one thing I expect from poetry.

So yes, I was looking forward to seeing Henry do a live reading. I didn't expect what Lydia Lunch, the force behind this show, put together.

Opening with Rat At Rat R in their performance mode, it wasn't the best piece that the group ever did. Sonda Anderson started with a new piece. A riveting piece about herself, she was about halfway through when Victor and Dave blew their internal timing and started reading their pieces simultaneously with Sonda. The resulting reading was overkill especially as I knew Victor's piece and Dave was doing something that looked like he was improving rapidly. The only person who seemed in control was John Myers, who sat with his back to the audience, creating feedback ambients from his guitar.

Then the major surprise of the evening. Between the Rats and Henry were about 16 other pieces. If Rat At Rat R just put on one of their poorer offerings, they seemed like masters compared to what I had to wade through afterwards.

Old faggots reading second-rate (if not cheaply imitative) writings by someone who read too much Burroughs without understanding it. Little art monsters grasping for their fabled 15 minutes and making one wish they had much less time. And of course, La Lunch. Her cat-in-the-porn queen antics are just dull, honey. And after 3 hours of this, with an apparent two more hours to go, I felt worse than if I had gone to a hardcore fest...and three times as bored.

Disgruntled, bored, exhausted and otherwise fitting in with what looked like the majority of the audience, I was heading to the stairs of the basement to the first floor when Henry happened to be heading down. He looked even more upset than I could possibly ever be.

"Is this the way to throw a party?" he threw at me when our eyes met.

I didn't get a chance to answer as the crowds pushing us in both directions made it impossible to stand still long enough for me to respond. That

was it, I thought to myself.

As it turned out, the people I came with were in the same mood I was in. The newsstand across the street made excellent ice coffee and lemonade and the thought of sitting in a cool park after the heat and claustrophobia sounded magnificent. We never got to see Henry. Quite frankly, this was one night none of us wanted to go back into the Pyramid, period. -S.Fritz

SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
The Beacon/NYC

Safe to say gothic punk is still alive and kicking in the corpuses of its high priestess, Susan Ballion; more commonly known as Siouxsie. Siouxsie and the Banshees have been howling to the dark side of the moon since 1976. Their approach to the dreadful is always with relish, not dread. They are creatures of their own creation.

The theatre was murderously hot, the wait excruciatingly long; by the fourth heatstroke victim Siouxsie and the Banshees appeared. Their entrance was pure high drama: dark, stark stage complete with mist and "modern art" blue gel lighting. The audience was mesmerized. The show consisted of earlier works as well as cuts from their recent album *Hyena*. Their sound was large and certain, enveloping the audience in an ominous, mystic dream, far, far, away. While Steve Severin's ear-splitting, heart-attack bass thumped on and Budgie rhythmically presided from his astral position center stage, Siouxsie entranced the crowd with her quirky, (psuedo)Egyptian dance steps. Blissfully, the audience stomped to the sounds of the rolling surf of terror.



-Sandy Davis

"Christine," concerning the multiple personalities within everyone, was the show's highlight. During this song I could understand why Siouxsie has been nominated best female vocalist by the NME for four consecutive years. Concerning the multiple personalities within everyone, the example being Christine Sizemore (remember the *Three Faces of Eve*?); her agonized expression of humanity's doom/hope syndrome left me shaken. While I loved this song, their (one song!) encore was measly and screechy.

Still, Siouxsie knows how to pick an audience's pocket and keep it. Equally captivating is the platinum-with-black-roots look of the Banshee boys. One of the most theatrical light shows around; if you like the drama of their music, you'll love the trauma of their show.

--S-I Rodriguez

BUSTER POINDEXTER
Tramps/NYC

Buster Poindexter is back and David Johanssen's got him. As Buster Poindexter, Johanssen performs old R&B, swing and jazz songs he loves so much. In tuxedo, bow tie and coiffured hair, accompanied by the Banshees of Blue, Buster Poindexter transports his audience to a time in life before rock clubs and discos; a time when cocktail lounges ruled.

Buster (David Jo) has a great knack for selecting dynamic material; every song in his diverse repertoire is an absolute gem. For instance, the calypso styled "Carnival," the swing classic "New York's My Home" (in which the phenomenal strength of his voice shines), and "Smokey Joe's Cafe," a humorous ditty from a time when rock and roll was in its cabaret stage. My favorite is "Bad Boy"--a riotous number with undertones of The Great Pretender. The lyrics are a bit ludicrous (leave it to David Jo), but once again, the vocals are top notch. I'm certain the Platters would get a kick out of it.

Lots of boogie-woogie piano and a touch of bop-shoo-bop/doo-wop that made me just giddy (but you know me). Buster Baby is a creative concept and a forceful, entertaining act. It is evident that David Jo thoroughly enjoys him and so does the audience. Show after show, everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, walks away happy. --S-I Rodriguez



RANK & FILE
The Ritz/NYC

Fan A--"Rank & File's country stance makes their punk edge more accessible..."

Fan B--"...Not to ignore their elevation of roots music into a modernistic country/punk expression of Americana."

Fan C--"...I don't know. I just like them. They're good. They get to me."

Way to go, C! The last thing Rank & File need is another explanation, another classification, another tag. Besides, if I hear another theory on "Country Punk," I'll puke. So on with the show...

Harmony is a particular talent of the Kinman Brothers. There is a large spectrum of sound covered by Tony's deep, gravelly bass voice and Chip's light tenor. Occasionally, Chip's twang gets out of hand; such was the case on "Timeless Love"--an otherwise sweet melody. Fortunately Chip regained control of his nasal passages for "Sound Of The Rain." There is a very soothing quality in this song that lasts long after the last note. Don't be surprised if you find yourself contemplating forgiving your ex. (By all means, don't do it, the mood will pass.)

"Coyote" stood out for its clear harmonies and Chip's soulful harmonica playing. In fact, harmonica is what keeps their cover of "Long Black Veil" from being a joke. At present their rendition stands only as a mistake. I think the band would be better off sticking to songs like "I Don't Go Out Anymore"--a jumpy tune, or "Why I Love You"--an early 60's cruiser (almost greaser) style song where Tony's husky voice adds just the right touch to Chip's sexy rockabilly strumming. "Sundown" was a real treat with plucky guitars and crashing drums layered against Tony's deep, languishing vocals. I love Tony's voice, it's got a unique, rugged intensity.

Rank & File put on a lively show and performed over two dozen tunes (they played a Texas set, so to speak). Last but not least, their anthem, "Rank & File" made me feel like donning a confederate uniform and breakdancing in the cottonfields. What a way to go! --S-I Rodriguez

JOHN EDDIE & THE FRONT ST.
RUNNERS/Trax/NYC

"Just Some Guy" is the title of one of John Eddie's tunes and a clear stating of the image he's pushing. An everyman type of music about an everyday sort of life. John Boy has a strong NJ (EEK!) following, and it's no wonder, with stage banter like "This song is and will always be dedicated to the girls of Cherry Hill NJ." All the young girls swoon while the older (16 and up) smile knowingly (boy, that J.E. certainly gets around).

On "I Want A Kiss," the audience is called in to participate on the oohs and aahs of this playful, snappy R&R tune, while John E. does a suave little dance around the stage. John Eddie is a lively frontman who during "My Steady Girl" douses himself with drinks, dances, twitches, jumps and yells all over the place. The pace is cooled down a bit by the spellbinding ballad "Sinner's Waltz". There is not a sound from the audience as J.E. sensuously croons the chorus "Close your eyes/Make believe it ain't your father..."

Not satisfied, because some girls hadn't fainted dead away yet, the band moves into the groove of "She's The Girl (The Girl I Love)". The Cherry Hill honeys once again begin to swoon. J.E. & T.F.S.R.'s do a great, camp, and quick hyper-rock song called "Cool Walk"--a high school confidential saga with lots of la-la's. "Pretty Rebel" is another ace number with a great drum beat and such lyrics as "She drives her mama crazy/Cause she's hanging out with trash" (who doesn't?).

John Eddie is a real talent and The Front St. Runners are a very tight band. Their music is very appealing and the band could be BIG with a little help. Their visual image needs some serious help though. Hey John! Get rid of those stupid bandanas! But don't worry about your voice because it's real attractive. So for now, I'll just close my eyes and make believe the voice is attached to someone else.

--S-I Rodriguez

MINISTRY
East Side Club/Phila.

When I first saw Ministry at the East Side two years ago, the acts they were competing with that night were the likes of the Human League, Flock of Seagulls (both at the Tower) and Romeo Void. With their first single out that week, they couldn't have chosen a worse night in Philadelphia to debut. But a lot of people made it to all the shows, and guess who won the raves?

It was no wonder that Al J. & Co. did. Of all the bands, Ministry had a rough edge epitomized in songs like that single, "Cold Life." Tough, a bit funky, yet ethereal. This was the shit, and Ministry could pull it off live as well.

The band's rise was fast. Within three months of the release of "Cold Life," the band had signed a deal with Lookout Mgmt (the Cars, Devo, T. Heads) and Arista. The band's first LP within that same year, *With Sympathy*, showed they were growing into more commercial directions. And the single from that LP, "Work For Love" capped it. Silky girlie-girls crooning in the back, happy rhythms, safe lyrics. Overnight sensations who could make good pop music. Then when you felt sure you'd get sick of the band, nothing.

Two years down the pike and Ministry are back at the East Side. Gone are Lookout and Arista, back is the balls that made this band. All that's left of the band (beside Al, of course) is drummer Stevo (thank god!). All that's left of the material of two years

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The Alarm

(Continued From p.26)

matter which of the Alarm's three songwriting members write the song, they all sound like Peters') is just superficially meaningful and po-faced enough to whet an opening act audience's appetite for the meat to come. The ultimate irony is that the band got its real start opening for U2.

U2 reportedly like the Alarm. And why not? Peters & Co. are the ultimate U2 fans, and are just bland enough not to present a threat. For Peters' part, however, there's a dollop of self-delusion that makes you feel kind of bad knowing that if the race was ever run, U2'd leave these guys back at the starting gate.

"A lot of people group us together in a movement with U2 and Big Country. That's a good thing, because we all have tremendous respect for each other. I think there's room for three great bands in the world--the Alarm, U2 and Big Country--and I think the thing that we all have in common is faith in our audiences."

Oh dear, we're treading shaky ground here. If I hadn't made it clear heretofore, the vital difference between U2 and the Alarm as performers is that U2 mean it. The Alarm are consummate poseurs--posing as the very picture of honesty. From Mike's undirected vocal theatrics to the band's repertoire of classic rock "moves"--wild strumming, windmills, leaps, climaxes with guitars held high--to their too frequent invocations for the audience to "sing along" with their empty anthems, the Alarm draw on a cache of rock clichés performed with such lack of humor as to make this band a pathetic parody before it even really starts.

Indeed, it could be a laugh to reinact rock's greatest moments. It's what drives us back to Rolling Stones and Who gigs even though those bands have long outlived any other usefulness. It's what makes us fondly tolerant of Joe Strummer's clownish polemics or the Police's peroxide philosophizing. There's nothing like a good, wholesome rock 'n' roll circus to take your mind off the gloomy viscosity of the genre's real vanguard. The problem is, I expect a circus from the once great has-beens...not from the aspiring up-and-comers. And to add insult to injury, the Alarm indulge in all this role-playing with such tight-lipped, grim determination that it isn't even fun.

The Tragic Flaw Revealed: The saddest part of the Alarm's whole misconceived melodrama is that they apparently believe--fervently--in everything they're doing. No matter it's nothing new--it's so-o-o honest!

"If we've got a message, it's a message of motivation. We've come from nowhere--a little town in North Wales--and now we're a group that starting to happen all over the world. We want to pass on the feeling that people can do it in what-ever field. There's room for your ambitions to come true." Why not? It sure beats working.

"We have been accused of asking questions and not giving answers. But we're not asking questions of the world because we don't think the world owes us a living. We don't just sit back waiting for someone to come along and hand us 'here's your future boys' on a plate. We've gone out and taken what we wanted." Capitalism: 1. Socialism: 0. "We haven't got the answer for other people. Our answer is for ourselves."

As I think about it more and more, there is a place for the Alarm in the great Rock and Roll (cum Artistic Expression) Scheme of Things. After all, Pete Townsend's getting kind of old...

(Continued From p.31)

ago are "Work" and "Substitute."

Now in are a lot of tape machines (too many if you ask me), Al's wife Patty, and one other member on keys. The new material is of the same caliber as "Cold Life" with two songs in particular "Every Day Is Halloween" and "Far Away, Oceanside" immediately holding my attention.

So maybe there's life for this band after all. Al's stage present wasn't the wimp boy one normally associates with music of this ilk. If anything, he seems to get his jollies being really obnoxious at times, screaming into the face of the audience, dancing at the foot of the stage and in general, keeping them at distance with a well placed shove at strategic moments.

A synthetic tough? Nah, Jourgeon is too small and spindly to get away with that act. But smart? Yeah. Ministry have all the appearance of a band that's going to stay one step ahead of the trends, because, like hey, who's still listening to Romeo Void, Human League and a Flock of Birdshit these days? I never really did. But I get a feeling that I will be hearing more of Al & Company.

-Steve Fritz

MOTLEY CRUE

title: motley crue
by J.D. Harris

The Spectrum?

What the fuck am I doing here?

When you're used to a club (fairly decent sound, small crowds and a good view of the band), a place like the Spectrum can be a bit of an experience.

There is nothing like standing in line with a bunch of puke-faced, leather-jacketed longhairs--as opposed to a bunch of puke-faced, leather-jacketed mohawks--while you are searched (mugged) by a door attendant for fireworks, firearms, drugs or alcohol. Yeah--fucking right. By the end of the first act there was more smoke than at Yellowman's last birthday bash, enough kids wobbling around "Partee Mutha Fugah Partee" and enough sparklers to recreate the Battle of Britain. Oh well...Rock 'n' Roll.

Waysted opened the show, and lived up to their name. Despite having Pete Way (ex-UFO) and a local kid on lead these guys couldn't quite cut it. Good musicians--but the material was kinda lame. At least the drummer had the sense to keep his obligatory solo mercifully short. Very few bics were lit. (In case you don't know, or have a self-induced mental block, the customary way of showing yer appreciation--besides clapping, yelling, puking etc.--is to light a match or lighter. How totally awesome.)



Motley Crue was second up, and this is probably one of the last times you'll see them second. These guys are gonna be a big deal...big. They've got the look: imagine a baptist minister's worst nightmare about rockers (long dyed hair, leather chains, the usual stage banter about their prowess with booze and women). It's the usual bullshit, but these guys can play to back up the imagery and show.

Not many second-billed bands have the guts to come on in a smokey haze. Whammo! Singer Vince Neil leaps out at ya and never lets up for close to

an hour. Christ--on a song like "Live Wire" they've got the speed and energy to make many a hardcore band look lame.

On the slower stuff like "Shout at the Devil", guitar humper Mick Mars, (these guys like funny pseudonyms: the bassist is Nicky Sixx), shows he can burn with the best of 'em. During the drum solo, Tommy Lee (real name???) was cool - a great solo as he juggled his sticks. A lot of bics were lit even after their encore. Wow! I'd gladly drink beer with these guys!

Even before the grand appearance of ole Bat Breath, you knew--even if you were on Tuinals like the majority of these idiots appeared to be--what was coming. Behind an enormous curtain was the stage set. A gothic staircase lined with robot bats (their wings flapped, too) and a giant video screen behind all this. Boy. I'll bet this stuff was worth more than the GNP of some African nations.

Finally he arrived. There before my own bloodshot eyes was Ozzie. After descending the stairs surrounded by lightning (great effects), and flapping wings, sulking about with a cape over his head and letting the dry-ice smoke lend an ominous air, he flicked his cape off.

Surprise! Guess who? "Hello Philly, are you ready to go crazy?" Subtle, ain't he? Telling these I'll monsters to go crazy is like telling the SS to play nice at a B'nai B'rith convention.

I really can't knock the guy, though. After all, you don't stay at the top for 15 years by not knowing what yer public wants. They want killer--he gives them killer. Sabbath lame? No problem. Get a new hotter band (which the bastard did, too.) Hot shot guitarist dies? No problem--find Jake E. Lee. Drummer leaves--spend a few bucks more and get Carmin Appice (ex-Vanilla Fudge, Cactus, Beak, Bogart and Appice, and Rod the mod). And voila! a killer band. The band money can buy! At times it looked like they were carrying Ozzie--after all the guy is pushing forty and all those years on the road are starting to show.

And speaking of show...Get crazy.

The screen was tastefully (?) used to coincide with all those neat images. Heavy metal loves: dragons, demons, wizards, fair maidens etc. All fantasy stuff--just the way some bands used anarchy, peace and freedom for their fantasy images. Ozzie stalking the steps of castle Osborne for "Snowblind" (killer), "Bark at the Moon" (killer, too, Jake E. Lee is a prime string-bender and writer), "Crazy Train" and (yeah!) "Paranoid." And...surprise! A drum solo! This time Appice and his kit part of the stairs and did a midair solo. Did the crowd love this? We're talking Bic city.

What the heck--even I liked it in a perverse way--sort of the same way you look at John Brinkly or Charlie Manson--these guys are loony, but they're fucking good at it and fun to watch. When's Iron Maiden coming???

Partee.....!

China Crisis/Simple Minds The Beacon/NYC

Seemingly alone and distraught, opening act China Crisis began their set awkwardly, evidently nervous. Perched precariously on just a ledge of stage, the band played and smiled but seemed to have difficulty settling into the job at hand despite the audience's enthusiastic and warm welcome. Twenty minutes into the set China Crisis announced "Interested" and eureka! a breakthrough. Kids down in front popped out of their seats like toast and things began to warm up. China Crisis perform a moody variety

of synth-music. Garry Daly and Eddie Lunden compose futuristic ballads with a stream of consciousness similar to The Associates; the latter duo being a bit more gothic. China Crisis have a few quirks to take care of but the kids are all right.



Jim Kerr of the Simple Minds was in great voice for this show. "Up On the Catwalk" even more impassioned live than recorded. "White Hot Day" otherworldly and defiant. The band was with him the whole way. They sounded as brilliant live as they did on records. However, good sound can be obtained at home with a decent stereo. At \$10-\$15 a ticket, a live show should offer something more. The performance consisted of Kerr leaping from mammoth platform cube to mammoth platform cube and calling for a show of hands. Same action, song after song. At one point, Kerr yelled "Gimme Hands" so frequently my companion questioned if it was a new song. Perhaps, someone will give Jim a few pointers. If not, buy the record, stay home and save your money.

--S-I Rodriguez

Echo & The Bunnymen The Beacon/NYC

A good thing that the Beacon serves alcohol (even if expensive and watered down). I needed it.

Opening for the Bunnymen that night were the Flesh-tones. And yes world, there is a band who stayed true to their CB's roots...with material as fresh as a month old box of cat litter and a live show that reeked even worse. That's when I started drinking.

Next up a character named Billy Bragg. Imagine a Paul Weller clone minus the Jam... minus even the Style Council...and take away even the ability to play guitar (and that's the good news). By then I was having a wonderful time staring at the ceiling, downing Goobers and Jack Daniels. And no world, I didn't even start a peanut plantation on the Beacon's carpet that night. What had been on so far was like a tremendous jolt of Maalox, blinding out anything that I might have ingested.

After too long a wait, and more drinking, the boredom finally subsided with the entrance of the Bunnymen. Minus orchestra, they kicked off with one the more forgettable ditties from their latest LP, Ocean Rain. Then the kicked into high gear with "Over The Wall" and there was no looking back as my ennui flew out through the rafters.

Ian McCollough was in excellent form, as was the rest of the band. The band's regular set lasted well into the near two-hour range. Despite some slow points (how much of an hour and a half can you take?), the Bunnymen were at their moody best with monster music from all their periods including songs like "The Cutter," "Killing Moon," and a show stopper version of "Do It Clean."

They made up for the boredom I had endured. It also allowed me to recover from my first bout of the evening. Seeing that it was only 11:30 or so, I knew that a couple of bars were only just beginning to kick into high gear. It was time to start round two.

-Sean Dunhill

Reviews!

SLAYER Show No Mercy (Metal Blade)

Their press kit states they are no "wimpy" band. Their promotion picture features band members grouped around a young girl sacrificially spread-eagled on a bier; there is blood on their faces and on her body. Their song titles (for example: "Evil Has No Bounds") are full of deep, dark, nasty sounding references. Obviously this band means business.

Not one who is easily impressed, I take all this with a tad more than the usual grain of salt—I go for the whole shaker. It seems, to me anyway, that this is the final culmination of heavy-duty rock/metal music—an amalgam of histrionics and heavy metal all rolled into one: there are the allusions to evil—a la Black Sabbath, the make-up and flamboyance of Kiss and the aggressiveness of younger bands like Motley Crue. What kind of music can possibly come out of this?

Slayer's press material may need a bit of work for presentation, but their music does not. When the stereo cassette hits the groove, the listener is hit with a moving wall of sound that lunges towards you and thunders over you. Not quite metal, but with a metal touch; not quite punk, but the speed and intensity are there; there is a passing glance at rock, but all in all it is music that defies categorizing.

Lyrical there is room to grow. The album cover, the title, the promo picture, the words to the music—all aim to convince you that this is one mean band you wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley. But after a handful of songs about hate and evil and darkness and the devil the listener may find he/she is no more affected than if he/she were listening to an album of nothing but love songs. Like everything else in abundance, even Satan gets to be mundane.

Songwriting aside, Show No Mercy is a strong debut from a band that warrants watching. (If for no other reason than to see if their stage show is anything like their press kit hints at!). It's an album that look like it's one of the crowd—but after a spin on the turntable you'll find it more than ably stands on its own. (Metal Blade/22458 Ventura Blvd/Suite E/Woodland Hills CA 91364) —C. Schutzbank

SLICKEE BOYS Cybernetic Dreams Of Pi (Twintone)

This is pop nouveau punk. At least I think it is. It's got the chords, the beat, the high-pitched vocals—yes all the elements are there. But somehow, the feeling I get when I listen to this album is the same kind of feeling I'd get if I was listening to Englebert Humperdink covering Soft Cells cover of the Dead Kennedys: there's too much distance between the music and the listener. This album is carefully calculated from chord to beat and back again—leaving little to no room for any real emotion or feeling to pull through. The old saying "too good to be true" is appropriate here; the music is slick, the lyrics are pat...it's pop punk at its zenith—a direct contrast to what punk counterculture was really all about. (Twin Tone/445 Oliver Ave. S/Minneapolis MN 55405) —Carol Schutzbank

RAGGED BAG 10 Song Tape

One of the problems that post-punk, industrial noise bands face is recording a quality tape that captures the total sound. Instruments and vocals tend to get lost in a haze of noise—producing a confusing mix of semi-audible songs. This tape is no exception. The vocals are gritty and passionate; the music is raw. But the drums are barely there, and the two guitars often sound as though only one were actually playing. The overall impression is more annoying than anything else—because what the listener does hear sounds like it might be pretty good—if only it were clearly defined. —Carol Schutzbank

M-FAKTER "War Dance/Macrobiotic Funk"

These days most "new" music is more likely to be a rehash of "old" styles: witness the popularity of Stray Cats, the Supreme covers (Soft Cell, Phil Collins) and more. By touching upon memories of yesterday, bands are hoping to enjoy success for today and tomorrow. Not so with M-Fakter, a Philadelphia band with a low profile and high talent. Neatly sidestepping the clichéd hooks of heavy metal, pop fusion and dance music, M-Fakter nevertheless incorporates all of these, and other styles, into their music. "War Dance" (the A-side) expresses a "serious-reflective side" of the band (or so I am told by their press kit). I think the words "serious and reflective" are misleading—implying ponderous thought-provoking chords and lyrics. This is a song with a



message—of that there is no doubt, but it also makes the foot, as well as the brain, tap. "Macrobiotic Funk" (B-side) is a catchy song that slides in between the humorous and the absurd (a vegetarian's adventures at lunch), with a few too many changes to make it easily danceable (a challenge for those who are dance fanatics!). All in all a highly enjoyable offering from a band that is most definitely making "new" music. —Carol Schutzbank

THIN LIZZY Life (Warner Bros.)

WAKE UP EVERYBODY! THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN!! And are they ready to rock and roll! This double album set is more than proof that heavy metal did exist before Van Halen, and that even without the evil satin/spandex presence that most bands insist on adopting a band can still rock with enough energy to fuel a power station. For those who have never heard of Thin Lizzy, this album is a good place to start: songs like "The Boys Are Back In Town," "Thunder & Lightning" and "Jailbreak" are hot numbers that rock by any of today's standards. For those who are Lizzy fans, all the material here will satisfy the taste without bringing any saccharine-sweet-silly memories of what was and what can never be. These guys, like the best of most classic rock bands, show that real rock and rollers never die—the just play until the Sun Goes Down. —Carol Schutzbank

DAVID VAN TIEGHEM These Things Happen (Warner Bros.)

Avant-garde percussionist David van Tieghem has had my admiration ever since Love Of Life Orchestra which he co-founded along with Peter Gordon. Van Tieghem is also a much sought after studio musician and has performed on recordings for Laurie Anderson, Robert Ashley and Brian Eno, to name a few. Van Tieghem is often classified with other experimental composers yet his work is more advanced, complex structures of what others are trying. For David van Tieghem, music is in the hands of the creator—a notion perfectly expressed in the Ear To The Ground video by John Sanborn. In These Things Happen Van Tieghem's compositions have never been more fluid or poignant. "Number One" brings in its smooth carcass both the calm and quirky pulsations of time and motion. The sounds of each step of a journey—foot or flight—as it complicates itself. In "Hunted Animal" DVT contrasts a variety of distant sounding, pawing, scratches and wailing sighs with a steady backbeat of calm strength throughout. The ingenuity, the intensity and the intricacy of David van Tieghem's musical persona is evident on These Things Happen from the very first sound to the very last. I did not see the Twyla Tharp dance "Fait Accompli" that this music was written for, but that doesn't matter because this album absolutely radiates on its own. A must for anyone with even half an ear in their head. —S-I Rodriguez

DANIEL PONCE New York Now! (OAO/Celluloid)

Interesting workings of congas and bongos. Daniel Ponce is pushing latin rhythms in new directions. "Africa Contemporanea" suffers by the inclusion of awful chanting. "Basta De Cuentos" and "Odie" are fast, almost tribal pieces. "Cojelo Suave" is a Cuban percussive that will cause even the most rigid body to sway. "Siboney" is a beautiful,

lying on the turntable. This is all the more notable because most of the other music on that particular side of the album doesn't have the same amount of heart that this stuff does. After listening to this offering you are bound to want to see this band and check them out further.

Overall, the best approach for this, or for any compilation album really, is to listen to a song at a time and then make your own decision. With so much to choose from there's bound to be at least one thing you'll like. (Enigma/POB 2896/Torrence CA 90309)

—C. Schutzbank



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN Ocean Rain (Sire/Korova)

Ocean Rain explores new horizons in modern psychedelic music. It appears experimental in nature, yet is so appealing that it engulfs the listener, drowning him in smooth progressions and full symphonic brilliance.

Unlike Porcupine, which relied heavily on Will Sargeant's guitars and Les Pattinson's bass, Ocean Rain dares to be different by implementing the crisp vibrations of a swirling orchestrated tidal wave! The opening song, "Silver" is destined to become a masterpiece of modern music. Ian McCulloch's vocals remind one of a songbird on a rainy day, and mix easily with Bunnyman harmonies which are reminiscent of the Moody Blues on their "Ride My See Saw" track.

Side one seems to depart from traditional Bunnyman styles by adding more depth and mobility with help from Sargeant's acoustic (sometimes Egyptian-sounding) guitars, and Adam Peters' orchestral arrangements. "Crystal Days" is rich in the clanging-infectious guitars and short yet wonderful symphonic interludes. For that matter, "Seven Seas" has equal strength, both songs are mastered and presented in the misty, windswept spirits of the sea, and beautifully woven into smooth sailing vocals from McCulloch (with "Echo" machine), and Sargeant, de Freitas and Pattinson.

"My Kingdom" and "The Killing Moon" all move in confidence, blasting some of the most awesome lead guitars since Clapton, and adding the folksy-ballad styles of Ireland with proud patriotic snares and bass drums.

The title track, "Ocean Rain" utilizes both the cello and violin most stunningly, adding the Bunnyman interpretations of the sailing ships with help from Les Pattinson's basses and Pete de Freitas' drums.

Other tracks on Ocean Rain include "Nocturnal Me," "The Yo-Yo Man" and "Thorn of Crowns." Ocean is one of the most high powered and original works to date. As a result, this quartet from Liverpool has the potential for commercial airplay. So hopefully Echo and the Bunnymen will hop on the radio waves, they deserve it because they earned it.

—Mark A. Lerario

BREATHER Loves and Disloves

This is the kinda experimental stuff that you don't really rate as "good" or "bad," but as "interesting," "garbage" or just plain "noise." Well, I find it "interesting," so I'm keeping it. (Address) —Rich Kidd

VARIOUS ARTISTS Hell Comes To Your House Pt. II (Bemisbrain/Enigma)

(A compilation featuring the Jones, Mau-Maus, Cambridge Apostles, Blood On The Saddle, Tex & the Horseheads, Minutemen, Screaming Sirens, and Lotus Lane & the Lane Flames)

I have mixed feelings about compilation albums. On the one hand, they offer you a wide variety of stuff to listen to without having to worry about buying albums and not liking them. You get samples of things to tickle your fancy, and whatever appeals to you, you can then get more of. (The "smorgasbord" approach to music). On the other hand, this approach tends to get monotonous. Like a smorgasbord dinner after the fourth helping, everything starts to blend into everything else, until it's hard to distinguish where one thing begins and another leaves off.

Such is the problem with this album. Despite its somewhat pretentious metal sounding name, most of the bands here offer music that is punk with a pop "country-down-home-ness" flavor. The similarity in music and even vocal styles becomes apparent after the first few songs, supporting my doubts about the "smorgasbord" approach. However certain bands do stand out, most notably Blood On The Saddle and Lotus Lane & the Lane Flames.

Lotus and her Flames sing "Bad Sex"—a funky out wail of a tune that makes one think of 50's music, 60's vocals and 80's socio-cultural awareness caught in a blender and all mixed up. Blood On The Saddle perform with a kick—the music leaps out of the speakers as opposed to

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Hot Shots and Pot Shots
by Carol Schutzbank

It's summertime, and as the cool breezes of early June segue into the heated humidity of July and August, there's little incentive to venture outside unless it's for entertainment or food (two of life's great necessities). With little but dribble on the boob-tube to keep you company while indoors hiding from the heat, the natural thing to do is head for the turntable for something interesting.



Fads in music have come in and gone out with increasing regularity in the last few months—like the tide they've left their skeletal remains to mark the charts and record stores, until the next wave of music washes away interest (Wadda ya expectin' for a summer analogy from Terminal? Hemingway?)

With no major style dominating the market at the present time, record companies have released a slew of products—a grab bag designed to get the attention—and the pocket money—of anyone looking for a way to take their minds off the heat and/or a dull summer day. Some of the things I've heard set my system smoking, others have wilted the needle. U-Men (EP—Bomb Shelter): Not exactly jazz fusion, not exactly punk, not exactly funk, not exactly r&b...not exactly. The U-Men aim to blend all of that and more. It's an interesting concept and when it works it works well. When it doesn't...well...Uneven but worth checking into. A band worth watching...Robert Gori—A Night Full Of Tension (Mute/Elektra): This is the kind of album that would like to be a hit in svelte nightclubs and on sleek disco stations. Would like to...but isn't. Instead it falls about three steps short...Anna Domino—East And West (EP) The cover shot focuses on an issue of Elle featuring the latest interview of Ingrid Bergman (with a huge picture of Bergman on the cover). The soft focus in yellow light, the background of muted decoration...it all hints at pretty weighty stuff. But the music itself is lightweight. Domino's husky vocals may have a unique sound, but this is hardly top-notch debut material...Soviet Sex (EP): Bright, poppy...these guys are having F-U-N! Reminiscent of early B-52's in style...but with a sound all their own. These guys are probably a blast live...Tommy Dean Deadline (EP—Panda): Tommy Dean plays guitar, bass, ukelele, re-corder, bontempi, organ, harmonica, typewriter, art objects, Datsun pickup (yeah—you read that one right), paperweight, clock and tv, as well as vocals. With all that you'd figure this ought to rival Laurie Anderson in concept, if not sound. But it doesn't. Instead one is reminded of the Beatles pop Sergeant Pepper/Magical Mystery Tour days (songs like "Fixing A Hole" & "Hello/Goodbye"). It's catchy pop music with a little kick...Baby Boom—Basket Case (EP—Rant): "Hey, I've got some instruments!" "I've got a tape recorder!" "I know how to write like Crass!" "I can sing!" "I've got a basement!" "Hey everybody—let's be a post-industrialist music band Let's be post-punk!" Let's be dreadful. Let's be boring...Western Eyes (Trace Elements): The Alarm, Junior grade. Indistinctive rock with industrialist lyrics. Harmless...Level42—Standing In The Light (A&M): Obviously this group has studied closely the songs that have made hits out of Hall & Oates, Stevie Wonder and Kool & the Gang. The problem is, they've studied too well. This album is a smoothly calculated, well produced funk collection of copy-cat styles set in a definite groove. If this band can define their sound they will definitely be the role models for the next aspiring dance band to come...Color Me Bored (A&M): Peter, Paul & Mary meet Creedence Clearwater Revival. Anyone seen my bell-bottomed pants?...Howard Jones—Human's Lib (Elektra): The big hit off this album, "What Is Love," is a pale version of the Thompson Twins. The rest of the album is a cross between Thompson Twins and Human League. Can you say "generically produced synthesizer pop dance music" boys and girls? I thought you could...China Crisis—Working With Fire & Steel (Warner Bros/Virgin): Yet another in the long line of indistinguishable syn-pop bands. Mindless music for mindless people...The Smiths (Sire): A cut above most of the other pop bands making the airplay rounds. There's more to the Smiths than drumbox and a catchy guitar riff. Eminently danceable "charming" music...Persian Gulf—Changing The Weather (Raven): Mother always told me that if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.

Enough said...The Style Council—My Ever Changing Moods (Geffen): A far cry from Paul Weller's last project (the Jam), this leans toward mellow swing and a touch of light dance music. The title song is a nice, tight be-bop of a tune, the rest of the album follows suit. This is the kind of music you can play loud and mom and dad won't mind—they might even like it...The Waterboys (Island): Haunting 30's style piano...visions of smoky clubs and dark smoldering nights...a reedy sax wafting between lyrics and illusions conjured...all of this perfectly sets the mood for the first song (complete with a 30's style title: "A Girl Named Johnny"). Not as vague as the Psychedelic Furs, but with a nod in their general direction, this album swings all the way through. It's upbeat, catchy, danceable and best of all, it's got substance. Worth owning.



DEL FUEGOS
The Longest Day (Slash)

"Dirty Water" (one of the absolute classics of all out trash punkdom) main line was something like "Boston your my home." And although the band who cut the song, the Standells, hailed from LA, the songwriter, Ed Cobb, was definitely a true-blue Yankee rocker.

Boston's had its share of classic bands (just think of the Remains), and the Del Fuegos are following this tradition to the tee. So it's not that unusual that this, their first major release, reminds me one hell of a lot of the Standells. With one major flaw. "Dirty

Water" was a classic because its rat's ass grunginess was preserved in all its funky glory on vinyl. The Fuegos' LP, on the other hand, has been produced too clean so that absolute killers of their's like "Nervous & Shaky" and "Turn On the TV" don't quite have the bite they should.

Of course this sucks, but hey, big labels want all-American bands like the Fuegos to get that AOK airplay. But I have a gut hunch that it really wouldn't have made a difference. Next time, see this band live. —Sean Dunhill

ELECTRIC CHORUS & ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROSENBLOOM
Souls Of Chaos (Neutral)

Electric guitars & cellos. Bass guitar and baton. Add in the likes of flute, rock drum kit and oboe and you get a mixed feel for the rock/classical hybrid that's sprung up in the advent of Glenn Branca and his Neutral horde (barring Sonic Youth and the Swans, of course).

Rosenbloom is a cohort of GB (he's appeared on The Ascension & Who You Staring At?). Unlike Branca (who relies heavily on e-guitar), Rosenbloom mixes his instrumental voicings between prissy classical and mongol rock instruments...to mixed results.

The music does have its moments. Made of two side long pieces, the second, "Departure," is at its best when Rosenbloom tells the choir (he's one of them too) to take a breather and let the instruments move on their own. But when the choir comes in, (with its grunts, chants and poorly mixed readings), a war breaks out, with my ears losing.

Too bad. Rosenbloom's use of instrumentation is capable of taking the arid terrain of modern classicism and putting some life into it. I still keep in mind that this is his first recording. I want to hear more from this man. (Neutral/611 Broadway/NYC 10012) —Steve Fritz



MR. GOODHORN SPEAKS!!!

At ease, at ease, the Goodhorn's back, axe in hand and a mystery up his sleeve. Watchya know, Good? got some new releases here. Let's jump right in.

Let's get the bad ones out of the way first. Guitarist Steve Khan has put out another pretentious flop on Antilles called Casa Loco. Wealthy NY sessionman Steve got together with a few chums after many a commercial recording date and they played the music they wanted to play. Only problem is, it ain't what we want to hear. Sounds like outtakes from some of Steve's more adventurous jingles. Tricky ethnic beats, cool licks, no soul. Don't bother unless watered down fusion's your bag. It ain't mine.

Remember Pat Metheny and how dull he usually was? Then you remember his former sidemen bassist Mark Egan and drummer Danny Gottlieb who've just put out a record called Forward Motion on Antilles. It's almost good. Egan's bass lines are nice, ex-Miles sax guy Bill Evans plays some good sax and keyboardist Clifford Carter has a nice Moog sound. But the whole thing is just too catchy for me. The tunes are so pleasant they make you think of credits for a sitcom rolling up in the foreground. I won't put this one out with the morning's coffee grounds but I'm still debating whether or not to put it in with the rest of my records. Fair.

Also on Antilles is Brother and Others by the Heath Brothers. The Heath Bros are some old boppers from Phillytown, veterans of Miles bands, MJQ and others. Bassist Percy is one of the all time masters and he's wonderful on the album. Drummer Al is no slouch either but arranger-sax dude Jimmy is kind of stiff. If the disc had a tougher tenor, it might really have happened. Guest trombonist Slide Hampton contributes some mean solos on two songs. Jimmy's tunes are a little on the cute side, but Al and Percy really bring them to life. Good, but could have been better.

Things get better on pianist McCoy Tyner's Dimensions (Musician/Elektra). Like the first three albums I've talked about, McCoy, a Philly boy himself, concentrates on bright melodic themes but he and his teammates know how to get the most out of this kind of material and it never sounds clichéd. Personally, I dig earlier McCoy when he used to play like he was bursting strings and knocking the keys into the ozone but this effort

is good. Saxman Gary Bartz plays some nice solos and drummer Wilby Fletcher always lights a fire under any band's ass. Good.

I never used to go for the late Bill Evans but his latest release, The Paris Sessions vol. II (Musician/Elektra) is something else. Before he passed on to the great Hot Club in the sky two years ago, he put together a rhythm section that was a little on the light side, but Bill covers it all and takes things elsewhere. The tunes are great and Bill's choice of chords and rich voicings are superb. This live 1979 Paris date is a must.

So is Sphere's latest on the same label, Flight Path. Ex-Monk sideman Charlie Rouse never sounded better in the 40+ years he's been out there playing that tenor. Pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Buster Williams and drummer Ben Riley are the consummate rhythm section. Sphere play beautiful, unpretentious acoustic music. Swinging hot chamber jazz. That may sound like a contradiction in terms but Rouse, Barron, Williams and Riley know how to make even the most subtle understated lick burn white hot.

Some guys like Bill Evans and the cats in Sphere have been playing great jazz for years, breathing it, being it. Other folks just read about it and crop names in Rolling Stone interviews to remind people that just because they sell tons of records to teenage boppers doesn't mean they don't have good discs at home. That's the story on That's The Way I Feel Now, a collection of Theonious Monk tunes played by everyone from Rouse, Steve Lacy and Johnny Griffin to Peter Frampton, Joe Jackson and Todd Rundgren. Guys like the last three and that jerk from Steely Dan play all the right notes but don't sound like much after bop genius Barry Harris makes love to "Pannonica" on a tack piano. Sax master Griffin and pianist Kenny Kirkland do magic things on Carla Bley's version of "Misterioso." Was(Not Was) has a nice jam too. There's great stuff on this album. I just wish the guys who've sweated all their lives to play like that make as much money as the sell outs who make their jive cameo appearances.

A final note. Yes folks, even Goodhorn himself makes an occasional mistake, but when he does, he's the first to admit it. I panned Woody Shaw's night music last time only to give it a second listen and realize it was really great. Woody's the best trumpet player alive and he's so far out there ahead of the competition even I missed the boat on the first bounce. I think the tunes are still a bit dull but Woody plays his ass off. Check it out for yourself. I'm right. You'll see. Everything else I said is gospel truth. Hail Mary. Later.

P.S. Hey Trac. You can keep the backstage pass.

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LIVIN' IN THE USA
-by Steve Fritz

Music moves from region to region. People talk about "identifiable" sounds such as the Athens or Boston sound (could we call reggae the Kingston sound?) and sometimes it's true, sometimes not.

Who cares? It's an easy way to categorize releases, and here's a slew...

Probably the most identifiable of the American regional sounds is in Athens. The primary outlet of music out there, Db Records (450 14th St./Atlanta GA 30318) steadily pumps out the regions smooth, sweet (but not saccharine) music in even doses of about one to two 12" records a month. The best of their series are two EP's. The first...*'til the cows come home* by Love Tractor, continues the band's rich sense of both country and surf instrumental influence. But now the band has done even more, such things as a cover of Kraftwerk's "Neon Lights" (w/no synths) is good stuff...Also pleasing is Oh OK's second release *Furthermore* What which travels the girl group harmonies first laid out with bands like the B-52's (without the damn silliness). Lead by vocalists Linda Hopper and Lynda Stipe (Micheal of REM's sister) this band could be the one that breaks the curse that's been laid out by the Go-Go's (and the 52's) in showing that girl groups don't have to be cute and dumb to make good music...Athens is also known for its eccentricity. Two that are on Db subsidiary Press have made names for themselves. First is Vic Varney, who led the Method Actors. I'll admit when they first came out I was in awe of them. Only a duo, Varney played either bass or guitar, with no overdubs while he had a killer drummer in I've Gamble. It was one of the most stripped down and emotional musics ever laid on vinyl. For some reason Varney felt

it necessary to add musicians to the mix, and in the process, lost Gamble. The Method Actors lost a lot in the process. A post-mortem EP, *Luxury*, has been released with the band in its final line-up. What once was awesomely pure now sounds muddled and ornate. Hell of a loss in that band...The other eccentric is Kevin Dunn. His new 12", *C'est Tourjours La Meme Guitar* shows with instrumentals like "Shuttle" that he's a fine guitarist with an ear for a hook. But as soon as he writes lyrics, and worse, sings them (as he does for the rest of this 6-song EP) he has all the appeal of Joan Rivers on a bad night...More pleasing is Buzz of Delight's *Soundcastle 12"*. A 4-song EP, this duo does everything that limp wristed poseurs like the Smiths only promise. Matthew's bass work is exceptionally sharp and clean and does a lot of the work for songs like "Miracles"...One thing that Db should keep out of is mixing Athens with Brit funk, you end up with the worst of both. Case in point: the Sport Of King's 12" *Parade* cancels the good points of both and leaves something truly sappy...Actually Db should just import its Brits. In this case: *The Essential* by Firmament & the Earth. Led by Guy Wooley and aided by his brother Bruce (remember the Buggles & Camera Club?), F&E write songs about this writers favorite past times, drinking. I can imagine many pleasant hours in a bar with this crew 'cause they make great synthetic lagerlieder. I could even end up singing a few...Other curios from the other side of the MD line include Ten Ten's LP *Ordinary Thinking* (Generic/POB 7054/Richmond VA 23221). The album's title is also the band's problem. They play a form of prog rock that didn't even go over when bands like Yes and Focus were in their haydays, and to top it, god are they boring...The other band is Animation, whose *Loud 12"* (Vital/POB 5493/Island Head SC

MAGNETIC FLIP

29938) sounds like watered down REM. They even do a cover of a Velvets song! C'mon...

To me, the classic Boss-town sound is in the blues/punk drenched styles of the likes of J. Geils (who had their share of great shit) and Willie Alexander. The Black Jacks maintain that tradition with their 12" *Basic* (Homestead/45 Alabama Ave/Island Park NY 11558). Trad as hell, yet not the slightest bit dated. If you want a powerful slab of 60's cockrock, this is it...also as bluesy, but more sophisticated, is Magic Mose & his Royal Rockers. Their LP, *Between Grief & Nothing* (Arf Arf/POB 954/E. Dennis MA 02641) goes down like a shot of Jack Daniels, smooth at first, but with that final kick (usually provided by the harp of "Blind Sam")...Now the guiding light of Arf Arf is a character best known as Eric Lindgren. EL has also released a compile on his label, *The Contemporary Music Sampler* (vol. 1). Somehow, be it as producer, engineer, sideman, leader, songwriter and/or gofer, Lindgren succeeds in appearing on every track. The thing is that all the tracks are all so diverse, be it from the avant-classicism of Birdsongs of The Mesoc to the primal yowl of Willie Alexander (it even includes hardcore's answer to "Louie Louie" in the Pink Negros version of "Sex Bomb")...now also from Boston are Salem 66. Their first 12" (Homestead) is sparse, moody and reminiscent of the late Young Marble Giants. Very pleasing, in a quiet sort of way...The previously mentioned Birdsongs of the Mesoc have also released an LP, *Magnetic Flip* (Ace Of Hearts). Formed from the remains of Mission



of Burma, they mix classical styles by the likes of Cage, Riley, and Stravinsky while doing covers like "The Theme from Rocky & Bullwinkle." Strange? Yes, but it works. A highly cerebral mix of pianos, percussion, organs, guitars and synths make this an intriguing album, if not a highly original release...Lastly from Beantown comes a compile put together by the fanzine *Conflict* (what ever happened to our articles, Gerard?) and Radiobeat Records (POB 75/Allston MA 02134). Entitled *Bands That Could Be God*, its aim is for the bands that aren't too well known yet. Most of them aren't above the usual garage shit or generic thrash, but Salem 66 do one track and HC Moving Targets have some energy in 'em. But best of all is the psycho-basement thrillers Christmas. On their tracks, do they ever shine...

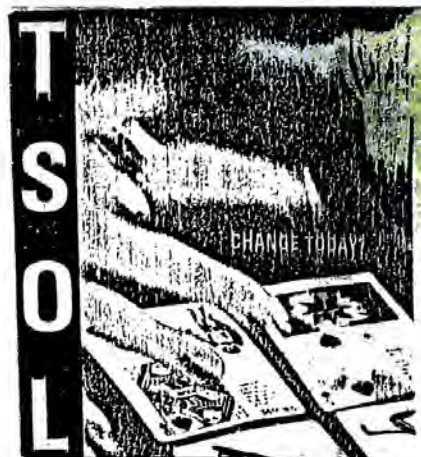
In the home state of the Olympics, things have been pretty productive. Of course, SST Records rules this pack. There has been Black Flag's *My War & Slip It In* LP's (with a third, *Family Man* due any minute), Husker Du's *Zen Arcade* 2-fer and "Eight Miles High" 45 as well as the mighty Minutemen's *Double Nickels On The Dime* (for more on these records though, look elsewhere in this ish). Still, there's been two more, and one's an absolute killer. The record of note is Saccharine Trust's *Surviving You* LP. Mix HC/punk roots with elements of free jazz and top notch poetry with images from the Bible. You end up with awesome stews like "Lot's Seed" "YHWH on Acid" and "Cat Cracker" and this is naming just a few of the songs. The best recommendation I can give is to just go out and pick yourself up a copy...Also from SST are the HM band St. Vitus whose self-named LP is not my cuppa, but got raves from people who do prefer metal overkill. 'Nuff said...T's also been bombarded by a slew of releases from Toxic Shock (POB 242/Pamona CA 91769). It's been one non-stop barrage of HC including the Kelp & Salad EP by Red Tide, Behind The 8-Ball EP by Massacre Guys, The Falling LP by Decry and the Barricaded Suspects compile LP. Of all of them I like the BS comp best as it shows the most variety with little trash as what plagues most of the other comps...Meanwhile, Enigma (POB 2896/Torrence CA 90509) has given three 12-inches of note. First off, a new EP, *Agony*, is a straightforward slab of action-pop. I mean, anyone who can make a cover of "Somebody To Watch" (a song I fucking hate) and make me like it is definitely all right in my book, and their original material's not bad either...Next is a 12" by Circle X

GOVERNMENT ISSUE

JOY RIDE

Int'l. Unlike Agent Orange, these boys' original material has all the worst elements of the 60's psychedelic scene: Art for art's sake with out any of the redeeming musical ability. Sux...finally there's the Change Today LP by the reformed TSOL. A balance of powerhouse rhythm and delicate guitar interplay, this band's HC days are long behind them. New vocalist Joe Wood's better get used to it, because he does sound like Jim Morrison (although not as visionary as the Lizard King) and songs like "Red Shadows" and "John" are probably going to be around for a long, long time...I've also scarfed 2 releases from Savage Republic's Independent Projects label the next band in a long line of Cle basement wonders.

Only got two from DC, but definitely worth a listen. Joy Ride by Govt. Issue (Fountain Of Youth/5710 Durshin Rd/Bethesda MD 20817) has two main assets over most of its HC competition. First is the killer guitar of ex-Threat Tom Lyle. Second, lyrically, Joy Ride has moved GI from the outward political thrusts of yore to a fairly inward reappraisal of themselves. It's an amazingly negative view, but they shouldn't keep up that with music like this...Second LP is *Head Down* Hand Out by Crippled Pilgrims (Fountain Of Youth). A softer, more psychedelic LP than the GI, the Pilgrims make me think of bands like HP Lovecraft (of all the damn things). But the acid drenched guitar of songs like "Out Of Hand" gives the tracks a lot of balls so this could be a band to watch out for.



From the depths of Harrisburg PA also comes two crazed LP's. Billy Synths and the Tune-Ups are seriously going for the GG Allin more-fucked-up-than-thou award, and could give GG a serious run. The Tune-Ups LP, *Urban Blight* (Cracked/1708 Chatham/Camp Hill PA 17011) is made of original material and although highly derivative, keeps the tradition of garage excellence alive (and it's even masterfully engineered). This band plays this stuff like they just thought it up...Billy Synth is best known for his *Psychodelic Unknown* compiles that rival Nuggets and the Pebbles series for their rare collector's item's excellence. So when he sets up with the Tune-Ups for his own LP, *Disorderly Conduct* (Cracked) you shouldn't expect anything less than, well you know. Killer fun and a must for those parties when you want to get rid of those truly boring people ('cause anyone who doesn't like this record's got to be one big hell of a bore)...

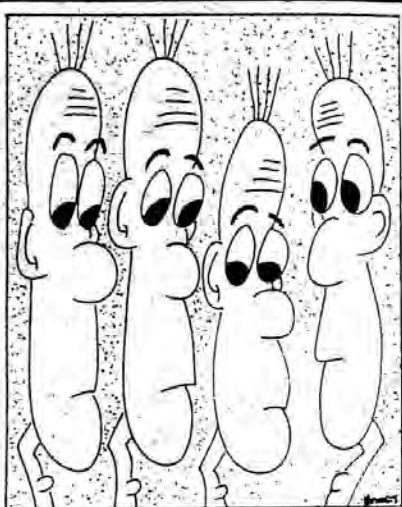
Now just because Minneapolis has produced the likes of Bob Dylan, Husker Du & Prince (well, two out of three ain't bad) does it mean everything there is gonna be great. The answer is definitely no on Curtis A's new LP (Twin Tone/445 Oliver Ave South/Minneapolis MN 55405). This is derivative, boring horseshit that you expect from some band that your (POB 60357/LA 90060). First off, the SR's "Tragic Figures" 45 continues the bands ambience of monotone guitars and parking lot environmentalists. They stand as one of the few bands who truly seem to be making any headway in pushing sound to its limits...Also out is the "23" 45 by Neef. Described as "happy industrial music" this is one time where another "critic" has come up with a term that better describes a band than I could think of. So it goes... From No. Cal comes Kill By Remote

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Control by Toxic Reasons (6th Int'l/326 Sixth St/SP CA 94103). Cleanly produced, it's one of the few HC releases that can easily be understood without the need of the lyric sheet. Also, songs like "Revolution?" are one of the few HC songs that should be understood by everyone...finally, the Dead Kennedys' East Bay Ray has released his first solo project, the 45 "Trouble In Town/Poison Heart" (Alternative Tentacles/POB 11548/San Francisco CA 94103). Billed as a country single, it reminds me more of the music you heard in spaghetti westerns (and I liked the "Theme from The Good, the Bad & The Ugly" with Ray's guitar playing the Clint Eastwood role. Strange, a little sappy, but good, for all diehard DK's fans and some Rank & File types as well...

Now although I was born in NYC, I spent the bulk of my life in Cleveland. Cool town, Cle, honest enough to know it's a hell hole that's waiting for the Giant Lamprays to come out of Lake Erie and devour everything north of Akron, east of Cedar Point and west of Painesville (although they'd probably die real soon afterwards). Two incredible LP's have graced us from bands there. First is Tripod Jimmy's Long Walk Off A Long Pier (Do Speak/4188 Greenwood #15/Oakland CA 94602). Led by ex-Ubu Tom Herman, this trio mixes the best of his old band's Modern Dance daze with D. Byrnie vocalizing. The lead track, "Autumn Leaves" is worth the price of the LP alone...Also in is Disease Is Relative by Spike In Vain (Trans Dada/3316 Elmore Rd/Shaker Hts OH 44120). They mix thrash with more avant elements of bands like Sonic Youth, DNA and Flipper into a nice, trashy sound that shows that they could be local prog rock 'Station would like a lot while you sit there and scratch your ass (if you aren't covering your ears). Considering this is the label that gives you the Slickee Boys and the Replacements (both decent commercial bands) I expect a lot better, not this trite Top 40 stuff...

For being such a sophisticated city, NYC puts out some truly primal sounds. NYC as jungle with white jungle music has become a trite cliché, and here's some reasons why. First off, Mykel Board wasn't satisfied with his only band in the world, the late, lamented Art. Now his label (The Only Label In.../75 Bleeker St/NYC 10012) has spawned four albums, his Republican thrash band. Their 7", "I Am A Rock" (yes, the Paul Simon song) can best be described as horny (uh, corny?) hardcore with only one real problem, the musicians can play...If Artless

isn't enough, then there's The Scene Is Now Whose 45, "1150 lbs/Treaty Stone" (Lost/361 Canal/NYC 10013) comes close to the Greatful Dead during that band's country blues period, except this band can't play. Boring anyhow...now for some truly tasteless trash, it's gotta be the Honeymoon Killers LP (FMR/534 E. 1st St/NYC 10012). I mean, if bad

taste is timeless, this record's eternal. Lead vocalist Jerry sounds like a cat being neutered without anesthetic. Drummer Claire has a hard time keeping the tempo of her two beats. Bassist Lisa knows 4 whole notes (I think) and I'll forget to think of something to say about guitarist Micheal because I have a hard time trying to remember him. Yes, get this record, and then use it if you want to prove to your parents that the other stuff you listen to is made by people who do know how to play...Now Lenny Kaye's LP, I've Got A Right (Girono Poetry Systems/222 Boverly/NYC 10012) could've been a classic. The man has an ear for a hooks and lyrically, he's not bad (or gets help from Jim Carroll). But the production is so saccharine that it's real hard to believe this is the man who was the raw power behind the Patti Smith Group. This record could cause hypoglycemia...Remember No Wave? (do you want to?). Ut do. They were part



of that movement. It's something to see while other members of the movement (like Arto Lindsay and Glenn Branca) have gone on to create some truly inspired music (come to think of it, they made inspired music during the movement) Ut are still trapped after (is it?) five years in the same tuneless garbage. Quite honestly, their first self-named 12" is about as current as Lydia Lunch & the Titanic (and both have gone down, alot). Ut makes this writer pine for the Slickee real bad...On the more positive side, one absolute killer has come out of NYC. Live Skull's first self-named 6-song 12" is a subtle piece of cerebral psychosis. Dischordant guitars, off-synch drums and steady pulse bass are mixed into a marvellous sonic texture that's both hypnotising and dominating.

Which leaves T.I.'s beloved home base of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia sound is best known for two aspects, the sham of the American Bandstand days (Fabian, Frankie Avalon, the Dovells) and the saccharine r&b of Gamble/Huff (equally bankrupt). Maybe because there's so



little real history to talk about, there's now some much diversity in local releases. But that doesn't mean it's all that good...Executive Slacks can be a killer electronic psychohorror trio. Their first EP, although mixed so flat that it was kind of boring, gave clues to their live capabilities. To combat the problems of their first EP is probably the reason why they decided to call in an outside producer. The problem was their choice: Youth, the ex-bass player of Killing Joke. He's made their new EP, Our Lady (Red), sound like Killing Joke Jr. and one of that band is enough. Only the track "Man Of Christ" realizes this band's true capabilities, which is a lot. Back to the drawing board guys...I think, as a matter of fact, I'll make production a subtheme for this article, cause it's doing no good on most of the Phila. bands...Now FOD deserve the title of fastest band in the world. Their mix of thrash, humor and power makes them one of the best local acts around. You couldn't tell that from their first 6-song 7", Love Songs (Speed Of Sound/POB 16117/Phila. PA 19114). Killer material like the bitchin' "Powerload" sounds like the master tape was dropped in an Oesterizer, rather than being mixed, before being sent to the pressing plant. It ends up making them sound like they're playing with broken knuckles and arms, which is what the engineer of this record deserves...



BUNNYDRUMS

Another pair of people who deserve that kind of treatment are Lux Interior and Ivy Rosecharch of the Cramps. They took the tapes of one of Phila's finest, the Sic Kidz, and made them sound like they're coming out of your kitchen sink. Now the Sic Kidz are known for their primal, psycho-delic hoo doo (maybe that's why, hmmm...), but you wouldn't be able to tell that from the 12" just released, I Could Go To Hell For You (Big Beat)...Now there's been some record's where the mix is fine, but not the material. First in this case is No Amount Of Talk by Nomadic Tools (Ulterior). Their first track, "Nikko Dreams" is smooth, phantasmic stuff with sax that reminds me of the best moments of David Jaxon (Van der Graaf, Long Hello). Then comes the other five tracks, which suffer from bad cases of art damage (in the worst sense of the term). I'll wait for their next release... The Nightcrawlers (Synkronous/1493 Greenwood Ave/Camden NJ 08103) are being billed as "Philadelphia's Tangerine Dream," which is cool, if the music didn't sound so derivative of the German band (and blander)...Pretty Poison also took the Slack's route and hired an outside producer to help them. In the case of their 12" "Nighttime" (Svengali/10 Church Rd/Merchantville NJ 08109), the idea pays off in spades. PP were last seen with their EP Laced being caught in the transition from experimental pop band to dance rock band. Producer Kae Williams gives "Nighttime" that sharp, synthetic crack that has dancefloor hit written all over it. The single's only drawback is the fact that after "Nighttime" the dance version, you get "Nighttime" the short version and then "Nighttime" the dub version, and that's a bit too much for me. Otherwise their second best record to date (I'll still hold out for the single "Expiration/Realm Of Existence")...Now two records have come out of Philadelphia with killer material and powerful production. The Little Gentlemen's LP, Another Wasted Day (i.e./POB 724/Bala Cynwyd PA 19004) is a kick-ass, angry rock and roll album at its best. Songs like "Willing Mob" and "Last Of The Street Fighting Kids" show that the band has taken the elements of the Damned and Sham 69 (they even do a cover of "New Rose") and pushed it down your throats without sounding the least bit derivative or dated. Bands who hold on to their "punk integrity" (remember the Clash?) should give this band a definite listen...finally Bunnydrums have released their latest 12", On The Surface (Red). Gone are the synth, sax and funk of their last LP PKD and in their place the band comes screaming with Link Wray distorted guitar licks and an intensity of a band that's sure of what it's doing, and can do it all the time, anytime. A ripping record that draws blood (from out of your earlobes), the only advice I could give for this EP is the ultimate reviewer's compliment. PLAY IT LOUD.

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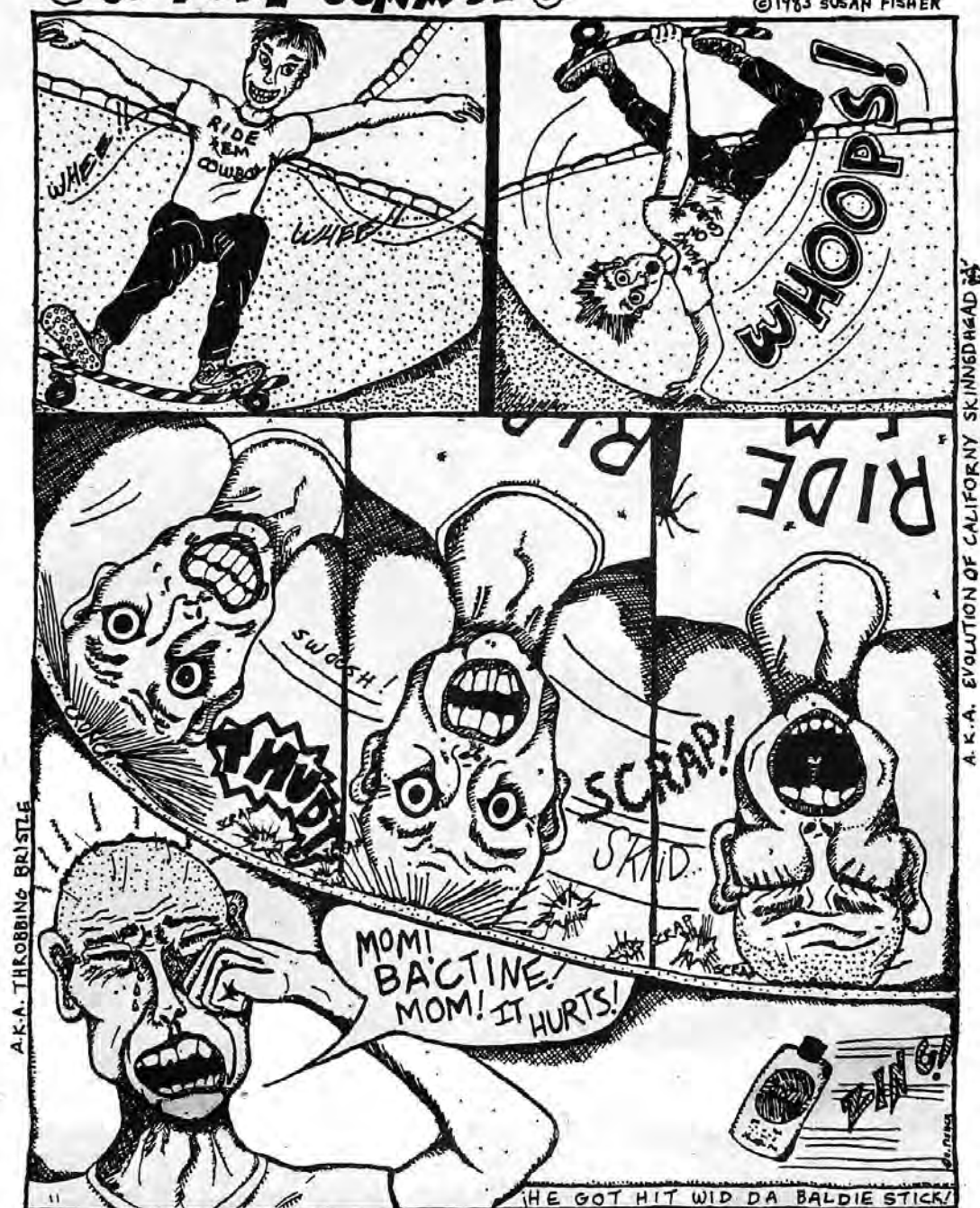
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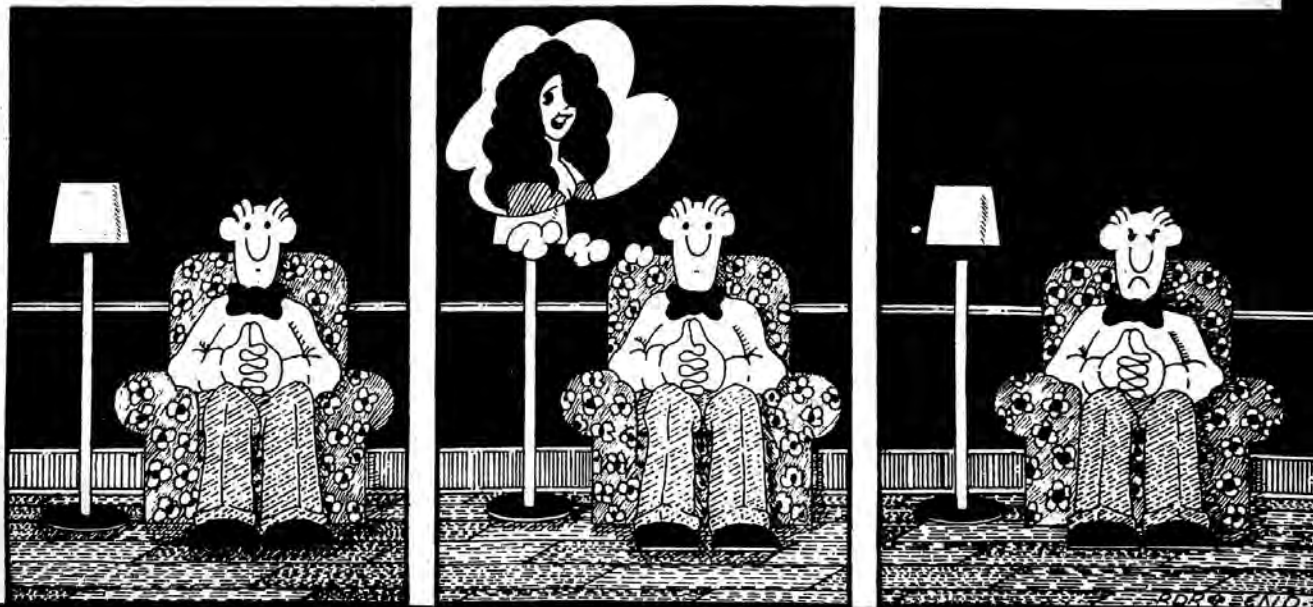
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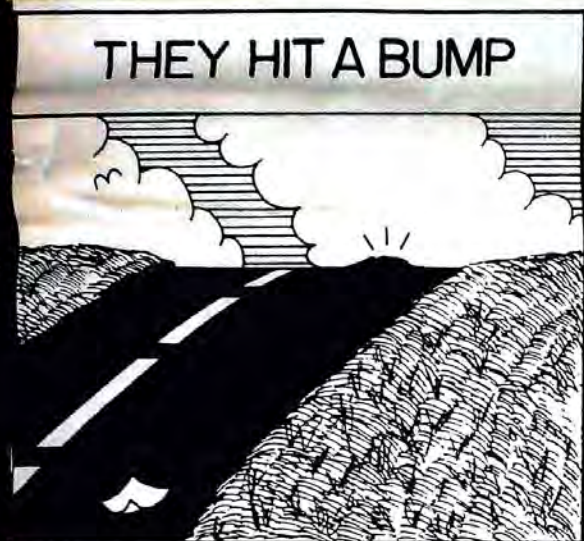
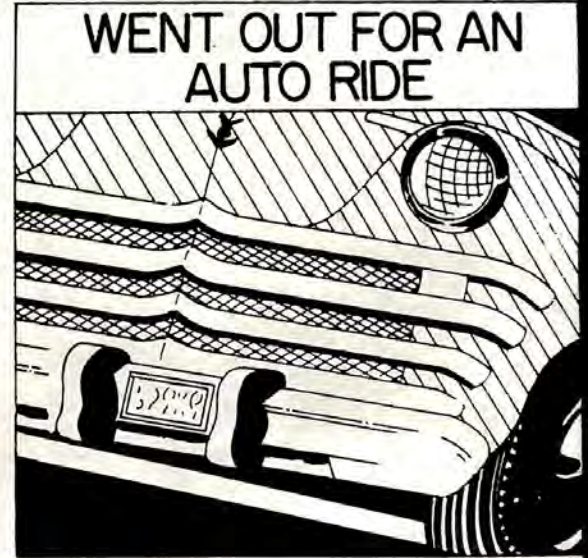
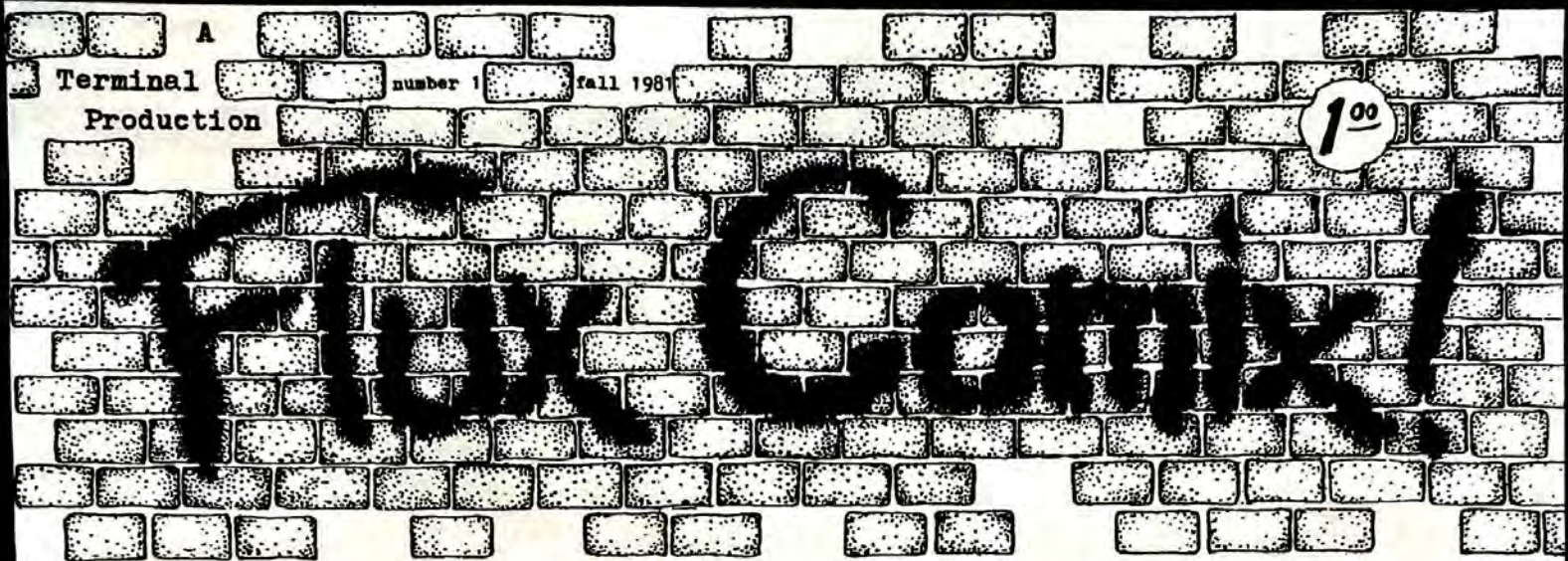


Male Menopause.



By R.D. RODRIGUEZ

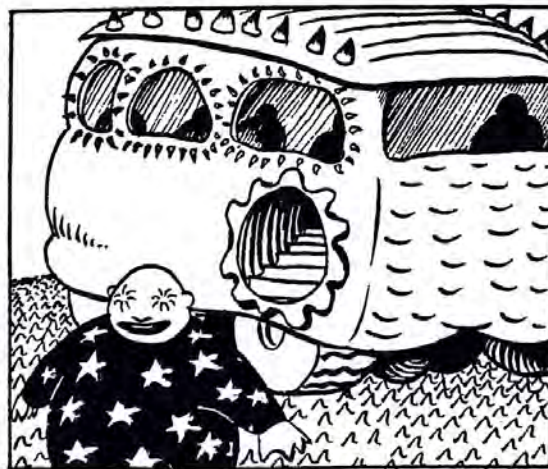
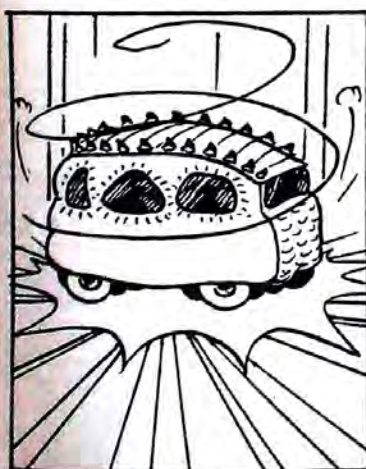




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