

Nº96

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DESTROY ALL
MONSTERS
DAMNED
CLASH
ALBUM PREVIEW



MARIANNE FAITHFULL

THE JAM



SPECIAL OFFER
CLASH LP
INSIDE!

ZIGZAG[®]
96

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BACK WITH A BANG!!

HELLO, HELLO, WE'RE BACK AGAIN! WELL DIDJA THINK WE COULD LIE DOWN AND DIE THAT EASY? TAKES MORE THAN A LITTLE T'ING LIKE OUR PUBLISHERS GOING BROKE TO SQUASH THIS ONE. WE'VE GOT A NEW PUBLISHERS - MENTOR BRIDGE LTD. AND WE'VE MANAGED TO KEEP OUR FAITHFULL OLD OFFICES IN TALBOT ROAD.

• THE REASON WE WERE GONE SO LONG WAS COS OF ALL THE NASTY LEGAL TANGLES INVOLVED IN LIQUIDATION. TO GO INTO ALL ALL THE INS 'N' OUTS OF IT ALL IS TOO DEPRESSING. REGULAR READERS WILL KNOW HOW DISORGANISED IT WAS GETTING BEFORE, HOW LATE WE WERE (THERE WAS A WHOLE ZZ96 DONE BEFORE THIS WHICH NEVER EMERGED!) AND YOU MAY HAVE READ ABOUT IT IN THE M. PRESS. SUFFICE TO SAY, THE PROBLEMS WE HAD WITH THE PREVIOUS PUBLISHERS HAVE BEEN SORTED OUT AND WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO WHIP UP THIS SPARKLING CHRISTMAS CRACKER FULL OF GOODIES BEFORE THE 70'S WAVE 'BYE AND THE 80'S SAY 'ULLO.

• WE'RE GONNA HOLD OURSELVES (!) TO A STRICT MONTHLY SCHEDULE FROM NOW ON TO PUT A PAID TO ALL THE BRITISH RAIL COMPARISONS. THERE'LL BE 12 ISSUES A YEAR! THE QUAUTY, WE HOPE, WILL BE EVEN HIGHER THAN BEFORE. ALL THE FIRSTS AND INSIGHTS ON THE GROUPS WHO MATTER COS THEY KNOW THEY CAN TRUST US, & VICE VERSA. IF THIS COMES OUT N DECEMBER'S 1st WEEK, AS PLANNED, THEN LOOK FORWARD TO READING 'BOUT THE NEW CLASH LP BEFORE ANYONE ELSE. A LOT OF THE OTHER BANDS WITH NOV/DEC ALBUMS ARE IN HERE TOO (BUT SEE CONTENTS FOR THE LOW DOWN).

ALL I KNOW IS I'M REALLY GLAD WE PULLED THROUGH COS WE NEARLY DIDN'T. I WAS GONNA JACK IT IN COS BEING A FULL-TIME DERELECT AIN'T MUCH FUN. THIS IS. BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP. THANX FOR ALL THE SUPPORT ALREADY. STAY FREE.

KRIS XXX

COVER PIX: MARIANNE - DENNIS MORRIS; JAM - ADRIAN BOOT.

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THE PLAYBACK

TWO HOURS AGO THE CLASH FINISHED THEIR NEW ALBUM.

THERE I WAS, TRUSSED FROM HEAD TO FOOT IN GAFFA TAPE SPRAWLED ON THE POOL TABLE WHERE I'D BEEN DUMPED MINUTES BEFORE. A BILLIARD BALL WAS SELLOTAPED IN A VERY DELICATE PLACE.

MEANWHILE MICK JONES, JOE STRUMMER AND PAUL SIMONON WERE GRINNING AND GLOATING. THE WORD CAME THAT THE TRACKS WERE SEQUENCED AND READY FOR THEIR FIRST CONTINUOUS AIRING. IT WAS FIVE IN THE MORNING AND WE'D ALL BEEN THERE OVER 12 HOURS. ALL THE IOPS HAD RUN OUT FOR 'SPACE INVADERS' SO FOOD FIGHTS, WATER FIGHTS, TOILET UTENSILS IN THE TEA AND MUCH POOL PASSED THE TIME UNTIL THIS - THE CROWNING BOREDOM-BEATER.

NOW WE HEARD THAT THE WEEKS OF WORK WERE NOW THAT VINYL HOUR. SO THEY CARRIED ME DOWNSTAIRS TO WESSEX STUDIO ONE, PUT A CRASH HELMET ON ME HEAD AND ROLLED THE TAPES. KNOW WHAT? BY THE TIME 'RUDI CAN'T FAIL' POWERED OUT OF ITS SKA-FACED SHELL ONE SIDE LATER I'D BURST THOSE BONDS HULK-STYLE AND THE LEGS COULD PUMP FREE, FREE TO JOIN THE OTHER BEAT-SOAKED BODIES SMILING WITH PRIDE.

BACKGROUND: 'LONDON CALLING' TOOK HALF THE TIME TO MAKE TWICE THE VINYL OF 'GIVE 'EM ENOUGH ROPE'. IN THE PRODUCER'S CHAIR, BUT MORE OFTEN THE FLOOR, WAS GUY STEVENS. THE MAN WHO BROUGHT MOTT THE HOOPLE INTO THE WORLD AND PRODUCED THE ORIGINAL CLASH DEMOS. HE ACTED AS A KIND OF MANIC CATALYST TO FIRE THE LATENT NEW ENERGY SURGING THRU THE CLASH LAST SUMMER: THE MOOD IN THE MAKING WAS UP FROM THE OUTSET. BY THE TIME THEY LEFT FOR THE 'TAKE THE FIFTH' US TOUR 20 TRACKS WERE DOWN AND ALMOST READY FOR MIXING. BACK FROM THE TOUR, INTO WESSEX FOR A FEW DAYS AND THAT'S WHERE WE CAME IN...

'LONDON CALLING' IS THE MOST DANCEABLE CLASH ALBUM YET. IT SHOWS THEM BRANCHING INTO A WILD VARIETY OF STYLES. IF YOU HOLD THEM TO THEIR PAST YOU'RE STRAPPING ON A STRAITJACKET (BUT YOU PROBABLY WILL). THIS LP IS A GAMUT OF STYLES STREAMLINED INTO A NEW CLASH DIRECTION, WHICH HAS BEEN BUDGING MORE AND MORE SINCE THEY EXPLODED INTO THE WORLD: VITAL, EXCITING ELEMENTS FROM WHAT'S GREAT, CLASHIFIED AND CONCENTRATED INTO AN OPTIMISTIC, POSITIVE RECORD. MORE INSTRUMENTS: KEYBOARDS, SAX, BRASS ON MANY TRACKS. GREATER REGGAE ASSIMILATION, MORE DYNAMICS AND A SEVERE INJECTION OF CLASSIC WILD ROCK 'N' ROLL SHIVERS, PARTICULARLY ON A GREAT VERSION OF VINCE TAYLOR'S 'BRAND NEW CADILLAC'.

THE TRACKS: 'LONDON CALLING': HALF THE 12" SINGLE (WITH 'ARMAGIDEON TIME', A HEAVY REGGAE-ORIGINAL BY WILLIE WILLIAMS ON STUDIO ONE - GREAT ELECTRIC SITAR-GUITAR!) THE LP OPENER IS A DARK WARNING FROM JOE OF A NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE, WITH SHRILL, MENACING GUITARS, COUNTER-VOCALS AND STAMPING BEAT. GOOD START.

'BRAND NEW CADILLAC' - STINGING AND SOAKED IN SINISTER GENE VINCENT INTENSITY. 'JIMMY JAZZ' - POLICE-BUST BAR SONG WITH CLINKING GLASSES, LAZY JAZZ BEAT AND SCAT SINGING FROM JOE. REAL SORT OF TOM WAITS JOB (SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT DIFFERENT!) 'HATEFULL' - BACK INTO TOP GEAR - DRUMMING TIGHT AS A COILED SPRING, BOISTEROUS MICK CHORUS AND A KILLER LIVG. TYPICAL OF THE HONED-DOWN BUT EXPLODING SOUND.

'RUDI CAN'T FAIL' - NEITHER WOULD THIS AS A SINGLE. AS ON MANY TRACKS THE CLASH STEAM THROUGH CHANGES WITH RECKLESS ABANDON, SHARP AS A NEEDLE. THIS COMBINES CARNIVAL AND KILLER CHORUS AND IS PRETTY GLORIOUS. END OF SIDE ONE.

'SPANISH BOMBS' - A LIGHTER FEEL WITH ACOUSTIC GUITARS BUT STILL FAST & CATCHY.

'RIGHT PROFILE' - CAME ABOUT WHEN GUY WAS RAVING ABOUT HOLLYWOOD HELL-RAISER MONTGOMERY CLIFT. HE LEANT JOE A BIOGRAPHY BOOK AND JOE WAS BOWLED OVER

(CONT. PAGE 6)



IN THE STATES

PICS: ROBERT MATHAU

**SEE INSIDE BACK COVER FOR
AMAZING CLASH OFFER!**



LONDON CALLING

(CONT.
FROM
PAGE 4)

WITH THE MAN'S LIFE-BEHIND-THE-SCREEN TO WRITE THIS HARD SONG. DEEP-FRIED PIANO AND WHACKING BRASS PROVIDE SUITABLE TOUGH GUY BACKING.

'LOST IN THE SUPERMARKET'- MICK JONES SONG WITH A MORE LOW & RESTRAINED VOICE BEWAILING THE ANONYMITY OF ADVERTISING AND NOT LIVING UP TO TV STEREOTYPING (I THINK).

'CLAMPDOWN': HEAVIEST TRACK IN LITERAL SENSE WITH METALLIC PILEDRIVER BEAT EMPHASISING MONOTONY OF FACTORY WORK. ULTRA-BRITTLE SHEET METAL GUITARS, ANOTHER CHORUS CLASSIC AND HILARIOUS 'MOVE ON UP' QUOTE AT END.

'GUNS OF BRIXTON': THE SINGER-SONGWRITING DEBUT OF PAUL SIMONON AND TOTALLY CREDITABLE. PERCHED ON BLACK, WATERY GUITARS AND STEADY REGGAE BEAT. BUILDS IN INTENSITY ON A SCENE OF URBAN TERROR - POLICE AT THE DOOR, SUS AND GUNS.

SIDE 3 - 'WRONG 'EM BOYO': KICKS OFF WITH A FEW UP-TEMPO BARS OF GAMBLING CLASSIC 'STAGGERLEE' TILL JOE WAVES HIS ARMS - "NO, NO, START ALL OVER AGAIN" - AND THEY BOMB INTO A SKA-STAX STOMP WITH A TOAST-SLANTED JOE VOCAL AND STEAMING CHORUS.

'DEATH OR GLORY': STRONG FLAG-WAVING CLASH CITY ROCKER.

'KOKA KOLA': 'ARE YOU BEING SERVED' CASH TILL AND 'GOING UP!' INTRO FOR THIS MARKETING-BIG BIZ INFLATION BEAT. ENDS WITH A RAID.

'THE CARD CHEAT': SHOCKED AND SLAYED MG. THE CLASH MEET PHIL SPECTOR! A MILES-HIGH WALL OF BOOMING SOUND, POKEY FANFARE IN MIDDLE AND SAXES LIKE A LINER IN ORGASM. PUMPS BIG AND AMBITIOUS. NEARLY CALLED 'KING OF HELL'.

SIDE 4:

'LOVERS ROCK': LOOKS AT ABSURDITY OF REGGAE-MONIKER ON SUITABLE SIGHT BASE. BOSSA NOVA?

'FOUR HORSEMEN': GUTTER-IN-THE-FACE HARD ROCKER WITH JOE'S JERRY LEE JOANNA AND OUCH HOOKS.

'I'M NOT DOWN': WITHOUT A PAUSE AND IN. PREVIEWED AT THE NOTRE DAME GIGS, A STATEMENT OF DEFiance - 'YOU CAN SHOW ME UP, YOU CAN BLOW ME UP BUT I'M NOT DOWN'. STRIDENT DESCENDING RIFF & MANY SMOOTH CHANGES. AND BANG INTO...

'REVOLUTION ROCK': A LONG, BOOTING REGGAE, DUBONIC AND DISTENDED. JOE, THE ONLY WHITE TOASTER AND HIS FUNNY TRUE LIFE LINES. CARGO FOOD?

SLEEVE SAYS IT'S THE LAST TRACK BUT ON THE SATURDAY MICK COME IN WITH A NEW SONG. THEY LEARNT IT, LAID IT DOWN AND BY MONDAY NIGHT, 'TRAIN IN VAIN' WAS FINISHED. IT'S THE LAST TRACK AND SCRATCHED IN THE RUN-OUT GROOVE IF YOU LOOK. GLAD THEY GOT IT ON COS IT'S GREAT IRRESISTABLE PUNCHY GROOVE WITH HARMONICA AND HEARTFELT VOCAL FROM MICK. 'STAND BY ME, OR NOT AT ALL, STAND BY ME, NO WAY...'

THAT'S IT THEN. 'LONDON CALLING' SHOULD BE IN YOUR SHOPS DECEMBER 14. WHAT A WAY TO GLIDE INTO THE 80's.

KRIS NEEDS



absurd one
blah blah blah
side a in the army
side b why should
absurd two
eddie fiction
side a auto part two
side b auto part one
absurd three
forty eight chairs
side a shape it around
side b psychic slats
absurd six
the mother
side a does it matter in the
side b please let go
absurd four
gerry and the hologyams
side a gerry and the hologyams
side b increased resistance.

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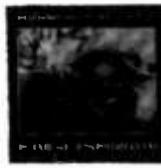
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4. BARRINGTON LEVY + ROMAN STEWART + TRINITY
Lose Respect/Since Your Gone (GRED 27)
5. CLINT EASTWOOD
True True Loving/Me Go Deh Already (GRED 25)

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EMBRYO

HACKNEY'S Balls Pond Road boasts one current claim to fame and that's a reference in a Campari TV ad. Its latest bid for notoriety is a new rock club, the Sugawn, which opened in a flare of excitement with a band that has rightly become its favourite sons. That band is Embryo.

I staggered out that night dazed but not confused; dazed because Embryo's bursts of blazing defiance leave the mind reeling and unconfused because they consistently make their point without clutter. They're a band with reason and musically they're well-equipped to carry it through; the total impact is conviction.

I talked to them in a dingy studio in Leyton Green where heavy metal filtered through the walls from adjacent studios. Embryo are Si Hart on vocals and gift-of-the-gab, Steve Brewer on drums and brothers Phil and Pete Ley on bass and lead guitar respectively. Phil and Pete are founder members but they've all played in various bands since their early teens and they're still barely nudging nineteen.

One of their ambitions is to play youth clubs. Si explains: "We don't want to cater for older tastes. Those who enjoy our music are mainly young kids and playing only pubs and clubs would mean missing them out. Younger kids are a great laugh, youth clubs are also uncharted waters so it's a challenge." Mightn't that limit their audience? "Yeah, we really want to play everywhere and hit everybody. It's just that, when all's said and done, the music is for a younger generation. Whenever I go to the Marquee I seem to be the youngest there! There's a definite tendency not to get across to younger people."

Embryo are still at that uncertain stage of fishing around for a recording deal.

That's not surprising since they've as yet played only the grassroots of the gig circuit and they've only recently begun to cast their net wider. They're adamant that their label should be small but well-distributed. Si: "Some bands seem to land big contracts 'cos they give great interviews. Go see them live and they're terrible." Steve agrees: "They'd be great if they never played. They've got all the quotes and chat but ruin it when they walk onstage!"

That shouldn't be Embryo's problem. Live they're impressive but they just might be that rare band that can transfer their enthusiasm onto record without short-circuiting somewhere along the production line. Their goals are straightforward: "We want to raise hell, play fast and generate energy. We enjoy working up a sweat and dropping dead at the end of it." Fierce words, but you



(L-R): PETE LEY, STEVE BREWER, SI HART, PHIL LEY

get the feeling they mean it.

Their set isn't all lightning-attack songs. "Embryo", "Good Old England" and "Stop At Nothing" showcase careful changes of pace that nevertheless retain their uncompromising, vigorous stance. Steve: "That's 'cos, being the drummer, I get tired and need the rest! No, we try to introduce contrast. The audience just couldn't keep up with us otherwise!"

"Critics Song" is one number that'll reduce reviewers to bolt frantically for the nearest exit. Phil asserts that big-name critics "make people". Si expands: "We want to knock that. It's a drag that others should be able to model you the way they think you should be. Something like 'Clash have sold out' is a piddling comment. It's easy to point at them when in fact they've made themselves available to their fans. There'll always be new bands to take the place of those that've made it big." Steve: "It means you don't have to trek up to Aberdeen or somewhere to buy a rare record. It's there for everyone."

After the interview Embryo honoured us with a quick performance; fresh, powerful music blasted out in a cramped,

claustrophobic studio, enough to blow away cobwebs and haunt the living daylights out of the resident spiders. It's this that makes Embryo such a formidable live proposition but not in any contrived way. If they find success they'll have bootleggers running around working overtime.

Si sums up: "Leap up and down, get pissed, then think for yourself. Hopefully we stimulate thought and vitality. It all comes down to this; react to us and we'll react to you." And that's this group personified; music that provokes directly without dealing in sleight of hand.

Embryo investigate with all eyes forward and celebrate without looking sideways to pick on what anyone is doing or saying. If you're reading this; you might be fed up with bands who're all dressed up with nowhere to go. You might be just as fed up with those that think they're the London Symphony Orchestra and still have nowhere to go. Embryo take you any which way you want.

PETE ARCHER

PIC: DAVID CORIO

"'allo there! I'll be with you in a minute. We're just mixing the violin track."

"Violins!" I gasped. The Cap smiled and disappeared into Studio 1. Trying desperately to imagine a Damned song with violins swooning in the background I slumped back into a chair. The Captain reappeared and we started the interview.

ZZ: You were kidding about the violins weren't you?

CAP: No. I met the violinist last year at the BBC when King were doing a session for John Peel. We thought it would be good to try something different.

ZZ: I know it's a dumb question but how would you describe the direction of the new album?

CAP: Well, I think a lot of people are expecting us to turn out an album of songs like "Love Song", but we don't want to do that. We'd prefer to surprise people a bit. Rat described it as a mixture of the first album and what the second album should have been. I'd say that's a fairly accurate description.

ZZ: Looking back on the second album, er . . . I mean it wasn't very good was it er . . . I mean.

CAP: The second album was a load of bollocks. Absolute crap! Don't be afraid of saying it, it was rubbish. It had half a dozen good ideas pushed onto a load of bad songs. We'd be the first to admit it.

ZZ: . . . And the first album?

CAP: I think it's great, I mean I still

a more contrasting pair of human beings.

Sensible is a loud, loveable, extrovert who sports a vicious skinhead crop and awkward clothes. Given another 15 years he'd be perfectly at home running a Fullers pub in Upper Norwood. A fine chap. On the other hand, Vanian gives no indication of his inner thoughts. Offstage he is cagey and cold to strangers.

The start of the interview is edged with his (understandable) cynicism towards the music press. His first words when I plug in my cassette are "Oh no! Here we go. The old routine."

Nervously I started the interview with an obvious question.

ZZ: I don't like to keep harking back but what do you think of the early days with Stiff.

Vanian (dry cynical laugh): Marvellous, marvellous days! No, really, seriously, I don't regret any of it. There were some really great times, like the early TV shows with Bolan and Mike Mansfield. Mont de Marsan punk festival and of course that first trip to the States. It was good fun but I think we were too naive to appreciate exactly what was going on. A lot of people made a lot of money out of us.

Personally I'm not interested in the financial side of the music business, but it's an unfortunate fact that you've got to take notice of it, otherwise you lose out all the time.

ZZ: Do you think you were badly

and bought the single as soon as it came out. We proved ourselves not by sitting back and telling everyone how ever so talented and clever we are but how we're not going on tour, but we're just going to work in the studio. We proved it by slapping our music up and down the motorway, playing any poxy little place that would have us, just for the chance to play to people.

Vanian: Yeah! Sometimes we'd see ourselves coming back up the M1 in the opposite direction, we'd travelled that road so many times.

Sensible: That's right but we still enjoy touring. We wouldn't do it if we were just gigging to promote records. I really can't understand these bands who say they hate gigging. (With that comment he returns to the studio.)

With the Captain gone, the interview settles down to a more leisurely pace. The atmosphere is unbearably sleepy and after coasting around the usual round of predictable questions about the American tour (yawn!) and the new album (snore!) we get round to Vanian's favourite subject. His obsession with horror.

Vanian: Well, I'd say the way I look on stage is really my private life spilling over into my work with the Damned. Since I was a young kid I'd always been fascinated by anything macabre. I'd always manage to persuade my parents to allow me to stay up late to watch "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" and

THE DAMN

listen to it. I think it's a good album. In fact along with The Electric Prunes, MC5 and Tomita I'd say it's my most played record.

ZZ: You've been away quite a long time, are there any of the new bands that have risen in the last year or so that you rate highly.

CAP: Mmm, well I think the only new band that I really like are The Skids because they have an original sound and they make exciting music. The Ruts are okay but the Skids are the only new band that I really rate.

By this time Dave Vanian had arrived with a burly Scotsman who acts as road manager and one-man army to the band when they are touring. Vanian looked immaculate, hair slicked back, all in black and chic shades perched on the end of his nose. In the hands of a lesser man his style would look false and unbearably pretentious, but with Vanian the effect is startlingly relaxed and natural. This is Dave Vanian, not a cheap image sprayed on for the benefit of his audience. When the Cap leaves to finish a guitar overdub it occurs to me that it would be difficult to find

treated by the press after the release of the second album?

Vanian: Well, about that time everything started going wrong. Suddenly everyone turned on us and all around people were saying that Punk was dead, and I think that we became a marvellous scapegoat for everyone. You know, if things go wrong blame it on The Damned.

I think that it was a difficult time for a lot of bands but while others had record company backing to see them through that period we had nothing. We fell like a dead weight.

ZZ: Considering how badly you've been treated, were you surprised by the success of "Love Song"?

Vanian: Well, I'd always thought that it was a special song, but yeah, I was surprised by the speed it climbed the charts. (At that moment the Captain returns to tell Dave that he's wanted for his overdub in about 15 minutes.)

Sensible: I'll tell you why "Love Song" made the charts. It was because we'd done three tours in six months, playing to anyone who would listen, and all those kids who came to see us went out

"The Outer Limits" on TV. If you come to my house in Acton you'd see how much horror comes into my life. The Captain described my house as "a miniature museum". He hates it. The only white things in the whole house are the skull. I'm collecting new ornaments all the time. This week I've got a stuffed raven and a Chinese monkey's paw mounted on a slab of marble arriving. The monkey's paw is particularly interesting because it's a replica of the monkey's paw from the Edgar Allan Poe story.

ZZ: What are your interests outside the band?

Vanian (laughs): Well, when I'm not collecting stuffed animals and reading Edgar Allan Poe stories, I enjoy listening to old 78s of the Berlin Music Hall. My father was over there just after the war and one of my earliest childhood memories is of him playing his collection of German 78s. I also spend a lot of time at the cinema. I go at least once a week when I'm not touring.

ZZ: What about a Damned film then?

Vanian: Yeah! Why not? If we did a film though I'd like it to be in black

and white. Something cheap and fun that didn't take a year to shoot. I think too many bands will be bringing out big budget films to compete with each other to gain prestige.

ZZ: How does the new band compare with the old Damned?

Vanian: Well, it's a much better atmosphere now that Brian is gone. The band is much more democratic, and although the Captain writes most of the material, all the songs are credited as being written by the whole band.

I've certainly got nothing against Brian and I wish him luck but it caused a lot of friction when he was living in a Knightsbridge flat collecting all the money for the songs and the Captain was (and still is) living at home on £30 a week.

Although you've not had a chance to talk to Alisdair or Rat I think they'd say the same. Alisdair's only been with us since January, but it's as much his band as it is mine, Rat's or Cap's. I think it's a good band and I think we're good for at least another three albums.

ZZ: If the band breaks up again, what will you do?

Vanian: Well, I'll not go back to grave digging, that's for sure.

With any luck the album and single "Smash it up" should be out by the time you read this article but if it's not, suffice to say you'll be in for a few surprises. I had the chance to hear only

ED

two tracks, "Anti-Pope" and "Ballroom Blitz". "Anti-Pope" is a typically absurd ditty written by the Captain about a religious fanatic turned atheist who returns to his old place of worship to nick the collection plate. Starting off as a vintage Damned thrash it disintegrates into a free form jazz violin work out. Very strange, very Damned, tongue as ever placed firmly in cheek.

"Ballroom Blitz" is a loud buzzing in my ear with drums that shake mountain, guitar that singes your hair, rumbling bass and deep throated vocals that will have them chanting along from Dundee to Dorset. Infectious as the plague, this is the best cover of the song yet.

Roger Armstrong of Chiswick is co-producing the album with the band and from what I heard there is no sign of the clean over-production that blighted the second album. Wading through a sea of Cadbury's Cheddars, Chocolate Digestives and the remnants of half eaten Big Macs I approached him about his views on the band. He's obviously a fan and Chiswick's interest in them obviously goes further than the purely

financial. I doubt if the Damned will ever break into MF radio, Stateside.

"Well, when the band got back together the general reaction from the music business was 'So what!' I was amazed that no-one was interested in them. Since their management had contacts with Chiswick we got together and decided to put out the single with no obligation to either side. I've always liked the Damned and I've known all along that Captain was a talented bloke and it's good that they are getting the credit they deserve. The success of the single proved a lot of people wrong. I mean most people didn't even realise the Captain played guitar!"

I left the Workhouse at about 9 and made my way to the tube, the opening chords of "Ballroom Blitz" still ringing in my ears. I was disappointed that I'd not been able to talk to Rat or Al at length but I was pleased that both Cap and Dave seemed optimistic about the future. Along with thousands of other Damned disciples I was pleased they were back.

In the post-faced run-up to the art orientated 'eighties the Damned fill a space and provide a service. Like it or not, they won't go away. They don't enlighten, they only threaten journalists and with a bit of luck they'll bring fun right back into fashion. For that much we can be glad.

and says:

"Aaah! Don't worry about him. Get any old tosser up here."

Everybody laughs. I laugh even louder because I know he means it!

After the gig, the band relax by signing autographs and generally throwing open house to a variety of young dudes and ageing punks. One couple, recently married with a baby, talk to Vanian about the early gigs. Vanian surprisingly shows an almost paternal interest in their offspring.

In another corner Sensible is giving one young kid an impromptu guitar lesson, while next to him Scabies is holding court to a group of young punks who keep up a barrage of questions for the rest of the night. Near the door Alisdair Ward is making immoral suggestions to a young man. Posing him away for a brief chat I discover that he is not too keen on talking about his past connections with the Saints. The only good thing to come out of it for him seems to have been a sizeable pay off which he blew on night life and some classy bars equipment. He was approached by Sensible to join after a night of mayhem with him and Scabies. In Ward's own words they were "Hanging about, boozing, takin' people's trousers off. Y'know, the usual stuff."



NOW, IN TRUE DAMNED STYLE - THE INTRO!

ALL around me smiling faces, lathered in sweat, shout and dance approval to the vibrant slab of *Noise* emanating from the stage. The hall is packed, the Damned are back. Bigger, louder, funnier, grosser and more entertaining than ever. The Damned never promised anything more than a good night out and that is certainly what they give at their gigs. The stage virtually explodes with their collective personality. The show is one long blur of visual and aural energy. So much so that it is difficult to pin-point individual songs.

One incident that says volumes about The Damned is during "Burglar" when Rat Scabies, trilby on head, takes the mike to extol the virtues of larceny. They discover that the stand in drummer is missing. Repeated calls over the PA fail to bring him to the stage. Captain Sensible then steps to the mike

Looking around the dressing room, it struck me as odd that for a band that is often (truthfully) connected with the worst excesses of the so-called rock and roll life style to the average punter, they are such an approachable group of people. I think of all the bands that have paid lip-service to socialist from the safety of locked dressing rooms surrounded by a bigger elite. It also strikes me that for a group that always insisted that they were non-political and purely entertainment that now they are regarded by many as the number one punk group.

Remember how as early as 1976 they were regarded by some twits as the Judas Iscariots of the punk faith.

Many bands who were then spouting ill-formed rebel politics for fun and profit are now insisting they were always just good time rockers. The Damned, like it or not, have done exactly what they promised.

RONNY CLOCKS

The Ballad of Marianne Faithfull

MARIANNE Faithfull was the Face of the '60s. Fragile, damaged little bird with the voice of an angel, broken on a spike and filled with downers; "The Girl on a Motorcycle", the girlfriend of Mick Jagger, the suicide temptation . . .

No music in the '70s. Sticking to the theatrical stage till the music got hold again. But the resultant 1977 album was duff, a C 'n' W dirge . . .

October 1979 and Marianne Faithfull, now 32, awaits the release of "Broken English", her new album. Her first album, not a bunch of '45s plus fillers.

It's no phoney comeback based on past reputation. To those who were fans at the time Marianne Faithfull will always be fascinating, untouchable and slightly tragic. And she's grateful. Today's kids are gonna be faced with a new album by a girl they might have heard of from their pasts. Maybe they remember their parents' venom, or read she was gonna play Sid's junkie mum in the original Russ Meyer version of "The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle".

Marianne Faithfull sits opposite swigging vodka 'n' orange in a Jermyn Street bar. We've been talking nearly two hours and I'm on me fourth "Downfall", a little concoction which seems to be working just fine.

She's wrapped in a big, battered old black leather jacket and thinks she's going down with a cold. The hair's still yellow, the voice husky and smile warm. Time's taken away that innocent beauty, replacing it with earthy attractiveness. She's got great grey-blue eyes.

For the first few minutes neither of us are relaxed. It's her first interview for some time and she must be so wary of the scandal-hungry hacks who only want what happened ten years ago. I'm meeting one of my heroines so I'm a grinning idiot. But first to the matter at hand. The new album. You'll be surprised. Shocked even.

The title track, "Broken English", is galloping, electronic Disco, courtesy Stevie Winwood, the reclusive genius who could "knock the Bee Gees into a cocked hat", according to Marianne. It's the only one overtly in that vein, but Winwood, an old friend of hers, is a

dominant ingredient throughout. He had quite a hand in writing material along with the rest of the band, and Marianne came up with words. There's a track written by husband Ben Brierley, called "Brain Drain".

It's a pained venomous album which Marianne says she didn't really enjoy making, but is now glad she did.

Her favourite track is "Guilt", and it's one of mine too. The song's hauntingly powerful and personal. At last she's singing about experience, her life. The only time she's done that before was on "Sister Morphine", for which she wrote the words — one of the most graphic, harrowing songs ever.

"'Guilt' was written for me by this guitarist who's known me quite a long time now, about two years. If you knew me very well, that's one of the prime things in my character. Guilt."

Why?

"I don't know, perhaps because I went to a convent and was brought up a Roman Catholic."

The Mother Superiors would fry in their cassocks if they ever got to hear "Why did you do it", the closing, most controversial track. The music manages to skip and be oppressive at the same time, as Marianne spits, intones, sneers and howls a gamut of derisive insults inspired by raging sexual jealousy. It's actually a poem by Heathcote Williams and with Marianne's delivery (I won't spoil the fun), couldn't be further away from 15 years ago on "Ready Steady Go" and a sweet-voiced teenager perched demurely on a stool cooing "As tears go by". Now her voice is dirty, gutteral, lived-in, but emotional and biting. As years go by.

How did you come out with this monstrous track, Marianne?

"I know Heathcote and was seeing him a bit. Have you ever read 'The Abdication of Queen Elizabeth II'?"

Er, no.

"It's very funny. Somebody did a video film of that and I went to see it, and when I was there he showed me all these poems. I took them home and they were all incredibly obscene. 'Why did you do it?' is the best one, I think, and it's the least obscene! I don't think I could even speak the other ones, it

would be too much."

How do you feel singing it?

"Well, I really like it. I've done it live, and it's great because all your fury forever can come out. It's about sexual jealousy, it's fury, it's anger. Sexual jealousy can make you more furious than anything else."

Do you anticipate problems with it?

"I don't think about it. I don't see it like that, Heathcote sees it like dirty little schoolboy stuff, and a lot of people who hear it hear it like that. I don't."

(EMI do 'cos they've just refused to press and distribute for Island, the record because of that track. (The label's other past acts to gain that honour are the Snivelling Shits and Derek and Clive!)

The title track, what's that about?

"Ulrike Meinhoff," says Marianne, huddling into her leather and lighting another fag. She ain't well. "I read a book called 'Hitler's Children', about the Baader-Meinhoff group and it was very interesting. Then I saw something on television in Russian which had the lines in sub-titles. Someone came out with 'Broken English, spoken English', and I wrote it down because I thought it sounded so good. We were in the rehearsal studios trying to write a song and I had this in my notes, so we did that."

The chorus goes, "What are you fighting for?" Is it directed at them?

"Well, it must have been at first but it could be anything, Northern Ireland, Germany, the National Front . . ."

"Broken English" should be the single.

Another strange track is "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan", an old Dr. Hook song, stripped of the country ballad treatment it might have got on Marianne's previous album, "Faithless", and given a pulsing Giorgio Moroder backing courtesy Mr. Winwood — but no drums. It works.

Marianne: "We didn't want to use a drummer, we just wanted to leave it in the air which was very chancy because you don't know what's going to happen. It goes against everything you think will be alright. That's how that happened, that's all Stevie Winwood."

Are you optimistic about this album, Marianne?



"Mm! I've not got much idea of my place — what I am, who's gonna like it, what they're gonna think. I don't really know, it's very confusing after Decca or Nems. I don't know where I fit in or anything. It's a pity but presumably I'll get a sense of that as a feedback with the record. When it's out it'll be such a relief, because I feel sort of suspended. It's very strange."

Marianne Faithfull went through the whole music biz manipulation bit of the '60s and a whole load of different styles which rarely hinted at herself. For those early hits they'd just sit the pretty face in front of the chosen track, pump it through the speakers and she'd warble away. "This Little Bird", "Come and stay with me", "Summer nights", "As tears go by" . . . they've still got a sort of, uh, charm today and I enjoy playing 'em, but Marianne could have been a cardboard cutout and the voice a seasoned sessioner. It was her convent background and fragile looks clashing so violently with her involvement *avec* Mr. Jagger which sparked my fascination and her aura of mystery. By the time the looks had hardened to sultry, the seedy stories begun to circulate, the drug rumours become rife and "Girl on a Motorcycle", the classic '68 motorbike-macho fantasy flick which only the other week netted her a handsome sum for showing up at the Motorbike Show, had appeared Marianne was a full-blown femme fatale and totally soaked in the Stones Satanic Majestic dark image of the late '60s.

Marianne is fed up with her past being dredged up for sensational purposes (though she didn't mind my gibbering-fan-style probings for trivia). She admits she had it easy as far as finding fame went, but no soft ride with the pressures. Those drove her to an agonising cold turkey stretch to cure the heroin addiction which sprawled with her into the '70s. They also took her out of the music biz for six years and sent her back to acting (plays, Hamlet, Vienna, all that).

Marianne (who by now I've definitely taken to as a person rather than an image): "I've never had to try very hard. I've never really been expected to try at all. I've always been treated as somebody who not only can't even sing but doesn't really write or anything, just something you can make into something. This is the first time anything's been asked of me in the music world.

"I've got quite a good brain and all that, which I've never had to use in singing at all. It just got so boring then. I was just cheesecake really, terribly depressing. It wasn't depressing when I was 18, but it got depressing when I got older because you're a person just like anyone else, even if you are a woman."

So this is the first album where you've really had control over what you do.

"Yes, I'm there. I exist. I'm not thinking about something else. It's the only good one I've ever done as an album. It was recorded as an album. It's a new thing for me, I've never done that before."

Still quite fresh and a source of annoyance for Marianne is her last record, the "Faithless" album, a pretty dull excursion into the country 'n' western music she was pre-occupied with at the

time. There's a load of covers, her '76 single "Dreamin' my dreams" (which topped the charts in Ireland and led to much touring there), "It killed me", plus other hammy redneck croonings.

One track stands out — the delicate moving tribute to a dead groupie friend, "Lady Madeleine", which Marianne wrote herself. A glimmer which has grown. It was released on Nems, which later went bust (stablemates were the Boys and one '77 night at the Marquee she leapt up onstage to sing with 'em).

"It wasn't recorded as an album. I'd do two or three tracks then have a break. This was over two years. When they got enough tracks that weren't too awful they put out an album. When I first started they didn't even make albums, they made singles and put them together with a few other things. Then when I started working three years ago with Nems, I couldn't believe it, we were doing exactly the same thing, and I knew by then that people were making proper albums!"

When Nems went bust "it was a Godsend. It meant I could get away. I was waiting for them to go bust for months, I was really getting desperate, I was gonna take a bomb in there and blow it up!"

Why did you sign with them?

"'Cos no one else would sign me and I wanted to start again. Mind you I didn't go anywhere else really, they wouldn't touch me with a ten-foot pole. They're really scared of my reputation. It's a particularly vicious reputation, mine."

But Island were okay.

"I didn't have much to do with it. It was Mark, the guy who produced the album. We did "Broken English" and "Why did you do it", and they turned out really well, and he tried to get deals from various record companies. One of them was Island. I've known Chris Blackwell since I was a little girl. I thought I'd be happier with people I knew slightly."

"Broken English" took from February till July to record and mix. "It was so hard to do and it took such a long time. I didn't really get much pleasure out of doing it, only when I went away . . . I went to America for three weeks, and I played it, then I could think about it, and it was really good." Right now preparations are starting for the next album. No gigs planned yet, for several reasons, partly the expense of taking out a band to reproduce the album's sound. The videos should do for now, but Marianne does hanker to get on stage again: "It's breaking my heart, I love audiences."

You wouldn't go back to acting?

"No, I think I've got to concentrate on one thing now. My whole life has been like a total dilettante thing. I do this, I get bored, I do that, I get bored, and I've got to stop. It's very superficial, you never get anywhere."

Next we talked about Marianne's inclusion in the original Russ Meyer-directed Pistols film, at that time known as "Who Killed Bambi?". She was to play Sid's mum. One scene was to show him seducing her. Marianne ducked out when Meyer did. She saw it was "falling to bits" and didn't wanna give them any free footage they could use later.

Did you ever meet Sid?

"No, I met Russ Meyer, who did 'Beyond the Valley of the Dolls', which

is one of my favourite films in the world. I would have liked to have worked with him but when he wasn't going to direct I didn't wanna do it, Sid or no Sid.

"It was pretty horrible actually. I'm kind of glad I didn't do it now. I was going to play Sid Vicious's junkie mother. My mother would have hated it. I've given her enough trouble! She's not a prude, but Sid Vicious's junkie mother!"

One of the things I most wanted to talk about was "Sister Morphine". Now you've probably heard the Stones version on "Sticky Fingers", a plaintive plea from a junkie's death-bed. Marianne's version, which has Jagger on acoustic guitar, Charlie Watts on drums, Ry Cooder on slide and Jack Nische, the producer, on piano, is more strident and beaty, but her low bloodless monotone is so pathetic and real — it cuts Jagger's play-acting to high camp.

You sound like the Angel of Death.
"I was."

This song stands next to Lou Reed's "Heroin" as heart-stoppingly graphic documentary of junk damnation. "Why has the nurse got no face?" The "Sticky Fingers" composing credits give no indication that it was in fact Marianne who wrote the words.

"Mick would always be strumming chords around the house and then forget about them, but these I remembered. I wrote the words in Rome, and it was recorded in America when they were mixing "Let it Bleed".

"Keith Richard wrote to Allen Klein (the Stones' former publisher) and told him that I'd written them. Jagger and I had split up, very bad blood and all that. This story I heard from Allen Klein, it might not be true — Keith Richard told him that I did write the words and I needed the money. So now and again, I get a royalty cheque for "Sister Morphine". I've been living off 'Sister Morphine' for years. I just got one today. \$485!" They're very heavy words.

"Yeah, I was very pleased with those. A lot of it's imaginary, some of it's experience, and some of it's what you are imagining in your highly paranoid state, that you would like to happen. You just take it out to the furthest limit. I was very paranoid at that time, still am actually, though not as bad."

What about?

"I think it's like putting something in your back to make you go on feeling things. It's a ruse that you do to make yourself go on."

Only 500 copies of "Sister Morphine" went out, according to Marianne (it was actually the B side to "Something Better"). I paid a hefty sum for mine and had to lend Marianne my copy of the "Best of . . ." LP it appears on. She doesn't own one herself. It's still in the Cheyne Walk house she shared with Jagger probably. (She says she goes there sometimes to see Bianca and sees her stuff still on the shelves. Old Bianca even pops in on Marianne and Ben occasionally. "She comes round and sits there all grand, doesn't smoke joints, doesn't drink, just looks very beautiful!") "Sister Morphine" may be on the next LP.

I don't wanna dwell on the past but it's funny what she said about Michael J:

"Mick is mean. He'll always be a student of the London School of Economics!"

After "Sister Morphine", Marianne bowed out of the Music Biz:

"If I'd have carried on after I did "Sister Morphine" I would have come up with something interesting, but I didn't. I lost heart. I couldn't stand it and broke away until three years ago."

You could have gone on to greater things.

"I could have done but I didn't see that, because I can only see that far, I really have got no imagination at all. When I found that the music business was so vile and ghastly I wanted nothing to do with it. I thought the best thing would be to do something else completely."

And the only time she came out and sang was in 1973 at the Marquee for David Bowie's "1980 Floor Show", for American TV. She had to dress up as a nun and duet with DB on "I got you babe". Also, she sang "As tears go by" over a backing track in a white dress, looking very nervous and out of place. The backstage booze helped but the full octave drop in her voice didn't!

"I can't use that key any more, it was terrible. It sounds exactly as if it's broken like a boy's voice, it's really weird. I suppose it's years and years of life, drinking and smoking, time . . ."

Do you get annoyed with all this past-dredging that's obviously gonna start again in the next lot of interviews?

"Yeah, obviously it gets very boring. It could get to a sort of Britt Ekland level, it's pretty horrible. I don't know that much about myself but I know I



don't lead my life to go off with rich, well-known men, apart from the slight aberration in the '60s." (!)

You could write a Brit-ish book and make a mint!

"It's only for money. If you've got a husband who's a successful dustman what do you want to do that for? (Ben currently earns a crust collecting, and then flogging, stuff the council won't handle.) Money that's acquired like that you spend immediately, like hookers."

Talk turns to Anita Pallenberg, a Rolling Stones woman for fifteen years, ten more than Marianne. "It's very frightening. That's what would have happened . . . no, that's not what would have happened to me, if I'd have stayed. I'd be dead. I'm not as strong as that."

You don't look like Benny Hill dressed up as a concentration camp kommandant either, Marianne. You've come through, as I hope I've shown. I know I've gone back in time and waffled like a fan but it's background for newcomers, not fodder for Sunday guttersnipes. Right now "Broken English" is the present, and the best place to start.

Kris Needs

PIX BY DENNIS MORRIS

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Propaganda and Enforcement



Working's
Setting
Sons

"THE new album is not a concept as such because half the songs have nothing whatsoever to do with the other half. I should never have told Nick Kent about the link between the songs in the first place."

Paul Weller, singer/guitarist/songwriter/poet, is talking about the new album to come from him and his comrades, Bruce Foxton and Rick Buckler. It will be The Jam's fourth album and carries on the speedy maturity of songwriting and performing that this three piece have been developing since their first anthemic 45, the glorious "In the City".

Unlike many leading figures within rock bands, Paul doesn't need to be constantly in the gossip columns. He is far happier to be taken seriously as an artist within his particular field. Not that Paul is any new wave Leonard Cohen, but he does like to face life with a realistic and honest approach.

The new album will be called "Setting Sons". The title comes from the period after the Second World War, when the British government showed a lot of propaganda films based around how the British soldiers would soon be given new jobs and everyone would live happily ever after. These were to be the setting sons who had won the war.

Needless to say, life is not like a fairy tale and the promises of that government came to no better than the governments before or after. A splendid programme has been showing recently on television called "Propaganda with Facts" and it has obviously had a great deal of influence on Paul Weller's ideas for songs.

Songs such as the excellent new 45 "Eton Riles" and "Little Boy Soldiers" carry on the militaristic ideas within the album. The cover showing a few of the army pawns in the hands of the government is the first not to feature a photo of The Jam themselves. I wondered if this was as pre-planned as it looked and Bruce assures me that this is the case.

Yet, there is no way that this album could ever be classed as a concept. Sitting in there with the aforementioned tracks is a marvellous recording of the old Martha & The Vandellas chestnut, "Heatwave", complete with piano and sax, courtesy of Mick "Muddy" Talbot, of the Merton-Parkas and Rudi, former X Ray Spex sax player. This is a golden oldie for The Jam, who have been playing the number, off and on, since they first formed the band.

It seemed obvious that The Jam would play this live once again on tour (they did it on the last with much success), yet they (Paul in particular) have this knack of being unpredictable. "I'm not sure if we will do it this time around because I hate playing things just because we're expected to do it. It's like the old ideas all over again. We may play something on this tour that we've never done before," says Paul, and I understand his reasoning.

I remember when The Jam played Hammersmith Odeon for the second time and the audience joined together in harmony to ask for "Art School" (off the first album and always an old favourite). Paul stepped calmly to the mike stand and told the crowd that they didn't play that song any more. I put it to

him afterwards that he wasn't pleasing his audience and it was then that I began to understand where The Jam stood in rock music. Paul said he never wanted to end up like The Who — dragging out "My Generation" at every performance just to please the masses. This generation is different!

On the latest Jam tour you'll hear only one number from the first album and that's "Away From the Numbers", which they only started playing live long after the album was released anyway. Gone too is the last tour's closing number, the powerful "A Bomb in Wardour Street". Most of the new album will be heard and Paul also hopes to include a few brand new numbers which are yet to be recorded.



The new album will surprise a lot of people. Not only is the cover "Jam-less" and piano and sax included on "Heatwave" ("Yeah man, we were always influenced by Secret Affair," says Paul sarcastically about a band he has no real liking for), but I can't wait for the Jam haters to yell 'ELO copyists' when they hear the new version of Foxton's "Smithers-Jones" complete with strings. "We just wanted to try something different and it's better than putting exactly the same song on the album that was used as a B-side," says Paul defensively. "Smithers-Jones" originally ap-

peared in its other form as the B-side to "When You Are Young".

The new album follows the much applauded "All Mod Cons" in so far as Vic Smith is once again producing. Vic has proved once again that he is the right man for the job of producing this dynamic trio. Songs like "Burning Sky", "Meet Me on the Wasteland" and "Private Hell" come across as minor epics in themselves, thanks to the linking of musicians and producer. His part in this album is just as important as the band themselves.

The Jam play today's music for today's people. They have wisely steered clear of any labels throughout their career, though Paul is always quick to praise the beginnings of punk which gave them their first break. Progression is always inevitable where talent is evident and this accounts for the overall success of bands like the Jam/Buzzcocks/Banshees Clash. The new mods are no better than the new punks if all they want are clones of The Who/Kinks/Small Faces. The Jam finished their stint of playing covers throughout their set when they last played the Red Cow in Hammersmith. They are now once of the country's most important rock bands and they've still got something to say.

Aside from the new album and tour, The Jam have other interests nowadays. Bruce, with Paul's father John Weller, is joint manager of The Vapors, a band that all The Jam have a lot of faith in and who will be getting their first major break when they support The Jam on the whole of their UK tour. Paul, on the other hand, is concentrating on publishing a book of about 32 poems — all written by his close friend Dave Waller (who co-wrote "In the Streets Today"). Paul feels (and rightly so) that young poets aren't being heard today because at school you're only taught Wordsworth or the other ancient poets. Another sad fact for young poets is that once on sale the price of poetry books is sky-high. Paul hopes to change all this if he can and will try his best to sell Dave Waller's book of poetry for around only 50p a copy if he can. After Dave's book, he hopes to publish a compilation of different people's work (including a few of his own poems).

Paul gets a lot of inspiration from poetry. "Saturday Kids," which is a track on "Setting Sons", was originally published as one of Paul's poems in the "All Mod Cons" songbook. His poems, like his songs, are very honest in their realistic approach to life. Unfortunately, Paul doesn't see as much of life as he would like to nowadays. With the unwanted trappings of stardom he is forced to spend most of his time at home listening to records and cannot get out enough to see some of the newer bands. Paul last went out to watch the Chords, but was instantly approached by an idiotic drunk who wanted more than an autograph. "Some of these blokes only go out looking for trouble and if they see someone who's in a band they always start. It's just not worth the trouble any more," says Paul. "I don't want to be an idol, but it's the fans who make me one."

ALAN ANGER

THE MO-DETTEs

PIX BY NEIL ANDERSON

"We don't want to be a cult," says Kate, the guitarist.

It's Mo-dettes. Not Modettes.

These four girls, Kate, Ramona (vocals), Jane (bass) and June (drums) — are currently filling London's halls with some of the most enjoyable and individual noise about. Songs about their lives which bounce and cling. A sound of their own already and they haven't done 20 gigs as I write, the last being an impressive showing at the Electric Ballroom with the Boys and the Psychedelic Furs. More pieces of plum exposure were supporting the Clash at Notre Dame Hall and the Specials at Hammersmith Palais.

The Mo-dettes formed for a one-off at the Acklam Hall with sporadic gigsters the Vincent Units and it grew from there. I first saw the name on a poster minus the hyphen and thought they were a bunch of female mods (or small mods!). The group despise that connection.

Jane: "June did have a parka and I did borrow it myself and it was very warm but people called 'Mod!' after me down the street — and I couldn't borrow it any more!"

We're talking at the Mo-dettes rehearsal room in Denmark Street which belongs to the Sex Pistols (see the amp in the corner sprayed "GUITAR HERO").

Jane is bubbly, blonde, wears doll make-up and bright clothes. Sometimes she talks in a little girl storybook voice, specially when reciting her lyrics. She's been playing for over a year and has a genuine Hofner violin bass she borrowed from her brother.

Kate is quieter but articulate and sure. She was in the original Slits.

"I did three gigs then it was about time for me to leave. Harlesden (with the Clash, March '77) was the best one." "New Town" and "Shoplifting" were two songs she had a big hand in.

"I just felt that the whole thing with the Slits was to get as famous as possible as fast as you could. I enjoyed it in a way." Kate and the Slits were a classic case of picking up an instrument in the '76 D-I-Y explosion.

"There were things in that period that were really exciting. It was a time when anybody could pick up an instrument and do it and I was one of the people that did that. It was great fun for a while working up enough songs to go out and do it."

Kate made several attempts at forming other bands after she left the Slits,



but couldn't find the right people. She replayed around with drummer June for "ages, trying to get a group together playing in my basement. We went through other people like they were going out of style. We had a lot of people who wanted to sing and play bass but when it came down to actually doing it they were afraid. Just before we had Jane there were these two guys. One was totally unreliable, the other just wanted to stand about. Jane and I had talked about doing something ages ago because we were both bored. When we got pissed off with these two people I took June 'round to see Jane, who suggested we do one gig." That turned out to be the aforementioned Acklam Hall bash.

In on vocals came Ramona, a Swiss girl they knew through a mutual friend. She's been in England for about a year, having lived in France too. She didn't half laugh when a review described her "O level French!"

"I used to do backing vocals in Geneva, but I never wanted to be in a band."

Jane: "We arranged to have a meeting, go through a few chords and work out a few songs. We didn't have a drummer but Kate arranged it so June came as well. I wasn't going to say no because she was there, but once she played! Then I looked at her lovely countenance and thought 'what a lovely

girl, she'll do'. But I was really suspicious of anybody I didn't know."

So the Mo-dettes were born . . . but gearless 'cept for guitars. June had a cheap drum-kit which is likened to one of those clowns' cars which fall apart. The amps and things are borrowed from friends in other groups. This is one reason the girls wouldn't say no to a fat record deal advance — they've been approached by three big companies already.

"First of all we're going to make a million pounds and buy an amp each."

Right now a first Mo-dettes album — still rather a premature thought — would include such gems as "Masochistic Opposite" (Kate's first song for the Mo-dettes), "Dark Park Creeping", "Fandango", "White Mice", "Satisfy Yourself", "Looking in a Mirror", "Norman", "Sweet shy shusfl" and possibly, the startling rendition of "My Favourite Things" from "The Sound of Music" which kicks off Mo-dettes sets with a bang. Oh, and maybe their raucous version of "Twist and Shout", which always sees their suave young piss-artist Sean and his cohorts leaping up to supply backing bellowing.

The girls talked about some of the songs: "Dark Park Creeping", which is, according to Kate, "a late night song. After you've been down to the pub you've got nothing to do and nobody

to talk to, you go and have a fight. It's people who go out looking for a fight and get their faces smashed — not very intelligent."

You're going out looking for a fight but remember you're a target too
Jane: "It's about these things that I've got on my feet called brothel creepers. It's about these punks that go out in brothel creepers on their feet and be tough."

"White Mice" is "a very chauvinistic woman's point of view", says Jane.

*Smile so sweetly, so completely
Girls in every way
A smile like yours should be on show
Oh gosh it's such good fun*

there were all these punks there and they all looked really boring to me. They were trying so hard to be outrageous they all looked like each other."

Kate: "The Norman I was thinking of is somebody that I quite like. He's still outrageous, but it's somebody you wouldn't look twice at because he's a boring straight cunt. They're really quite amazing underneath. They don't take anybody else's shit. There's quite a few people that fit it."

Why do "Raindrops"?

Jane: "I dunno . . . one way to learn bass guitar is to go through whole tunes. I tried that and it was great. If we get

Beatles and go, "it's not fair, they're all boys! Girls can't grow up and be a pop group!" I was real pissed off about it! Aaaah! That's the only time I ever wanted to be a boy. It turned out alright though."

Kate: "We made a conscious decision to do it with girls. June and I tried working with quite a lot of guys and there was always something there like, 'Oh, you're quite a good drummer for a girl', them not knowing whether we should tell them what to do or they should tell us what to do."

Jane: "I think we've got the best woman drummer in England at the moment. She's got lots of strength and lots of power."

Does it get more serious as you go along being in a group?

Kate: "It does, yeah. It has to really. Sometimes you just want to enjoy yourself. You do have to be a bit serious about it or you never make any progress at all. You're serious about the music you play in any case or it doesn't get any better. I'm pretty lazy basically, but I find it's something I really enjoy working on."



*And there's lots of other things
about you that I like
The only thing that's missing is
a 1,000 cc bike
Don't be stupid
Don't be limp
No girl likes to love a wimp
Dance and make fun nicely done
come and be my number one*

"Looking in a mirror"?

Jane: "That's a song about myself really, because the last boyfriend I went out with was always pissed off with me because when I was walking down the street all I did was look in the shop window, seeing how I looked . . . I finally wrote a song about it. I worked with it for about two weeks because I kept thinking of the tune and forgetting it. I finally got it, and then I realised after writing a song about myself it applied to almost everybody else in the world."

Kate: "Some people make themselves pretty, some people make themselves ugly, but most people look at themselves in shop windows as they're going by."

"Norman" is about a guy who thinks for himself but he looks really, really normal. He's a bit mad underneath. It's also a bit of a putdown of people who think you've got to be outrageous because I don't think you have to be outrageous."

Jane: "I went to the Lyceum and

something to replace it that would have to be ten times better. We could always do 'Climb Every Mountain'."

Who thought of the name Mo-dettes?

Kate: "I came up with it, but we sat around in the pub for days thinking of names, just rolling words out of mouths really. Some sounded good, some didn't. I almost wrote a song about writing a name and how arbitrary it can be. You come up with it and it sounds good and you might go off it, but it's still there, isn't it? It's like you might go off the idea of being a girl or a boy, but you can't do much about it! Wayne County did something about it but most people can't be bothered! I'm happy to be a girl but I wouldn't have complained if I'd been a boy either."

Jane: "When I was eight and a little girl I used to look at groups like the

What about records then?

Kate: "It depends what happens really because if someone offers us a decent amount of money so that we carry on, a decent deal where we can go in the studio and work something out, that's what we really need. I don't know if we're ready though. We did one tape which turned out quite well. That was when we were a week old."

What other groups do you like?

Kate: "I do like other groups, yeah, but if there's any band that I'd like to see and I have not seen it's the Mo-dettes, 'cos I'm dying to know what it looks like out front."

OH NO! LOST THE LAST KILLER SENTENCE!
— KRIS NEEDS.

"REGGAE HAS REACHED A STAGE NOW WHERE BOB MARLEY IS ROD STEWART PETER TOSH IS PAUL M'CARTNEY, AND INNER CIRCLE ARE THE BEE GEE'S!"

"IF you're looking for Jah Rastafari, it isn't here . . ." Wayne Jobson singer/songwriter with the Jamaican reggae band Native, is telling me about their debut on Arista records. He adds: "This is the first album in the history of reggae not to have one rasta song on it."

It's not that he's against the whole idea: "because religion is such a personal thing and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, it's just that neither I nor anyone else in my band believes in deceased imperialistic monarchs . . ."

Instead, most of Native's songs deal with colonialism, repatriation and the conflicts of day to day living. Wayne cites one track in particular — "In God We Trust", which he says "is about America where money is God and everyone is fat". You can tell from the way he says it, that he finds this totally nauseating.

Wayne is sprawled out on a dilapidated banana chair on his sundeck — "cooling out" at the end of the day — the perfect time to do an interview.

Since he formed Native a little under a year ago, he's spent most of the time rehearsing either for the album or the forthcoming tour of Europe. Some time ago, the band found it easier to live together, so Wayne shares a house with his brother Brian (lead guitar) and Warren Mendes (bass), while Peter Couch (keyboards), Perry Tole (rhythm guitar), Chris Lopez (percussion) and Richard Sinclair (drums) live about 10 minutes away by car. All of them, with the exception of Mendes and Sinclair were born in Jamaica and have been jamming on and off, since they were at school.

In the beginning, Wayne thought he'd just be a songwriter, producing material for artists like Peter Tosh and Burning Spear, both of whom had expressed an interest in his work. However, finally he grew impatient waiting to hear one of his songs recorded. "So me just get a record deal and that's what I'm doing. You could say that I'm just a writer who couldn't get anyone to do his songs . . ."

Do you enjoy playing now?

"Well, first of all I don't play because I don't consider myself an entertainer, you know as an entertainer you go up on stage and play but anyone can do it but for me there's more to life than that, so I don't really deal with recreation, I deal more with creation . . ."

Ocho Rios, where the band live, is one of the most pleasant and relaxed parts of the island — what you could call the Jamaican countryside. Problems are all simplified here . . .

Earlier on, it had seemed important to ask how a group of white Jamaicans could play songs about slavery and repatriation, etc. However, once in the country itself it became obvious that the colour of a man's skin isn't an issue in itself — it doesn't come into it at all



WAYNE JOBSON

much. To suppose that it did was just limited thinking, constructing barriers that were never there in the first place. When I broached the subject with Wayne, he told me, "I don't really have a colour, I'm not black or white, though if I had to identify with one or the other it would be more with black than with white but still not totally identifying with black because I don't deal with colour, I don't think about it. If I see someone going through a certain tribulation I feel inspired to write about it but I don't sit down all day and say, 'Hey, guess what man, I'm black' . . ."

"When I played 'Black Tracks' (Native's Arista single) to John Lydon, he said: 'This song sums up everything which every other reggae song has been trying to say up till now.' So I mean, how could I have written something like that and not understand . . ."

Wayne and John have known each other for some time now. They met backstage after a Burning Spear concert at the Rainbow and seemed to hit it off straight away. From the start, John had taken to Wayne's songs and had also encouraged him at a time when everyone else was telling him that he just wasn't "roots" enough. (Why is it, by the way, that the English are obsessed with "Roots" while the Jamaicans on the other hand seem to be quite cool about the whole thing and can accept any sort of music on its own merits?) It was through John that Wayne met Jah Wobble with whom he later did the hilarious "Dreadlock Don't Deal

With Wedlock" on Virgin's Front Line Label. "Dreadlock Don't", etc., was a send-up of DJ toasters — one area of reggae which Wayne is particularly critical about. He says: "There's so much starvation in Jamaica that reggae has just become a hustle, every idiot called Ja Mango and Ja Squalor just put out DJ records and mumble all their way through them. It really turns reggae into a joke business . . . Now, the only DJ that I respect is Linton Kwesi Johnson but still, you can't really call him a DJ because he's so far ahead of everyone else that he makes the rest of them seem totally irrelevant . . ."

Who else does he listen to, besides Linton?

"Well, I think that Spear is definitely the best but who else? It's hard to say. The tightest reggae band on stage is Third World but I'm not sure about their material, for there comes a time in the development of reggae where everything that's said has been said, so the rest becomes cliché. This is what's happened to reggae, it's just the same thing that happened to rock, I mean, reggae has reached a stage now where you have Bob Marley who is like Rod Stewart, Peter Tosh who is like Paul McCartney and the Inner Circle are like the Bee Gees — all highly irrelevant people, so you really need someone to come along and blow off all these guys, kinda what the Pistols did to rock that's what Native is trying to do to reggae."

One of the first gigs that Native played was the beach party during the recent Reggae Sunsplash in July of this year in Montego Bay. Originally, they'd planned to play on the main stage in Jarrett Park where most of the other acts would be appearing but the organisers had been reluctant to give an unknown name that much exposure — so they'd wound up on a small stage set in a straw hut playing on the beach — and in complete contrast to their audience, the band were fully dressed. Wayne wore a cream silk tuxedo jacket and grey shiny pants, while each member had also chosen to express his individuality — there was an odd mixture of headbands, barrow boy caps, stripes and T shirts but not one single dreadlock was to be seen anywhere.

The concert itself was a bit of a disaster — amongst other things, the PA went haywire and at one point they couldn't hear a word they were singing. Meanwhile just about every major reggae name had collected on the beach including Spear, Marley, I Jah Man . . . it was a demoralising experience but one which did nothing to dampen the spirits of the man who seems out to give "Modest Bob Geldof" a run for his money in the self-appraisal stakes. "Next year," said Wayne, "we'll kill 'em."

Roz Reines

PIC: PETER MURRAY CLARE HERSHMAN

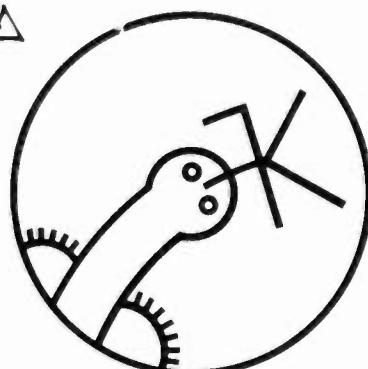
A **CITIZEN'S NOTICE**

**IT IS HEREBY DECREED THAT IN 1984
there will be no more hatred
between black and white.
Our mission is now against
Hugo X from the seventh
martian colony. We cannot
allow our genes to be
contaminated, we do not
want any little Hugo Xs
with twenty-seven legs,
fourteen heads and maybe
some "acne."**

**You are instructed to obtain
a copy of the L.P. "Snake
Document Masquerade" for
further enlightenment.**

By Order

Kim Fowley



Manufactured and distributed by EMI Records Limited

ILPS 9572



Friday evening in Chelsea and I'm looking for a house, panning the street on the odd numbers side.

Nearly there and a door opens. Down the steps bowls a familiar figure in a furry red coat. "Hello, coming down the offo? I'm going to get my supplies", are John Lydon's first words, turning out to be the first of many as my visit sprawls into an 18-hour session.

"I like talking, it gives me something to do," he says, as we settle on a mattress to watch TV. With the dismal selection on that night the conversation flows with the lager.

When the little white dot has gone we lurch down a floor to hear 'The Metal Box', Pil's latest collection of material. Already occupying the long couch in the large living room are guitarist Keith Levine and publicity-backroom operator Jeanette Lee, who, along with soundman Dave Crowe, is considered an equal member of Public Image Ltd.

The mighty sound system is soon booming with the strains of 'Metal Box'. It stands alone from anything I've heard all year. Pil deal in *sound*. This record is the result of a year spent on-and-off in studios learning new and greater ways of sculpting formidable dance attacks.

Takes were mainly live and often several mixes were done. Pil see mixing as almost another instrument, a few knob twiddles and the face of a track can be changed. That's why new mixes of 'Memories' and 'Death Disco' (back to its working title of 'Swan Lake') are here. Not to pad out the record with hits.

On 'Memories' they've taken two mixes and spliced them up to devastating effect. So you'll be kicking along happily when Mix Two Snaps in at twice the volume. Hold a feather duster so you'll have something to do when you're swinging on the lampshade. Innovative fun.

'Swan Lake' is the heaviest of the three-out-fun of four 'DD' mixes now out. The extra-deep booming funk gains a dense blanket of flickering guitars.

This is the new sound. Numan is Yes and Safe and all those posey Blitzers have as much enjoyment value and depth as the Speaking Clock. Pil are forging compulsive, danceable, provoking sound with uncompromising care.

There weren't gonna be any track titles but Virgin insisted. There isn't a running order either - you can play any of the 12-inches first, but the scrap of paper in the metal box container which lists the tracks (Virgin wouldn't rise to a lyric sheet, according to Pil) has 'Albatross' for openers. It's a 10-minute wallop, built on a characteristically house-shaking bass from Wobble and relentless drums. A suitable live base for John's mournful wail ('though he does launch into 'Only the lonely at the end) and Keith Levine's jangling, shattered-nerve guitar.

I jiggle about the order from now on. 'Pop Tones' was me immediate favourite. The drummer problems which have plagued Pil mean Keith handled drums on this one and others, and he comes up here with a brand new beat: a swirling cliff-hanger where you have to step to the



lunging snare before you get it. The guitars are a spiralling wall, a magical motif, and it's topped with a vicious vocal from John.

Keith uses string-synthesiser on some tracks. For instance, on the menacing 'Careening' he uses it to supply an eerie roar above the basic throb to great effect. Or discordant noise at the end of the manic stomper 'Chant'. The most surprising track, the perfect touch, is ALL Keith's string-synth, apart from some bubbling bass from Wobble: 'Radio 4' appears on the last side as such and was considered as a kind of Pil theme. Saturday-night-on-Blackpool-pier organ going wonky on a two-chord riff. I know that sounds terrible but I can't describe this one. I just know it's totally great - funny and sinister at the same time.

What else? 'The Suit' - a sardonic stab at slumming posis (see words) with John on low intone over muffled piano-drums-bass. 'Bad Baby', 'S.D.S.' and a revamped 'And no birds do sing' (maybe the most descriptive wads on the album). 'Graveyard' is guitar led and atmospheric.

This is Pil further out than ever from what those shackled to the past want cos they missed out first time. I can't compare it to anything 'cept it shares the same healthy, open-ended attitude to experimenting but never losing touch of the monster-beat, as 'Hallelujah' - period Can. But this music is totally non-derivative. John adopts the voice that fits, whether it be the tortured, cloud-bursting wail on 'Swan Lake' or the convoluted but soft intensity of 'And no birds'.

The three records come in an embossed silver metal container. Now this brave attempt at spicing up the predictable routine of record packaging has already come under fire as an expensive gimmick. Once again Pil find themselves on the defensive for trying to break away from the normal and the predictable.

As it happens the boxes cost 75p each to make by the famous Metal Box Company. Not much more than a gatefold sleeve and ten times the fun - use it as a tea-tray, spliff-board, weapon, a drum instead of your leg (though you should be dancing).

Pil wanted all copies in the tin but Virgin would only print 50,000 (plus an extra surprise 10,000 for export). So no ltd. ed. intended, right. When they've gone it will take the form of a 33 rpm album and a 12-inch single in a gatefold sleeve, something Pil ain't too happy about.

£7.45 it costs in a tin. Surely that's fair when you think what a normal 36 minute (if that) album costs. Here you get over an hour for just another two quid, plus much better sound and a fun container. Who complained when Fleetwood Mac shoved out the same amount of music for around eight quid?

I really rate Pil, always have, as purveyors of startling, exciting music and a genuine force to bi-pass the bigotry, bullshit, seriousness and dull routine of the Rock Biz. Their potential is enormous on both these fronts. The music speaks for itself, but the other side - the fact



they manage, produce and act as agency and publicists for themselves - is just as important cos it sets a precedent for others to follow and also tackles the rot corroding the 'Biz' at its roots - the influence of clueless hangers-on and unadventurous, company-fawning bands. They question the whole structure and it is working for them. So why don't others follow suit? You tell me.

Anyway, I hope the following interview throws some light on Pil's motivation and ideals, and also gives ya a laugh and a thought or two:

ZZ: Why did you decide to put out three 12-inch singles?

KEITH LEVINE: That's really important, because it's not really an album, it's a load of singles.

JOHN LYDON: It's simple. 12-inches have a better sound quality. You can go mad, and get it all on plastic without distortion and racket. It's just sense. You put it out in the way you think it will sound best.

KL: Not only that, we thought it was a good idea, not a gimmick, just a good idea. Instead of putting out albums you're just putting out loads of material.

ZZ: Predictably you got all the accusations of "rip-off merchants" and "exploitation" as soon as it was announced.

JL: Yeah, when they knew nothing about it, not bothering to find out. It's not an album anyway. It's a tin of material. If we're gonna be extra-technical, a la Virgin, it could be counted as a double-album. It's definitely the length of a double album.

ZZ: Did Virgin ever try to pressure you into doing a Normal Album at 33 rpm in a sleeve.

JL: (laughing his head off) That's something you don't need to ask! You know they did! That and worse.

ZZ: How did the idea for a metal container come about?

KL: It was a mixture of not wanting coloured vinyl and metal being involved. Metas was involved a lot, metal guitars ...

JL: It was being bored with the way albums are just continually thrown out. The same fucking shape and format forever and a day. You go back 25 years. They're still the same, nothing's changed and it has to.

KL: I bet it was good for the record company in a way. I bet they had to think about what they were doing for once, instead of going through the same dismal routine.

ZZ: But it was a struggle all the way?

KL: They weren't gonna release it. We had to put 35 grand of our own advance in all this, else they weren't gonna do it in the end.

ZZ: I know you pay your own wages ...

KL: And more. Not only do we pay for everything ourselves we pay for the record company now. We had to agree to do it, Kris, or else they wouldn't have put it out.

ZZ: But what are they there for but to put out records?

KL: It's not so much that. Virgin are an

WORDS FROM THE

DRIVE TO THE FOREST IN A JAPANESE CAR
THE SMELL OF RUBBER ON CONCRETE TAR
HINDSIGHT DOES ME NO GOOD
STANDING NAKED IN THIS BACK OF THE WOODS
THE CASSETTE PLAYED POPTONES

I CAN'T FORGET THE IMPRESSION YOU MADE
YOU LEFT A HOLE IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD
I DON'T LIKE HIDING IN THIS FOUGAGE AND PEAT
IT'S WET AND I'M LOSING MY BODY HEAT
THE CASSETTE PLAYED POPTONES

THIS BLEEDING HEART
LOOKING FOR BODIES
NEARLY INJURED MY PRIDE
PRAISE PICNICKING IN THE BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE
POPTONES

SLOW MOTION
SLOW MOTION
GETTING RID OF THE ALBATROSS
SOWING THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT
I KNOW YOU VERY WELL
YOU ARE UNBEARABLE
I'VE SEEN YOU UP FAR TOO CLOSE
GETTING RID OF THE ALBATROSS
FRYING REAR BLINDS
IF I WANTED
SHOULD I REALLY
IF
I RUN AWAY
RUN AWAY

RIDING ALONG ON THE CREST OF THE WAVE
GETTING RID OF THE ALBATROSS
ANOTHER WILL NOT FORGET
I KNOW YOU VERY WELL
RUN AWAY
RUN AWAY
SHOULD I
I RUN AWAY
GETTING RID OF THE ALBATROSS
I KNOW YOU VERY WELL
YOU ARE UNBEARABLE
I SEEN YOU FAR TOO CLOSE
IF I WANTED TO
IF
RUN AWAY
I RAN AWAY

THIS COULD BE HEAVEN
SHALLOW SPREADS OF ORDERED LAWNS
I LIKE THE ILLUSION
ILLUSION OF PRIVACY
THE CAREFUL TREES BLENDING SO
PERFECTLY
BLAND PLANNED IDLE LUXURY

A CAVIAR OF SILENT DIGNITY
LIFE IN LOVELY ALLOTTED SLOTS
A TOKEN NICE
A NICE CONSTITUTION
A LAYERED MASS OF SUBTLE PROPS
THIS COULD BE HEAVEN
MILD MANNERED MEWS
WELL-INTENTIONED RULES
TO DIGNIFY A DAILY CODE
LAWFUL ORDER-STANDARD VIEWS
THIS COULD BE HEAVEN

VOICE MOANING IN A SPEAKER
NEVER REALLY GET TOO CLOSE
ONLY A GIMMICK POINTED FINGERS
NEVER A MORE SERIOUS SIGHT
WOULDN'T WASTE THE EFFORT ON ENTERTAINMENT
OUT OF CONTROL-MOB RUNNING WILD
ALL YOU EVER GET IS ALL YOU STEAL
SIDE OF LONDON THAT THE TOURISTS NEVER SEE
ANGLO AMBIENCE
CHANT
DON'T KNOW WHY I BOTHER
THERE'S NOTHING IN IT FOR ME
THE MORE I SEE THE LESS I GET
THE LIKES OF YOU AND ME ARE
AN EMBARRASSMENT
CHANT
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT
IT'S NOT WORTH A MENTION IN THE GUARDIAN
EVERY LIBRARIAN HAS ITS THEORY
CHANT CHANT ANGLO AMBIENCE
CHANT
VOICE MOANING IN A SPEAKER
CHANT

METAL BOX

A FACE IS RAINING
ACROSS THE BORDER
THE PRIDE OF HISTORY
THE SAME AS MURDER
IS THIS

HE'S BEEN CAREERING
THE STEADY HAND AS PLANNED
BEHIND THE REASONING
NO CLAIM FOR PROPERTY
BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER
THERE IS BACTERIA
IS THIS LIVING
HE'S BEEN CAREERING
TRIGGER MACHINERY
MANGLING THE MILITARY
NO ONE SHOULD BE THERE
IS THIS LIVING

BLOWN INTO BREEZE
SCATTER CONCRETE
THE JAGGED METAL BAD LIFE
MANUFACTURED
HE'S BEEN CAREERING
IS THIS LIVING

THERE MUST BE MEANING
BEHIND THE MOANING
SPREADING TALES
LIKE COFFIN NAILS
IS THIS LIVING
HE'S BEEN CAREERING
IT'S RAINING

I NEED TO HIDE
TRIGGER MACHINERY
I'VE BEEN CAREERING
ACROSS THE BORDER
IS THIS LIVING

BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER
THERE IS BACTERIA
ARMOURED MACHINERY
MANGLED

**WHY NOT RIP
THIS OUT AND
STICK IT IN YOUR
'METAL BOX'?**

oooh yes!

SEEING IN YOUR EYES
WORDS CAN NEVER SAY THE WAY
TOLD ME IN YOUR EYES
FINAL IN A FADE
SEEING IN YOUR EYES
NEVER REALLY KNOW
NEVER REALIZE
SILENCE IN YOUR EYES
SILENCE IN YOUR EYES
NEVER REALLY KNOW
TILL IT'S GONE AWAY
NEVER REALIZE
THE SILENCE IN YOUR EYES
SEEN IT IN YOUR EYES
SEEN IT IN YOUR EYES
NEVER NO MORE HOPE AWAY
FINAL IN A FADE
WATCH HER SLOWLY DIE
SAW IT IN HER EYES
CHOKING ON A BED
FLOWERS ROTTING DEAD
SEEN IT IN HER EYES
ENDING IN A DAY
SILENCE WAS A WAY
SEEING IN YOUR EYES
SEEING IN YOUR EYES
SEEING IN YOUR EYES
I'M SEEING THRU MY EYES
WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS...
WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS...
WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS...

YOU MAKE ME FEEL ASHAMED
AT ACTING ATTITUDES
REMEMBER RIDICULE
IT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW
CLEAR BY NOW
YOUR WORDS ARE USELESS
FULL OF EXCUSES
FALSE CONFIDENCE
SOMEONE HAS USED YOU WELL
USED YOU WELL
I COULD BE WRONG
IT COULD BE HATE
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
CLUNGING DESPERATELY

IMAGINING PRETENDING
NO PERSONALITY
DRAGGING ON & ON & ON...
I THINK YOUR SLIGHTLY LATE

THIS PERSON'S HAD ENUFF
OF USELESS MEMORIES
ALWAYS REMEMBER
TWISTED AMENITIES
COULD BE WRONG

IT COULD BE WORSE
YOU'RE LOSING ALL THE TIME
I LET YOU STAY TOO LONG
I COULD BE WRONG
IT COULD BE WORSE

WHATEVER PAST
COULD NEVER LAST
ALL IN YOUR MIND
WHERE IT ALL BEGUN
YOU'RE DOING WRONG
IT'S NOT THE MOVIES
AND YOU'RE OLD

IT IS YOUR CHARACTER
DEEP IN YOUR NATURE
TAKE ONE EXAMPLE
SAMPLE AND HOLD
ROMANCE AND REPLACE
THE LACK IN YOURSELF
IT IS YOUR NATURE

IT IS YOUR NATURE
WE SEE YOU CLIMBING
IMPROVING THE EFFORT
WEARING MY SUIT
IT IS MY CHARACTER

THERE IS A LIMIT
OVER YOUR SHOULDER
EVERYONE LOVES YOU
UNTIL THEY KNOW YOU

ALL LYRICS BY
JOHN LYDON ©
USED BY
PERMISSION

up-and-coming company. Show 'em something new and they shit themselves.

JL: Branson of the boat people ...

ZZ: What's causing the fuss, the tin?

JL: Well look, we're not making fuss over it. We're not throwing it in your face and going, 'oh look, what a glorious product!' Fuck all that shit. Look at your average music journalist, right. 99% of them are pissheads, spoilt brats. They get free gifts almost continuously ... 'We know it all, we've seen it all', they get very cynical. Ultimately they've dictated to by their editors, who're ultimately dictated to by their publisher or whatever. If they don't do whatever record companies want them to then they won't have their adverts, and adverts dictate, do they not? We're putting an ad in your lot to keep it fucking alive.

ZZ: The papers had to buy their review copies, didn't they? (cept us, hee hee). JL: You fuckin' bet. You gotta fight those bastards. Us in the band see no one else doing the same. No one's standing up for their rights. They're all wankers trying to be pop stars or whatever. It ain't on is it?

ZZ: It's odd that no other bands have really followed your lead.

JL: I'm glad they don't follow. That's what happened before and I've had enough of that.

ZZ: No, I mean taken the initiative?

JL: Yeah, take the fuckin' initiative, right. Do your own stuff but don't back down. They all do. They're all so scared to say something against someone in case they might need them in the future.

ZZ: It seems nowadays that there's a bunch of cynics ready to shoot down anything you do.

JL: Fine. Any way you look at it I'm entertaining them then. Look, if we're so goddamn fuckin' awful and have no place in society as we know it today, etcetera, why can't these bastards not keep mentioning us? There always has to be a dig. The last one which made me fuckin' roar was a review of the Boomtown Rats' new album. We got a slagging in that! Now how the two were put together I don't know. It's in that bum's brain, the silly sod that reviewed it.

ZZ: How much did it cost to make each tin?

JL: It was £1.20 but we got it down to 75p. If 100,000 had been made the cost would have been brought down a lot more.

ZZ: So it wasn't your decision to only make 50,000?

JL: No, we wanted as many as fucking possible, and more.

ZZ: It's been called a limited edition gimmick.

JL: If you can call 50,000 a limited edition. Yeah, really. The attitude is one of resentment for anything that's away from the normal.

KL: People are just scared of what they don't understand because it doesn't fit in. Because it's a challenge they just wanna block it off and say its crap.

ZZ: You're talking about Virgin?

JL: Yeah, but every band gets fucked over by a record company but nobody's

prepared to do anything about it or even mention it.

KL: By putting all these restrictions in the way they're just teaching us more things, so it's just gonna widen our output and knowledge. They're not fucking us up at all, just putting us through it. It might take longer, but it's still worthwhile.

ZZ: How long did the record take to do?

JL: We started immediately after the last album, and recorded it on and off. Lots has been thrown out. We don't just go into the studio to record a track. We go there to learn stuff to fucking progress, know what's happening, generally mess about with sound and anything else.

KL: The thing is, we didn't expect to learn as much as we have about the studios and how you run businesses, learning the ropes and more than that, seeing what's wrong with them.

JL: We now know everyone's allegiance, well nearly everyone's. Why they're there and why they're not there, etcetera.

KL: And even if you tell them to their face, which we do — all the people you have to deal with when you manage your own affairs, which we do — all these people are hanging on. They're all like producers, engineers ... they only work if they can tell a group what to do. The producer tells a group how they should sound, right, but a producer is just a glorified engineer. What they're affecting is the way you're communicating, what you're saying. Just because they want to add their little thing. All these people who cling on. We don't need them. I see them as clingy little arseholes.

ZZ: If what you're saying did catch on there'd be about 50,000 people who've been used to it cushy out of jobs.

JL: Well those 50,000 would have to stop ligging and work for a change. What would happen is the record company would not dictate any more. They're almost like a middle man. A whole lot of it's gotta change. Maybe we are a bit far-fetched but if only half of what we want begins to happen then that's fine. That's fucking fine. That's more than we expect.

KL: We're more involved with sound and the overall effect of sound on people. We concentrate on that, progressing at those skills. I think we're one of the most advanced groups around now. There's a lot there. We spend hours working. The record company don't realise, we're really into what we're doing. Obviously we want the album to sell as much as they do. We're so into it but they just make us pay for every second of recording time.

ZZ: Isn't that stirring?

JL: Put it this way, if we weren't given a release date on 'Metal Box' we'd still be making it. It'd come out eventually like an encyclopaedia! Would have been a laugh but that is going too far. Now the bit that the general public want to hear, right, (adopts American Music Biz accent) — 'Well we wanted this album to cost £23.50. Virgin have stumped us because they've thought of things like the kids, maan, and we're not into that!'

KL: Plus they cut an hour of it.

ZZ: Uh?

KL: How many tracks didn't they release,

seven?

JL: Twenty-four wasn't it? No, seven were actual tracks, the rest were one-second things, remember?

KL: We had lots of short tracks, one and two seconds, right?

JL: We wanted them to cut them off because we don't like to give value for money, it's against our principles; and they keep trying to make us do gigs. Cor, it's so out of order, innit? Fact: Why didn't our record company fuckin' help us at the Rainbow at Christmas? Why did we have to finance that ourselves yet how come they paid lock, stock and barrel for Jimmy Pursey's binge the night after? Tell me, I'd like to know. I never could get a straight answer on that one.

KL: We had a lot of trouble with 'Memories'. It didn't get to deejays. We had a radio ad and nobody heard it. They went out of their way to stop that record being a hit. They don't like us, they're underhand like that.

ZZ: What about your own label?

JL: Well you still have to go through big companies. You're merely prolonging the torture.

KL: It's either boring directors who'll throw you off the label like EMI, or Virgin, who at least you can talk to and a few people even like you.

JL: But look, by continuing our approach, sooner or later someone has got to pick up on that. Someone has got to understand in the right positions.

KL: It's a bigger thing than a band. It's total.

ZZ: See, it's not like the Pistols or any of that because we're just going above the media. It's a way away from how things have been done for God knows how many years. We're not looking for slavish idolisation.

ZZ: Quite the opposite of what you got before in the Pistols now, innit?

JL: Did I not tell the world right from the start that I didn't wanna be a star? Have I not followed my beliefs? Where have I changed?

ZZ: Pil is so different musically from the Pistols. Did you even try and get them to do this sort of thing?

JL: Look I was banned from talking to Wobble and Keith and Sid. They didn't want me to talk to my mates at all. They were the only decent human beings. They were a constant threat to Malcolm and his silly little bullshit.

You show me anything in those songs that was like anything else then show me the guitar. Don't tell me that was outrageously different. Steve just slavishly followed format. That pissed me off a lot. Fuck rock 'n' roll. It's dead.

ZZ: Who's the drummer now?

JL: We've got a new one, called Martin.

ZZ: I thought it was the bloke from The Fall.

KL: No. Wobble got rid of him.

ZZ: What happened to Richard Dudanski?

KL: He showed his true colours.

KL: We slung him out after we used him for the Leeds gig. That was painful. He was an ex-university graduate. He used to write to the papers under different names, a regular intellectual.

ZZ: He issued a statement to the Press ...

JL: A plea for credibility. What a wanker.

ZZ: What about gigs?

JL: We do 'em when we want. Now we got a drummer we can.

ZZ: Would you have done more if you'd had a permanent drummer?

JL: Yeah, if things were right but they never were, not for a year. This country's a joke. No one wants to do anything any more, except play lead guitar like Chuck Berry, and there's billions of those bums.

KL: We're pissed off about how people think we're lazy — we just sit around on John's name and sell records. It's not like that at all. Because we decided not to have managers and producers it turned out that we had to manage and produce ourselves, so we've been learning loads of things. There's hundreds of things to do.

JL: We're all the band, all of us. No one else.

KL: We don't do tours because we don't want to fit into that format, not because we're lazy. Groups make their album, do their tour, to promote it. They've just become part of the machine.

ZZ: How'dja feel that Virgin are planning three more Pistols-related albums? (Live, Hits and Sid Sings). The past still seems to colour what you do now.

JL: Yeah the past they weren't involved in. I'm afraid I don't live in history books. We're trying to write the next chapter not look back pages. That's the way the whole business has been manoeuvred. You have to have an image, ready packaged. You have to have your promotion ready, your gigs, your interviews, etcetera. Now why can't a band just say 'bollocks, fuck all that, we'll do something else for once, not what it has been, not follow the format.' That's why they have to live in the past. It's easier that way.

ZZ: You've been called self-indulgent.

JL: More like self-respect. Look, the fact that you walk on a stage is self-indulgence because you must feel yourself to be important to be there. And what's wrong with that anyway? What's wrong with being proud about yourself? Is it not worse to have your pictures plastered all over the place in nice poses? Is that not a worse scheme of things?

ZZ: If what you did was old bollocks there'd be some cause for complaint.

KL: And it'd be number one.

ZZ: You were once the centre of what was going on, now you're subverting on the edges. What do you think of the 'scene' now?

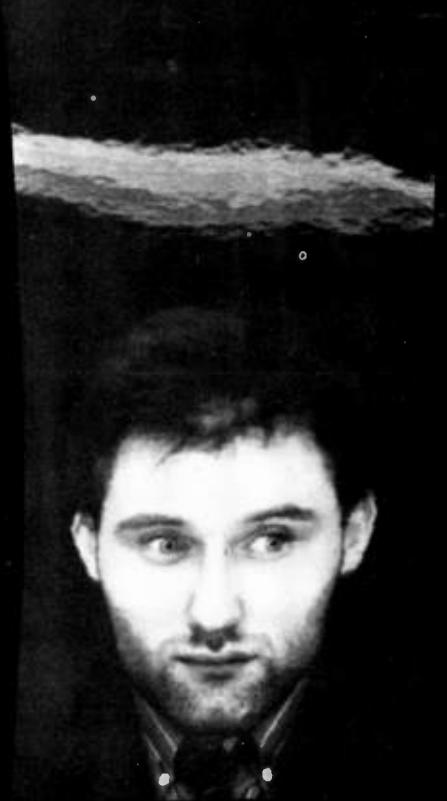
JL: There is no scene. It's all a load of charades and bluffs. There shouldn't be a scene anyway, there should be a load of alternatives. There's nothing in this town worth talking about. You'd have more fun in Barnsley on a Sunday night. At least in those places there's no pretensions of faroutness. Here there's pissall.

ZZ: Mods.

KL: That's ridiculous, ennit? People take to it like fucking lemmings to cliffs.

ZZ: You've been lumped with serious New Musick types by those who should know better...

JL: It's always been that toerags like us could never do what we're doing. It's



always been for the university boys. You know what I mean. They don't like the yobbos to take over. They don't like that at all.

ZZ: Can you give your side of what happened on that TV show up North?

JL: We were asked to go to Newcastle to play two numbers in the studio, so we agreed to do it and got there. No monitors, so we couldn't hear what we were doing. No monitors in the entire building, a TV studio. You tell me that's a normal state of affairs. So we deliberately made a load of noise. The interview: they wouldn't talk to the rest of the band, just me. After half an hour of pure bullshit they agreed to let the rest of the band sit around and I had to do the talking. Fine, let's talk about PiL. First question: What do you think of Malcolm McLaren? What did you think of Sid dying? Why are PiL not as good as the Pistols? That and then suddenly, 'we met four punks in the street and asked them what they thought of PiL.' On walk the Angelic upstarts on this video: the four punks, just by chance. (Adopts Geordie accent) 'We fuckin' hate PiL'. Bollocks. It was just a setup. Pure crap.

ZZ: What about 'Juke Box Jury'?

JL: I set out to end that programme and I thought I succeeded. Every programme after I had to get a mention. Brill. I wrecked it. They didn't like me at all. I was meant to look a fool. They cut the bit where I was talking to the audience. Didn't like that.

By now it was about 6 a.m. For another eight hours beer was drunk (and things like that), a great 'Tiswas' watched and then I went home.

Kris Needs

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RICO

Now that the press seems to have rediscovered ska and bluebeat, it seems incredible to me that no boy scout reporter from *Zounds* or *Melody Makers* has bothered to check a local character who is undoubtedly a walking encyclopaedia of all types of Jamaican music. To some of you out there, the name of Rico may be new - you may have seen him getting credit for working with Linton Kwesi Johnson or The Members. The man, however, has been around for over seventeen years from the early days of ska and bluebeat, where he played his trombone alongside such important Jamaican musicians as Don Drummond, Carlos Malcom and many more. He has also dabbled in jazz and was a temporary member of Georgie Fame's excellent Blue Flames in the early sixties.

Rico, without a doubt, already has the respect of all his fellow musicians and he acknowledges them with the same respect. I first met the man known affectionately as The General when I saw him supporting The Members with his excellent band backing him. The Members had asked especially for Rico as support, just as Linton Kwesi Johnson does whenever he plays one of his all-to-rare gigs. Rico and horn player Dick CUTHELL PLAYED WITH THE Members on 'Offshore Banking Business' on the night as well - giving that particular number the added ingredient it needed to make it sound great.

When Rico first entered the world of music he was attending the Alpha Boys School in Jamaica and the policy of the school was for the older boys to teach the younger ones how to play the instrument of their choice, thus leaving the teachers more time to deal with other subjects as well as teach the older boys different musical techniques. Rico was taught trombone by none other than the late (and legendary) Don Drummond, who himself went on to create some of the best sounds to ever come out of Jamaica with his own band The Skatalites (of 'Guns of Navarone' fame).

Rico went on to play and record music with various ska units for the local sound systems around at that time. Sadly, these recordings have never been heard outside of Jamaica, so having not heard them myself, I can't really comment on Rico's early days of playing ska and rock-steady music. What I do know is that Rico was very much in demand by the various sound systems and he strayed from one band to another, never really settling down until he joined Count Ossie and The Revelations, who he stayed with for a considerable time before departing for the UK.

Yet reggae (or ska as it was then) was not

the only music that interested the young Rico. He used to buy up all the most recent jazz releases from the UK and US and when he first arrived in London, about seventeen years ago, used to hang around the local jazz clubs such as Ronnie Scott's, getting the chance to get up and jam with the talented jazz musicians around at the particular time.

He also contacted another Jamaican who was resident in London with his own studio. This was Laurel Aitken, who released a few classic ska records himself in his day, such as 'Rise and Fall' and 'If you're not black, you're white'. Rico was more than happy to squeeze in a few sessions for the man, therefore keeping his hand in the music of his roots as well as playing jazz with the UK musicians.

It didn't take Rico very long to become an established figure on the London circuit and he was soon asked by Georgie Fame to join the Blue Flames, which he did. Rico played with the Blue Flames for about a year before becoming restless once again. He had decided that it was the right time to form a band of his own and play the music of his choice, and his choice, alone. Since that day some fifteen or sixteen years ago, Rico has always had a band of his own backing him, although it has never been very stable as a unit. Musicians come and go and it seems that this is the way that Rico likes it.

The only two members of Rico's band who are at all regulars are Dick Cuthell, who has been playing flugelhorn with him for over three years and his regular engineer and producer Karl Pitterson, who also plays percussion and some of the keyboards on his records.

Rico never returned to his native country until three years ago when he signed up with Island Records and was due to record his first album for the company. He took Dick Cuthell and Karl Pitterson with him and they both took an active part in producing 'The Man From Wareika'.

"I wanted to go back home for a holiday as well as to play with some of the younger musicians who had emerged since I was last there. It was really strange because everyone knew me because they'd seen me in my early days, but I never knew any of them at all. It was nice to go home and still be recognised," says Rico in the comforts of the London offices of Island Records, where I went along to talk to him.

'The Man From Wareika' was recorded shortly after the Rico Band had finished a long European trek as support to Bob Marley and The Wailers. Rico was pleased with that particular tour, but the band split up before recording the album, members going on to form bands such as Merger and



Fusion.

Karl Pitterson (who incidentally has just finished producing the latest Steel Pulse album) is the only engineer that Rico trusts these days and is a steady companion. Karl chose to work in two studios - Randy's and Joe Gibbs' studio in Kingston. The musicians literally queued up to work with him. There was Sly Dunbar (drums), Robbie Shakespeare (bass), Ansel Collins (keyboards), Dirty Harry (tenor sax) need I go on? It was of course the cream of Jamaican musicians working with Rico, Dick Cuthell and Karl Pitterson.

'The Man From Wareika' still remains a good showcase for the music of Rico. All instrumentals, the album's influences range from early ska (just listen to the trombone playing on 'Gunga Din') to jazz and then it merges with the clean cut sound of modern commercial reggae as used on 'Africa', it comes as no surprise to find out that this odd-track-out was in fact recorded in London at Hammersmith with Bob Marley's sidekick, Junior Marvin plucking the clean-cut fiery guitar solo from his small axe.

So 'Man From Wareika' emerged as a very varied instrumental album with a nice, laid-back feel that seems to appeal to all kinds of people (non reggae fans included). The forthcoming album which has a working title of 'Travelling to Jama' should be

more of a group effort. It will always be Rico at the wheel, but this time he will be using his own regular band and they've all been playing and rehearsing regularly for a considerable time. "The feel is right for a new album", says Rico.

All the new material will be originals, unlike the last twelve-inch single by Rico which was a new version of Dave Brubeck's old jazz classic, 'Take Five'. Released earlier this year, 'Take Five' was chosen by Island because it was a well known tune and it swirled inside your brain as soon as you heard it. Rico admits that the sad fact is that although the record company had the right idea in releasing that song, they never really backed it up with any strong promotional campaign. The odd slot on Peel's show was about all you heard, which was a shame because it's well worth getting and earful of.

Seeing as how Rico played a lot of jazz in his early days in London and does even in his music today, the trombone tends to put a jazz tint on the reggae style of music. I asked Rico how come he hadn't given a jazz audience the chance to judge him and his band - if only for the reaction towards the music. It may even be a step towards jazz fans taking a new interest in reggae and other forms of music. He told me how the band very nearly landed themselves a support slot on the recent Stanley Clarke

tour of the UK. It was a shame it never came off, but it seems that this idea of taking his music to a jazz audience appeals to Rico. He admits to listening and liking all kinds of music and wouldn't criticize anyone for choosing a different form to his. However, when the talk turns to some of the new jazz musicians in the world today, Rico becomes positively uplifted to the point where his respect for his fellow musicians becomes like a regular fan's admiration for his fave raves. After talking about jazz for some time, we both agree that for sheer musicianship, Weather Report cannot be beaten. "Weather Report! Wayne Shorter, Pastorius and all them in that band is dynamite musicians, y'know."

Time eventually faded away fast and Rico had to rejoin his band downstairs in the basement studio to finish laying down backing tracks for the Wailing-Souls - yet another mighty fine reggae act on Island Records. So for a finale, I thought I'd leave the last words to The General, himself:

"I know I could go out any day and record a true reggae album if I wanted to, but all I really want to do is make music which is representative of I-self and you have to admit that there is no other band around at this time who plays like us".

Alan Anger

FOOTNOTE: SINCE ALAN'S INTERVIEW RICO & DICK CUTHELL HAVE RISEN TO FAME WITH THE SPECIALS & CAN BE SEEN ON THE TOUR.

THE ATOM TROM!

FIGHTING THE DAM-BUSTER

DESTROY All Monsters were the first American group to be brought over to the UK by a British small label.

I can't recall any US act getting such a hostile reception on their first visit here since Blondie in Spring '77. I remember Debbie and the lads, who'd done the rounds supporting Television, approaching the end of the tour with distinctly glum visages. They haven't exactly been overnight sensations, the Press had been nasty or just dismissive (with a few exceptions, like Tony Parsons) and it seemed they'd have to wait until fun wasn't a dirty word any more.

This is all I can offer Destroy All Monsters as a feeble attempt at consolation over the deflating display of callous cruelty and apathy which greeted their arrival on these shores.

Press and Biz stoked themselves into foaming anticipation for the Next Big Thing, mainly triggered by a bevy of pix of scantily-clad chanteuse Niagara which had appealed to the papers' basic instincts to search for a new Debbie before they'd done with the old one. The Monsters had impressive pedigree in an ex-Stooge (Ron Ashton, guitar) and a former member of the MC5 (Mike Davis, bass). The Niagara-ogling possibilities p'us the cynical show-us-what-yado-yanks scrutiny always di hed out to American visitors ensured that the first London date, at Dingwalls, was an early sellout.

Only the Second Coming could have appeared that let and when Destroy All Monsters turned out to be "just" rampant purveyors of high-action Kickass Motor City Madness, that was it. Knives came out and DAM never really got their momentum back. Vitriol spread through every typewriter which started three words with a capital D. They didn't get one good writeup, just slaggings or piddly pokes.

DAM didn't deserve this kind of treatment at all. In fact, in the face of all the pooped, knackered, petty wimpery currently flooding from the US via OGWT every week they were a positive healthy blast of no-nonsense raw energy, and Niagara, with her bewitching visual and scatty charisma, is the most compelling and individual front lady I've seen for ages.

Destroy All Monsters weren't the end of the world, or anything over-dramatic like that, but they drove many who went to see 'em to mania and ecstasy, which you'd never know going by what

you read. Blimey, you'd think they made Def Leppard seem like the Clash or something! But in face of the panings and the quizzical looks, I do have to ask myself: ARE they a load of bollocks? Is it just 'cos I took to them as a friendly bunch of people?

No chance! We'd been acquainted about an hour when I first saw them play — at Leeds Fan Club, as it happens, and they still did me in with that screaming barrage of powerchords, beat-riffs, steaming energy and Niagara's presence. The first two singles — "Bored" / "You're gonna die" and "Meet the Creeper" / "Nov. 22" — don't represent DAM as they are now with their murky sound and cluttered former line-up, but the new one, "Nobody Knows" / "What do I get?", kills. 'Specially the latter track, which positively explodes under Niagara's frustrated cool.

I saw another four gigs after that, topping half way with the best one of the tour at the Nashville, where the lethal trio of Ashton, Davis and Rob King locked horns with nuclear intensity and Niagara was prompted to remark delightedly, "It's just like Detroit!"

Those three Cherry Red singles complete the licensing deal with the Monsters' own IDBI (I Don't Believe It) label. Cherry Red, working on a shoe-string budget with the Nimoco agency and DAM manager David Keeps, set up the tour which, apart from the problems I've already mentioned, suffered from minimal promotion, which meant some of the gigs were rather sparsely-attended, hitting their percentage payments. Hence DAM dropped several grand and even had to dosh down at Heathrow 'cos there weren't enough readies for an immediate flight back to Detroit. It must have seemed all worthwhile . . .

"One of the reasons we came here to rough it is see if anyone picks up on it, see the reaction, play for the people and test ourselves. This is the most gigs we've ever played in a row. It's our first attempt at going out on a so-called real kind of tour, having another vehicle with the PA and a band that plays with you every night (Viva)."

Ron Ashton, the man responsible for those screaming walls of fuzz and wah-wah on the first two Stooges albums, probably took the slaggings hardest,

'specially when it got personal (age, weight, etc.). During the two days I spent with the band up in York he was jovial, easy-going and a mine of anecdotes about the Detroit bands.

Then he read the papers.

He said he didn't care but you could see tight-lipped anger in his face all the way down to London and from here on he was quiet and temperamental, but still polite.

Mike Davis' reaction was a shrug and a slug from the usually-present beer. He's been through too much — five years on smack, jail sentence for possession, all that — to let other people bother him, unless it interferes with his laid-back day-to-day amble, which sees playing bass with DAM and getting legless as priorities. A sound geezer.

Rob King spent the whole tour on Coke (fizzy variety). Two years ago he was a total alcoholic who went through the full drying out bit. His motto is: "One's too many but a crate's not enough", so when it was his birthday in York, Rob stayed in and watched TV while we all pissed it up for him down the road. Niagara did buy him a cake though.

(Foreboding footnote: after the last gig, at Dingwalls, Rob was to be seen in a Greek restaurant demolishing beers by the score! And that's the last we saw of him.)

Niagara writes DAM's lyrics and gets photographed a lot. We first met at the Leeds soundcheck. She'd been catnapping under her coat when I arrived but pottered up to introduce herself as I was battling greenies in an umpteenth game of "Space Invaders" I dunno, I was expecting someone strange, cool and detached. Just like another girl with that kind of image. Niagara turned out to be the opposite. A rather weird way of seeing things maybe but not an icle in sight.

She's got the clearest, whitest skin I've ever seen and usually wears shades off-stage. "I can't stand sunlight, it makes my skin feel funny." Her hair is red-brown and uncommonly long for these days.

"Well, I like it. I'm always freaked out so it gives me something to hide behind . . ."

Niagara is a baffling blend of fun, mystery, nerve-ends and talent: (good drawer). She'll talk to anyone, including dogs and canaries, and is very partial to large bottles of rum which make her





SNAPPING MONSTERS (L-R): MIKE DAVIS, NIAGARA, RON ASHETON, ROB KING.

do things she may later regret.

Weird things happened halfway up a staircase high in the corridors of the London Music Machine. The two of us were exploring when she stopped, shivered and tilted her head to one side.

"Did you hear that?"

Wot?

I thought I heard something . . . oh, it's gone now." Niagara explains how she thinks she sees things like spiders and dogs. "but then I look and they're not there."

And that was before she started on the rum!

Ron Asheton had this to say on his Constant Companion (group relationship here like Lene 'n' Les and Debbie 'n' Chris): "If you ever seen a baby's arse, open Niagara's head and that's how her brain would look!"

But she's going to be the next face.

DAM change the set order every night, but each gig on the tour saw them run a gamut of stun-elections like "Haunted House Hangover" (about their Ann Arbor home where doors open by themselves), "Life" (with MD belting out the lyrics), "Lou Lou" (with Rob King singing and skin-bashing simultaneously), "Meet the Creeper" and all the singles, a great version of Nancy Sinatra's "These boots are made for walking", not to mention "I wanna be your dog", which Niagara was born to intone, and occasionally "No Fun", when the mood's wild enough.

At Leeds pogoers and headbangers joined forces and I realised that DAM could make a killin' supporting someone like the mighty Motorhead, who they share a similar battering approach with.

Niagara draws the eyes to the stage. Always in a different combination of the skimpy tops and vinyl miniskirts she finds in junk shops, she totally distracts the males present with her spaced-spontaneity. At Leeds one punter was surprised to be suddenly stabbed in the jugular with Niagara's pointed lollipop, but his look when he turned to his mate said it all. She floats about, rolls on the boards, swigs her rum, talks to the kids . . . and that's just in the solos. On "Nov. 22" she's convulsed and screaming, "Haunted" sees her passions out in space and on "Bored" she's just that. If Jane had met Nosferatu instead of Tarzan . . .

I hope Destroy All Monsters can pick themselves up, dust themselves down and get down to those new songs they were talking about. There was talk of adding keyboards too.

If they come back I'll even forgive 'em for doing a crafty in the Greek and leaving me to look after an eighteen quid bill and a legless Niagara. I wouldn't blame them for never even looking at this country on a map though.

Destroy All Monsters came in on a slimy limb. The Powers sawed it off and slammed them out like bouncers.

They hope to be back in the New Year.

Kris Needs

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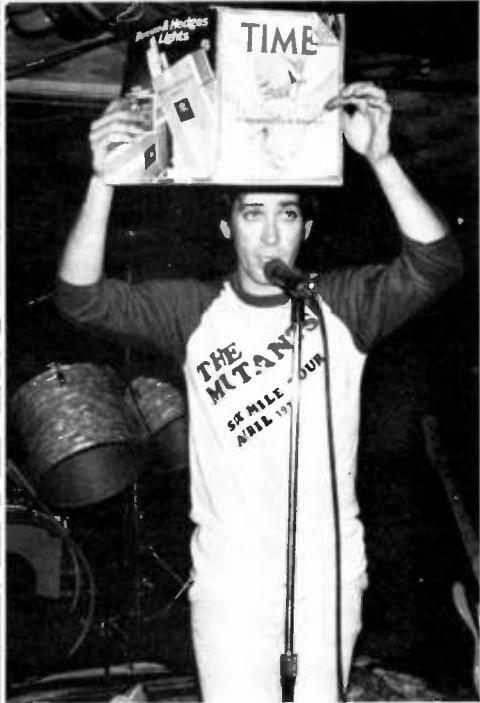


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MOTOR CITY



MUTANT JOHN ANCORE

MANY people who are deeply involved with rock 'n' roll music seem to have a fascination for the word "scene". You know, the "New York scene", the "London punk scene", on and on. Categorising something as personal and emotion-driven as music doesn't make a lot of sense to me, except for the sake of explanation and occasional commentary. It's too easy to pigeon-hole bands that don't conform to current tastes in fashion (example: some punks' animosity towards groups with long hair or beards and moustaches). Sometimes there is less energy devoted towards the music and more towards posing and creating what they desperately want to call a scene, so they can belong. In the past few years as back-alley bands from both coasts of America and various areas of England have been harvesting record company contracts and international publicity, many fans in the Detroit area have been bemoaning the lack of a scene in Detroit. What they fail to realise is that the lack of mass media attention focusing on this area has let the melting-pot musical processes simmer and stir themselves until there results a fascinating mix of musical styles and influences. The current cult popularity of punk/new wave music with certain groups of fans is a large influence today, but there is still a large cross-hatching of sound developing here.

One reason is the long and varied musical heritage of Detroit, another the large ethnic factions that help determine cultural tastes. Mix this with a liberal

dosing of the late '60s-early '70s heavy metal high energy Detroit rock 'n' roll style of attack and you've a resulting brew very heavy on the energetic side of music. There is a band playing in Detroit somewhere to fit any oddball category you might choose to imagine. What follows is by no means a complete rundown of all the original and exciting bands currently in town, nor is it a new wave/punk wrap-up: these are many of the groups that play often and influence fans and musicians alike. All the outfits mentioned in this article have their place, but there are many more appearing all the time. Another limitation with regards to completeness is the undeniable fact that I haven't seen each and every rock 'n' roll band in town; all the people that I write about I've seen. Enjoy this and think of it as one writer's tour of some great bands in Detroit.

One of the old-line groups, and one that has surely influenced many musicians and given some of them their first exposure to receptive audiences is Sonic's Rendezvous Band. Composed of four musicians that are well known all around the world more because of their previous associations with infamous bands than for their musical skills, these guys have melted into one tight destructo unit. Fred "Sonic" Smith on lead guitar and stage jokes, Scott Asheton on drums, Scott Morgan on rhythm guitar and vocals, and Gary Rasmussen on bass are the individuals in question. Offstage they are a quiet and unassuming bunch, but once plugged into that magic element, electricity, they transform into giants of loud, driving music. Fred Smith is a better guitarist than he showed as a member of the MC-5, Scott Asheton is mean as hell to his drums,

vocal chores are shared by Smith and Morgan, with those two also handling the songwriting. Sonics Rendezvous Band is always looking towards the future and never dip into their immensely popular musical heritage (MC-5, Rationals, UP, Stooges) to pull out old classics that would win instant acclaim from their audiences. Rather they maintain that they will once again rise to the top of the musical heap on the basis of their current material written and performed as a unit or not at all. They've been through the music/business pressure-cooker that up and coming and newly signed bands have to endure and they don't want any more of it. If you dig their music then they'll play it for you. Some fans don't like what they're playing and call them relics. Sonics Rendezvous Band prefer that you don't attend rather than tell them what they should be doing.

The Mutants (not to be confused with a couple of bands sporting the same moniker) have also been plugging away in Detroit for a number of years, trying to make exciting things happen. The lack of commercial success outside of Detroit is certainly not their fault, as anybody who has witnessed their amazing live shows will attest. Sporting a wit and sense of outrage/amusement towards everything in this world that few musical units or comedians ever approach, the Mutants embellish their live sets with every musical texture and recognisable influence known to music fans. Not above following a note-perfect rendering of the Monkees' "Daydream Believer" with the original "Jesus Was A Hard-Working Guy", the Mutants are every good rock band that ever existed rolled into one on-stage performing jukebox. Don't mis-interpret this to mean that they sound like dozens of other

FLIRT



UPPRISING!

bands; rather the opposite. The Mutants are the most original band I've ever heard. Linking the stage antics of vocalist Art Lyzak with the humour/satirical wit of bassist John Amore is the powerful and versatile guitar playing of Tom Morwatts, the calm Pasadena on keyboards / guitar, and the powerful and energetic drumming of Steve Sorter (also an unheralded harmony singer). The Mutants have been gigging around Detroit and Ann Arbor in various incarnations since 1971, with temporary lay-offs here and there. Since four years ago however they have been as active as anybody in town, keeping busy on stage, and building up a tremendous following that enables them to sell-out nearly any joint they play on any night of the week. "Happy Jack" is one of the powerful and better-known covers that they do, but the Mutants can easily play for two hours or more utilising only original songs. These vary from style to style and cover all musical bases. Sometimes it's social commentary ("Bad Talk") and once in a while a tune might be nothing more than an excuse to show off their skill ("The Boss"). The most FUN rock 'n' roll band in Detroit, that says a mouthful. Their initial 7in. vinyl offering, "So American / Piece of Shit" is also one of the best produced and most listenable independent efforts heard in a long time.

There is a band called the Reruns who also (as did the Mutants and Romantics) evolved out of the bars of Hamtramck. Instrumentally their line-up is identical to that of the Romantics, with the Romantics slightly better guitar players. The Reruns are younger though, and are evolving and growing musically at a rapid pace. On the basis of their song-writing alone the Reruns could



THE ROMANTICS

break out of Detroit! They can put lyrics and music together in one real attractive rock 'n' roll package without intentionally pandering to the marketplaces and radio station playlists. The Beatles are an immediately noticeable influence, but as time marches on the Reruns' own personal touches stand out more and more. On-stage the Reruns are enthusiastic and bouncy, with no central visual focus. Al Phife on hopping bass is the big jumper of the band and infects the others with his considerable spirit. Dave Bodine shares vocals with Kenny Haskell; they both have strong voices that are different enough from each other to blend in a fine sound. And of course there is George

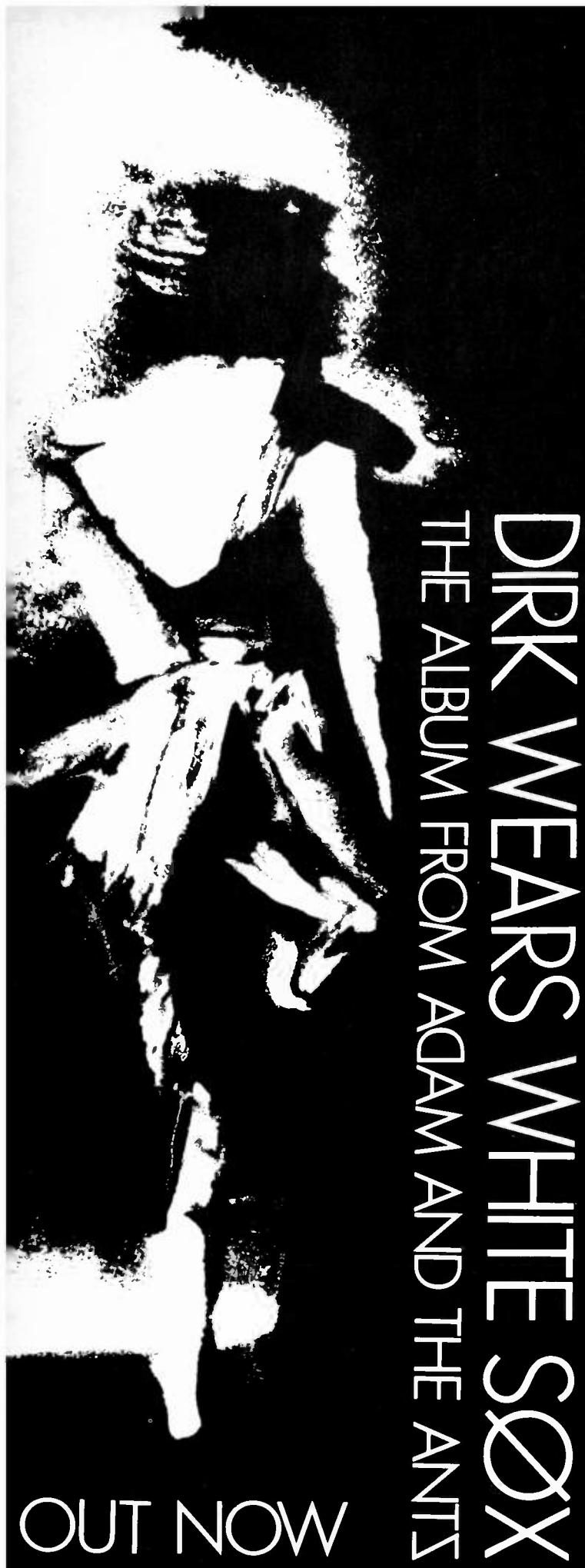
Ricardo continually bashing away at the drums with consummate skill, sometimes nearly hidden by the kit. They are becoming one of the more popular bands in town to see. Like the Mutants they also have a fine single out that is immediate hit material.

Cinecyde is often noted for the reactionary stance they take on many social and community problems, most notable of which is the lack of original or exciting programming on Detroit radio. Gary Reichel is also known for his weird vocal phrasing which some people (upon first hearing their records) take for studio gimmickry until they witness the Cinecyde live performance. He's merely got a strange set of vocal cords. Sometimes Gary sounds like a demented broken down android from Star Trek played back through a Leslie. With original pipes like this and such a good guitar player in Jim Olenski, Cinecyde are always pointing a disruptive finger at society and the bureaucracy that makes so much of day-to-day existence difficult. Really they just play crazy rock 'n' roll music, and get off on it immensely. Cinecyde don't worry about having to soften the attack of their music and lyrics ("Don't care if I start third world war, Businessmen don't know what it's for, There's nothing wrong with making a buck, But all they want to do is fuck me up") — ("Radiation Sickness") because they'll just continue working day jobs and playing nights in clubs. Cinecyde have released three EPs to date, each one more direct than the previous one. I think that "Positive Action", their current release, is one of the most relevant and thought

CONT. PAGE 38



TWO RERUNS



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20 minutes WITH LENNY...

THE Patti Smith Group had a day off in London. The night before they'd played to a generally enthusiastic reaction but universal slagging at Wembley Arena. It was for this reason and the reception given to "Wave" that the only interview Lenny Kaye — currently acting as group spokesman — did during PSG's visit was with "Zigzag" (although he did stroll round London with Sandy Robertson, and got panned for his trouble!).

We're sitting in his room at the Montcalm Hotel. Lenny's preparing to go to see the Rasses at the Nashville.

ZZ: How do you feel about last night's gig?

LK: I enjoyed playing there. I didn't feel as relaxed as we sometimes do on-stage, but, I think that's a lot to do with our recent reception in England over the past year. The fact that "Wave" doesn't seem to have met with a lot of approval, both critically and from the kids, and so I think we were a little on the defensive, whereas sometimes when we play we don't have to worry about stuff like that. We can just relax and have a good time.

ZZ: Wembley's a big place to play.

LK: Well, we're experimenting with different types of things. I know it's not cool to play a big place. I know that it's not considered an acceptable place and we should play a small club where 250 people come to see you. Unfortunately, in the context of this tour it seemed like the right idea because we're mostly playing large places. Also, it is the only time probably this year that we'll be playing England, so rather than play a smaller place and have kids excluded, we decided to play a place where anyone who wanted to could come, even if we didn't sell out the place, didn't really make a difference.

We just wanted a place where there'd be a little room to breathe. I personally was surprised with the intimacy of that place. Patti said to me after the show that it felt like a club. In fact, we put on a very club-oriented show. It was long because we play long. If you're only gonna see someone once a year, three hours isn't much. We like to think of it as an "evening with . . .". You're gonna come there and it's like a big party. We also like to have the spaces so kids can relax and get to meet each other. When I go to a concert one of the things I like best is the intermission. You can go out in the lobby and check out the girls. We want to create the space on stage so we can relax, so we



LENNY KAYE & PATTI SMITH IN DETROIT (PIC: BOB MATHEU)

can explore our music rather than put it out in regimented style. A lot of times it doesn't work that well, it's one of the risks inherent in what we do, the fact that there's likely to be a good series of boring moments, but on the other hand, the peaks that we aim for, the type of places we try and reach in our music, the challenges that we put before ourselves every night — for instance "Seven ways of Going", different every night to just let it off into space, then try and bring it back into the song. It's not an easy thing. We're professional enough to know that we could go out and do a greatest hits show and pop the kids' corks every time, but we don't want to fall into that trap of repetition.

ZZ: Patti seems more relaxed these days, wandering about . . .

LK: In Amsterdam she wandered out during my song all the way to the sound board! When we finished the song she was working her way back through the crowd. It's just you grow up as a band. We're not the same band. I look at us three years ago and we were just feeling our legs. We go up there and at our worst we can do a professional show, but we never like to settle for that, 'cos we feel its jipping the kids.

ZZ: Shall we talk about the last year, and the "Wave" backlash?

LK: I don't understand it. I understand

the "Radio Ethiopia" backlash, because that was so . . . predictable (laughs). But I think in the last year people have really taken offence to Patti, at her presumption at being what she is. She escapes, she's too slippery, there's too many contradictions within her personality, so people can't feel comfortable with her as a whole. They're either attracted to a part, but they can't accept all its permutations. Be a poet, but you can't pick up the electric guitar. Patti doesn't see those divisions, the band doesn't see those divisions, we like all types of music. I went out today and bought a Cliff Richard record which I heard on the radio. I didn't know who it was but it's a good record. We'd like the freedom to do that kind of a record, as well as do something as intricate as "Seven Ways of Going" or "Radio Ethiopia", 'cos we also listen to Albert Ayler, we know who those people are. We don't believe we only have to play one type of music. But people are so regimented to thinking that one type of music is superior or can't possibly exist, that we can't have a pop side and a zoned-out side, and so we don't fit into any categories. We're not part of the Old Wave, obviously, but we're not part of the New Wave, we're not part of any wave, we exist outside of our society, outside of any society, that's what "Rock 'n' Roll Nigger's" about. In

fact, rock 'n' roll itself is considered a nigger, alright, but we've chosen in the context of rock 'n' roll to place ourselves outside the boundaries so we can't be trapped by them. We're not even trapped by rejecting our pasts, because, I've been playing rock 'n' roll music for 15 years in bands. When I do a song like "For Your Love", I also did it when I heard it on the radio, when it came out, and so, all those different dimensions in which we move we're like the last of the '60s bands and a big '70s band, and now we're curious about what our direction is for the '80s. To me, "Wave" tied up a lot of our loose ends, and also completed a spiritual and philosophical quest of Patti's which began in the first lines on "Horses", "Jesus Died for Somebody's Sins but not Mine", to an acceptance of a type of Christianity. I'm not talking about that "born again" jive. I'm talking about ecstatic religion. True religion as opposed to church religion. You know, that quote on the cover, "the greatest task of one human being is to love another", therefore the most close to God, the spirit of creation, whatever you wanna call it. "Frederick, you're the one, my soul surrenders astonished to death" . . . these words aren't put there because we've put on a computer that those are the words that people on AM radio understand the best, they're put there because they have effective meaning throughout the record. We haven't lost artistic integrity. Our sound may be more acceptable in places, it might sound more like other records, but we've always experimented with styles, we're a little better at getting them.

ZZ: Are you gonna use Todd Rundgren on the next one?

LK: Our attitudes change so much. I think Todd was perfect for this record. He helped us out of musical cul-de-sacs we got into, and we often did because we're still technically struggling musicians, but he also left us alone when we wanted to work our stuff ourselves. When we needed the studio as a laboratory, like on "Seven Ways of Going", which is exactly what we wanted. I don't know where we're going next. I think "Wave" is a summation of a certain period of the band.

ZZ: Do you think the next one will take another direction?

LK: Oh yeah, I think there's a very interesting shift coming up with us, because we don't believe in becoming prisoners of your past, and there's a new decade. I don't wanna sit around and be a relic of history. I don't wanna be on "Nuggets 18". I wanna keep on it, but the way to keep on it is to move along with progress, to be ahead of progress. Plot your own evolution and get ahead of it to not get mired in the past. We've done that regardless of the squawks that come up every time we do it. We're here, we've got four albums out, we've got 11 bootlegs. We had the first independently pressed New Wave single of all time. I'm not ashamed of that stuff. I think that's fantastic. I think the progressions that we've made have shown our ability to keep ahead of ourselves, that we don't wanna be trapped into doing the same record. We could have had a quadrillion seller if we'd followed "Easter's" formula.

They catch onto us an album too late. Every album they want us to make

the last. Even "Easter" didn't have as happy a reception, because it wasn't as "experimental" as "Radio Ethiopia", which was slagged for not being enough rock 'n' roll, when, rock 'n' roll had gained its footing.

I don't like to dwell on the Press cos I was a member of the Press myself. I know the inner workings of how things rise and fall within the Press, and I can understand, in some ways, the Press's frustration with us, but what I can't understand is the sloppy journalism, which I, as a journalist, can't accept. Any piece of idle rumour or gossip is printed as fact and to me that's reprehensible. For a band that's accused of being so enamoured with itself as we are. You clean up your own house first. We're all human beings in this, as far as I'm concerned. We make a lot of mistakes, but the Press makes a lot of mistakes too. Sooner or later it all balances out. Instead of casting the first stone we should all get stoned or something.

ZZ: What else is happening?

LK: Well, as I said, we're coming into a letting the earth replenish itself period, something akin to when Patti was off the road between "Radio Ethiopia" and "Easter". Then it was enforced but, in retrospect, we realised what a good thing it was. We could catch up with ourselves. During that period I was able to get our record company started, our record was put out — the Tapper Zukie 'Man a Warrie' album, and since we've been back working I haven't had the chance to put out another album. I have a record company that puts out tri-annual releases!

ZZ: I hate to say it, but any plans for "Nuggets"?

LK: I think if "Nuggets" came out now, next to "Pebbles", which is so collector-oriented, it'd be like a K-tel compilation, which is not what I wanted. "Nuggets 2" was originally gonna tell the other end of the story and have bigger hits like "96 Tears", "Talk Talk" by the Music Machine, and totally obscure tracks, whereas "Nuggets 1" covered the oddball middle ground, but now that that pressure for archaeological preservation has passed, I'm going to utilise the "Nuggets" concept on different genres. My original "Nuggets" idea, which was "Nuggets" of different anything — get a great girl group record together. I'm thinking along the lines of two areas now. One would obviously be a second generation Punk Rock record, composed of stuff that came from 1976, 1977, 1978. There's a lot of those around, but I would try and make this "Nuggets" a better one with a bunch of tracks which'd really be nice in one place. I have other ideas too. I'd like to do one of late '40s/early '50s jump music, which I'm starting to discover.

I have other ideas to sort out with the record company. Patti's going to work on a solo record. We've been working within a group context for six years now, and we need a break, slow things down to see what's happening. Who knows what we'll come out with. We'll just have a few months to play around, see what happens. I'd like some time to think about what we're going to do next, 'cos I'm not going to blindly rush off the edge of the precipice. I mean I've seen too many groups panic and do that. We're more mature in some

ways. We're willing to wait, 'cos we're not gonna disappear. We're gonna make sure that when we do resurface from the subterranean depths we've got gold or oil or something.

Kris Needs

DETROIT FROM PAGE 35.

provoking records heard in a long time. Three of the songs are originals and let the listener in on a bit of their thought processes concerning today's civilised state, but are still couched in a very listenable and enjoyable rock 'n' roll format. With ideals running counter to the very decadent state of the music industry right now. Cinecyde are more than a breath of fresh air.

Flirt impress people. A five piece band, visually the beautiful Rockee Re Marx and husband Skid Marx keep the fans' attention riveted upon themselves. Rockee is one of the finest singers in Detroit, a stunning combination of gritty emotion and smooth, sexy singing. She has a whole variety of vocal textures at her disposal, and makes excellent use of them. The three piece powerhouse combination of Skid on bass guitar and stage presence Shawn Del on rhythm guitar and Tom Fremont on drums is a wonderful audio backdrop for the songs that Rockee sings. When she's wringing her anger and frustration out with a song like "DMA" (a much lambasted booking agency) or transforming Gene Pitney's old hit from the 'sixties "(She's A) Heartbreaker" into an angry and powerful attack, she exudes a command that's addictive. There is a cat-like quality to her voice that sends chills down my spine. It's obvious after hearing Flirt do only one tune in a club setting that they are no newcomers to rock 'n' roll. Their experience cannot be measured in how long they have performed on stages around Detroit; rather it's the readily obvious fact that before you is a combination of musicians that is perfect. Raw and thunderous rock 'n' roll, grinding and sensual lyrical/musical combinations, Flirt have a way with sound. There is a commanding sense about them, from the little bursts of guitar that filter through, to Skid's presence up there that always reminds me of an orchestra leader, in the sense of somebody being in control at all times. Flirt are one of the most dramatic and musically sound bands in Detroit. Lately they have gone through two lead guitar players, but they should have the situation under control soon.

My next article will cover bands that were not mentioned in this piece. They are numerous, and provide many an interesting night out. Also next time will be a discography of locally released records, with addresses where they may be obtained.

John M. Koenig

Next Month in ZIGZAG...
MOTORHEAD, B-52'S THE CLASH, SPIZZ STEVE JONES-P. COOK TALKING HEADS, LOTS MORE!

WALTERS

WELL, that was all a bit sudden! (You're telling me, complains Annie Mossity, our oppressed minorities representative — we women have feelings too you know — am I merely a vessel for your lust while irate reader M. Black has gone down to the off licence?)

No, not that, I mean the old mag back in action. I couldn't believe my ears when Needs turned up at the Monty Python preview (at which he distinguished himself incidentally, when I introduced him to Michael Palin, by swaying about, pointing at Palin and demanding, "And who's he?") and said "I've found a twerp so let's have a column quick and the drinks are on you!"

Well, better get started then . . .

"Where Pippets Play" by Woodlander
Feather footed through the plashy fen passes the questing vole . . . it's no good — don't you have days when it just won't come?

(Don't I just re-complains Annie Mossity.)

I'll have to think of something. Trouble is I haven't really got much time as I'm just off on another of my Euro jaunts which aren't as exciting as people think. They're such a formal bunch — and terribly precise. When I was in Munich in September I actually saw, written on a toilet wall, "Early Elvis rules OK". You see the Euros sitting on the tube over here all looking prosperous in leather and suede in various shades of greys and greens and browns but nothing too definite — even their hair and skin, a sort of bland colourless crew, the Euros.

('Da-daaa! M. Black and Annie Mossity bursts from the bedroom, he in a torero's suit of lights with rainbow tinted accessories, she in the colourful garb of the Balkan gypsy — her fingers tap out a seductive rhythm on her beaded tambourine while his fingers gently strum the strings of his gypsosnia — he sings,

"Vrasti vrasti, vrasti oh meena Pomoré . . .")

Perhaps there's a gig I could go and see — I was looking through the Melody Maker the other day when my secretary pointed out that the Venue could be a nice place if it wasn't for all the boring old acts they put on. Boring old acts indeed, some are friends and acquaintances. Then it struck me — you know you're middle aged when you are personally acquainted with the acts at the Venue. Cripes! This month it's Maddy Prior, Roger Chapman and someone or something referred to in the M.M. as Neils Inns. The M.M. are getting a bit vague in their spelling. In my current edition there's a reference in a headline on Bullmoose Jackson to the American blues tradition. Ah yes! Once the collectors from the four corners flocked to America to hear those boys sing the blues — the only living tradition as yet unplundered by



mercenary white boys — partly because the American blues are in fact sung by mercenary white boys and partly because the true American blues go something like this . . .

*"Don't the moon look lonesome shin-nin' through the trees,
(plonka, plonka)*

*"Don't the moon look lonesome shin-nin' through the trees,
(plonka, plonka)*

*"Don't ya' baby look lonesome when
that 2.19 train has gone down,
lousy, yes I declare, down to that
lonesome road where that Michigan
water tastes like sherry wine and
she's dropped her earring and is
crawling about on her knees — oh
yeah!"*

Not easy to dance to and only Alexis Kerner has been known to finish more or less at the same time as those American chappies and I fear that it's a dying tradition except on Saturday nights in any of the chain of Neils Inns which stretch with depressing regularity across America.

Speaking of depressing regularity I was one of the lucky few million to get to see Abba recently at Wembley. After the first half hour I realised that the hits would beat down relentlessly, like the sun on your Spanish holiday — I mean a bit's alright but . . .

Half way through I could stand it no longer and went down for a drink. Imagine my surprise when I spotted a figure flitting from column to column, trying to approach the bar unobserved.

It was Needs! He had obviously been rowed up the Wem on muffled oars and smuggled in in a laundry basket but once unmasked he had to own up. He is obsessed with Abba! Not only did he know all the songs, he had bought several souvenirs and admitted to having bought Agnetha's (!) solo album sung in Swedish! Talk about cul-de-sac credibility!

What could have attracted him? They

certainly performed all their songs live, unless they were miming to out of tune tapes, and pranced about a glittery set — my secretary whispered that it was like going to see Father Christmas at Selfridges — but most attention was centred on the ladies. They stalked about the stage in a slightly ungainly but formidable manner. They're strapping Nordic gals with great buttocks grinding away like millstones — the sort of buttocks that you could crack a walnut between while musing away a winter's eve in front of a roaring fire. And nipples that a man could put his eye out on if he had a mind to. (Sexist muck shrieks A. Mossity. I am irate murmurs M. Black, but do continue.) No, more than that I cannot say, but you should have seen the audience. The interesting thing was how many look-alikes there were. Stacks of Sunsilk blondes with Joan Crawford-shouldered furs. You expect that at Bowie concerts — not furry blondes but Aladdines and so on — but is it now compulsory? When I was a lad in jazz and Lou's Armstrong came over, I didn't feel the need to black up and go in waving a white hanky, etc., but *plus ca change*. I don't think I've ever seen such a big audience of straight's. They all seemed to be young marrieds who had left what I'm sure they call "the kiddies" — a little boy and a little girl (little pronounced litt-ull) named respectively Jodie and Kelly-Sharona, with someone referred to as "Nan". Horrific! Except for Needs the Empire Pool seemed to have been taken over by a gigantic Tupperware party from Milton Keynes.

I think that's this issue's *bon mot*. I'd like to see it in books of rock quotes . . .

"Abba's audience was like a gigantic, etc., etc. . . ." It always gives an article a lift to include a quotable quote. It doesn't have to come from me, if you spot a decent one, cut it out and send it to me and I'll save looking for a punch line. I came across a wonderful line while browsing in the lav the other day. It was from David Peel, a legalise marijuana type who used to record for Elektra and was a prime example of the hippy as philosopher. It went, "No rock star ever paid to see, an audience so why should an audience pay to see a rock star?"

Hey, great man (sniggering helplessly and intermittently), that's right, you know like no guitar ever played Eric Clapton so why should Eric Clapton play the guitar? Great, that's right man. My nose never blows me so why should I blow my nose eh, great! I've got a headache coming on. (Any excuse complains A. Mossity.)

John Walters

Thanks for all the nice letters while we've gone. Write more so we can restart the letters page.

(and thanks for your encouragement sounds. Thought you championed independent action. Funny how you also offered me a job!)

REVIEWS

DOLL BY DOLL: *Gypsy Blood*

(Automatic)

Well, what a shock! Eleven tracks, short and sharp like several multi-pronged eye pokes. There's one hundred per cent more hit singles than on the still-devastating debut album. There are none of its lengthy, tortured epics, no moments so brain-napalming as the climax of "Palace of Love". Doll by Doll have made a Record.

But it couldn't be a Doll by Doll record and be all as straightforward as it all seems at first. I know Automatic has the States in mind but the profusion of good radio songs hide a maelstrom of emotions and musical limit-pushing.

It's the production, y'see. While "Remember" was all bare bon's and nerve-endings, "Gypsy Blood" is fleshed-up and sizzling with walls and walls of *sound*: deep wodzes of guitars, massed almost-choral vocals and hints of dark psychedelia. Bottomless drums punch it together into a chest-whacking, feet-shifting whole. It seems that experience and purpose have given Doll by Doll a new studio presence, plus this John Sinclair bloke who produced.

It kicks off with the single "Teenage Lightning", which has been beefed-up and bolstered with drumming and pace which is almost Romone que, but still turns and twists. This and the third track, the gorgeous "Strip Show", were the two songs on Doll by Doll's original demo — have they changed?

The title track should be granted 45 status too. It swings on a sturdy hand-clap beat which makes movement com-

pulsory, as does the Jo Show-penned "Binary fiction" on side two, which is kind of HM disco!

This is a new song: recognisable from the stage set are "Human Face", with its shifting calm-storm moods and Bible-epic chorale, "Hell Games" and "Forbidden Worlds", which rides a skin-strokingly restrained wonder-riff.

The album sort of "winds down" through side two: "Forbidden Worlds", the bluesy "Highland Rain", "End Game", a swirling spacey ballad, down to the brief final statement of "When a man dies".

"Gypsy Blood" is a perplexing blend of commercial rock and the Doll by Doll experience. I was disappointed that the massive inter-exorcism odyssey of "Honest Woman" still hasn't made an album but really its ten-minutes-plus would have stuck out a bit.

My last words are, decide for yourself about Doll by Doll. Don't be told, don't be afraid.

MOTORHEAD: *Bomber* (Bronze)

Likewise this . . . as it's more recent we'll talk about it 'cos, when you get down to it, there is nothing better for going berserk to. Now if you're the sedate kind of sap who likes their music safe, sitting down or interesting you'll call Motorhead a dinosaur, a noise or both. But if it's the absolute gut-grabbing roar of rampant rock 'n' roll you crave just ignore the wimp-cynics, leave the LA pop of Crass behind, and dive headfirst into a barrel of bombers, overkill and Motorhead. They've got the

teeth (well, musically speaking, anyway). This time round we get the vocal debut of guitarist Eddie Clarke on the steaming, heaving "Step Down" and a brace of soon-to-be stage killers like "All the Aces" and the careering title track "I COULD EXPLODE!" (More next month.)

THE SHOES: *Present Tense* (Elektra)

Normally American "pop" groups who specialise in twangy mid-tempo, Mersey-beat harmonies and "catchy choruses" make me cringe or bored. Not so the Shoes, who, though obviously aspiring back to the Beatles and all the usual influences, have the daintiness of Twilley and a healthy smattering of West coast Byrds-Mamas vocals to lift from the yank-wimp mire. It's not a worldslayer but gets better after plays and is even highly recommended.

THE SOUL OF BLACK MUSIC, Volumes 1 and 2 (Sonet)

Bit out of normal areas but for sheer rhythm and passion very hard to beat. The roots of reggae and soul but quite recently done. Worth a check then a cheque.

Look... it'd be stupid to try
and catch up with all we've
missed while we've been
away. Sure you agree —
next month'll be okay.

Kris

HELEN CHERRY



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COMPILED BY RAY DUTHIE

hard, but the real madness takes place on the actual Upsetter tracks — "Bird in hand", "Soul Fire" and "Big neck police man" feature his odd, quavery voice. My favourite, though, must be "Vibrate on", a severely weird meeting between LP and Augustus Pablo. Watery voices punctuate the galloping ridim but the showstopper is the howling cow! Would've been great to see what he would have done with "Complete Control" again!

Reissue is Keith Hudson's mighty "Rasta Communication" (Greensleeves). Another heavy individualist, Hudson pokes his spiky voice through a veritable carpet of shimmering sound layers and hammering beat.

I Jah Man floats in with his second album, "Are we a warrior" (Island) and it couldn't be anyone else as he creams and praises over live backdrops of wafting spiritual undulance. Pretty hypnotic, I think.

Yummy, Island's soundtrack to wonder-film "Rockers" is a bag of past gems. "Police and Thieves", "Fade Away", "Tenement Yard", "Book of Rules", "Stepping Razor" — all classics, and the woolly hat on it is the inclusion of Winston Rodney singing "Jah no dead" to his spliff and the night air. (By the way, try and see the film, it's a good crack.)

Culture used to be my favourite JA group but their last few seem to have entrenched into a set pattern of call-and-response vocals and riff and ridim. "International Herb" (Front Line) is okay but not particularly dangerous, if you know what I mean.

Meanwhile The Gladiators pop up with "Sweet so till" (Front Line) and still manage to sound urgent and melodic at the same time. But you have to be rich . . .

The Rases are a prime vocal group now, with Main-Ras Prince Lincoln Thompson possessive of one of reggae's most distinctive larynxes. And those harmonies and arrangements — assured, compulsive and bolstered effectively with sublime injections of semi-Chic dancefloor devilry. Oh, the album's called "Experience" (Ballistic).

And what about the Wailing Souls? Their 'Wild Suspense' (Island) is packed with potential 45s, being bust with melody and spark. Reggae vocal group albums are lifted out of the norm by this album's qualities — y'know, good songs, swish harmonies, bit o' passion . . .

Homegrown reggae has taken stick since the Regulars' album but Capital Letters' firm debut, "Headline News" (Greensleeves) should tidy things up a bit. Strong songs, committed performances and good imagination here.

Junior Delgado is one of me fave JA singers, being emotional and distinctive. 'Effort' (DEB) fluctuates between sturdy statements like the insistent, brass-flecked title track, and softer cooings to his own Miss World, I prefer the former.

Matumbi have compacted and honed their music more since "Seven Seals", so there's more shorter songs and less overtly impressive slayers first go. Very clean with a lover's rock feel. Take the single and title track, "Point of View" as a pointer. It's on Harvest.

Right, that should keep ya going. Normal scorching service will be resumed next month.

K.N.

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THE worst thing about being skint while "Zigzag" was off the air was having to abstain from the regular visit to Daddy Kool to see what goodies Keith had got in hot from JA that week. As I write I still ain't got the funds to support what I know would be a hefty spree ('specially now the basement's crammed with Old Ska and Studio One classics). So here's a few of the UK releases that I've been sent . . . hopefully next month will see the return of the regular reggae column.

Feast of the month must be "Scratch on the Wire" (Island), a wicked collection from the scatty genius Lee Perry, who's taken stuff he's done with other people like the Meditations ("No Peace") and Jah Lion ("Soldier and Police War", the take-over to "Police and Thieves") and shot 'em through again with fresh sounds and loopy effects. Errol Walker's two tracks — "John Public" and "In these times" are well

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