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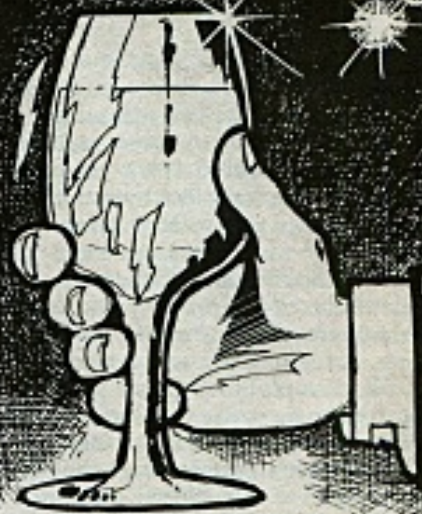
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THE QUAKE SOUND & LIGHT SHOW

By Rob Francis

The Quake Sound & Light Show rounded off the final month of '83 with a colorful mix of gigs, including school dances, business parties, and the now legendary Quake Comedy Night at the Palace of Fine Arts. But let's start with the Quake's visit to **Half Moon Bay H.S.** Some ten minutes after the dance had officially started, there were barely a dozen people in the room and I wondered whether we had the wrong building. An hour later, at 9 p.m., the place was packed. It's always a great feeling when you sense that the audience is really turned on to the music. Sometimes people forget that the idea of a dance is to rattle the old limbs and, above all, have fun. The Half Moon Bay crowd understood this...in style. Almost everyone was dancing all evening, and it was one of those special shows where, even at the end, nobody really wanted to stop partying. I look forward to playing there again.

We rarely make Sunday appearances, but when a restaurant closes its doors for an employee's party, it's often the night they pick. Such was the case at the **Sundance Mine Co.** in Palo Alto. The food was outrageous, and a lot of effort was put into making this party a success. A crowd that's got to be up at

7 a.m. the next day is difficult to hold, and frankly, I don't know how some of those guys did it! Still, even your intrepid Mobile reporter struggled out of bed to catch a flight to L.A. to check out our Rock of the Eighties sister station KROQ. Whilst down there I saw air personality Richard Blade packing 'em in at Mr. J's dance club, plus I got lost driving the infamous "Poorman's" car around in the Pasadena smog trying to buy coffee for the morning team.

L.A. was wild but I wouldn't have missed **J. Walter Thompson's** Christmas bash at San Francisco's St. Francis Hotel for anything, so I hurried home. **JWT's** Diane Round and St. Francis' Larry Dead did a breathtaking job and I've never seen such lavish, well-prepared dinner and dance event. We were glad to have been part of it.

Next up, we played the Oakland Hyatt for **Moreau H.S.**, Hayward. The paced audience had a good time, and I guess there was romance in the air since the slow songs proved most popular, no matter at what speed played! **Jim Patterson**, self-styled "moderator", did an excellent job and **Moreau** was a satisfying finish to the Fall school season.

Which left our last gig of the year, and, by the same token, first of the

new, at the **Palace of Fine Arts**. **Timba**, **Kevin Pollack**, and **Jay Leno** took the sold-out theater by storm, and the audience, suitably primed for the midnight countdown with mirth and champagne, took to the dance floor in droves. Thanks to some technical wizardry from the Palace's **Kevin O'Brien**, we combined sound systems to provide an acoustic sound quality seldom achieved in such a cavernous edifice.

In contrast, the student center at **Presentation H.S.**, San Jose, is small and intimate. We are talking dedicated and up-to-the-minute Quake fans here, brimming with energy and enthusiasm. A terrific gig.

The following night took us to **Trader Vic's** in S.F. for a private party, and definitely an evening to remember. We played alongside **The Units**, a dynamic synthesizer band. I would like to say a special thanks to **Danielle** and **Beatrix**, and to **Trader Vic's Nicholas Tham**, for being the perfect hosts.

Finally, you too can hire the Quake Sound & Light Show. Dates are rapidly booked, so call us on 474-9100 during weekday business hours, well in advance of your projected event. Don't forget, Rock of the Eighties rules, OK!

The Bluebells -



By Frank Andrick and Mark Hoffmeister

Good things seem to just happen to the Bluebells. Without really trying or enforcing a nose to the grindstone work ethic the Bluebells have recorded on Scotland's Post Card Records, toured Britain and Europe, gained a domestic record deal on Sire Records, brought in Elvis Costello as a producer, and successfully toured the United States in support of their 6-song compilation E.P. Not bad for a band who came together in their own words "mostly as a joke". The Bluebells leader and main songwriter Bobby Bluebell (alias Robert Hodgens) recounts their once in a lifetime formation story. "I had a fanzine at the time called 'The Ten Commandments' and I make up imaginary groups to fill up space, 'cause there weren't many groups going at the

time. Well this other fanzine called me up and said they'd like to hear some of these groups, so I said I'd see if I could get ahold of them. So I went home and recorded this song and it ended up on their tape. Then a few weeks later Alan Horn who ran Postcard Records phoned me up and said he had to hear this track. When he found out it was me he suggested I start a group which ended up being the Bluebells."

Even the introduction of Elvis Costello, and his subsequent producing of some Bluebells material just sort of happened. "Well we were in this office getting interviewed by this record publisher who wanted us to sign with him. So he told us if we did we could have anyone we want to produce our record. Much like here (referring to the

Elvis Costello picture in the Quake offices) there was a picture of Elvis Costello on the wall, so we said "Get him to produce us" then the next day Elvis called and we hit it off great."

Make no mistake, when it comes time for the Bluebells to put their collective feet down on a question of quality their Scottish will and determination comes through. "We made one video for 'Cath'. When we met the director in London he asked 'what do you want in the video?' I told him no story line, no sex, no special effects, we don't want make-up or beards and he said, 'I can't do anything like that but it would be a real challenge.'

So much for production line M.T.V. imaging! The Bluebells refuse to sink to the mediocrity of a medium where the music videos and the clothes, car, softdrink and pimple creme commercials are indistinguishable from each other. The Bluebells do share a positive view on the positive side of the United States that they feel rather strong about.

"We'd just like to say that America is nothing like we expected it to be. It's like when we arrived in New York City the driver that picked us up kept saying 'don't go to 8th Avenue, don't carry a guitar up Broadway you'll get mugged.' "We went walking about and its exactly the same as any other city. It's no worse than London or anywhere else. Its like in England they say 'don't go to Brixton'. But really fear breeds fear, you don't have to think that way. Like America has a lot to be proud of, I read somewhere that patriotism was on the rise. Well that's great it should come back. We're proud of Scotland and Britain. Its like some people are embarrassed to be Americans and that's really a shame."

Then again, there's no place like home, no matter where you lay your hat. As much a validation as anything is Bobby's love for local talent. "Orange juice were one of the main influences that made me want to start a group. I'm good friends with Edwin Collins (of Orange Juice) and they're wonderful. Aztec Camera, the last time we saw them it was a moving experience, so, obviously they are both real inspirational groups for us. We also like Altered Images quite a bit as well. Big Country spends a lot of time in London, they're really great but we never really see them as they tour all the time."

1984 will bring the Bluebells to our shores once again. Orwell's year of the Century will also be the release date of the Bluebells debut album. 'Till then their 6-song E.P. and numerous import singles are well worth looking up and listening to. So do yourself a favor, support the sincere. ●

NINA HAGEN

By Linda Johnson

Though German may be her native tongue, language has not been a barrier for Nina Hagen, as it is her operatic screams and chaotic utterances that have brought her international fame in the rock world.

An East Berliner expelled to the West in 1976 due to her subversive activities, Hagen's out-of-control persona carries through in her music. Since leaving Berlin, she's released five albums offering danceable reggae-inspired songs of considerable power. Given the vocal elements in play with her bizarre visuals, Hagen is hard to ignore.

Her live performances are similar to freak shows. Dyed orange hair teased like the Bride of Frankenstein's and provocative lingerie leave Hagen anything but delicate. Her range extends over several octaves as she belts out her songs in many different languages, some of which might be better left untranslated: "Hermann's balls turn blue/he says to him self:/shit, that's all I need, ow-owww" (from 'Hermann Hiess Er').

But Hagen's obnoxiousness is a statement in itself. In the early '70s when she was working with dull German show bands, she was not allowed the freedom that she has now to express her outrage. She could not write her own lyrics, and the musicians played only easy rock. Such a future in

East Berlin did not attract Hagen.

"I really wanted to make good rock and roll," she told *Melody Maker* in 1979. "But it is not possible there. They are into soft ways. When you make too hard a sound they go 'Acchh, Thcchh.' You can't make good music when you are controlled the whole time."

Hagen's rebellious nature was instilled in her ever since her childhood. She was born in the Eastern sector of Berlin in 1955, to actress Eva Marie Hagen and writer Hans Hagen. When she was two, her parents divorced; seven years later, the dissident poet/songwriter Wolf Biermann became her step-father.

At 13, Hagen joined the FDJ (Freie Deutsche Jugend), an East Berlin youth movement. But only a month later she was thrown out in disgrace because of her involvement in a Biermann protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by East German troops.

So Hagen's adaption to school and its attendant youth organization was pretty traumatic for her, and by age 17, she had already begun performing. First with blues groups, then as a rock and roller, Hagen was singing music which, to the good family men, women and children of Germany, was taboo.

Hagen spent a year studying at the Studio for unterhaltungsmusik (Studio for Popular Music). She left with outstanding honors, and as part of her training, toured East Germany for two months with an orchestra. Tiring of this, she changed her act by starting her own band, *Automobil*. This still wasn't a tough enough sound for the energetic Hagen, and in a few months she quit.

In 1976, Biermann was expelled from East Germany and Hagen decided to

make her exit as well. Threatening to continue her step-father's crusades if she wasn't let go, Hagen was allowed (begged?) to leave. On December 9, 1976, she arrived in the Federal Republic of Germany.

A year later, Hagen met Bernhard Potechka, a guitarist who became the first part of her band. The group's line-up was soon completed, and in 1978 they released "The Nina Hagen Band" on CBS records.

The album made Hagen a hero among German youth and she went on to build a reputation throughout Europe and Australia as a punk superstar. Singing social and political songs, Hagen swore that she would never use any other language than her native German to express her emotions.

But it seems that she has since changed her mind, as her most recent album "Fearless," (released last year) contains the popular song "New York, New York," purely entertainment rather than politics. Sang in English, 'New York New York' is gaining a positive response on American radio, making the crossover from just the alternative radio stations. It seems Hagen's decision to play more accessible music pays off, as she appears to be making a breakthrough to the American market.

In contrast to her first Bay Area appearance a few years ago which drew a handful of underground music lovers, Hagen's recent performance here (The Kabuki) attracted a much larger audience. It was interesting to see the shock on the faces of her newly found listeners. Though her music may have toned down a bit, it is still the wild, unpredictable Nina Hagen up on stage.



EARLY TREMORS



The Quake's Early Tremors brought together some of the best in the west for our first official party at the Stone in San Francisco. On January 14th, the Bay Area was treated to live performances by three extraordinary up and coming bands. From Los Angeles, carrying on the rock tradition started by bands like the Byrds, the Long Ryders demonstrated to the crowd at the Stone that guitar dominant music with country overtones is not only part of our past but an integral part of our present as well. Out of the Sacramento area, True West also performed that evening spotlighting material from their two l.p.'s in addition to new tunes produced by Tom Verlaine in New York, that debuted on the Sunday night show the week prior to the gig. To round out the evening, New D-Zine from San Francisco proved to be as energetic and dynamic, live, as their demo tape

played often on Sunday nights.

Stay tuned to the Quake's Early Tremors for news on more showcases in town. Thanks to all for making the first one a smashing success.

As you know we've been big on Big Country for some time. Over the past months we have turned you on to their import l.p. and cassette, their import ep, which includes *Tracks of My Tears*, their live gigs first from the Ritz in NYC to their performance at Wolfgang's. Recently, we aired Big Country's farewell show recorded live once again from the Ritz in NYC. The band was top notch, perhaps the best live material from B.C. yet, and really showed a marked improvement from the group first heard on Early Tremors in July of 83.

To usher in the new year we invited 11 of our favorite local bands to the station and gave each one

an opportunity to share with you their plans and goals for 84. This was indeed an historical Bay Area first and we thank the following groups for making it down to the studio (in whatever-after-New Year's Eve condition) to participate in this most informative and worthwhile program: **Perfect Strangers, Permanent Wave, Big Race, A Private View, the Defectors, Yanks, Big City, New D-Zine, Wonders of Science, Robert Seidler, and Wire Train.**

The following week we debuted *Up Down* from the forthcoming *Wire Train l.p., In a Chamber.*

Incidentally, *Wire Train's* final SF gig before hitting the road, featured opener **Green on Red.** Originally from Tucson, these L.A. guys deliver with a raw, eclectic edge and are destined for a very colorful future.

There is probably no one more colorful or outrageous than East Germany's **Nina Hagen.** New York/NY has landed a spot on the Quake playlist so Early Tremors has moved on to air new faves, *I Love Paul and Freuhing in Paris.* In SF for a show at the Kabuki, Nina wowed the crowd with her theatrical antics and operatic vocal gymnastics.

England's **Specimen**, who are as strange in person as they are performing, joined Early Tremors for a guest stint before bringing their comic horror shenanigans to the I Beam. We've been playing tracks off the *Batastrophe* ep as import singles for awhile. As prop-

rietors of London's Batcave club, (thus the lp title) they have also helped to launch the careers of bands like **Sexbeat** and **Allen Sex Fiend.**

Bill Nelson's new l.p., *Vistamix*, is a remixed compilation of material from his *Flaming Desire* and *Chimera* l.p.'s. Early Tremors debuted *Another Day, Another Ray of Hope* prior to the album's release.

Jah Wobble, former bassist for P.I.L. has teamed up with **U-2's The Edge and Holger Czukay** for one of the most interesting rhythmically exciting collaborations we've heard in a long time. *Snake Charmer* is our early favorite.

Special thanks to the following local bands for stopping by and providing us with material: **the Lloyds** (*Boys Life* sounds like a hit), **Wild Game** (formerly *Bad Attitude*), **Vis a Vis, Mal, Necropolis of Love, the Units, Chris Ketner, Fade to Black, the Flying Tigers, and Pop-o-Pies.**

The Early Tremors informal phone poll song of the month once again; **Hunters and Collectors, Judas Sheep.**

Finally we offer to you the following l.p.'s and e.p.'s worthy of your immediate attention: **David Jaye, Death Cult, Pretenders, DOA, The Fall, Violent Femmes, and the Chameleons.**

Please continue to offer your input by writing or calling. Send letters to Early Tremors c/o KQAK, 1311 Sutter Street, SF 94109 or phone us at 478-8900 Sunday nights between 9p and 12a.

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By Phil Slash

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- 18 _____ CEI
- 19 THAT GIRL
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- 26 WOLF IN SPANISH
- 27 _____ ING IT ON HOME TO ME; SAM COOK TUNE.
- 28 _____ 40
- 29 BEER
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- 32 GYM _____
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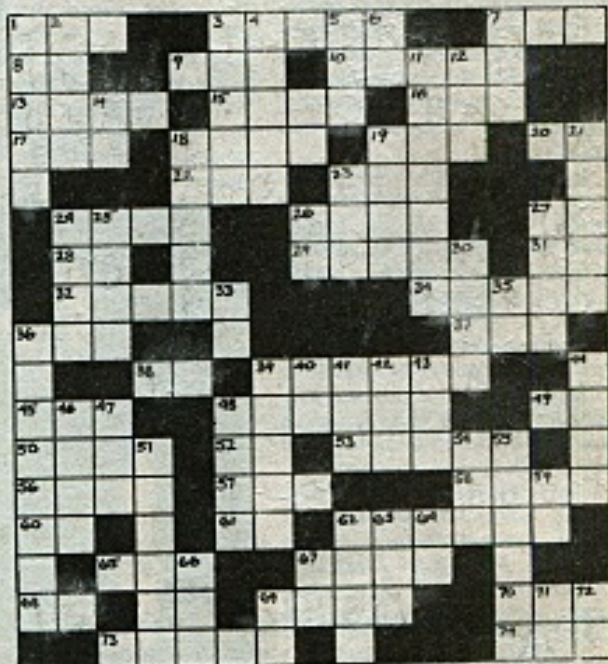
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- 50 LEE VING'S GROUP
- 52 _____ MED FORCES
- 53 HU _____ AND COLLECTORS
- 56 DESTINY
- 57 RICKEE LEE JONES MONOGRAM
- 58 NAVY HELLO 'DERE
- 60 _____ THE MAN!
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- 62 ACCLAIMED CONCERT FILM; HEARTLAND _____
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- 68 EXISTS
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- 2 THE _____ ONES
- 3 DER KOMMISSAR
- 4 SATCHMO
- 5 _____ BOY; BANANARAMA TUNE
- 6 SANTA'S LAUGH
- 7 _____ STONE
- 11 BELLE, PETER & FRANK; EARLY _____
- 12 SOUND ORGAN

- 14 EBNOZN VOWELS
- 18 ROMANTICS THEME; TALKING IN 'YER _____
- 19 LOOKIN' LIKE A _____
- 21 TOM & _____
- 23 _____ MUCH BLOOD.
- 24 _____ ARD & MAYO
- 25 _____ BAKER, ZULU, WHISKY (CALL LETTERS)
- 26 LORI COLLINS' INITIALS
- 27 LIFE _____ PARTY
- 30 LOBSTER'S DOG
- 33 _____ WHAT?
- 35 ROUTE 4 SHORT
- 36 MUSIC BAR ON VALENCIA
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- 40 _____ E FRIENDS ELECTRIC?
- 41 IMPORT 45. INXS'S "ORIGINAL" _____
- 42 DYNAMITE!
- 43 SCREAM
- 44 BIG _____
- 46 I-_____
- 47 CHOW DOWN
- 48 ALMOND OF SOFTCELL
- 51 AUTOMATIC RESPONSE
- 54 DUSTCLOTH
- 55 ELVIS; _____ DOLL
- 59 OSCAR ERICKSON'S MONOGRAM



- 62 _____ LIFE
- 63 TREE
- 64 PUBLIC UTILITY
- 66 _____ SAW
- 69 YOU AND ME
- 71 MAX B. _____ R; 40's PRIZEFIGHTER
- 72 DISEASE THAT AFFECTS RONNIE LANE.





THE UNITS New Way to Move Epic Records

If you were to feed into a computer all of the elements needed to create a popular rock band for the eighties, the result would probably be something very much like The Units, who have a new EP out under the title *New Way to Move* (Epic Records). Aptly enough, they make music almost entirely from synthesizers—four of them, in fact—played by the four bandmembers, all of whom also sing. Eschewing any pretense of political or social statement, they're aiming straight for the syntho-disco dance crowd. The Units conjure up unrelenting, bubbling pulsations, punctuated by various blurps and burbles.

There are six of these metro-nome-like pieces of precision here (actually five—the last, "More More Alike," being an extended dub version of "More Alike," which, in case you're wondering, isn't preceded by "Alike," although all of the cuts sound very much "alike,"). The best candidate for Hitsville is "The Right Man," an immediately appealing number that sounds a little like The Mutants, but without that band's unique quirkiness.

The "instruments" are skillfully played (programmed?) by Scott Ryser, Rachel Webber, David Allen, Jr., and Jabari Allen, with capable production by Michael Cotten in San Francisco, and Bill Nelson in Wales.

In other words, The Units are far from breaking new ground, although they do a pretty good job as dedicated followers of fashion, right down to the properly modern album cover. And while they don't really have a lot to sing about thematically, that doesn't matter either. As is the case with a lot of

similar bands, it's difficult to determine The Units' attitude toward the electronic age: whether they're observing it, celebrating it or satirizing it. But who cares, anyway? Shut up and dance.

—Robert J. Bowman

VISIBLE TARGETS Autistic Savant Park Avenue

Visible Targets are three women and one man from the land of "Louie, Louie": the Pacific Northwest. Making an end run around the large record companies, they have released a five-song EP, *Autistic Savant*, under the Seattle-based Park Avenue label. They probably got a big boost when rock and roll veteran Mike Ronson took them under his wing, producing a work that is extremely likeable, if a bit too soft-sounding. The band may have a commercial sound, but there's not a sense of selling out, thanks to the skilled songwriting of bassist Rebecca Hamilton and guitarist Pamela Golden. The complex cuts emphasize the voices of two of these plus lead vocals of Laura Keane, who also fills in on percussion and accordion. Ron Simmons, the fourth member, is a capable drummer (sometimes the mere presence of a human drummer can sound refreshing), although the mix tends to emphasize voice and guitar. A synthesizer can be heard on "The Cure," but its presence is that of just another instrument, and it doesn't overwhelm the band's carefully crafted sound.

As for the content of the songs, Golden and Hamilton's compositions deal in a fairly obscure way with the problems of life and love in the modern world, and are full of dreamlike images of frustration and alienation. They are compelling without being fully comprehensible, but since when has that mattered in rock music? In any case, Visible Targets has the earmarks of a band with a future. Their talent is obvious, and with any luck they could develop into an individual act with real staying power.

—Robert J. Bowman

BLUEBELLS The Bluebells Sire

I can't quite figure the Bluebells out. One minute I hear "Aim In Life," a gorgeous thing reminiscent of the slice-of-life mini-dramas Squeeze used to give us—only to be hit on the other side with "Cath," a Beatlesque pop tune with a predictably pop melody and lyrics. This is a nice record, don't misunderstand—it's just that some parts of it are better realized than others. There's a couple of pretty good songs, some good ol' ringing guitar work and some sweet-sounding vocals to standard, better-than-average pop/rock songs.

The two outstanding tracks are "Aim In Life," produced by Elvis Costello, and "Patriots Game." "Aim In Life," with minimal studio effects, makes its impact with two crooning voices harmonizing over a lone, distant acoustic guitar, a bass and a far-off tambourine. The story is that of an old woman, alone and in despair. "Patriots Game," based on Irish writer Brendan Behan's work, is an Irish folk song, starring a 16-year-old boy as he

lies dying. His anti-war lament, sung with an anguished and affecting voice by Robert Hodgins, is quietly stirring. Like U2, the Bluebells are forging a new socially significant pop music with tunes like these.

They also know how to have fun. "Everybody's Somebody's Fool" is a completely harmless, acceptable competent rehash of Beatles/Monkees/Gerry And The Pacemakers-brand 60s pop with a straight-ahead melody and predictable lyrics. "Sugar Bridge" is a "big" song, production-wise; its seamless instrumental track positively becomes one with the thick, layered harmonies. But the song says nothing.

I suspect that's OK, though. If they can continue to churn out songs like "Aim In Life" by Ken McCluskey the band's second vocalist, they'll be putting out music worth hearing.

The Bluebells are Robert Hodgins lead vocals and guitar; Russell Irvine, guitar and vocals; Ken McCluskey on harp and vocals; David McCluskey on guitar and drums; and Laurence Donegan on bass.

—Jean E. Catino

NINA HAGEN Fearless Columbia Records

Whenever I hear Nina Hagen I visualize a giant chipmunk in Wagnerian braids and breastplates, hiding in a cave somewhere, out of its mind on drugs. Her latest album, *Fearless* (Columbia Records), doesn't do a thing to dispel this image. It's got all the trademarks that made her big: a dancy kind of beat, weird music and a screechy voice that sounds



THE VISIBLE TARGETS Rex Rystedt Photo

like Ziggy Stardust at 45 RPM. The ubiquitous disco maven Giorgio Moroder produced this one, along with Keith Forsey, and they give Hagen her glossiest package yet. With wider exposure, though, she seems to have lost some of the edge that characterized her music when she started out. Hagen is sounding more accessible these days, singing as she does about discos and flying saucers, and incorporating hare krishna chants and other odds and ends into a song or two. Maybe it's just that we've become familiar with her, or maybe she's beginning to slip into a formula. In any case, *Fearless* is fun, wacky and danceable, and Nina Hagen fans will probably like it a lot. The liner notes thank everybody under the sun, including Marilyn Monroe, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and virtually every branch in the world of CBS Records, and there are two different spots on the album listing the place to write if you want to be a member of Nina's fan club, in case you lost the address.

—Robert J. Bowman

D.O.A.
Bloodied But Unbowed
C.D. Presents, Ltd.

And finally, here's something to pull the plugs on the syntho sound

and slap you upside the head with pure punk for now people: *Bloodied But Unbowed* (C.D. Presents, Ltd.), a retrospective of the past five years of music-making by D.O.A. Just a look at the song titles is enough to clue you to what you're in for, and what you see is what you get: "Smash the State," "Rich Bitch," "Slumlord," "I Don't Give a Shit," "World War 3," and that perennial favorite, "Fuck You." The band has been toiling for some time now in what amounts to the underworld of rock and roll, refusing to make any concessions to commercialism, but at the very least their longevity attests to the survival of the punk scene in the face of all obstacles. As for the music, either you like it or you don't, and you've probably decided without even having to listen to the record. In any case, the power of D.O.A.'s sound is undeniable, and they're one of the very best punk bands around, as *Bloodied But Unbowed* shows. Sometimes, after satiating yourself with the latest video by the trendy act of the week, it's necessary to get back to basics. And it's somehow reassuring that a band like D.O.A. goes on, representing the outlaw force of rock and roll. After all, that's the true spirit of the music anyway, isn't it?

—Robert J. Bowman

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CLUB REVIEWS

By Susie Leon



Trocadero Transfer — 520 4th Street

Here's a place for the true die-hard dance fanatic. Except for Wednesday nights, the club is open, for all intents and purposes, 'til dawn. It is a medium-to-large size club (legal capacity 760) with a 20-foot video screen and two bars upstairs. Whee. Upstairs is the lounge area, a balcony that wraps around part of the dance floor, so that those who do not deign to dance or who are about to collapse from too much merriment can gaze down upon the boppin', cool, folk down there.

The hours are pretty good. Thursdays from 10pm-4am, Friday and Saturday from 10pm-dawn and Sundays their tea dancing begins at 7pm and continues til 5am. Then you grab a bite somewhere and rush to work, no problem.

Wednesdays are the "normal" hours. From 8:45 til 10pm admission is free for the "Dynasty Party" which features the hit TV series "Dynasty" displayed on the video screen. After 10 admission starts being

charged, a reasonable 3 bucks to dance to the Quake format spun by Belle Nolan, til 2am. A deal, especially if you get there before 10, then can stay all night for free.

About the worst thing about the club is that you have to be 21 to enter, as there are two full service bars. Ce la vie. The best thing I think, are its hours, where the phrase "dance 'til dawn" is a reality. The music sticks to the newer dance tunes, a la Quake with a few classic disco numbers thrown in for good measure. The crowd is as diverse as anywhere else and most everyone seems to enjoy being there.

Located on 4th Street between Brannan and Bryant, the Trocadero Transfer has other fun events happening there. For more information on this, call the club's event tape at 495-0185.

SYNCOPIATION

—577 Howard near 2nd Street

Open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

and Sunday nights. Syncopation is a small place yet the floor is never sardine-city. Tables and comfy chairs fill the front part then line the mirrored walls to leave room for dancing, with the bar at the back. The tables have table-clothes and the whole place exudes an air of elitiness. You have to go up an elevator to get there and usually someone opens the door for you and seats you. There is a video screen with the usual silly and arty videos and the mirrors give a sense of space. Syncopation is a fun place. The largely international crowd seems friendly enough. The music is refreshingly upbeat, with popular hits well-mixed with untried numbers, the emphasis being almost exclusively on modern music. Unfortunately, the dj has an annoying habit of cutting off a song, rather than smoothly segueing it into the next one, especially when people leave the floor.

Rather an exclusive club, it has a cozy size, friendly staff and a bright, jet-setty air about it in its favor. You could be pleasantly surprised.

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LOCAL BANDS



By Susie Leon

"I think everyone of us are musicians. There's just no way to not be a musician, it's just part of our combination something that we really believe in."

So muses Contractions' guitarist/singer Mary Kelly in a recent interview. And after four years of playing dozens of venues and changing lineups, the Contractions are stripped down to the bare essential drums, bass and guitar and releasing their debut LP on February 17 at Wolfgang's.

Originally slated for hopeful release in late November ("if it's not out by Thanksgiving, we'll have a Caesarian!!!") the wait is well worth it. *Something Broke* contains ten original Contractions songs that show just how dedicated and talented these women are. This is no fly-by-night effort—the Contractions are here for a good while and their songwriting skills are just one example of their talent.

"Kathy and I are, I guess, the Lennon/McCartney of this organization," explained Mary. "Debbie's the George Harrison and Ringo Starr all rolled up into one." An appropriate analogy since Debbie Hopkins is the drummer, one who despite her small stature, looms large in the band's sound — lotsa' feeling, lotsa' energy.

The energy can be traced to the band's early days when they were virtually surrounded by the electric atmosphere of San Francisco's underground music scene when punk became a household word/taboo in the mid-70's.

"Debbie and I spent a lot of time jammin' together...Lisa (producer) introduced us...I was playing on Haight...very bad folk guitar," remembers Mary. To make a long story short, Mary and Debbie jammed a lot and "...We were practicing down at Iguana Studios where the DKs used to practice, and the Offs, the Dils, Pink Section...so we were playing but we were actually hearing that music more, so it just fell together, and we needed a bass player...Kathy was writing songs, I



THE CONTRACTIONS

had written songs...we had 20 minutes which was all you needed...Our first show was at the Deaf Club."

From these days have come a very energetic performance band that through the passage of time have become dedicated to their craft. Their sound has matured into a more cohesive unit — they're not kids anymore, they're women with a message.

"I write about personal experiences," explained Kathy Peck, the Contractions' bassist/singer. "Debbie helps equalize what we write."

"Kathy writes more about feeling things, I write more about thinking things," added Mary. "Debbie is more on political, personal politics levels, more about society...Kathy's more emotional...I...like...landscape...architectural feelings...images...Sometimes it's hard to spit out the lyrics because it's a little too literal...(I like) dreams..."

Something Broke kicks off with "Voices Do Repeat" a song that features snappy percussion and clear, boppy keyboards, complemented with soft, almost blurry vocals. It's totally irresistible — danceable, listenable and a distinct change from previous Contractions songs.

"Voices' is something I wrote in Texas," explained Kathy. "I originally did it as a project in Mary's studio with (some members) of Baby Buddha...and then the Contractions joined me later on it...it came out really nice, it's real different from a lot of things we do...it's boppy."

A lighter side of the Contractions to be sure. "No Matter" is a definite rocker, no less danceable than "Voices" but with clearer vocals and much bolder, pronounced guitar riffs and leads. The quieter breaks show real feeling and the added horn work fits in well. A rocker of a song.

"Rank and Vile" starts out with a

wild, exotic drumbeat, and swingin' guitar carries the song, Debbie's voice coming through as well as her drumming. A vile look at the rank and file.

"Fifteen" is a change of pace from the above songs. It is, to put it simply, beautiful lyrically, musically and vocally. Mary's voice is soft and pensive, singing wonderful images of fiteen. The guitar (that is a 12-string, right Mary?) has a classical tone; one is reminded of the Beatles' "Dear Prudence."

So there's several sides of this trio, featuring each member on each song, showing at least three facets of the band, fun, intelligent and thoughtful.

Something Broke is something tangible the Contractions can point to and say, hey, we're for real.

"...we'd reached the end of line without having an LP...and God bless 'em all, but the little bars and the little nightclubs are not gonna' do for the Contractions what we all want for the Contractions. We'd burnt out...we basically played for three years without stopping..."

The record release party on Feb. 17 at Wolfgang's should show the two important things about this band. The strength of their songs, which after all, is what defines a band, and the energy of their live performances, which is what gives most bands their closest rapport with their audience. And the rapport is there, Mary going nuts on the guitar, Kathy jumping up and down on various speakers and amps and Debbie madly pummeling her skins — looks like chaos, but sounds so t-i-g-h-t.

"Playing should be a rare moment and we're looking for rare moments...we just wanna put our energy into the better parts of music, which is playing and writing and willfully going into the great beyond of art. We're the mad scientists of rock 'n' roll."

JOE STRUMMER

CHIEF CONSPIRATOR OF

THE CLASH



Joe Strummer stopped by the Quake on his way to the "new improved" Clash world premiere performance in Santa Barbara.

OZ: Joe strummer has made it. You have the pained look of a new father.

JS: (laugh) Huh. You heard. My very own.

OZ: I heard about that.

JS: You rotten liar. Yeah.

OZ: (laugh) I'm not supposed to say it.

JS: It's a daughter and it's two months old...she, sorry.

OZ: It's a daughter and it's two months old?

JS: It's called jazz...after Charlie Parker.

OZ: As in Charlie Parker...yeah, I figure if I die and come back I want to come back as a saxophone, a tenor saxophone, yeah, I figure. We heard you were lost between Los Angeles and San Francisco, I'm glad that you made it, uh —

JS: Yeah, it was between London and S.F.

OZ: I guess the obvious question is, after we say welcome to the City, is, um, the date is not for a week, what are

you doing in town, a week early?

JS: I'm on my way to Santa Barbara because...I got...a five piece Clash to uh, make it's premier concert to the world and we're gonna do it in Santa Barbara which is somewhere —

OZ: Between here and Los Angeles. (laugh)

JS: Yeah, somewhere down the coast, you know. We've come here to give you the full low-down on everything because...

OZ: Yeah, because there are a couple questions, since the last time you were in the States.

JS: I should think there are, but let me tell you about London because I just come from London... I gotta tell ya... things 'ave gone dead in London, like from, the neck up to the neck down and things 'ave just gotta change, an' that's why we're come back, to... step out there an' say, 'We don't have to go this way, you know, we wanna change it all around an' move it the other way... everything got so tame, you know, Mummy and Daddy loves the records that are being turned out now, everything so safe and predictable, there's no chance for anyone new to burn up... it's all lawyers and accountants an' businessmen are running the whole deal an' people are just swallowing what they're given an'... it's time for us to come out here and go, 'enough is enough!', I've done, every trip in rock and roll from drugs to ego to... fooling around with art and poetry, I've been through every single

one of them and not one of 'em is worth one ol' used Biro?

OZ: I guess the obvious question is, now that you're a mother and father, does that put out the fire —

JS: I'm only a father!

OZ: I have a quote — (laugh).

JS: I have a bit of a mother but... we won't say the rest of it...

OZ: I have a quote here from your mother, says, 'the baby has had a marvelous calming effect on Joe Strummer...

JS: EH! An... let me talk about the media here, cause you introduced the media into this conversation, (OZ: Exactly.) and what we have in England is the most right-wing fascist media on this... unbelievable, and if they can't get any information they just make it up, on the spot, an' what you read me there was some hack in Fleet Street, which is where all the journalists hole up, and they're all drunk, an' they just write the biggest load of dribble an' they pour it all over everything. We don't get one shred of truth in information in...in... England, that's all about anything whether it's my baby daughter or the crucial nuclear issue, we don't get one shred of truth and I think the same goes for America.

OZ: I think you're right. Last time I saw you guys I was at the US Festival and they had a press conference backstage that got real weird, the whole thing got real strange and you guys got the short end of the stick because they were writing it, you were performing it

and all we got was 'The Clash wants a hundred thousand dollars, are a bunch of capitalist pigs, and they, and now, they preach, hey, you know, we don't want to make any money, and we're for the Sandinistas and we preach revolution and they want a hundred thousand dollars, and, (JS: Yeah, but wha--) they're turning around, and, an' uh, uh, (JS: Yeah, but--) giving up they're principles...

JS: Yeah, our job was to go in there in the US Festival and say this is not the heavy party that you're tryin' to make it, you're trying 't'ave a heavy party in a land where there's thirty-two million people living below the official poverty line, just like we 'ave in Britain, and you cannot 'ave Woodstock in a situation like that, without... Woodstock was um, flower power an' all that and there was people believin' in it an' however stupid the ideals were, people were sincere, but you cannot restage Woodstock in California in this day an' age an' 'ave everybody out of their minds on qualudes and say, you know... while people get beaten to death in the car-park an' say everything is cool. We went in there and said, 'It is not cool, this is a disgrace, we, we needed that money 'cause we're gonna develop talent in Britain, we, we need a scene in Britain, I have no scene, I don't wear makeup, I don't wear a frock, I'm not an ambiguous... I don't make love to frogs, you know what I mean? I cannot fit in in England, there is nowhere for me to be in England, so therefore we are gonna take Wozniak's money an' we're gonna put it in there, an'... anybody sayin' that Van Halen's

cool and David Bowie's cool, I mean, we played to more people than David Bowie an' he got paid three times the price of us, an' nobody slacks him off yet. He's the biggest dribbling merchant going as well as all these other... sixties cohorts who, it's about time they were all slung out, you know how long does it have to go on for? How safe an' predictable is it gonna be? Where's all the passion and energy an' excitement gone, its just, this is one long bore and I am fed up with sitting around in a rehearsal room arguing with Mick Jones and I've got rid of 'im, and we've got two new guys called Vince White and Nick Sheppard and they're both playin' guitars and it's the loudest thing you ever heard an' it goes one hundred miles and hour straight down the middle of the road an' it does not stop.

OZ: That's... what I was gonna try and clear up, that was the thing, the show that I saw you (outdoors) was one of the best shows of last year. Bad politics. I mean, the politics were absolutely... garbage. But the intensity on stage was incredible. So, it doesn't seem that you lost the passion for that. So what? Is Mick Jones deciding to lay back, or what... where was the riff there?

JS: He's just, he just wants to be an artist an' a pop star an' he can shove off in some corner an' get on with it, I 'aven't got any time to waste. Do you realize, um, President Reagan is out there in Central America, gunning down people, in the name of America, and only eight percent of the population of this country have, have any idea of what side, or what is going

on, out there. And meanwhile you're shouting freedom and democracy and gunning down all these people, and you... you're all shouting you're scared of communism an' the fact is that the rich are too rich and the poor are too poor an' the, that's just a complete imbalance, an'... there's no way that capitalism is gonna work either here or in England or in Europe or in West Germany, there's gotta be some humanity 'cause we're all going straight for a nuclear power, either a meltdown or a nuclear war, and that is capitalism, I don't care... if you were having a good time, or you're dancing the twist or shaking the watoosie or whatever you're doing, you are not doing what you don't know what's happening in Central America, yet Reagan is doing that in your name, you gotta vote, you go out and use it, you find out what the issues are, where's all the intelligence, you know... all we got here is, like... um, unnecessary nonsense dribbling out of twelve inch disco mixes, I mean, where is the, you know, what d'ya think's going on in the ghettos of this land?

OZ: Does this mean we're not gonna have a dance mix on your next record?

JS: To hell with dance mixes! I haven't got time for a dance mix! By the time a dance mix 'as gone by I could've laid four heavy songs on you, (OZ: Exactly... exactly what I mean). you brain is gonna be blistering, you know. I'm talking about apply a blowtorch to your memory.

...next month freedom Strummer style, more about Mick Jones & of course politics.



eating in the 80's



By Sharon Daley

The Pixley Cafe is a small, elegantly charming restaurant located on Fillmore street between Filbert and Greenwich Sts. in San Francisco. The owner says that 80% of his business is repeat customers, and after eating there its easy to see why. Floral tapestry carpets, Alice in Wonderland illustrations on the wall, classical music being played and fresh flowers on every table contribute to the warm and comfortable environment the Pixley Cafe provides for its customers.

Taking the waitresse's recommendation, I ordered one of the five specials which was breast of chicken cooked with butter, wine and scallions. The onions were so fresh I thought maybe the cook ran home to pick them from his garden. Rather than order a bottle of wine (it was lunchtime) I had a glass of the house wine which was a Roundhill Vineyard Chardonnay, very impressive but by this point nothing could surprise me. The rest of the menu offered a variety of fresh pasta, fish,

and salads which could satisfy any appetite. For dessert, strawberry ice cream from Vivoli's. If you have never had Vivoli's, you have never tasted ice cream. The service was above average, our waitress was more than happy to answer any questions regarding the menu and thanked us for coming.

The Pixley Cafe is a restaurant no one will forget, go there for lunch or dinner any day of the week and discover why people always return.



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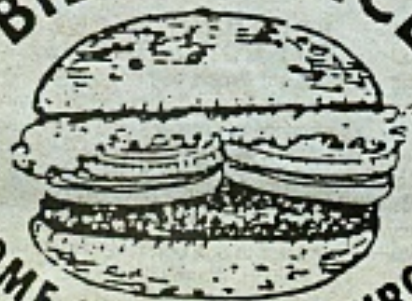
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VERTIGO: Sometimes an Alfred Hitchcock movie is the perfect tonic for the jaded or morose soul. His artful camera work and black humor, combined with non-stop suspense and O. Henry turnabouts, make for classic films and vintage entertainment. But if you are looking for typical Hitch when you turn to "Vertigo," acclaimed by many critics as the Master of the Macabre's masterpiece, you will be sorely disappointed. Personally, I find it difficult to recommend this latest restored feature in the current Hitchcock revival. It's the plodding tale of a retired detective with acrophobia — the vertigo of the title — and his obsession with a mysterious woman. Too deliberate in its pacing and hackneyed in its romantic dialogue (parody,

perhaps?), it hardly compares to the feistier "Rear Window." "Vertigo" also telegraphs most of its dramatic punches and plot twists. To my mind, the film's only redeeming features are solid performances by Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak in the leads and beautiful location shooting done in San Francisco. In truth, the most noteworthy thing about "Vertigo" is the celluloid proof that California Street was also torn up 30 years ago when the movie was filmed. Actually, the panorama of the City as it was back then — charming residential hills, light on the skyscrapers — is nearly worth the price of a ticket. Nearly. Better to wait for "The Trouble With Harry" or "The Man Who Knew Too Much," due for return engagements in the next few months.

HEART LIKE A WHEEL: A down-home, feel-good biography of hot-rod champ, Shirley "Cha Cha" Muldowney, the only woman to win a national drag racing title and the only person — man or woman — to win three of 'em. Bonnie Bedelia, aging roughly three decades as the Schnecktady, N.Y. housewife with true grit and enough drive to win in the man's world of hot-rod racing, is completely believable whether portraying Muldowney's triumphs or tragedies. Beau Bridges is on the mark, too, as Connie Kalitta, Muldowney's racing mentor, racy suitor and eventual rival on the track. A tasty and inspiring slice of Americana.

LA BALANCE: This French hit from '82 ("La Balance" is slang for "The Informer" or "The Stool Pigeon" — one who equalizes the battle between the police and the outlaws) pulled a near-sweep of the Cesar Awards, the Gallic equivalent of the Oscars. Basically a cops 'n' robbers 'n' pimps 'n' hookers escapade, it dabbles in modern-day Parisian lowlife, where everybody plays dirty and love is a lever. Nathalie Baye is persuasively funky as a bright, high-

priced streetwalker whose affair with a two-bit gangster leads them both into a dangerous liaison with ruthless, crimebusting cops. Fast-moving, inconsequential action pic. Passez le popcorn.

SILKWOOD: The concept of the docudrama seems more like a made-for-TV conceit, yet we have a theatrical treatment of a recent and mysterious news story. Unlike most of the mini-series forays into history that jam the airwaves during television's ratings sweeps, "Silkwood" is unforced and ambiguous. Like daily life, the events depicted in this film merely unfold, helped along by a delightfully naturalistic piece of acting from Meryl Streep as Karen Silkwood. She's a blue collar worker at a plutonium fuel plant in Oklahoma who discovers that a little knowledge can be as harmful to your health as a lot of radiation. Kurt Russell and Cher, as Silkwood's housemates, turn in equally effective low-key supporting performances that further enhance the reality of the milieu. A set of episodes, sombre and drab, then taut and frightening, that pose questions and offer no easy answers. Greater than the sum of its parts...

TO BE OR NOT TO BE: Remake of the 20th Ernst Lubitsch comedy with Jack Benny and Carole Lombard, this time starring Mel Brooks and wife Anne Bancroft as the Bronskis, who run a Warsaw acting troupe that gets involved with the Polish underground during WWII. Charles Durning is a comical Gestapo general, Jose Ferrer is a traitorous Polish spy and Tim Matheson is a dashing Polish aviator. Surprisingly, a lot of compassion and no bathroom humor from Brooks. He gives us his best in the role of a ham, an obvious bit of typecasting.

ZIGGY STARDUST & THE SPIDERS FROM MARS: This...uh...low-budget rockumentary by D.A. "Don't Look Back" Pennebaker (concert and backstage footage from David Bowie's first "farewell" tour in the early '70's) only looks good compared to the wretched excesses of M-TV. Boy David, heavy on the make-up and platform shoes, different earrings for every few songs, metal guitar posturing, hippy-dippy lyrics, blah, blah, blah. Glitter-rock gave the word some of the ugliest clothes in the history of fashion. "Oh, You Pretty Things?" Not quite.

CARMEN: The lines between real life and art blur in Carlos Saura's sensual film about a flamenco dance company adapting Bizet's tragic opera. Sexy and compelling; in short, nothing like actual opera. Cameo by Spanish guitar virtuoso Paco de Lucia is an extra treat.

D.C. CAB: Mr. T., Gary Busey and Marsha Warfield are a few of the relentlessly wacky drivers at a ramshackle Washington cab company. Streetwise and sappy. Sort of like "Taxi Goes to the Car Wash." Instant VCR material.

THE KEEP: "Radiers of the Lost Keep?" Nazis, angels and demons in spooky Romania, circa 1941. Keep away.

EXPERIENCE PREFERRED...BUT NOT ESSENTIAL: Charming, lightweight British comedy set in a Welsh seaside resort during the early '60s. A sweet young student has a summer job as a waitress. Worldly, but gentle cook, — nice guy — deflowers her. She blossoms. Goes back to where she came from at the end of the summer, smile on her face. Cook goes back to his ladle, I suppose. Audience goes back to box office, demands money back. Just kidding. Warm little movie. ●

Dec. Issue correction: Gorky Park was reviewed by Robert Bowman

VIDEOACTIVE THE SECRET SEX LIFE OF MARTHA QUINN

By Thomas Stearns

It was one of those nights. As the hours slipped by, it got later and later. So I decided to go for a walk. Somehow, I ended up near the Caravan Lodge. You know: that motel on the edge of the Tenderloin with the closed-circuit naughty movies. Ambling by, I spied a pert young gal, hugging close to the parking lot wall, as though fondling cinderblock would make her less visible. She walked through the dim light and as her image clarified, I realized that she looked just like Martha Quinn, America's favorite MTV vj.

Upon closer examination, I was sure. She had the same clipped, preppy hairdo that Martha had; even flicked the limp bangs from her forehead with the same deft movement. And her clothing sparkled with the same innocent little fish prints and high collars that made Martha the Sare Lee of TV cupcakes. But the clincher was neatly packed beneath her delicate arm: a stack of videocassettes. For a moment, I thought the Three Musketeers I'd eaten was lodged in a heart valve. I couldn't breathe and my hand started twitching like it wanted the remote control to my tv set. Boy, this was better than running into Pia Zadora on a one-way bus to Skin City. "Martha Quinn," I whispered to myself. "Martha Quinn."

But why was she at the Caravan Lodge? Showing rock videos to winos and perverts? I had to know. This was more important to me than my entire collection of toilet strips that say "sanitized for your protection." Off I ran, following Martha Quinn through the grimy streets; lost in the shadows, but close enough to see the cute poodle on her skirt wagging its tail as she walked.

Near Sutter, Martha turned into a diner and sat down at the counter. Nothing like that great set on MTV, that's for sure. But I sidled up beside her and mounted a stool. The coffee was lousy. And Martha studied the rings of cream in her cup like she was about to say "More exciting news about Motley Crue's tour schedule after this really spiffy video from Bonnie Tyler." I decided I had to meet her, come up with some incredible line that would knock the caps right off her creamy-white canines. Look, I'm not Mr. Love Boat and I'm a little out of Martha's demographic interest — ages 12 to 24, you know — but she's the sexiest thing I've seen since the Playtex Living Bra was born.

"Pass the sugar, please," I said, doing my best Robert DeNiro imitation. Martha stretched her lean torso forward and obliged me. "You passing that to me? You must be passing that to me. I'm the only one here," I added, knowing this once worked really well on a girl from Daly City. Martha chuckled like she does when she tells you MTV's 900 request number only costs 50 cents per call. "Nice couple of cassettes you got there," I offered with a subtle nod towards her palpitating mohair blouse. A quarter was still rolling down the counter when we left the diner.

Standing in my apartment, Martha looked curiously about. "Gosh, this is just like Mick Jagger's room in 'Under Cover Of The Night,'" she giggled

uneasily. "And the view is better than Cyndi Lauper's in 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun.'" Suddenly, Martha looked a little hazy around the edges like the horizontal hold was off. I offered her a Diet Pepsi and then mentioned how Snickers bars made me feel better about myself — the familiar advertisers didn't quell her nervousness. But the next thing I knew, I was perched next to Martha "Hi, I'm Martha Quinn" Quinn on my own couch.

Bending over, I gave Martha a quick peck on the lips. My god, they were softer than a Maxi-Pad. Squirming about, she brushed the remote control from its honored position next to my Harrah's Club ashtray and — you guessed it — on came MTV. "Paul McCartney cracked up another Mercedes Benz today. A rowdy disturbance by coal miners in Newcastle caused him to veer off the road. Also in the car were Stevie Wonder, Robert Plant and the ghost of Dennis Wilson."

Martha turned to me and just gleamed. I couldn't help myself. I applauded. "Wait. Wait," she demanded. "I love this part...where I scratch my ear then rub the back of my neck. It has such a...such a realness. I've been practicing that for weeks."

"Sure, Martha! Real, really real," I offered, thinking that maybe kudos could get me into a designer skirt viewed by over 12 million households in major market areas each day. Finally, I

reached for her, but she seemed to waver and drift like a weak tv signal.

Well, Martha Quinn sure put me into heavy rotation. I was crazier than a bloodhound at the Third Annual Possum Convention. But being a well-mannered guy, I took her where she wanted to go: the Greyhound station. Last time I saw Martha, she was feeding dimes into a Rent-A-TV chair and muttering something about "ToTo playing Kansas with the Wizard of Ozzy Ozbourne." Click.

On A More Mundane Front

On A More Mundane Front: Video Caroline is recreating the land of Oz, yes, the land of Oz for a Greg Kinn song, "Reunited." Joe Dea directs and the Juanita Diana/Michael Feeney team produces. Then they jump right into a video for The Call. The song will be "Scene Beyond Dreams" and involves some kind of post-apocalypse setting. Tami Friedman, the befreckled producer, has grabbed a big one: Tiggi Clay, the Morocco Records artist. The video will be for "Flashes" with Scott "the boss" Ross directing. Richard Jett, a name new to the glamorous world of music video, has completed a project for Patty Wolfe and her cover of "Johnny Get Angry." The video is a mini-dissertation of the job market. It's really c-u-t-e, but Patty won't have audiences crying Wolfe.

Some recent videos from the Bay Area have made that long journey to MTV. "Flick of the Switch," the AC/DC tune assembled by Nigel Paul of Alcon, is currently rotating. Patrick Kriwanek's video for "Never," Wire Trains's smash hit, just entered the MTV bullpen. "Backstabber," produced by Video Caroline for Hyts, is out there slashing new viewers. And, of course, Huey Lewis' "I Want A New Drug" is getting lots of attention. The anonymous director lives somewhere in the swollen hills of San Francisco.

Editors note: Steve Seid is on vacation. ●

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AN INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT RYSER OF THE UNITS **By Peter Fields**



UNITS (L. to R.) Jabari Allen, Scott Ryser, Rachel Webber, David Allen Jr.

Photo: Rande St. Nicholas

UNITS NEW ASSEMBLY SPARKS A NEW WAY TO MOVE

San Francisco-based band, The Units have received national attention with their dance-floor smashes, "The Right Man" and their latest, "Girl Like You." The current line-up of co-leaders Scott Ryser and Rachel Webber on synthesizers and vocals, with the addition of identical twins, David Allen Jr. and Jabari Allen, also on synthesizers and vocals, combined with D.C. Carter on drums, Raymond Frolich on percussion, seems ready to explode into top forty territory, yielding the coveted, but often evasive, across-the-board hit single. *Quake*

Magazine checked in with Scott Ryser to find out what's behind their budding success, and generally, "What's shakin'?" with The Units.

QM: Scott, what is the "New Way To Move?"

Scott: For our group, it's a combination of the old Units and the new guys we have in the group which are more reggae and funk-oriented. So for us, it's a crossover between a reggae-funk sound and the rock and roll sound. It's a name that applies to the new direction the band went in after we added Dave and Jabari, and D.C., the drummer.

QM: The Units' single, "Girl Like You" bubbled under on the Billboard charts and received a lot of attention from local clubs and radio stations. Did it do as well - or better than expected?

Scott: It probably did as well as expected because we had a single out right before that called "The Right Man" that did real well and went to number 18 on the Billboard dance charts, and top ten on the Rockpool charts. What we wanted to do with "Girl Like You" was to follow-up with another club-type single that would take the time until the album came out. →

when we had a few more songs that were MOR or AOR oriented. It basically did what we wanted it to do, keep the momentum going until the album came out.

QM: How about the video? It's been on MTV, and many club video services such as Telegenics have picked up on it, too. Who produced and directed the video of "Girl Like You," it was shot in the Bay Area...

Scott: Video Caroline produced it and Pat Kirwinik directed it. It was done at Mt. Kriwanek High School, the same place where "American Graffiti" was shot. We did it in the high school gym with about 200 teenagers from different high schools in the Bay Area that were all involved with drama class.

QM: You've worked with two different producers on the "New Way To Move" EP, Michael Cotton (of the Tubes) and Bill Nelson (of Be Bop Deluxe fame), was there a sharp contrast between the two's approach to the Units' music?

Scott: Yeah, it was very different. They're both great in their own ways. Michael Cotton has a much more "american" way of producing, in that he goes for more of a polished, pre-planned, arranged kind of sound. He works with the group closely, and

offers a lot of his own ideas as far as arrangement, whereas Bill Nelson has more of a...I want to say "artistic," a more intuitive way of working, where you don't listen to other formulas but listen to the group itself, and bring out the strong points of the group without adding your own (Nelson's) ideas. I'd say Bill's way of working is more intuitive and less polished...

QM: After the "Digital Stimulation" sessions, the Units left the 415/Columbia fold and landed on Epic Records. What happened between the Units and 415 Records?

Scott: Basically, it came down to differences of opinion over the contract. We felt, and Howie (Klein) from 415 felt, that neither one of us wanted to compromise any more than we already had. At that point we decided to look for another label. We were lucky enough to get signed with Epic, mainly because of our manager in New York. After we'd left 415, we put out an independent single that we got Michael Cotton to produce. That was the basic reason we got signed too, because we had done so well on the dance charts with "The Right Man."

QM: Where do the Units' roots come from, girl groups? Ohio Express?

Scott: I'd say our group came out of

the punk-new wave thing that was going on in the late seventies. It's in reaction to the really produced MOR stuff that was on the radio. Once we started putting records out, we gradually changed from that back to our roots...

QM: The band is so pop-influenced, it has to go back before the punk movement in terms of what you're drawing from, right?

Scott: Once the initial punk movement was over - for us it was 1980 - that we wanted our songs to get on the radio. We started listening to some of our older, favorite groups that had influenced us before. I'd say that it would be from some of the old girl groups. Before Rachel (Webber) was in the Units, she was in a group called the "Mummers and Poppers." They did a lot of rhythm and blues covers. In fact, she was in the group with Debora (Iyall) of Romeo Void. When we started gearing ourselves to a sound that could get us on the radio, that was the sort of thing we'd listen to.

QM: What's in store for the Units' in the future?

Scott: To keep putting out pop songs that can get us on the radio, and to try and maintain an artistic integrity, yet still be played on the radio. ●



TOO MUCH FUN IN REDDING

By Will Durst



So, the deal is they paid me way too much money to fly to Redding and do 30 minutes of stand-up in front of the County Supervisors Association of California (CSAC)'s annual convention. Each of the 58 California counties are run by 5 Stupidvisors, except the county of San Francisco which is also a city and has six more. Not all 296 Stupidvisors actually showed, but with aides, spouses and various political cretin hanger-oners, the total came to about 500 and the oozing moody egos were thick enough in the air to be cut with a dull bar coaster.

So my agent gets me this gig and as soon as I land at the airport, I know I'm in deep ca-ca. Redding is like slumber city. Makes Hayward a glittering metropolis. The airport is a mock up of a real airport. Little tiny airline desks with the logos all squished up diagonally so they fit behind. The big news is Redding is getting a new Mervyn's. "Yep, gettin' us a big department store real soon."

So I'm there for the last day and already I've missed such workshops as "Health Care and

You", and "How to not look guilty on television interviews" and "Integrity-how to get it and when to use it". Some of the Supes are already looped, and I'm thinking, "Great, these guys are loaded at three in the afternoon. Six hours from now after the formal banquet and open bar." Either that, or it'll be like the heckling I got in East San Jose where the dress code was written on a paper plate taped to the door and no. 7 was "All Knives Must Be Sheathed" and I got heckled by three generations of imbred drunken females.

So on the shuttle ride from the hotel to the Redding Civic Center, I find out Mark Russell did last year's convention; of course last year the convention was in L.A., I try not to think of the analogies.

So I get to the Civic Center and the place is a cement barn. The acoustics are like forget it; underwater would be an improvement. Then they've thoughtfully provided a dance floor, which to a comedian is a moat. Just another 30 feet from the 8-foot stage to the audience, terrific, this is going to be a reeking heap of steaming

faces. But it isn't dinner is. Ever have a meal that makes you wish you'd eaten on the airplane? Shudder.

So it's not till the awards presentations that I realize these guys are really politicians. First, they all tell a joke, then take note of some sort of poll which proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that they themselves interpreted the results of the poll, then they get all humbled by this honor from their peers, then spit. At the end of each award of a plague or a solid gold expense account, people are suddenly hopping up from the dais and running to the podium for picture time, "here Bob, let me help you hold this".

So I go on and do all right, surprisingly, and I get off stage and they liked me, but they're politicians.

"Nice mike technique"

"Not inadequate to your task"

"Very funny, not my brand of humor but amusing"

"I didn't like your hair." You got it, he was bald. SAY BYE.

The Suburbs

By Tom Lanham

Disjointed Pop Goes Hollywood

Love is the Law



Compromise is not a word to be bandied loosely about when in the presence of Chan Poling. Upon hearing even a faint whisper of the word, the tall, Chaplinesque Minneapolis native immediately launches into a defensive tirade on the merits of conformity in a camouflage-hungry world.

Poling has good reason to be so touchy. His band, The Suburbs, recently found conformity ("selling out," by many contemporary standards) to be a prime method of dealing with the record company blues.

"I really appreciate a good, simple rock song," relates Poling, who conversely is the Dr. Frankenstein responsible for some of America's most bent anti-rock music of the latter seventies. "I turn on the radio and, truthfully, I only hear about two or three songs a week that I really like. Why couldn't one of those songs be The Suburbs?"

Polygram Records, who signed the group last year, wasn't quite sure how to approach the marketing of such a quirky unit. Could a band responsible for such near-anthems as "Tape Your Wife to the Ceiling" actually hit it big? Rather than wait for the powers-that-be

to decide their fate, The Suburbs, true to their interpid nature, dove right into the fray.

"When a company like Polygram signs a band that made music like we did," Poling admits "they've obviously got to say at some point 'Now really guys. There's nothing we can do with this kind of stuff. The radio won't play it, so you probably won't sell a lot of records.' So we told 'em we could write songs that would be on the radio — in fact, we could do it better than a lot of the other groups out there."

The Suburbs weren't just whistling "Dixie." Their new release, *Love is the Law*, is chock full of herky-jerky artistic compromises, and is now enjoying extensive airplay on typically New Wave-format radio stations, as well as turning videophiles' bobbing heads with a four-minute optical feast of the album's title track. The Suburbs sound is truly realigned, and all of their chaotic, dissonant tomfoolery of yesteryear has been replaced by a sleeky sophisticated, almost scientifically formulated new accessibility. The group's lyrics are as witty and exaggerated as ever, though; cuts like "Rattle My Bones" ("...hip

bone connects to the backbone/ Now hear the word of the Lord!"), and "Hell A" ("...everybody, when I sing this song, must dance..."), and "Monster Man" ("I'm talking about a monster groove/ Law of gravity, let me move...") prove The Suburbs' distinct personality to be alive and well underneath all the glistening embellishment.

The Suburbs' present blossoming success is no real surprise to anyone familiar with their past — the group has always played its own game by its own rules. Formed mainly for the members' own amusement, the Suburbs (Bruce Allen — guitar; Beej Chaney — guitar, vocals; Michael Halliday — bass; Hugo Klaers — drums; Poling — keyboards, vocals) took Minneapolis by storm in the heyday of rebellious punk. "We started in 1977," growls Poling, "so all these 'New Wave' bands are nothing 'new' to us. It annoys us when we're lumped into that category."

It was however, the band's overriding intellectual slant on music that quickly put them at the top of the Midwest touring heap shortly after their inception, and it was the same astuteness that won them a record contract with the small but thriving Twin Tone Records.

"We had no other aspirations beyond Twin Tone back then," Poling recalls. "We were amazed that anyone would record us at all! We just wanted to play music. It was in our blood — all those riffs and melody lines just kept haunting us until we had to vent them."

One of those riffs happened to interest disco producer Steve 'Lipps, Inc.' Greenberg, and he promptly set to the task of remixing "Music For Boys" with absolute dance club appeal uppermost in his mind. The song became a minor hit, even placing in Billboard's Top Forty. "The more we appeared on the charts in Billboard," adds Poling, "The more the big record companies knew we existed."

Then came Polygram and still more big names like the Katz-Gallin-Morey agency, who now handle the management of The Suburbs as well as the careers of Dolly Parton and Richard Pryor. "I think we're their only rock band," Poling notes.

So now, after a long struggle, The Suburbs are facing fame and fortune and, even though they had to bend a bit, they're still putting out some incredibly intriguing and danceable tunes.

"Taking the basic pop philosophy and twisting it into your own vision," concludes Poling, "gives a band character and longevity." Otherwise you're beating your head against an A.O.R. wall somewhere — you might just as well be crafty about it, right? ●

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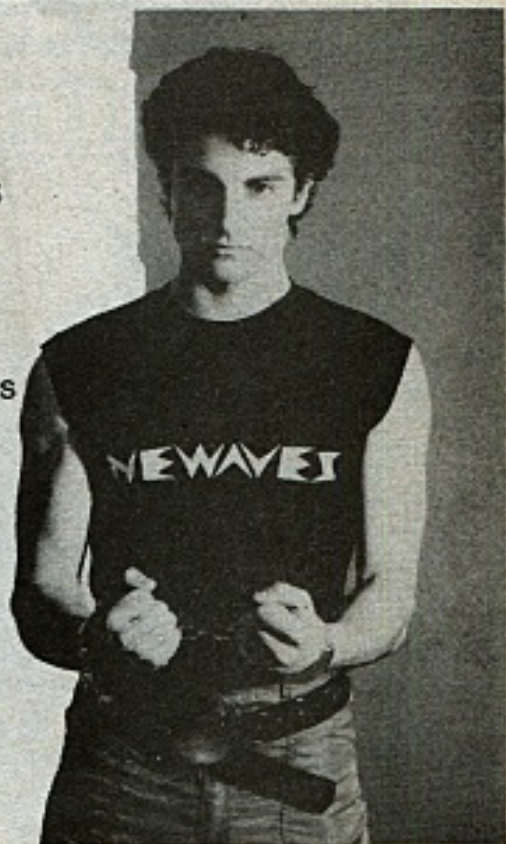


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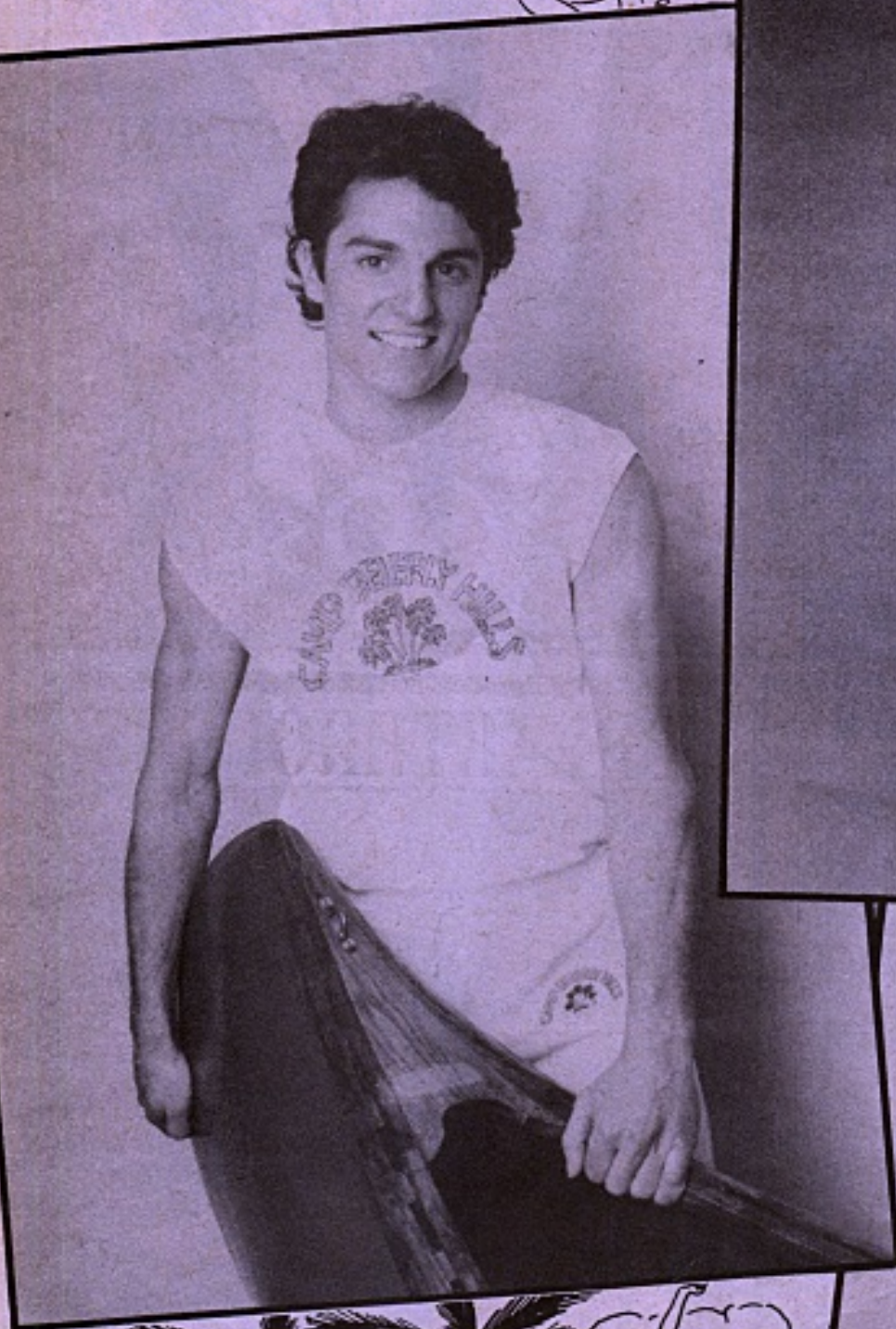
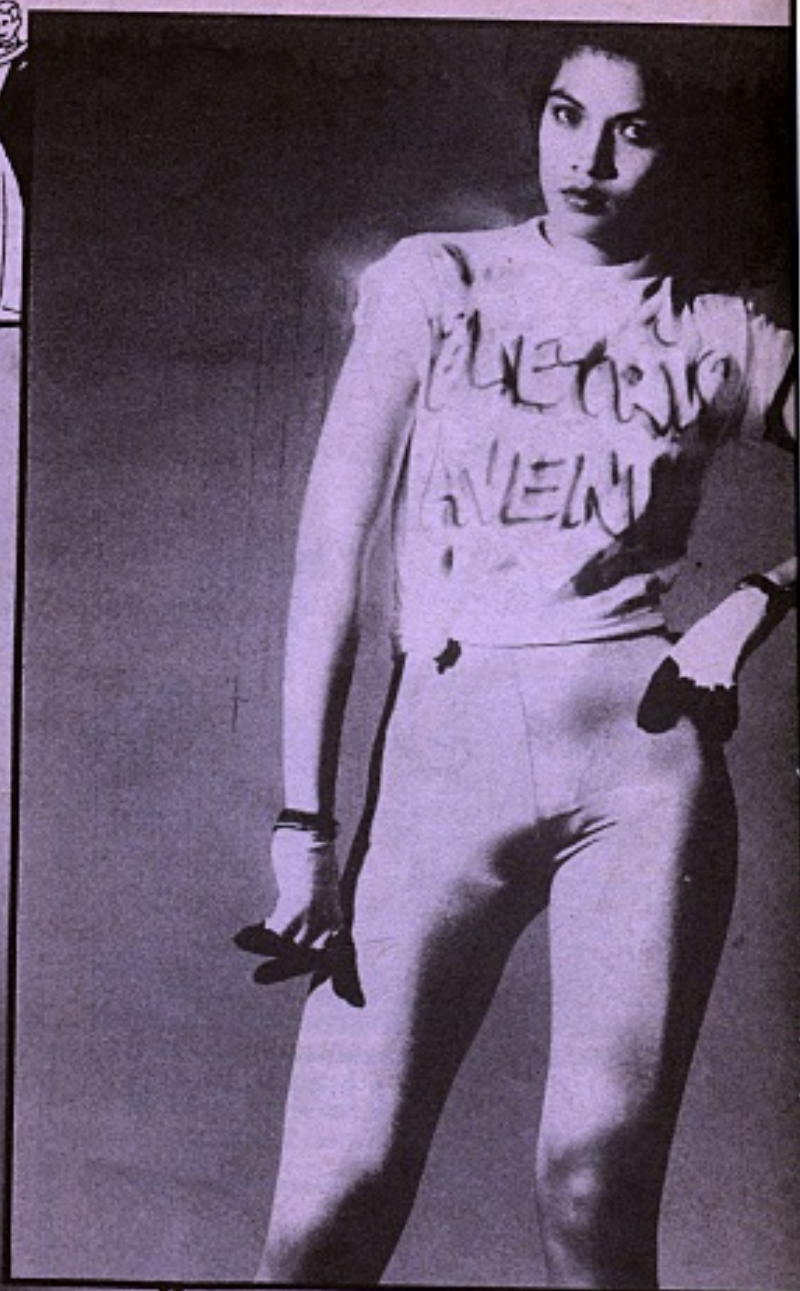
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SPECIMEN

A BATASTROPHE IN THE MAKING

By Frank Andrick and Mark Hoffmeister

Does the Fear of the unknown ever strike the heart of the press? If the protective policy inherent is overt redundancy then we certainly have positive proof. Proof in the form that the parasitic print media coined yet another term for something they could not understand. England's "Positive Punk" movement unofficially marked in time by the release of *Young Limbs and Numb Hymns*, The BatCave club's compilation LP which featured the recorded works of Alien Sex Fiend, The Venomettes, Sexbeat, and the club's proprietors The Specimen. The BatCave housed in a notoriously seedy section of London's Soho district has played host and housemother to these bands allowing the look and the music to develop on its own accord, seeking its own audience. Recently Specimen spent an evening on the Quake's Early Tremors show where they debuted material from their then unreleased "Batastrophe" EP. They were easily conversant as lead singer Oliver (Ollie) Wisdom told us how things really came about. "The band did a few shows here and there in its first year and everytime

we did one we got shat on totally and we said this is ridiculous. So the BatCave just seemed like the obvious thing to do. It cost about six hundred pounds to open. It was in this strip club in Soho and you had to go up in this tiny lift that only fit four people. We'd take it over from 11 o'clock at night. We'd just entertain ourselves and our friends and it end up drawing people in."

So successful was the BatCave as an innovative force that it spawned imitators from the word go, and not only in the states as one club owner in Los Angeles even used the clubs name and logo. "There's alot of clubs in England doing it but they don't try to be the BatCave they pick up some kind of identity of their own. But this guy has no imagination, I've seen tickets for it that say 'London's BatCave.' Its a joke and I think the guy is very unreasonable to be using the name. I spoke to the guy and told him, 'I don't care what you do with it or what ideas you steal, just don't call it the BatCave cause thats ours.'

The sound of Specimen can be

found on the a forementioned BatCave Compilation LP and their import singles "Returning From A Journey b/w Kiss Kiss-Bang Bang" and "The Beauty of Poison b/w Tell Tail. Their singles tell a varied tale of sound influence stretching from Public Image, Wire, Mott The Hoople, Bowie, Bauhaus and the Who. "There's no one direction for us. A lot of bands have a straight line to the pot of gold on the horizon. We're not just one song and twelve variations. This band just kind of goes boom in every direction."

The side of Specimen most easily picked-up-on by the press is the supposedly arresting and shocking image of the band in leather, lace, makeup, and stocking. In closing Ollie explains why the band, who doesn't really need to exploit the visual, does in addition to their distinctive music. "Every mother wants to take Boy George home for tea. When I was 14 or 15 my mother never liked the music that I liked and that's a good sign. If your mother or grandmother likes it its obviously too bland."

Lords Of The New Church

IS NOTHING SACRED?

By W. Scott



THE LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH: (L to R) JAMES, guitar and backing vocals; BATOR, vocals; TURNER, drums and backing vocals; TREGUNNA, bass and backing vocals.

WARNING:

Headline bands hit the stage no later than midnite at Wolfgangs. Who owns that place anyway? Dressed in black, I left the candles burning in my subterranean apartment and made the scene in North Beach (Wolfgangs) about 11:30. Surely, the lords of The New Church wouldn't be going on until at least 12:01, so I had time to check in and get that little something to calm the nerves. Or so I thought. Much to my surprise, the Lords had started mass a little early and father Bator was just beginning to spit and utter the new holy words... "They threaten our lives with a nuclear war. Gonna crucify us just once more. Join the new church. Be a lord of the new church." Having been them last year, I knew this would be their opening song. New Church, an eloquent stab at manufactured religion and corporate intrusion in sacred places. Stiv Bator speaks the truth and

"Truth is the sword of us all".

This bit of information can be found in gold letters beneath the credits on the reverse side of the Lords I.R.S. debut album. Manufactured religion? Hardly. Stiv Bator has more than earned the right to speak this sort of truth, whether you find it on the back of a nine dollar list retail item or spray painted in the Tenderloin.

Although, mothers, (if they only knew) would most likely consider Bator and his "truth" a horrible influence on their children, his notorious stage antics and self destructive bouts with alcohol have earned him an almost cult figure status among the youth of today. The truth is heard. In the first punk movement of the late seventies, Bator was largely responsible for leading The Dead Boys, an influential band of the time, straight into the black book of Rock 'n' Roll history. You may also remember Cheetah Chrome who played guitar with The Dead Boys and later became involved under questionable

circumstances with Sid Vicious and Nancy Spongon at the time of her unfortunate, widely publicized death in New York.

In those days, Bator, Cleveland's answer to immaculate conception, actually hung himself on stage for shock value and a few kicks. He now claims and rightfully so, to have broken more bones than anyone in the business. While the eternally outspoken Stiv Bator actually fronts the Lords, equally important to their present success are the other members of the band. Brian James, (guitar) is not exactly what you could call an unknown. Another founding member of the early punk scene, James played guitar in the first formation of The Damned. His undying devotion to psychedelic trash and minor chord rock, really make the unmistakable Lords sound complete.

Live, the band holds a sort of dark, curious power over their audiences. Wild jungle beat drums (Niki Turner) seem to put your body in a trance, while your head gets blasted by screaming guitars and Stiv rattles the cage. This particular evening live material was fairly well spread across the bands two major releases, drawing slightly more from the familiarity of the first album. Great moments included: "Russian Roulette", "Livin on Livin", Stiv's ode to the Lizard King and the insane "Little boys play with dolls," yet another tribute. This time quite obviously tribute to the New York Dolls. But perhaps the most fitting tribute of the night was the final encore when the Lords covered the Bo Diddley classic "Goin to my head". Something like Eddie Cochran's "Nervous Breakdown", pretty racy for it's time. Opening the show were two S.F. favorites, the Flying Tigers and by way of N.Y.N.Y. Rx. Unfortunately, I was not able to catch either of their sets, though I've seen them both before and assure you, there's good reason for their popularity.

Lords of The New Church. Incense and peppermints. Made loud to play loud. Rejoice. Psychedelics have returned. ●

By Lobster

Talking Heads

LIVE FROM THE QUAKE STUDIOS, as "the 3 O'clock Club" hour plays all requests, I made one for myself. A "Lobster's Choice" for *Cities* by the TALKING HEADS. My fondness for this band goes back to their early days, and the first time I saw them live at a show with the B-52's at the venerable Coconut Grove Ballroom at Santa Cruz's Beach & Boardwalk. It was in the days when most radio stations were afraid to touch the albums coming out by "New Wave" artists, let alone play their music on the air. The Talking Heads were the first legitimate new music band to break that barrier, but in the guise of a cover of Al Green's "Take Me To The River". It was the beginning of the development of a new dance music that would not polarize Rock music fans bored with the pabulum, formula "A.O.R." music of the late 70's like Disco had, or what was up until that time broadly regarded as "Punk".

It also seemed to me at the time that the rawness of bands such as the Talking Heads would be refined by their own progress and experience as time went on. The massive popularity of the Heads now is testimony to that evolution. Seeing the Talking Heads twice in 3 months wasn't something I expected to do, especially since the earlier performance at summer's end in U.C. Berkeley's Greek Theatre had been such a magical evening. An event that is as electrifying as their show usually loses something in repetition. As a birthday present to my older brother,

who had discovered the Talking Heads on the "Remain In Light" L.P. because of their incorporation of African Rhythms, I found myself at the S.F. Civic last December. Instead of losing intensity, the power of their current stage show was enhanced by seeing it indoors, where it was easier to focus on the in-performance building of the set.

Both shows were witnessed by the largest crowds I'd ever seen at either venue, and followed the same pattern of construction. True to their Art Student roots (Lead singer/Guitarist & resident alien David Byrne, Drummer Chris Franz and Bassist Tina Weymouth all met at the Rhode Island School of Design, and Keyboard player Jerry Harrison has a degree in Architecture from Harvard) the stage set was molded together by the piece by piece assembly of the group around David Byrne, who begins the show on a naked stage, and begins "Psycho Killer" alone. As the early part of the show progresses, Drum and Percussion risers, Keyboard and synthesizer platforms, backdrops, lighting and visual projections are all moved into place by the ever present road crew with the project culminating in what becomes a 9 piece Talking Heads.

The nine member unit churned out a dense, rhythmic pattern, hinged on the solid bass lines Tina holds tightly to Chris's timekeeping. The set cut across the material from all five of the Talking Heads 5 Studio L.P.s, including the aforementioned songs and such standouts as *Cross-eyed and Painless*, *Houses In Motion*, *Life During Wartime*, and most of the new

Speaking In Tongues. All of the Heads' songs are unified by the tension created by David Byrne's murky lyrics and tonal singing. The relief of this atmospheric tension comes when Byrne leaves the stage, and Chris Franz takes over in what becomes a brief Tom Tom Club set, with songs from the two L.P.s he and Tina have released as solo projects, a light-hearted danceable affair. When David Byrne returns to the stage, he is preceded by a crew member with a hand held spotlight, casting a larger than life, angular shadow off the padded shoulders of a boxy, baggy sport coat. The effect created by the Talking Heads current road show is one of shape, as well as sound and light.

If you missed the tour, you'll get a chance to see it all, as the entire set was filmed in L.A. after the S.F. show. I reached Tina Weymouth at her hotel room during the shoot, and found her very happy with the growth of the band, and the filming of the stage show, which will be released in some form by the middle of the year. David Byrne was at the time working directly with Director John Demmie in setting up the lighting and camera angles, so I didn't get to speak with him when I called, but was told that his next project would be with Phillip Glass. The Talking Heads current tour ends this month with a swing through Australia and New Zealand. Tina was also hopeful that there would be a separate Tom Tom Club tour after they had a little more material.

As I wear out my copy of **Speaking In Tongues**, I look forward to the next phase of the ever expanding Talking Heads, a band whose movement in music has charted the course for the continuing evolution of the modern music scene. To me, The Heads are the 80's equivalent of the Rolling Stones, and will prove to be just as influential as the decade continues. See you on the dance floor!



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