

# OVERGROUND

NEW ORDER  
HOLGER CZUKAY  
THOMAS LEER  
THE NEUROTICS

ATTRITION  
BUSHIDO  
CHAKK  
PULP

EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL

no. 3



Hello and welcome to this free, miniaturised edition of Overground. Issue 3 was originally due out a year ago but one thing after another held it up till eventually most of the features were hopelessly out of date. Anyway, it was a choice between consigning it to the dustbin or doing something.... so we thought we'd send it out just to let you know Overground still exists, and also to plug our printing service which has taken up most of our time since issue 2. Publication of a revamped, new format, up to date Overground will recommence soon so look out .....

All enquiries meanwhile to  
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Martin



"If you think hard enough you'll always find something in a band to market. If you looked at the Neurotics you could take the skinhead and dark glasses of Steve and say 'well that's our image'."

A glance to one side finds Steve Drewitt just as Neurotics drummer Simon Lomond has described him. Cropped hair, dark glasses and deep in thought. Indeed this could be the band's image.

During the past year while the Redskins and New Model Army have leapt up a popularity notch into the world of hits and misses the Neurotics have stayed committed but criminally overlooked.

But frivolous attempts at packaging themselves as a marketable product for record companies is still the last thing on their minds.

"We're totally honest about everything we do. I mean there is no way we could even consider tarting ourselves up," explains bassist Colin Dredd.

"We want to get an audience that are coming along because of what the lyrics say and because of the music. It's no good us dressing up in a certain way and everybody turning up looking the same. That would be pointless having an audience who are just into the style of the band," adds Steve.

But the question still remains. Why are the Neurotics still shaded from the acclaim which has been blazingly shone on others?

"There are a million reasons," proclaims Colin, as if lost for a place to start.

"It comes down to record company finance, being able to press enough copies of records to be able to sell in large numbers during the course of any one week. Being able to afford to advertise enough in advance."

But to cut a long story short.

"It boils down to one man - a good manager. That's all it is. And we've said we're not going to have any manager unless he's a good one," concludes Steve.

The practicalities out of the way there's time for a pause. And a gaze round our table in Harlow's cosy Sun and Whalebone pub. A friendly place in keeping with the band whose conversation flows quicker than the establishment's beer.

I mention compassion, an integral part of the Neurotics lyrics giving their songs a nerve-tingling feel, as their new LP - the excellent seven track mini-album *Repercussions* - proves.

"When you look at the world as a whole and look for something compassionate, the fact is there's very little," begins Steve.

"With music you can get to a point where if you really love music that much, then it would be criminal to pile a load of shit lyrics on the top. It would be doing a dis-service to the music. You can imagine a really emotional piece of music which says 'we're going to fly to the moon'."

His voice trails off in an almost horrified tone and Simon adds:

"There's lots of pieces of good music around at the moment, but the lyrics are mostly awful."

Steve continues: "I think that everyone at some time in their lives, when they're feeling really down, occasionally they've found a record that uplifts them. Not only musically but lyrically. I've found that I've thought to myself, that's what I'd like to do."

"If you listen to something like Jackie Wilson's

Higher and Higher - every time I hear that it kills me. It's such a fucking amazing record," adds Colin.

"And I'll tell you one thing," Steve returns. "Since 1979, there's been not a drop of compassion from the Tory government at all. And there needs to be something to counter-act that."

Compassion leads to emotion. The band's songs can be deeply moving affairs. Possibly, I suggest, because in their lyrics they deal with individuals and not mythical millions.

"We want to get across to people throughout the country who will understand more about the evils of society by talking in plain language rather than empty sloganeering. Explains Steve.

"I mean how is a pensioner or middle-aged person going to respond to a red flag at a bull type statement like 'Come on unionize'?"

The obvious answer rings aloud in the momentary silence, as we switch back to the new album.

A creative, professional affair, it compresses the Neurotics raging songs onto vinyl with subtle atmospheric keyboard touches from Chris Payne (ex Tubeway Army) and an array of fiery brass moments too. It should finally show that to label the band 'punk' in anything other than attitude is totally ridiculous.

But continuing for a moment on the subject of lyrics, it contains a track called *This Fragile Life* - a poignant, almost heart-breaking song about the fate of pensioners. Steve explains.

"The point we're making is that there are people in this country who have worn their bodies out making profits for other people and they deserve to be looked after when they're incapable of carrying on that job. When you've given your health and physical energies towards creating a better country, then the country should look after those people."

"The Tories aren't interested in that at all. And the only way you can get that across is to talk plainly rather than sloganeering."

Simon, who's been following Steve's train of thought waiting for the next stop, leaps in.

"How can a pensioner vote Tory when the Tories revoke their bus passes and cut their National Health services?"

A tinge of disbelief enters his voice. I wonder whether this type of concern for others and the band's approach to lyrics could lead to wider audiences.

"I'd like to envisage a situation where the stuff we do is accessible to more people, where you turn up at a gig and find a coach party of little old ladies from Grantham, or wherever, 'cos they've been able to hear the records," Colin replies.

It's an optimistic note to end on and not that absurd.

The Neurotics are an inspiration to all in these dreadful times, in both their honesty and their ability.

Their shining style of music - a refreshing creation of tough, positive pop, rock 'n' roll - is topped with warm, humane words, so passion filled they could bring you to tears.

And yet they go virtually uncredited.

Being on an independent shouldn't stop people from rushing into their local record shop and demanding a copy of *Repercussions*. It might do, but that's silly. It's a searing, resilient record stuffed with spirit and colour and I defy anyone who disagrees through apathy.

This year's band. Not next. We live in hope.

# THE NEUROTICS



# REGIONAL REPORTS

## BRISTOL

The jeep carries seven kids in marine helmets, shades and tropical shirts — they shoot along the main drag, spattering verbal napalm at the bemused sidewalkers. Cruising under Old Glory and the daft name of Colonel Kilgore's Vietnamese Formation Surf Team, they are essentially a wacky live act. They play an annihilation mix of surf pop and New York Dolls schlock — and they have an energy for promotion that is typical of the new surge of local ambition — brewing up to burst like a boil.

Then there's the phantom of the Pop Group that will not be stamped into a permanent grave. The strikingly ugly, Mark Stewart has devised yet another second coming with Mark Stewart's Mafia. Backed by a mini constellation of top disco/dub men he wields a hoaxer's power like Brando — it don't matter if he mumbles, screams or sulks in a corner — the old disciples still look to him for salvation. Check for yourself on the current single Hypnotised (Mute Records). His line up includes the heaviest bass and drum set on the Sugar Hill label, Keith Le Blanc and Doug Wimbush, plus Steve Beresford on synth and primo reggae producer Adrian Sherwood to mix. This Godfather's droll sense of P.R. had him set up a press conference with the London hacks at his humble barn in Bristol — they duly braved the backwoods only to find the man out to lunch, in London.

Shunting a more serious substance into the publicity vein was the, by now, legend in its own lunchtime gig which billed Bristol's three top guitar bands — not so much a mafia more a triad of twang. They ride the three alternative lanes on the jangle highway which has led the traffic of sixties sounds doing the mid '80s route from America into our collective pop consciousness. R.E.M., Green on Red, Rain Parade et al., have crashed the barriers of music TV and press. And this gig showed a Brit equivalent to their Velvet/Byrds lyrical sass and melodic chime. Spanish boots, bootlace ties and a spatter of paisley add local colour to the Country route followed by the Whole Wide World. Their gravel voiced songs are sped along by the brittle rhythm guitar and decorated with sunsets, cactii and orange sunset canyons by the richly inventive lead guitarist.

The Brilliant Corners add barbs to the tangle of guitars. They're sharp. The singer looks like a skinny cross between Morrissey and Buddy Holly, his lyrics verging on protest and delivered with a vicious vigour. Their sound has moved on from the original thrashabilly into a weirder, angular precision — the "Underground Sound" they call it.

The Blue Aeroplanes made a hat trick of the evening adding the odd times of Beefheart and touches of Thompson, Verlaine, and John Martyn to the guitar work. An art band that escape the song format of the other two — D.J. mixing explosions, Sci Fi sounds and riot tracks into the fast and frantic blend of textures. All three would make a great Bristol tour package — there's lots of cash in Bristol but the bands don't have it.

And look what's happened to those wild jazz hipsters Aguchi — they've sold out that blurt/squeak beatnic sound for a new, melodic, inventive jazz pop. Fronted by a beautiful, tiny, black girl vocalist with an incredible jazz/soul voice they now run a set where hard tread bass, rippling sax and natty keyboards, are perfectly cross blended — every song is distinct, hooky and highly enjoyable. Here's a band that needs hype because they could, like the git-box trio, make it nationally.

Hey Belabal! will probably hit the headlines instead — they've got the money and the management — they dry ice and shiney equipment to go with the limp shiny pop tunes — still it's the kind of thing record executives can relate to.

And to end this year's theme of hype — the Startled Insects have just returned from a successful tour of Holland following the screening of their films at the illustrious Watershed arts centre. Their show is a masterpiece of bulldust dressed as stardust. The lights turn low — the boys appear with their post nuclear overalls and masks/lights/antenna — and they wiggle in a sinister manner to Eno/Floyd ambient synthozac noises — while some clever speeded up/slowed down films are shown in the background. If you can picture the wiggle you can recreate the gig by turning the sound off on TV and playing Badge at 78 — impressive huh?

But what does it mean? It means that one day you might hear a lot more of one of the above bands than most of the others in Bristol — because these are the ones with the talent to nut your imagination while they've got a firm grip on your ears.



## LEEDS

All roads room to Leeds

For the first time in years Leeds has something to write about: enthusiastically. Two years of the Sisters, the Johns and the March Violets is enough to tire even the most optimistic. Soft Cell were never part of any "Leeds scene", likewise only the old and infirm, or young and boring are to be heard discussing The Mekons, Gang of Four and Girls At Our Best. The likes of Richard Rouska writing about something that happened seven years ago is ridiculous, which brings us onto the man who bypassed a palace on Quality Street for a semi on Enthusiasm Avenue. A current regular in the spineless reviews selection of the Leeds Other Paper Richard Paddison and his accomplices Ian Cheek and Jeremy Beany T, are a millstone in this sludgy new Leeds scene. ROUSKA ENTERPRISES — promotions, fanzines, badge making, a hand in everything but my own boxer shorts ROUSKA HQ is 19 Stansfield Chambers, Great George Street, and should be visited.

The mainstays of Leeds club life the Phone and Warehouse are as musically and atmospherically retarded as ever. Monday night down the Phono, Gothic Ian Gillan fans scowl and slump as an obligatory Redskins or Pogues record is played. The same tracks each week, the same people with dirtier jeans and longer hair. Boring! Where's the new positivism...

Abner, drummer from PINK PEG SLAX, has at least got the guts not to hide his "Swing/Rockabilly" night behind some cowardly "alternative" headline. Sunday nights at Adam and Eves is the place to be if you've got a haircut that's been batted with a cricket racket or you simply want to dance to the best in rockabilly... and that doesn't mean the Guana Pratz.

That you can go out every night after pub hours is a fact that should be commended; eighteen months ago such a proposition would have been greeted with wide eyes and hungry lips. Rather than just accepting this new enthusiasm and idolising those who have created it people should be looking to open better and more interesting clubs. Music For The Masses are doing just that, the society who've put on the better bands at the University are opening the first club (at Intime in the Merriem Centre) to spit in the eye of the Phone/Warehouse Saturday night monopoly.

Singles from the Age of Chance, Cassandra Complex, Sinister Cleaners, Flowers For Agatha and albums from Parkside Studios, the excellent 1 in 12 Club and AKIMBO keep the presses moulding and have drawn some attention away from the capital, it's a pity there's no local radio show for such bands to be played. Leeds has always stank of Gestetner and Xerox, the fanzines currently being ir/regularly produced include KVATCH, RAISING HELL, MASS MURDERS, ROAR, ROUSKA, TONGUE IN CHEEK, BISCUIT, WHIPPINGS AND APOLOGIES, STRAWBERRY MATCH and FUNGUS SANDWICH, be they good or bad they can be found amongst the beards, beads and foul shirts on some of the employees of JUMBO RECORDS, Leeds' best record shop. My own fanzine ATTACK ON BZAG! has been sunning itself beside their Berlin Wall for six months now whilst I finish my fine art course. Believe that if you dare. Issue 8 is out now and should be purchased today.

The best live bands around at the moment, ignoring the Johns, are the SHE HEES, SURFING DAVE AND THE BEANY T'S, and BOGSHED, who don't exactly live in Leeds but Elvis Presley didn't come from Rochdale so who's complaining. The Beany T's play that exciting bouncing music that Yank yawns Jason & The Sorchers at all are desperately ripping off Bob Dylan, the Pistols and the Ramones to achieve. The She Hees, the monkey children of a Hinge and Bracket acid orgy playing disco music that even the Bee Gees would cringe at. Bogshed, ex hippy wiz kids with one foot in Jello Biafra's mouth and the other two in Captain Scarlett's toilet. All three are definitely worth seeing.

That's it, if you're wondering about the positive writing mentioned in the opening sentence don't. The last thing I want to encourage is complacency and while Leeds is just beginning to build some decent foundations us shit scatterers are more important than ever.

## MANCHESTER

Round where we live — where we'll spend all summer gambling to the perfect beat of Electro-Funk — new shops open but then shut with the regularity and frequency of a fish's mouth. Only it's not a sign of breathing and living, but a sign of dying. A sign of the times. The doors are locked, the windows are vandalised and then boarded up.

Jimmy and Mike — there's a Jimmy and Mike in every town — paste massive promotional posters up on boarded-up shops, half-demolished walls, and broken bridges. They're those pop posters that advertise a new LP released by CBS, or Island Records, or a forthcoming concert at Manchester Apollo, or whatever, Jimmy and Mike jump out of a white van, do their pasting quickly, and then scarp. The posters get rained on, written on, and ripped off. But they're there to make more money for the record companies and their 'artists'.

Artists? We're talking about money here. The root of all evil. A fact of life. And we're about how music which is a kind of art (in the same way as it's a kind of hobby), becomes a question of commercial success and failure. How music becomes a profit-generating product on a poster on a derelict shop front. Where conquerer meets conquered.

How does a band get to be rich and famous? We'd all like to know. Meanwhile the real sinew, bone and muscle of music is performed by groups who are still at the stage where they have to promote their own gigs, beg for bits of money to record demos, and either work hard or dream long. Success is just around the corner, they keep telling themselves.

Among the hard-working unknown young Manchester bands are Laugh; four young men who play bright, breezy and beautifully crafted songs. You probably won't have heard of Laugh; the nearest equivalent I can think of is Hurrah!

There's also the Levellers. They play a kind of fast blues-and-beat music (say Wah!); their live set, though, is always a bit patchy. What they need are a few really strong songs. Just two or three are enough.

The Danny Boys recently performed in aid of Bangladesh. They sound like the track 'Are You Trying To Be Funny' off Everything But The Girl's 'Love Not Money' LP. Like a cross between Orange Juice and the Long Ryders.

These are boys' groups. Boys in a band. Where have all the women gone?

Some are involved in the Magnificent 7 who promote and play at benefit gigs throughout the Manchester area. For all sorts of worthy causes. Their music isn't really very exciting, but their energy and commitment is to be applauded.

Manchester's new hopes are Simply Red who recently supported the magnificent James Brown in London. Posters are appearing everywhere promoting their new single 'Money's Too Tight (To Mention)' — a version of the classic by the Valentine Brothers. The 7" is better than the 12", though neither are as good as the original. Mick Hucknall, the singer, has soon taken upon himself the mantle of spokesman for the band (and why not; his vocals are by far the most glorious thing about them). Whee! he was in the Frantic Elevator he had shorter hair.

Perhaps the band with the shortest hair at the moment is Big Flame. A recent live set of their's reminded me just how good they are. Comparisons with the Fire Engines now seem ludicrous, so successfully have they carved their own unique identity out of their spluttering, scampering great energy. The third of their series of three-track EPs is shortly to be released.

And what else is there to do in Manchester these days? Apart from wandering around the Arndale Centre, or queuing at the Post Office that is.



## SHEFFIELD

### MANCHESTER

Fanzines are another part of a local independent music 'scene'. One national newspaper once claimed that Manchester had '15 or 20 fanzines'. This is, unfortunately, far from the truth. In fact it has about a quarter of that number. Among those currently available in the area are the following (add 20p for postage).

'The Rox' — belongs very much to the 'Bzag' brigade; bawling, bawdy, dirty, angry. It's organised by the hard-working, heavy-drinking John Robb of the Membranes. (30p from 87 Anchorsholme Lane, Blackpool, Lancs).

'Debris' — described in the NME as the 'best independent rag around'. Recent issues have included a mix of articles on heroin, video nasties and books with interviews with the likes of EBTG, Terry Hall, Coil, Sonic Youth and Mark E. Smith. (40p from 148 Great Western St., Manchester 14).

'Alarm' — this costs exactly 18p and comes out a lot more often than the two previously mentioned prestigious publications. Enthusiastic and excited; it's now up to issue 5. (18p from 33 Brookfield Ave., Manchester 21).

'The Yellow Book' — they've produced just two issues of this, both seem a bit drab and thin. Issue 2 contains short interviews with Pete Shelley, My American Wife, Membranes etc. (35p from 6 Durham Road, Salford, Manchester 6).

'Another Empire' — A tidy, type-set layout, and well written too. Again, this is only up to issue 2 (which features the Chameleons, New Model Army and the 3 Johns, as well as some welcome non-music articles). (30p from 6 Ogden Close, Heywood, Lancs).

So, the cottage industries continue; the home-produced fanzines, the informal gig and club promotions, the dedicated and financially insecure bands. But they're just cottage industries. Boisterous, committed, but poverty-stricken, ignored and marginal. We're talking about money, power and poverty. We're talking about how we live and how we die.

(Anthony Stampede)

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All the talk recently in Sheffield has been about the deal Chakk have signed with MCA.

Rumour, from various mouths who claim to be in the know, say its worth £400,000 plus.

Whatever the truth, the band have already set about building a state-of-the-art studio in the city centre — with no expense spared, seemingly.

All this is on the strength of two singles the admittedly brilliant raw funk of Out of the Flesh and the equally impressive but mellower You — and would seem to be a bold gamble by a label not known for its adventurous signing (Nik Kershaw and Musical Youth come to mind as their big money spinners).

A recent debut tour of the bigger cities was awaited with mouth-watering anticipation (hats off to Chakk's manager Amrik Rai — of the indecipherable articles in NME — for a hyperactive publicity campaign) by critics and fans alike.

If their show in Sheffield, at the Leadmill was anything to go by, they've got a lot of work on their hands to fulfil MCA's requirements. The performance was not impressive (the sound was awful which didn't help), but there was no focal point and even the 'hits' fell rather flat.

The full integration of John Stuart, from the now defunct Vendino Pact, should help strengthen the vocal department but there's still the little problem of a lack of strong material. MCA will be looking to see them on Top Of The Pops. They could have a long wait.

Another Sheffield band who have signed a big money deal — with no track record to really recommend them — is Vitamin Z, a duo made up of Geoff Barradale and bassist Nick Lockwood.

Phonogram signed them on the strength of a sighting at the Limit by A and R man David Bates (who counts Def Leppard and ABC among previous captures), at their very first gig.

With the advance, they bought themselves a 16 — track studio, recorded a first single Burning Flame which made the '90s last year, and then spent a year recording at Abbey Road, going through various local musicians as well as working with the likes of Richard Barbieri and David Jansen of Japan, before finally releasing their second single, Circus Ring (Scream About) recently.

Phonogram must be wondering if their investment is worth it but a recent Vitamin Z support slot with Tears for Fears has gone well and knowing the outfit's luck they should be superstars in America by the end of the year.

Unlike Chakk, they are a pop group pure and simple, and they've got Phonogram's muscle for marketing their faces. A sound investment surely (for all the wrong reasons).

Back in the real world, Artery finally split with a last date at the Leadmill, leaving behind three albums, eight singles, and lots of happy memories. True to the last, they disappeared in a cloud of smoke with Mick Fidler returning to sing for the first time in four years. Usual frontman Mark Gouldthorpe was in the crowd. He's already started a new venture and a solo album is almost complete.

Support act were the Mau-Maus back after a long lay-off (bass player Bunny has recovered from cancer and two others have spent a year picketing their pit, Renishaw, during the miners' strike). Their album, Fear No Evil, is worth checking out.

There has been an upsurge in good new bands — the anti everything Dig Vits Drill, the fun but totally sexist Enzymes, the fun but serious Sweetie boys and the Smiths/Orange Juice sounds of the very young Tree-bound Story (the singer's dad plays drums with Bass

Tone Trap, not forgetting bands who keep threatening to do something, Junk (currently being chased by all the major record companies), Midnight Choir, Siiri, and, as always, Pulp.

There's also a number of good bands coming out of Barnsley in the wake of the success of Danse Society (back with Arista and recording new material). Party Day, particularly, Second Coming, Fractured Echo and Attic Voices come to mind.

On a final note, as noted in a recent letter to NME, Mal and Richard of Cabaret Voltaire, must have been heartily sick when they returned from a tour of America to find Paul Hardcastle's 19 at number one.

Was nobody listening when they put out Sensoria? Paul Hardcastle obviously was.



## EDINBURGH

It seems months since the Clash played a pub gig here, in Edinburgh, at La Sorbonne, but it still stands out as the musical highlight for the period since I last wrote. Crucial Xylaphones had shaken their things across an empty hall only a week before and it seems such a shame that it's the same old story when good bands get lost in what can only be described as a jungle of new bands. Sometimes you can pick out the flowers from the weeds or even find a nice looking weed but in the mass of vegetation, oh yes, it's jungle out there Lesley!

Back to those crucial five, it's my second encounter with them and despite the vocals and song-writing charm the presentation just backed up everything they said and I fell instantly in love. Roxy/Talking Heads/Chic music coupled with Feargal/Billy Mack vocals, it's pointless trying to describe them as they've got so much it's far easier to let you hear them, c/o Brian at the Tayside Bar 197 Seagate, Dundee.

Ex-Dundonians will be sad to hear Brian's pub being removed shortly to make way for a motorway, surprising how many good pubs in Dundee have been destroyed.

I reckon a few bands might've been interested in playing Scotland at one time or another so here's a few places I'd recommend you try:

La Sorbonne, The Cowgare, Edinburgh pays £50 to £80 you play on any day except Sunday between the hours of 12.00 and 2.00am, late licence till 3.00am. You play to about 200 late night drinkers and music 'lovers' and the shortest your set should be is 45 minutes. I don't think they've stopped anyone playing because their music's 'different', ie HM to skins, Lou clones and other hippies! House PA.

The Jailhouse, Lower Calton, Edin. They don't have the big house P.A. so it's bring your own PA, wages are £50 - £100 and at present it's two sets between 9.00pm and 10.45 but with the late licence due in soon and also the house p.a. things are a changing. Great place to play just now as it's still unknown! By that I mean people don't come there to be seen, they come to watch and listen, hearts and ears open they prop up your ego with enthusiastic receptions, unless your crap then they tell you as well.

Played both in the last week, our pay day was £60 and £75 respectively, I preferred the latter.

## GLASGOW

Simple Minds, Lloyd Cole, Aztec Camera, Bluebells . . . . forget it. Bands such as these weigh heavily on the rather dull Glasgow music scene. Aspiring pop star bores doing their damndest to emulate the above and various other big names who have 'made it'.

Oh yeah, there are lots of bands most of whom would sell their souls for a major recording contract. Dull, dull, dull. You want names? Wet, Wet, Wet, Hipsway, Pure Glass. All vile.

The good noises begin with Creation Records stars the Pastels. The Pastels loathe the Glasgow music scene and are somewhat apart from it all, as well as above it all, heavens above! Their next step is an LP which Stephen Pastel says will be called 'Second Hand Emotion'.

Alan McGee, Creation mainman, is of course from Glasgow and has several other local outfits on his label, namely Meat Whiplash and Primal Scream, not forgetting Alan is manager of expatriates the Jesus and Mary Chain and fronts his own group, Biff Bang Pow! Primal Scream also feature Bobby Gillisepie of the Mary Chain on lead vocals and guitar and have a single called 'All Fall Down' whereas Meat Whiplash assault your ears with 'Don't Slip Up'.

Del Amitri have their debut LP out on Chrysalis/Big Star and, to quote Pure Popcorn fanzine, "it is doubted whether they will be successful (chartwise) due to the record buying public's inability to handle anything as lyrically, musically and emotionally complex".

Another famous Glaswegian (in London) is Alan Horne of Postcard fame and his label, Swamplands, features local heroes James King and the Lonewolves, and Memphis, who include ex Orange Juicers James Kirk and Steven Daly; both bands have put out fine singles though it is said that Horne is having problems with London Records, under who Swamplands operate, concerning these two bands. Typical eh!

Others to watch for: the Close Lobsters, the Primevals (who record for French label New Rose and wear leather trousers), the Dragsters, Almost Evening, the Wake (on Factory), Jacuzzis for Bears, Safe As Houses (Paisley's finest we've been informed), the Soup-dragons (releasing a flexidisc soon), the Styngrites (who support the Ramones at their Barrowlands gig) and the Submarines.

The clubs are pretty boring, infact very boring. The only good ones at the moment are the Splash 1 - events recently featuring the Loft, and soon Big Flame, Primal Scream and the Soup-dragons. There are also the infrequent happenings staged by Chris Davidson, formerly of Slow Dazzle fanzine, whose recent happening was a cracker, with the Pastels, Membranes, Shop Assistants, Meat Whiplash and the Dragsters all on the same bill.

By the way, Buba and the Shop Assistant are actually an Edinburgh/Inverness band but are excellent and soon release their second 45 on the Subway Organisation label in Bristol.

Another club is the Bombay bicycle Club run by Tam Coll, who is hoping to put on some Factory bands, especially James.

The fanzine scene . . . . once again the picture is a little grey. The only glimmers of colour are Juniper Beri-Beri and Pure Popcorn, with one or two other triers. Ferocious Apache is OK, and a new fanzine Cloud Nine Morris should be promising.

In Glasgow we have a new Radio Clyde complex built but the DJs are still old. Mark Goodier does try; his idea of playing local demos is good (but they are bad). The only decent DJ around is Peter Easton who has a listenable show on Friday nights (Radio Scotland 11.30 - 12.30).

Best record shops are Al Sounds and Lost In Music, which is good for second hand records.

So that's Glasgow for you; if you disagree you should have read the 'Glasgow Focus' in Jamming.

# RECORDING NORMALS



# CHAKK

CHAKK — HOT MUSIC IN A COLD CLIMATE\*

Arctic Sheffield in deep mid-winter, and here in this studio complex, this building subdivided into a map of rehearsal rooms, jagged lines of deep bass lurk behind every door. Hot music in a cold climate. This building's been through several lives; past incarnations peel off the wall in flakes of dead paint. Pre new-Depression it might have started out as a factory block.

Today, Chakk are recording here... Chakk, their debut 12" was "Out of the Flesh". An electronic chewing-gum of a rhythm track with vocal furniture scattered over it. The rhythms are gigantesque. They lurch along an aural precipice almost — but not quite — out of control. It's a blaze of noise signalling the advent of a dark millenium. It's a challenge to the whole Industrial Funk state-of-play. And you can dance to it!

Jake Harries is the voice on the record. He sits here now, forward on the near-edge of his chair for emphasis. His hair is tufted into an overhang that precedes him. He wears a red close-check shirt clasped in at the throat with a small gold eagle. A bag of MacDonald's chips starts with him and is passed clockwise like in some devolved hippie ritual of passing the joint, like some sub 'STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND' water-sharing rite. From Jake it goes to Sim Lister (sax), then to drummer/time-keeper Dee Boyle who's set opposite me. He extracts three limp anemic chips and angles them uncertainly into his mouth, then passes them to Mark Brydon (bass) who declines the offer, thereby breaking the circle. Only one Chakk is now missing. He's Alan Cross and he's still mixing tapes. Stories are told about Alan; his bedroom is pegged out with a clothes-line of different lengths of neatly numbered and annotated tapes, from which he'll select and edit, mix and match.

Chakk: Mark explains what they tend to do. "What we tend to do" he explains, "is just like, actually, set up a kind of very very basic structure on a rhythm machine. Then what happens is the spontaneity that adds to it. A lot of the track is built up through processed sound or production ideas. That", he completes, "is how it tends to work".

"That's what we work from" agrees Jake. "The machine — getting something that's simple, but which works well as it stands".

Dee retrieves the narrative. "I work with the drum machine. But maybe I'll not even keep up the same rhythm. We tend to think in terms of 16 bars of something — then a drop down to something else. THAT'S when they know the change — although we haven't actually worked out what we'll change from, or change to. It just says 'we're gonna change'".

Outside, the blizzard sets in with a vengeance, while, in this studio complex, this adventure playground of sound, me and Alan Cross sit on either side of an ITT portable cassette machine. "We did a first single that never came out — it was to be called 'Stare me Out'". It was before "Out of the Flesh". This is Alan talking now, fast, authoritatively. "We started working on it when we had a deal with Go Discs (Billy Bragg, Box, etc). But the deal was a complete non-event. Nevertheless we were working on this track down there with producer Ken Thomas. He liked what we were doing, and he just said to me 'do you want a job here? Why not come in on some of the sessions I've got lined up'. It was just a twist of fate really, but I ended up doing that for 3 or 4 months working on some very varied sessions which was good. I was asked to engineer the Test Department thing ("Beating the Retreat"). I had quite a big hand in that; but I worked on everything. There were things like 'A Day with Haircut 100', and then a Marilyn

single. I just sat in on that. I wasn't playing a part on it — but it was quite an eye opener seeing Ken doing that session. You learn a lot from actually seeing people do it, it's the best way to learn. Sitting down and asking them — picking their brains — is one thing, but actually seeing it WORK is another!

"I even did a session with some people doing a 'Library' record; there are massive record libraries — EMI has one, but this one was for... um... can't remember, it's gone. Anyway, what they do is — when someone's making a commercial or a jingle, and they need some music, they go and pick one out of the Library. So, this particular week there were these people doing a Library record. It was a little different to working with a regular band, they knew EXACTLY what they were doing. They came in and set everything up, and in twelve days they'd done nearly ten sides! Everything was so... QUICK. There's a bloke who used to be in Be-Bop Deluxe — do you remember them? Andy Wumbles Clarke. He's ended up doing that for a living. Makes two albums a year and lives off them. Lives very well too — just bought a new house and all".

One of the bands Alan engineered for during this period, but fails to mention, was Apocalypse. The now-defunct proteges of a certain Tony Fletcher's 'JAMMING' label. "But" — he continues, "I found that, at the end of that time, I'd got to the stage where I wasn't really bothered about the music that the bands were making. And that was really quite an important decision for me. Making a record, to me, is just like saying to someone 'here's my door-key'. It's like throwing my door open to them. A lot of electronics people fail because they tend to forget that. They think they're there just to make records, and that's the be-all and end-all of everything. Just making records. They get into the trap where they're making records and they think 'you've got to make use of equipment like the Fairlight and the Emulator to be a contender'. Which, really, they don't...".

Amrik Rai concurs. He's Chakk's manager. He's also a totally hot journalist — part Asian with a silly haircut (his description). "The single was recorded on the cheap" he adds. "For the price most people tend to spend on Speed". On reflection, his haircut's not THAT silly, more a flattened pompadour that matches the shoe-string tie quite well...

But Alan's now into techspeak and accelerating. "The Emulator is wildly over-priced too. £7000 for that thing! It even LOOKS horrible. I know a few people who do computing, and when you talk to THEM about the way computers are coming into the music scene they laugh. Because computer technology is far more advanced than any of its applications used in music. They've obviously got a long way to go, but instead, manufacturers have got into a rut. It's like cameras or something. They've made a synthesiser. They know that it's what sells. They know how to market it. It's got THIS and THIS, oscillators and selectors, and they boast about it. They've settled for a format too soon. No-one's come out with something REALLY wild, have they? I don't know... a synth that runs off alpha waves or something. Just a different approach. But they've settled for something and they can sell it 'cos musicians are pretty dumb!". A thoughtful pause — "but that's a point. Perhaps they SHOULD design something for idiots. Yeah, if THAT approach to design was applied to a really good quality instrument then it'd be amazing. 'Cos a lot of it's just designed for boffins...".

But hang on — this is 'OVERGROUND', not 'TECHNOFLASH MUSO'S MONTHLY'. How's about something salacious?

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"SHEFFIELD, THE CITY THAT LAUNCHED A THOUSAND HIPS, IS SENDING OUT A BECKONING CRY. THE WORD ON ITS LIPS IS - CHAKK - 'YOU/ 'THEY SAY' ESCAPES ON MARCH 14".

NME advert March 1985

I went to my local Indie outlet to ask for "You". "Chakk?" she says. "You mean Chaka Khan? We've got Chaka Khan". As though she's offering me an acceptable alternative.

Chakk: they create sound tracts of creative disorder. A couple of '83 tapes emerged with the sound of nerves strung out and jangling like barbed wire in the wind. They draw on aspects of the past to define their future - people say Cabaret Voltaire, Clock DVA, or A Certain Ratio - but Chakk's kind of intuition can't be pre-programmed. Their music/non-music is structured with a painterly use of sound, almost taken outside its musical context. A non-musical use of sound in a danceable art context. In Chakk, things like rhythm, pitch, melody and harmony are important - but they're not the real issue. The issue is FEEL. The issue is to graphically illustrate a state of mind, it builds images out of noise.

When the 'Go Discs' deal left them stranded, Cabaret Voltaire bailed them out, taking "Out of the Flesh" to launch their Double-Vision label with an authentic sliver of vinyl shrapnel. The link-up was appropriate. Double your pleasure, double your fun. Double-Vision was the complete design and development service, lifting Chakk into the rarified upper reaches of the Indies. And now...?

Now it's been superceded by Amrik Rai's latest project, Fon records, and...

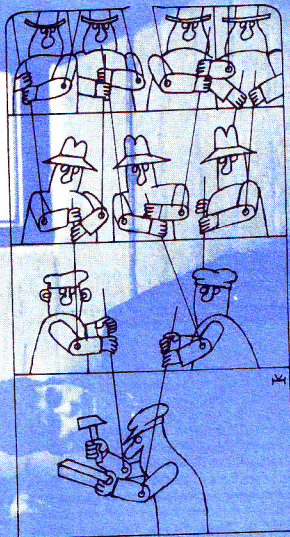
"You".

U? Y-e-w?

"No - 'YOU'. As in "You". The first Fon single" NUMBER ONE IN THE SERIES IS DOUBLE-HEADED TWELVE 'YOU/ 'THEY SAY' IN FOUR DIFFERENT EDITIONS. NUMBER TWO IS A LIMITED COMPRESSED SEVEN OF SAID TRACKS. NUMBER THREE IS GETTING CLOSER BY THE SECOND (same NME ad)

Outside, the snow falls in torrents. Inside - the interview disintegrates and the record playback of "You" begins. Tetchy rhythms shimmer in shock waves of aural stress. An art of deliberate artlessness a new high in the Industrial Funk state-of-play. It's contagious. You can dance to it. Chances r Me-Mark Page hasn't played it yet! ... and no-one mentions "getting into videos" ...

INTERVIEW BY ANDY DARLINGTON



THANK TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS :

Andy Darlington

P.A. Dann

Debris

Vinny Bee

Anthony Stampede

Rory Tilt

Ann Sheldon

Steve Lamacq

James Brown

Sushil Dade

ARTWORK

MARK ALBROW



# HOLGER CZUKAY.

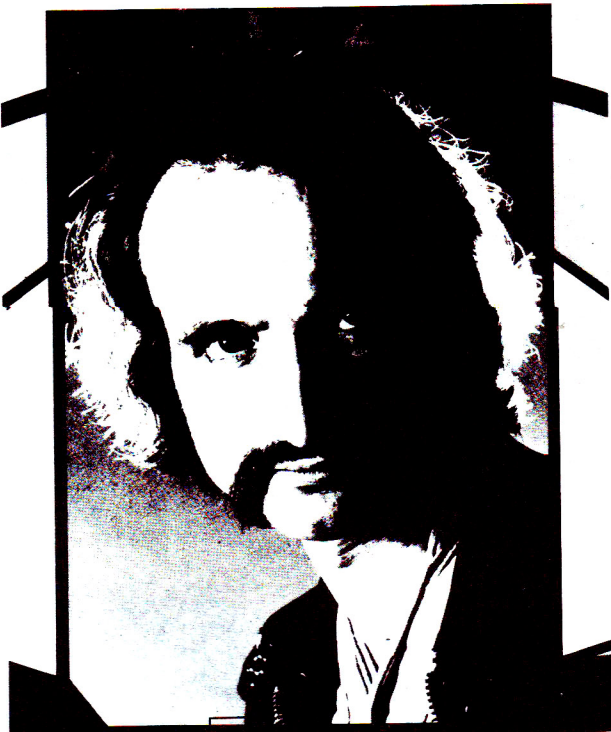
"ON THE WAY TO THE PEAK OF HOGER CZUKAY"  
by

ANDY DARLINGTON

I'm time-sliding with a German with a name like an anagram clue to a cryptic crossword. Holger Czukay is 7 years old, caught up in the wind-down of World War 2nd. He's a refugee from Danzig where his family had been close neighbours of novelist Gunter Grass. Their Red Cross train is bombed, caught up as the Americans come in across the Elbe and snarled up in the Soviet advance from the East, and everywhere there are disintegrating troops of the Reich. "I had some friends, some children, I put everybody under arms, I put helmets on them, and guns. I had a white flag, I didn't know what it represented, we found a white flag, that was all. And we marched on the Schoolyard which was occupied by the Russians". Soviet sentries watch the crazy kids coming in across the street playing at soldiers, aping the march of the armies they see all around them. The sentries smile benignly and make indecipherable jokes, and before they know it — KA-WHAAAAAAM!!! the munition dump ignites, set off accidentally by the games of Czukay's war-gypsy children. "Kids, OK, ya? But the kids have blown the whole thing up, nothing was left standing. I know the next day when I was passing by there was a little part of the wall left, and a sign — BEWARE THAT THE WALL FALLS DOWN! I was very pleased, but so afraid at the same time, how powerful I can be in destroying something".

In Manchester Square directly below us and about a million miles away a Honda Accord whispers past, hangs a sharp right turn and phases out of sight. Czukay has that effect on things. He's in Thatcher's blighted isle doing press promotion for his album "DER OSTEN IST ROT", issued through a new hook-up with Virgin. The vinyl is an ideosyncratic tour de force of oddities running from the title-piece — a cut-up reworking of the Chinese National Anthem ("The East is Red"), through to the novelty single — "The Photo Song". But he's also been working in a variety of other avant garde settings. He contributes to David Sylvian's "BRILLIANT TREES" LP — an association growing out of their mutual involvement with producer Conny Plank. And Holger's played with Jah Wobble (who he pronounces Shah Vo-Bell); they turn up on each other's records, Czukay guesting on Wobble's critically acclaimed "SNAKE CHARMER" mini-album. Czukay was also once with Can, Germany's finest and most megaton-heavy band, he studied sound subversion with the visionary electronics composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, made music for porno movies and, and, and...

The movie pre-occupation is strong with Holger Czukay. His "ODE TO PERFUME" is like a soundtrack for a movie they haven't got around to filming yet. His previous solo shot was called simply "MOVIES" and featured a long complex "Hollywood Symphony". Predictably the movie angle ran like celluloid thread through the Can story too. Their 1973 "SOUNDTRACKS" album collected their film music, drawing on Roland Kilck's "Deadlock", Roger Fritz's controversial "Madchen mit Gewalt", Thomas Schamoni's "Bottom" and their most accomplished score written for Jerzy Skolimonski's "Deep End". Czukay sees the process of filming as directly analogous to his own attitude to recording: "people take their instruments, play something, it is photographed on tape by a microphone, and is put on a record". This inter-relationship between the two different disciplines he learned from keyboard player Irmin Schmidt. "Irmin was the guy in Can who was best experienced. He had a very good talent to feel the common aspect between picture and sound. He sees moving pictures in the rhythm of music, for him these things are not different. A good movie is a good music, a visual music".



Can came together in a converted cinema, and grew out of this interaction of forms, Holger himself "was a clerk before I was a musician. I was also a teacher and I became slowly independent". He met Schmidt in Darmstadt's 'Kranischreien Institute' in 1965, mid-point in this process of self-liberation, while both of them were taking seminars under Stockhausen. "Stockhausen is somehow a prophet" he enthuses. A prophet who also "shows himself being a real musician when he takes everything in his own hands, his fingers are the concentrating points. But he's always thinking in terms of music — never just effects. When he makes electronic music, like "Kontakte", he controls just everything". Drawn together by Stockhausen's idea of 'balance in the compositional concept' Czukay and Schmidt began their own experiments in sound, recruiting guitarist Michael Karoli, and drummer Jacki Liebezelt. The final element was the spontaneous-invented lyrics and scat passages of black American Malcolm Mooney, the Syd Barrett of the group, a fountainhead of too much weirdness to regurgitate here.

Mounds of tape followed, some salvaged on the historical retrospective "Un/Limited Edition", some on "Soundtracks" and some more on the privately pressed "MONSTER MOVIE" album. Underground notoriety led to a distribution deal with U.A. and it opened the floodgates internationally for the contagious virus of Deutsch Rock. Their approach to recording, according to Czukay, was deceptively simple. "You take your instrument, somebody throws the first stone, and you follow it, you go on. And that's the experience". His own playing was sparse and minimalist. "When we started with Can I was playing thousands of bass notes. And Jacki once said 'Why are you playing so many notes?'. I said 'It must make interesting music with many notes, ya? He said 'If you play so many notes it means you haven't yet found the right one!'. Simplicity can be a real serious musical quality".



It was a vastly productive period for Can, based on the internal tensions thrown up by the conflict in styles and ideas, and the compromise necessary to unite them. Each participant produced himself as strong as he could, otherwise it would just be a group of four egos". And through the destruction of preconceptions and musical barriers, Can's creative energy blossomed. Something is the beginning of building up something. It's like out those two aspects together then you make an interesting act, yes. That is exactly the quality of Can in the early days. We have a big archive out of that time, we have recordings we never dared to offer a record company, but today times have changed and now it makes sense."

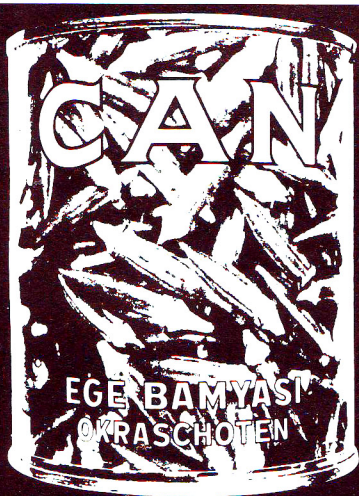
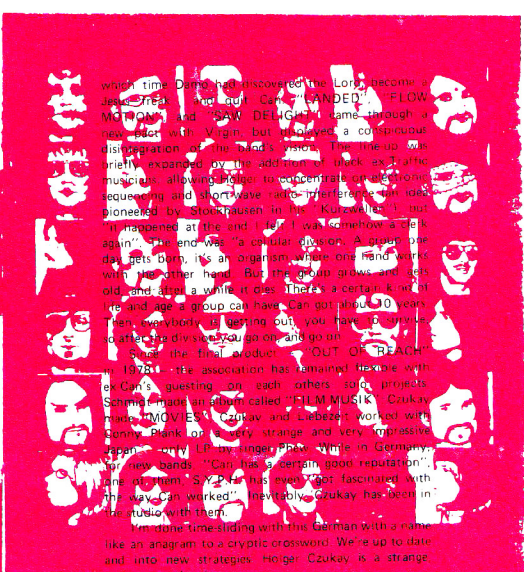
He pauses and stands up, produces a cassette tape, a casual flourish. "I have here something Can will bring out on an album which is provisionally called "1968". During '68 Can were on full power, and this gives some indication of what the live quality of the group was". He slots the tape face-up into the Music Centre and punches the key sharply on. The fade-in drone swells and the cross-rhythm shocks begin. "Being somehow heavy," he commentates. "Very heavy. They could destroy just everything..." The violent electrical storms of aggression and barbaric sophistication are unmistakable as bustling and challenging now as they were then. The comparison with Bill at its inevitable, and is inadequate now, as those with Velvet Underground were in '69. "The rhythms were holy, back was strict about it".

With international tours the albums that followed were carried on a seemingly limitless momentum, and came last, "TÄGO MAGO" in '72 featured Can's 2nd vocalist, the Japanese Kenji Domo Suzuki. Its focal point was a long drifting track called "Auman" an early recipient of Czukay's tapesplicing and mixing days. "EGE BAMYASI" came next, then "FUTURE DAYS" with a 20-minute "Bal Air" dedicated to Hedy Lamarr. "SOON OVER BABALUMA" arrived in '74 by

which time Domo had discovered the Lords became a Judo-Heck and Anti-Can's "BANDS". "FLOW MOTIONS" and "SAY DELIGHT" came through a new filter with Virgin, but showed a conspicuous dissipation of the band's vision. The line-up was briefly expanded by the addition of Greek ex-traffic musicians, allowing Hoffer to concentrate on the drum sequencing and short-wave radio interference (an idea pioneered by Stockhausen in his "Kürzwelle") but it happened at the end of 1976 I was somehow a jerk again". The end was "a cultural division. A group one day gets born, it's an organism, while one hand writes with the other hand. But the group grows and gets old and after a while it dies. There's a certain kind of life and age a group can have. Can got about 10 years. Then everybody is getting out, you have to move on, and after the division you go on and go on."

Such the final product, "OUT OF REACH" in 1978. The association has remained flexible with Can's guesting on each others solo projects. Schmidt made an album called "FILM MUSIC" Czukay made "MOVIES" Cortay and Liebertz worked with Gonty Plank on a very strange and very impressive "Japan" LP by singer Pöhl. While in Germany for new bands "Can has a certain good reputation", one of them, SAY 2 has his even got fascinated with the way Can worked. "Inevitably, Czukay has been in the studio with them."

I'm done time sliding with this German with a name like an anagram to a cryptic crossword. We're up to date and into new strategies. Hoffer Czukay is a strange and a strangely wise man.

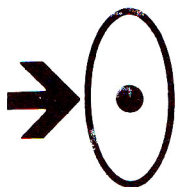




EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL







BEN WATT & TRACEY THORN

TO SOME PEOPLE EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL ARE STILL BRACKETED WITH SADE AND GIVEN A KIND OF 'NEW JAZZ' LABEL ON THE EVIDENCE OF THEIR L.P. 'EDEN', AND THEIR EARLY SINGLE 'NIGHT AND DAY', YET THEY WERE RELIEVED TO BE BRACKETED BY ADRIAN THRILLS IN THE 'N.M.E.' AT THE END OF LAST YEAR WITH PEOPLE HE CALLED 'BRITISH REALISTS': THE SMITHS, THE REDSKINS, BILLY BRAGG AND BRONSKI BEAT.

Ben: I think we made a conscious decision around about Easter last year when 'Eden' came out, when we realised that if we weren't careful we'd be lumped in with the dying trend of Carmel and the French Impressionists for the rest of our lives, and we realised that there was far more to our music than any peripheral association with that horrible term 'new jazz'. So we wanted to show that there was much more to us by the end of the year and to be recognised as a far more important group for our generation, I think. I think we achieved our aim. In December we ended up with a double page spread in the 'N.M.E.' in which was printed basically our manifesto. I think during that time we sacrificed some of our humour in an attempt to prove there was a serious side to our music.

UNTIL THAT 'N.M.E.' PIECE WERE YOU A BIT WORRIED THAT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE YOU'D MISSED OUT: THE FACT THAT YOU'D HAD TWO SINGLES - 'MINE' AND 'NATIVE LAND' - WHICH DIDN'T DO AS WELL AS 'EACH AND EVERY ONE'?

Ben: In some ways I'm pleased that they didn't do so well because I think what we've just recorded is far more representative of Everything But The Girl, and I'm glad that we've got a new year to have a new crack at the charts and a new crack at peoples' hearts and minds.

ON THE SECOND L.P. THE NEW SONGS ARE MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY OF THE SONGS ON 'EDEN'. DOES THIS REFLECT A DIFFERENT RESPONSE IN YOU TO EVENTS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD OVER THE LAST YEAR: A TYPE OF POLITICAL CHANGE IN YOU?

Tracey: I think so. It's a question of toughening up. But really we respond more to changes in the musical climate, rather than anything else. We're musicians. It's a question of wanting to be taken seriously by different people and so you deliberately try and avoid certain types of music which will be listened to by certain people, and if you want to be taken seriously by people who will listen to your political lyrics and respect that kind of music then you can't make music that might only be listened to by middle-aged executives frequenting wine-bars.

That's the rationalisation of it. But the truth is you just change your taste, and you're developing all the time and it just happens. In reality we just got bored with bossanovas.

Ben: You have to be very wise to get on in the music business, and I don't think you can exist in a little refuge and expect people will come to you; you have to make concessions and you have to be aware how the musical climate is changing.

Tracey: Yes, you change much more with the musical climate, than because the miners have been on strike or whatever. I would never claim we started to use a drummer because of what happened in Britain over the last year. But certainly we couldn't go on playing 'cocktail jazz' and 'The Girl from Ipanema'.

This new L.P. is the L.P. I've wanted to hear for ages. Lawrence out of Felt said that the only reason for being in a band is to create the music which is your ideal. In every band there's something you wish they'd do and they don't; so you form your own band and create the perfect thing.



DO YOU KNOW ALMOST BY INSTINCT WHAT THAT IDEAL SHOULD SOUND LIKE?

Ben: It's like going out shopping for a shirt, and all the shirts in the shop are really nice, but they're not quite the perfect shirt you want...

Tracey: It's got the right neck, but the wrong material. And then the next one's got the right material but the collar's too big...

Ben: So you tailor your own shirt.

Tracey: You pick your own material and make the collar just the right size.

Ben: And the important thing is once you've tailored the shirt, is whether it feels comfortable as well.

(TO STRETCH THE METAPHOR FURTHER:) IS IT JUST A MATTER OF YOU FEELING COMFORTABLE IN THAT SHIRT. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GO OUT AND GET RIDICULED?

Tracey: It matters after a while. The trouble with records is that you make them and then you live with them for three months and think that they're brilliant, and by the time they're released to the public the novelty has worn off and you need reassurance again that they're brilliant and if you don't get it and if you don't sell any copies then obviously you're plunged into complete self-doubt.

Ben: If you'd made that shirt and then walked into a party and everyone burst out laughing...

Tracey: You'd still think it was brilliant but a while later you'd have your doubts.

YOU SHARE WITH MORRISSEY A DEEP INTEREST IN LITERATURE: DO YOU THINK THAT AFFECTS THE WAY THAT YOU WRITE SONGS, USE IMAGES, SET SCENES IN SONGS?

Ben: Not consciously.

DOES IT MAKE YOU MORE CRITICALLY AWARE?

Tracey: I don't think you have to be desperately knowledgeable about literature, but just to be vaguely intelligent renders you incapable of using lyrical clichés. I would find it impossible to write "I just called to say I love you / I just called to say how much I cared".

Ben: I think the majority of pop songs that get in the charts don't deal in specifics, they deal in generalisations. The phrase "I just called to say I love you" can appeal to millions of people because it says nothing in particular and quite a lot of things in general. Records like 'Hello' by Lionel Richie do well because they could apply in any political and emotional climate because they're just generalisations.

Tracey: They're vacuous; they don't exist in the real world so if the real world changes it doesn't matter at all.

But to sing a song like 'Why?' by Bronski Beat is really zooming in on particulars. 'Hello' and 'Why' are both love songs. If we write love songs we write them about particular instances, and things that happen, not just love as some golden glow, but love as what really happens between people and what it leads to and its real consequences. Love doesn't just consist of phoning someone up all the time and saying "I just called to say I love you"! That's an illusion and those songs create and live within an illusion.

Ben: It's almost an impossible problem. The language of pop music has always been in those terms. Even Ronnie Spector said that a lot of the girl groups who were singing with Motown and stuff like that realised the absolute fatuousness of what they were singing, and then yet it was, in all its shallowness, just the language of pop.





DO YOU THINK THAT DIFFERENCES IN THE LYRICS OF THE SONGS YOU TWO HAVE WRITTEN OVER THE LAST 5 OR 6 YEARS ARE EVIDENCE OF SOME KIND OF MATURING PROCESS.

Tracey. Yes, definitely. But it doesn't mean that the recent ones are necessarily better. Our approach to songwriting has always been painfully sincere so that even songs we wrote when we were 18 are completely realistic accounts, honest accounts of what it's like to be in love at 18 and therefore they're still valuable. We have moved on. You can't go on detailing your personal life: there are limits.

DO YOU THINK ONE OF THE CONVENTIONS OF POP MUSIC IS THAT PEOPLE AREN'T ALLOWED TO GROW UP?

Tracey. Oh yes, it's very difficult to. And if you're going to be someone whose going to stick around, you have to be prepared to grow up in public. People find that difficult to accept.

YOU GET SOME WHO STICK AROUND AND END UP BEING 35 YEAR OLDS WHO ARE TRYING TO BE 18 YEAR OLDS WRITING SONGS FOR 15 YEAR OLDS, WHICH IS LUDICROUS.

Tracey. That was the sort side of the Ronettes and the Shangri-Las, it wasn't an honest account from 18 year olds, it was a really cynical, calculated attempt by men in their middle thirties to give songs to young girls to sing about being vulnerable and in love. I suppose that's what groups like us are trying to do: to sweep away that dishonesty.

Ben. It happens all the time: you can talk about Holland-Dozier-Holland as songwriters on the Motown scene, but there's now Jolley and Swain and these people dominate the charts with the songs they write. It's basically irresponsible.

Tracey. And the strange thing is we can complain about the system that gave the Ronettes all these appalling lyrics to sing, yet they're still among the best records ever made. You can still love the Supremes and the Shangri-Las: you can still value music on a different level and for different reasons. No song is just a set of lyrics.

Ben. In pop music in general 80% goes on the tune.

IS THAT WHY GROUPS LIKE BRONSKI BEAT GET AIR PLAY WITH THE SORT OF LYRICS THAT COULD EXCLUDE THEM?

Tracey. Yes, because nobody ever listens to the lyrics.

Ben. I was walking down the road just outside the flat and I passed a greengrocer's and there was this bloke taking in crates of orange juice into the shop and this girl with long blonde hair and high-heeled shoes walked passed and he wolf-whistled, gave the obligatory mating call across the road. As I came back passed the shop five minutes later he was coming out singing "contempt in his eyes as I turned to kiss his lips".

Tracey. He probably thinks it's a woman who sings that song. It's probably never occurred to him that it's a bloke. That sort of thing doesn't happen in his world.

HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES IN THE LAST YEAR STRENGTHENED YOUR FEELING THAT POP MUSIC IS A VERY SEXIST INSTITUTION? FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE FIRST 'DEBRIS' YOU SAID HOW YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT HOW YOU WOULD BE PORTRAYED IN THE PRESS, AND THE WAY YOU'D ALREADY LEARNED THAT YOU COULDN'T EXPECT A JOURNALIST TO FEEL MUCH SYMPATHY FOR YOUR POINT OF VIEW, OR EVEN TO TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY.

Tracey. I will say that sexism in the music business is a lot more subtle than I thought it was a year ago. For a lot of women it is very obvious, especially if you're beautiful.

Tracey. It's been more devious and subtle than I ever imagined. Just in the way that you are edited in your interviews and the way that women are edited out of the annals of 'rock history'. When I see a list of songwriters who are considered important over the last five years, it still goes Costello, Weller, Dammers



and Billy Bragg. Every important female group of the last five years are consciously, it seems, edited out of that history, so that even Lesley Woods isn't included, even the Raincoats and the Slits...

Ben. It's not just because those male songwriters are chart successes: Billy Bragg is only as big as the Au Pairs ever were.

Tracey. The very fact that the music papers are written by males makes it so hard to fight against what they consider to be important.

The thing which I find disturbing is the ideal of the perfect pop group is still four blokes, the heroic pop group...

Ben. Like The Beatles, The Stones, The Who... The Smiths.

Tracey. The Smiths fit into that pattern and we never will.

Ben. It does sound as if we've absolutely no success at all, but when we look at the amount of success that Everything But The Girl have had we are incredibly grateful, and in a lot of ways very surprised at the amount of immediate success we've had over the past year. And I'm very grateful to everyone whose bought our records or given us any time at all.

Tracey. I think it's the kind of recognition that we get that could be complained about. Apparently, because I'm a female singer that's the only category I belong to, not political songwriters, which is infuriating.

Ben. If we don't get lumped in with songwriters like that after this I.F. we never will.

THERE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS TO PRESENT A MORE INTELLIGENT AND LIBERATING VIEW OF WOMEN, BUT DO YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE AU-PAIRS AND THE RAINCOATS?

Tracey. There hasn't been anyone over the last few years who's been championed by the music press, and therefore brought to your attention. The people talking about these things have faded from the public eye.

Ben. The fashionable female singers over the last couple of years have been Carmel, Sade and Liz Fraser, and none of these have championed anything remotely feminist. The last person I can think of who was held up as anything other than an attractive female singer was Alison Statton.

BUT THAT WAS ON SUCH A SMALL SCALE. POP MUSIC IS SO GHETTOISED, AND AS AN INSTITUTION IT IS VERY FRAGMENTED. IT'S JUST CERTAIN GROUPS TALKING TO CERTAIN PEOPLE.

Tracey. That's why it's so important for us to achieve mainstream recognition. I'm really aware of how I'm becoming a feminist heroine in pop music, because I look around me and, strange though it may sound, I'm the only person with my level of success talking about these things with as much openness. It's so important and I'd love to take on that role: there has to be someone up there in the top thirty, or at least in the papers and on vinyl.

YOU'VE ACHIEVED A RELATIVELY HIGH LEVEL OF FAME IN THE LAST YEAR. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Tracey. It makes you get recognised in shops. But it's on such a small scale. It certainly isn't like getting mobbed everytime you go into the street.

MORRISSEY ALWAYS HAS A GREAT COLLECTION OF TRUE-LIFE ANECDOTES ABOUT HAVING PEOPLE APPROACH HIM WHILE HE'S BUYING HIS SOCKS.

Tracey. It is true, you do get recognised a lot in shops when you're buying clothes. Often it's by blokes who are loitering around the changing-rooms waiting for their girlfriend to come out and show him the new dress, and suddenly I walk by and they rush up and say "You're Tracey Thorn, my girlfriend







thinks your brilliant!" This happened to me three times when I last went out shopping.

People say some funny things; one girl came up to me in Top Shop and said "You're Tracey Thorn, I think you're marvellous. What star-sign are you?", and I told her I was Libra and she said "Oh so am I!" and wandered off in a cloud of happiness.

Ben: One of the funniest times this has happened was when one girl passed us in Camden Market and I heard her say behind our backs to her friend "Hey! That was Tracey Thorn and whatsi!"

DO YOU HAVE A FEAR OF IT ALL HAPPENING MORE OFTEN? IT WOULD BE HORRIBLE TO HAVE PEOPLE ENCAMPED OUTSIDE YOUR FRONT DOOR. PRESUMABLY IT OFTEN HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE TOGETHER BECAUSE YOU'RE SO RECONISABLE AS A COUPLE.

Ben: I think that maybe in some ways it helps being in a couple because people feel they might be intruding, which is quite a good thing really.

Tracey: In another way because we're a couple we don't inspire that kind of adulation and having your photo on the bedroom wall.

Ben: The main thing about being a pop pin-up is the fact that the pin-up is, or appears to be, successful and available.

Tracey: People like Howard Jones have to disguise the fact that they're married. Pop stars often keep their wives hidden away. You have to project this image of being footloose and fancy free.

The point is that pop music is about making money for people, and because sex is attractive to young people, it's presented sexually.

Ben: The promise of sex is attractive to them. Kids are lead to believe that if they buy pop records they will have a good sex life...

I'VE FOUND THIS TO BE UNTRUE: I'VE GOT A MASSIVE RECORD COLLECTION...

HAVE YOU FOUND IT HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR NEW FOUND WEALTH?

Ben: Yes, there's not much you can do with £1.50!

Tracey: We thought we'd put it in the bank and let it earn some interest, and in a year we might have £2.50 and we could go and buy some sweets. No, most of it is in the bank; it's just that human desire for security in the future if all this falls through in a year, which it might well do.

Ben: The first thing that made me realise we've been reasonably successful was when I had a silver disc placed in my hand for sales of 'Eden'. Pop music is very temporary in the sense that I soon forgot what it was like to have 'Each and Every One' at no. 28 in the charts, but once you've got a silver disc in your hands it makes you realise you must have sold quite a few records.

Tracey: It's true. The things that make you feel successful are so intangible; like being cheered at by three thousand people when you're on stage, but that lasts just half an hour and then you go home, or back to the hotel and that moment completely gone.

DO YOU THINK WHEN THE L.P. COMES OUT YOU'RE GOING TO BE FACED BY JOURNALISTS ASKING YOU TO EXPLAIN THE PARADOX OF HOW YOU CAN WRITE CONCERNED LYRICS WHILE EARNING SO MUCH MONEY?

Tracey: Of course they will, like they always have done with Weller and Dammers.

Ben: It's a typical British malaise that socialism and prosperity can't go hand in hand.

Tracey: Also there's this thing that people with socialist views are completely saintly, virtuous, have no self-ambition, and that the desire for security and even a level of normal human comforts can't go hand in hand with any commitment to socialism. It's such a puritanical view of things. The life that we lead is just the sort of normal, comfortable human life that everyone should be allowed to lead.

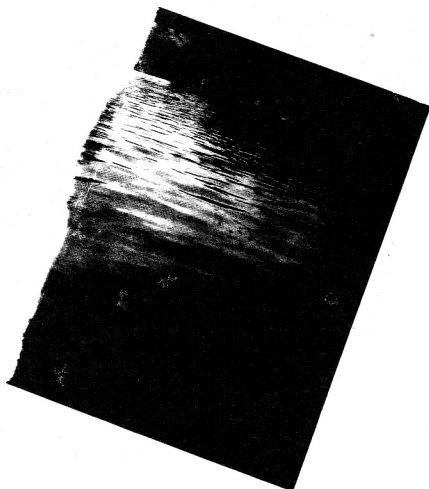
Ben: Socialism, after all, should be about raising everyone to the highest common denominator. It's about distancing everybody from poverty.

LISTENING TO THE L.P. A LOT OF THE SONGS SEEM TO BE ABOUT A WORLD WHICH YOU YOURSELVES DON'T INHABIT, ABOUT PEOPLE IN THE POORER NORTHERN TOWNS, FOR EXAMPLE. DO YOU THINK YOU'LL LOSE CONTACT WITH THEM?

Ben: In retrospect I think I'm beginning to realise that three of my formative years in terms of my songwriting were spent living in Hull and not spent living in the South. I spent the years 18 to 21 living in Hull and actually spent only a small amount of time, in relation to most students, actually at the University and more in the town itself. And a lot of our lyrics draw on that experience of living in a Northern town.

Tracey: The songs about women I feel is a world that I do completely inhabit and however much money I've got and personal comfort I still identify completely with what I see as being the oppression of women and it doesn't matter if I've got a comfortable flat when if I go down the street to the launderette I get abused by two men walking passed me. It's one of my strongest motivations, writing about women, and I will always be part of that; however successful I become I will always have to live with that. ◀

(Dave Haslam)





■ Ever feel like giving up?

I'm at the Clarendon, Hammersmith to see Attrition at a gig promoted by themselves and there's about thirty people there, twenty of which must be something to do with the group or their record label. To make matters worse nobody opens the bar and at 10.15 precisely management pulls the plugs to bring things to a crashing halt. Of course, playing to empty halls, losing money, getting ripped off and being generally treated like dirt is all part of the fun of being in an aspiring young band. It builds character. Only Attrition are no aspiring young band. They've been around for five productive years, made records, been written about. They should have a following because they're good, very good, bordering on brilliant.

Attrition on stage are Alex Novak, Martin Bowes and Marian, with Ashley working on backing tapes, Pete Morris currently contributing bass and Alan Rider providing films and slides. The story starts in Coventry with some grinding psychedelic music which slowly but surely built them a reputation on the underground/indie cassette scene. Dave Henderson picked up on them and wrote a feature for Sounds. Now Dave is one of the all-too-few good guys in the music press, his 'Wild Planet' columns have given much needed exposure to many a weird and worthy artiste. The problem is that 95% of Sounds readers probably see that Dave Henderson likes a group and make a mental note to avoid them like the plague. Martin thinks the pros of the publicity they got (including a track on the 'Elephant Table' album of

# attrition

## Slow-stalking predators



the column) outweighed the cons. Alex, who was once in the more outwardly commercial Tempest (past record also includes Religious Overdose) is less sure. In reality Attrition, who reached yet another fad by appearing on a Crass compilation, are producing music which screams out to be released from the alternative tag. Just listen to the 'Shrink-wrap' or 'Voice Of God' 12" discs. This group could be up in the charts, massive, stamping on the sickly crap that passes for electronic music today, having hits with the singles and educating with the albums. The rock hard rhythms are as insistent as a police interrogation and the vocals are fierce but melodic — a cross between Jimmy Somerville and Johnny Rotten, tormented as Ian Curtis but three times as crazy.

Live, they stick to the more accessible facets. They perform to a pre-recorded backing, which is something I'm not too keen on, but it's a performance full of punch and vitality. Alex, in his sunglasses and flickering with the backing visuals, has more than a touch of the Marc Almond about him. A rawer Soft Cell? Maybe.

Right now they'd be grateful for even an indie chart hit. Attrition could be big. They'd sign to a major label on the right terms but they've got to raise their sights and convince a major label that they need Attrition. Thankfully, miraculously, Attrition don't feel like giving up.

### ATTRITION DISCOGRAPHY

#### TAPES:

- 'Facet 1' (Alternative Sounds) June '81
- 'Live At The Star Club' (Alternative Sounds) September '81
- 1 track on 'Bits' (X-Cassettes) September '81
- 'Death House' soundtrack (Adventures In Reality) August '82
- 'Attrition Archive' (Medusa Evident) October '82
- 'Attrition Onslaught' (Third Mind) April '83
- 'Action And Reaction' by Attrition & Audio Leter (Adventures In Reality) May '83
- 3 tracks on 'Rising From The Red Sand' Vols. 1 — 5 (Third Mind) '83
- 1 track on 'The Last Supper' (Adventures In Reality) December '83
- 1 track on 'Audio Condizionata' (Trax) Italian '83
- 'Attrition/ALU' by Attrition and ALU (Irre) German '83
- 2 tracks on 'Sudden Surge of Power' (CFC) '83
- 'The Terminal Kaleidoscope' by Attrition & Legendary Pink Dots live (Ding Dong) '85

#### VINYL:

- 'Fear'/'Devoid' flexidisc with Adventures In Reality fanzine April '82
- 'Dreamsleep' on 'The Elephant Table' compilation (X-Tract) October '83
- 'Cut It Fine' on 'Shadow An Substance' compilation (Glass) March '84
- 'Monkey In A Bin'/'Surge And Run' on 'Deliverance' 12" EP with Schamaneer Circel February '84
- 'The Attrition Of Reason' LP (Third Mind) August '84
- 'The Last Refuge' on 'Life At The Top' compilation (Third Mind) October '84
- 'In Your Hand' on 'Bullshit Detector 3' (Crass) October '84
- 'Something Stirs'/'Pain'/'The Beginning Of The End' on 'Something Stirs' compilation (Adventures In Reality) December '84
- 'The Voice Of God' 12" EP (Third Mind) November '84
- 'Shrinkwrap'/'Pendulum Turns' 12" (Third Mind) May '85
- 'Hallucinator' on 'Imminent' compilation (Food) forthcoming
- 'Smiling, at the Hypogonder Club' LP (Third Mind) forthcoming
- LP of deleted and unreleased material from '81 — '84 projected for 1986



# P U L P



Five years ago I saw this band. Four people not old enough to be in the Venue on stage at the Royal Hotel, Abbeydale Road, Sheffield, turning out ram shackle, endearing and daft pop songs without a care in the world. Fronted by the gawky, bespectacled Jarvis Cocker, a man with a brilliant line in stylish bad dressing, I thought they were tailor-made for early and total obscurity. But Jarvis Cocker, against all odds, turns out not only to be a persistent bleeder but a simply brilliant charismatic songwriter, which is how come Pulp 1985 are on the point of releasing a new 12" EP on Fire Records. Let's backtrack.

By 1981 the style had developed and musicianship improved. There was a session on the John Peel show and the group took to making tongue-in-cheek artistic statements like playing with cardboard cones over their heads and being wrapped in toilet rolls by dancing girls. I left Sheffield early in 1982 and lost touch, but bearing in mind their raucous style and garage pop sense of aesthetics I half expected them to surface in the London trash wave of '83. Sure, I read the review of their LP 'It' on Red Rhino which said they could be the next Simon & Garfunkel, but I didn't take it seriously. Perhaps there was another group called Pulp? Then I heard 'It' . . . . . shock is hardly the word. More Leonard Cohen than Simon and Garfunkel but what's an acoustic guitar wimp between friends? This was fantastic in more ways than one, skilfully crafted songs of love powered by luxuriant horn arrangements, sometimes funny, sometimes poignant, always great. At this point Jarvis Cocker should have been adopted as another romantic teenage genius like Roddy Frame, but he didn't have a leather jacket with tassles on, so nobody bought the album. Pulp were dropped by Red Rhino and only now, after a low profile two years, are Pulp threatening a comeback. So what does the man himself think of that period?

'That was our middle of the road period. I wouldn't like to be compared with Simon & Garfunkel. I wouldn't like people to think we were some kind of soft rock thing. I wouldn't say that review made the band split up but it certainly made me think, well, I don't want to come on as that kind. I don't want to be anybody else besides myself. I don't think I'm very good. I don't have a great complex about how great I am but I wouldn't like to be anyone else.

Very sensible.

'Around the time of that LP we got into this music/musician type of thing, everyone was very proficient whereas I'm the best musician in the band now and I'm not very good. When people know how to play their instruments their imagination goes.

'That LP, it was dead sincere at the time. I feel a bit embarrassed when I listen to it now. I was 18 when it was released. I'm not trying to make excuses. It makes me sad more than anything else because I seem very naive and very innocent about things which I don't feel that I am now. It was hankering after something which I didn't have any experience of and when you get to actually have what you've been crying for for a long time some times you find that you don't want it and chuck it in the bin. I suppose I'm a bit more cynical than I used to be although I don't want to be because I don't think anything good can come from cynicism. You just drag things down and don't take any chances.

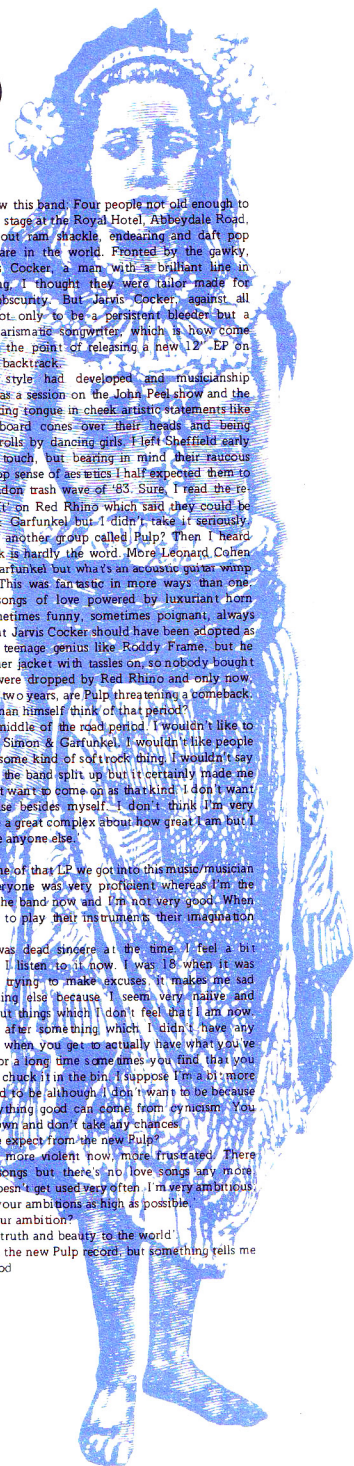
So what can we expect from the new Pulp?

'The songs are more violent now, more frustrated. There are some softer songs but there's no love songs any more. The word 'love' doesn't get used very often. I'm very ambitious, you've got to set your ambitions as high as possible.

And what is your ambition?

'To bring back truth and beauty to the world.'

I haven't heard the new Pulp record, but something tells me it's going to be good.





"I don't feel I'm someone super special who's got this big, wonderful message to give to the world - it's all just vibrations in space to me."

■ Thomas Leer, a man with a story to tell.

"I started in the late '60s when I was around 13/14, playing and singing in little soul bands and pop-type groups, but I got fed up with that and started to write my own material around about 1970/71. At the same time, and this was all part of the same sort of dissatisfaction I was feeling, I left Scotland and spent about five years wandering about the country. During that period, I built up a load of songs and spent a year trying to get a record deal. I had this fantasy of trying to get on Virgin because they were putting out the kind of music I liked at the time ('74) but I didn't get anywhere because the music was of such low quality. So rather than wandering round sleeping on people's floors and creating a whole new sound, I just wrote songs. I got a flat in Edinburgh and started to get into seriously developing my writing technique, while at the same time, like a lot of other people, getting more and more disillusioned with the 'rock scene'."

I started delving into early Kraftwerk, Can, Faust, rediscovering Psychedelia, listening to The Ramones, Patti Smith, Jonathan Richman, and writing very raw songs. As soon as I heard The Pistols, I immediately recognised it as something very similar to what I was trying to do. I went back to London with a band called Pressure, but by the time we got there most of the bands who were going to make it were already well known and it was a struggle for us to get gigs and become recognised. I went to see Siouxsie and the Banshees and The Slits at Croydon and that finished punk for me. They were doing what I wanted to do, and I thought, well, they've done it, so it's time for me to move on to something else now. I split the band up the next day, and decided that the proper thing to do was to bring the electronics thing back in again. I recorded 'Private Plane' at home about a month later - the D.I.Y. thing just seemed like an extension of the punk ethic. To those who knew about it, I proved it could be done, but where it fell down was in the promotion. Throbbing Gristle were another part of that whole D.I.Y. thing, but they had a very good self-publicist in Genesis P. Orridge. I worked for a while with Robert Rental ('The Bridge') but he was equally as bad a self-publicist as I was.

So I went back to my soul/jazz routes. It seemed to me that taking Stax and Tamla soul and injecting that into electronics would bring a different element into it. With 'Contradictions' I wanted to make a mush, a big potpourri of sound, but the equipment wasn't capable of handling it and that's why I began to think in terms of moving to the majors - it was more a creative decision rather than desperately wanting to be rich and famous."

Indeed, and I think this can be put down as much to a lack of maturity as to the usual budgetary restrictions, a yawning chasm between many of the ideas and their execution is self-evident in much of Thomas Leer's pre-Arista output. This gap has since been breached by the adoption of a systematic process of rarification, responsible for extending the already considerable subversive reach of 'International', and sifting the grains of sand in 'Heartbeat' until only the pure quartz remains.

"Arista didn't know much about my past, all they knew was the last single for Cherry Red, 'All About You', but they liked it and thought it could have been a hit in the normal pop sense. Compared to the other labels, they were the most adventurous. All the others, when I said I wanted a Fairlight, didn't wanna know - most didn't even know what it was. I did have a long-standing offer from Geoff Travis to be on Blanco Y Negro but he understood that I wanted quite a lot of money to buy better equipment - things he couldn't actually offer me at the time.

I made it quite clear to Arista that they weren't signing up a potential Thompson Twin. As it happens, since I joined up, there are a lot of people on the company who see me precisely that way - in fact, worse than that, they see me as Howard Jones."

■ Thomas Leer is not Howard Jones.

c.P.A. Dann 1985

# LEER



## THOMAS LEER

### DISCOGRAPHY

|   |                   |             |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| 7" Private Plane/International  | (Oblique)         | 1978        |
| LP The Bridge (with Robert Rental)  | (Industrial)      | 1979        |
| EP 4 Movements  | (Cherry Red)      | Summer 1981 |
| 2 x 12" Contradictions  | (Cherry Red) 1982 |             |
| 7" All About You/Saving Grace   | (Cherry Red)      | Early 1983  |
| 7"/12" International/Easy Way   | (Arista)          | July '84    |
| 7"/12" Heartbeat/Control Yourself   | (Arista)          | Feb. '85    |
| 7" No. 1/Chasing The Dragon   | (Arista)          | May '85     |
| 12" No. 1/Chasing The Dragon/Trust Me   |                   |             |
| LP The Scale of Ten   | (Arista)          | June '85    |
| Kings Of Sham (outtake included on Cherry Red compilation, Perspectives & Distortion) |                   | 1981        |
| Who's Fooling You (free flexi with VINYL)   |                   |             |
| No. 21 - Cherry Red/Vinyl Records, Amsterdam  |                   | Jan. '83    |
| Contributed synthesiser to 3 tracks on LP Soul Mining - The The (Some Bizarre):       |                   |             |
| The Twilight Hour/I've Been Waiting For Tomorrow (All Of My Life)/Giant               |                   | 1983        |



# BUSHIDO

## BUILDING REPUTATIONS

■ Gary Levermore, as well as running Third Mind Records, is a founder of Bushido, whose 'Sands of Nakajima' LP was reviewed in glowing terms in Overground no. 2, and just about everywhere else. An electronic album of stunning power and variety it was one of the most original and surprising records I'd heard in years. But then 'Deliverance' turned up. In just nine months of existence Bushido have developed a sound of stylish maturity which most groups strive a lifetime to achieve without coming close: a mix of disco, rock, classical and avant-garde which nevertheless has a strong thread of continuity. Much of the progress is due to the full integration of Chris Elliot, a classically trained guitar, violin and piano player who wrote most of the music for the new LP.

Where does the inspiration for Bushido's blend come from?

Chris: Debussy, Stravinsky... that was for the last LP ('Deliverance'). Today's stuff comes from anywhere really.

Is the variety intentional?

Gary: With 'Sands of Nakajima' it was because all three people did an equal amount, but 'Deliverance' was almost totally Chris's music.

Do you think you fit in with modern pop music?

Gary: I think we're getting close now. It's a case of the band getting better really, and the addition of a good violinist now... it should help us to become more acceptable overall. It would be nice, as long as it's what we want to do.

Are Bushido different to anyone else around?

Gary: I don't think we could pretend to be pioneering at all. I don't think many bands could. I don't think anything's been done in the last ten years that hasn't been done before, apart from the obvious developments in technology, but certain things that certain bands are saying they're pioneering I don't think they have. I'd say looking back on it that Throbbin Gristle didn't actually pioneer much at all. You grow up a bit and start listening to older music, and relating to T.G. I'm thinking of late 60s/early 70s German bands that I think were doing the same thing as T.G. years earlier, like Cluster.

Isn't it hard to sell yourself without specific comparisons?

Gary: Everyone gets annoyed when they're pigeon-holed in the press but the press does have to do things like that otherwise people aren't going to know what the band are like at all. Obviously I think Bushido do sound like certain bands but it's different influences coming in.

Can you be sold to a mass public?

Gary: I think so. If Bushido had been around for fifteen years and had a serious audience I think 'Deliverance' could have been sold to a mass public.

What I'm getting at is the problem of marketing. In the 70s there was such a thing as an 'album band' who sold respectable volumes of vinyl while ignoring the fickle singles market. Punk reacted against that and as a result success now depends on the pin-up, the video and the three minute radio 1.45. Anything too thoughtful or tasteful to fit the format doesn't get a look-in. We think of Magazine or the Psychedelic Furs as examples, great groups who for all their acclaim were commercial failures and disappeared because they didn't look/act/sound like Wham!

There are other options: I'm convinced Bushido could be gainfully employed making brilliant film/TV soundtracks. Failing all else (though when I claimed 'Intrigue' was a touch reminiscent of E.L.P., the reaction wasn't too enthusiastic) they could get some dirty denims and long wigs and pose as 'prog-rockers'. Definitely a last resort, I stress.

Anyway, reassuringly, Bushido do want fame and fortune and show a degree of willingness to meet the

biz half way at least. There's a new single on the way, a double A featuring a remixed version of 'Lament from 'Deliverance', redone with guitars and new vocalist Julie singing, and on the flip a new track which on first listen sounded just a bit like 'Obsession' by Animation, just a bit! It's titanic.

## BUSHIDO DISCOGRAPHY

LP 'The Sands Of Nakajima' TMMLP 10  
12" 'Among The Ruins/The First Cut/Beyond The Great Wall' TMSO2

LP 'Deliverance' TMMLP 12  
Extract from 'Beyond The Great Wall' included on 'Life At The Top' compilation TMMLP 07  
'Somebody Up There Likes Me', 'Sayonara' and 'I Like The Way You Said That'

included on 'Could You Walk On The Waters' compilation LP TMMLP 09  
12" 'Voices/Time And Time Again' forthcoming  
All recordings on Third Mind Records.

Track also on 'The Elephant Table Album' which they want to keep quiet about.





# REVIEWS

**ELLIOT:** Again I Lift You To My Heart Again (Office Box/Himalaya 12"). **THIRD PARTY:** Financial Director (Trifle Sudden 45). **CONSPIRACY INTERNATIONAL:** Thy Gift Of Tongues (CT1 12").

**GOLD:** Reviewing the releases for this issue has been extraordinary difficult, and Elliott's record is the reason why. You see, every time I sit down with a pile of untried and in some cases unappetising vinyl I think 'Well, I'll just listen to the Elliott single first', and after that the Geisha Girls, Bushmen and Princess Tiny Meat just don't have the same appeal. I thought maybe if I listened to it enough I'd get bored, but it just gets better. The studio engineer who accidentally wiped the master tape clean did Elliott a favour – the re-recorded version is far superior to the prototype which I mentioned in my Issue 2 feature. Though he's been away from the live circuit far too long there are few performers who put more emotion into their act with total disregard for the risk of losing one's cool. No posing. 'Again I Lift You To My Heart Again' conveys a large part of that raw passion. The voice quivers on the verge of breakdown, the guitar swirls and builds, the melody soars. How long can this brilliance remain unrecognised? Eventually I got someone to hide the disc so I could get on with reviewing the rest....

**SILVER:** Alright, I may be a little biased because Third Party feature one time they Must Be Russian Chris Whitehead but they really are pretty good. Firstly, I know you have to do something outrageous to get yourself noticed these days, but a black vinyl 7" in a straight-forward black and white sleeve is taking things to unnecessary extremes. In any case, there was one just like it about five years ago. Third Party are based in Boston, Lincs. Where I guess everything is a bit behind the times, so this is pure, spine-tingling, unpretentious, unsynthesised pop of a species long thought extinct. Of course, they have about as much chance of making it big as their local football team had of beating Wembley last May (private jibe), but you could make me, you and a third party very happy by sending about £1.50 to C. Whitehead, 127 Ward Cres., Fishoft, Boston, Lincs, PE21 0RQ.

**BRONZE:** Conspiracy International are based around Chris & Cosy, once the sensible half of Throbbing Gristle. They too now inhabit the Far East (Kings Lynn to be precise). Their work over the last three years has been occasionally rather than regularly brilliant, but 'Thy Gift Of Tongues' is something special, a cerebral death march with a skull jarring rhythm and bass tones guaranteed to turn your brain to jelly. I almost believe the warning about 'subliminals'!

**FATS COMET:** Don't Forget That Beat (Rough Trade 12").

Plenty of producers have crossed the studio partition to make records by themselves and invariably the records are technically brilliant and totally soulless. Soul hardly comes into electro – it's 99% science, so for Sherwood and Leblanc there should be no problem. It's fine dance music, yes, but I miss that 1% of true inspiration. On 'Strike' it was Arthur, On 'Don't Forget That Beat' it's missing.

**BLUBBERRY HELLBELLIES:** Flabbergasted (Upright LP). **BUSHMEN:** Sweat It Out (Upright 12").

If the Boothill Foottappers, Pole Cats or any of the other groups with which members of the Bluberry Hellbellies are involved don't make them millionaires they have a career ready and

waiting as country superstars in the U.S. of A. Classy tunes like 'Hootin' and Howlin' and 'On The Trail' sound like every country song you ever heard, and if you don't pay too much attention to the irreverent nature of the lyrics you can easily imagine Johnny Cash snarling them to the inmates at San Quentin. Then again, the best thing about country is usually that the artists don't take themselves too seriously, and the more clichés packed into a song the better it goes down so maybe no alteration are necessary. A smattering of r'n'b and reggae in the repertoire adds variety. One of the most enjoyable LPs around.

Fun seems to be the Upright Records credo (Higsons/Serious: Drinking/Laurel & Hardy) so what they're doing with the Bushmen is beyond me – they're about as much fun as getting up for work on a Monday. Laborious funk and grey political credibility – I hope they raise loads of money with their benefit gigs. Personally I'd contribute to the cause by paying them not to play.

**JONATHAN RICHMAN AND THE MODERN LOVERS:** Rockin' and Romance (Rough Trade LP). That Summer Feeling (Rough Trade 12"). **DURETTI COLUMN:** Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say (Factory 12").

Jonathan Richman is one of the new wave's survivors – he's been making records for over ten years and appeared in the earliest fanzine charts – but he's been scarcely noticed since the freak '77 hit 'Egyptian Reggae' and the more durable album 'Rock 'n' Roll With The Modern Lovers' consisting of revved up nursery rhymes, ethnic folk tunes and other acoustic wimpy. The last image of Jojo (as he likes to be known) has him beaming inanely from under his long hair wearing flares and a flowery shirt on the sleeve of that LP. Listening to 'Rockin' And Romance' you'd think nothing had changed. It's raw, acoustic and contains songs about all his favourite people and places. Still drippy after all these years? A press conference shattered the illusion. Facing journalists, Jojo turns out to be a hard-nosed, bad tempered prima donna who argued with questions instead of answering them and more or less walked out at the first opportunity. Oh well! 'That Summer Feeling' comes from the previous, more sophisticated 'Jonathan Sings' LP and has a certain warm, floral charm.

For the REAL summer feeling however, get the Duretti Column 12", six drifting, carressing tunes from the seductive guitar (and other instruments) of Vini Reilly. Great stuff – though probably recorded in the middle of winter.

**NORMAN SALANT:** Sax Talk (C.D. Presents LP & 12"). **CRAWL AWAY MACHINE:** Crawl Away Machine (C.D. Presents 12"). **TALES OF TERROR:** Tales Of Terror (C.D. Presents LP).

C.D. Presents are a U.S. indie best known for their hardcore output, presently setting up in the U.K. These are some of the products not scheduled for U.K. release though available if you want them badly enough. I have to confess the sound of saxophones generally gets up my nose, so Norman Salant starts on shaky ground. It's a slick, commercial sound which with a big label and the right lyrics could produce hit singles either side of the Atlantic. Remember who told you! Crawl Away Machine would like to think they're much wilder and weirder than they are. That name! And the sleeve photos... all doing their best to look intense, man! Once again, it's not really indie stuff, certainly by British standards. Perhaps a re-assessment of aims and tactics is called for?



**THE SAINTS:** Live In A Mudhut (New Rose LP); **THE FUGS:** Refuse To Be Burnt Out (New Rose LP).

I must admit to having lost track of The Saints' career not long after they made 'This Perfect Day', one of the unrecognised punk classics, much better than the earlier, better known 'I'm Stranded'. Thanks to New Rose, the French label dedicated to sustaining the careers of unfashionable geriatric rockers who are of course massive in Europe, the Saints have kept making music. In contrast to their big production LPs 'Live In A Mudhut' is a riotous splash of jangling guitars with lovely mournful tunes reminiscent of anything from Lou Reed to the Byrds. Definitely le rock 'n' roll, but probably not enough to revive interest in them here, more's the pity.

The Fugs first came to prominence ten years earlier than the Saints and decided to make a comeback not as an exercise in nostalgia but because they felt the urge to protest again in the year of Orwell and Reagan. The political points are certainly valid but the cabaret presentation, a theatrical combination of folk and poetry as well as the more predictable psychedelic tinged music, means they'll be preaching to their own generation. Are any of them listening? I think not.

**COIL:** Panic (K.422 12"); **WISEBLOOD:** Motorbug (K.422 12").

Two from the Some Bizarre/K.422 clique: Foetus man Clint Ruin produces Coil on this outing while Wiseblood are an occasional union of Clint Ruin and Roli Mosimann from the Swans. 'Panic' is half way between dance music and all out aural assault but includes a delectable, groaning version of 'Tainted Love' on the flip. Profits go to A.I.D.S. counselling.

'Motorbug' is a magnificent, maniacal, evocative, careering drive, a homage to automobile and death obsession, they say, theirs not mine I presume.

**JAZZ BUTCHER:** Real Men (Glass 12")

The Jazz Butcher seems permanently on the verge of the big breakthrough and never quite makes it. A gifted and unclassifiable songsmith. This disc includes his best known track 'Southern Mark Smith'. I say smiling Vic Godard.

**VIRGIN PRUNES:** Over The Rainbow (Baby LP)

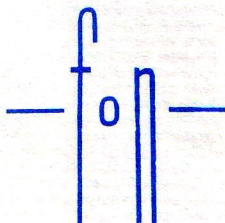
A collection of oddments to plug the gaps in your collection, the tracks and styles vary from the jokey, lightweight, to sublime, repetitive electronic and acoustic tracks. If you're unfamiliar with the genius of the Virgin Prunes you'd be best starting with the Rough Trade album 'If I Die I Die'. If that's left you hungry for more rush out and but this 'cause it's excellent. **STRESS:** The Big Wheel (Adventures in Reality LP).

If I were Stress I'd take some copies of this LP and ram one down the throat of every company A&R man in London. Stress are from the same 'school' as Attrition and Bushido and like these two groups are far too good to remain in independent obscurity. They're also the most overtly commercial of the three; four of the six tracks are superb, basic pop songs — 'Slaves To Beat', 'The Price You Pay', and 'Get The Most', with its incongruous similarities to Spandau Ballet's 'Lifeline', could easily have stepped out of the Depeche Mode repertoire. I've no idea whether Stress will take that as a compliment but I would.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS:** Abstract Issue 5 (Abstract LP/Magazine); **Could You Walk On The Waters** (Third Mind LP).

A multi-media package from Abstract for yer money you get on vinyl a speech and a bagpipe band masquerading as Test Dept. Wolfgang Press, 400 Blows, Swans, Cindytalk, Colourbox, Gene Loves Jexebel, and Also The Trees, Niyam Nyam, The Jazz Butcher and an uncredited track (In The Nursery?), plus a glossy mag including interviews with most of these. It's an inventive selection with a few excellent tracks and the presentation/packaging is very good. Things which could have been better? I'd have preferred a less logical running order (all the 'offbeat' acts on side 1 and the 'commercial' sounds on side 2) and it would have been more consistently listenable if they'd covered less ground and halved the number of groups, giving those prepared to do something specifically for Abstract more space. Given that Abstract is a 'package' rather than a common or garden magazine like Overground, it would be more of a lasting document, similarly, if groups had more paper to reveal their ideas and opinions, if they have any. These complaints notwithstanding Abstract it well worth buying, supporting and looking forward to.

With 'Could You Walk On The Waters' Third Mind have limited their selection to four acts and benefit by it. The problem is that it will undoubtedly be seen as 'just another weird indie compilation'. They could obviously benefit by adopting some of Abstract's ideas in marketing because the music is fabulous. Bushido open proceedings — plenty about them elsewhere in these pages; two of the tracks are alternative versions of ones available on LPs, the third 'Sayonara' is the most classical influenced thing they've done. There's not a lot to say about Konstruktivits or Nurse With Wound. For a long time I thought Konstruktivits were called Konstruktivitis and thought it was some obscure ailment afflicting builders. Nurse With Wound, in case you didn't know, are veterans of the industrial/new avant-garde/whatever you like to call it scene and deserve credit for being originals. Finally, Legendary Pink Dots, more electric but every bit as psychedelic as on their 'Tower' LP reviewed in Issue 2. If you could cross Abstract with 'Could You Walk On The Waters' you'd have the perfect product. Since that's impossible buy both.



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Tales Of Terror are more what C.D. built their reputation on. I guess if they'd had half the money to spend on recording that Norman Salant did it could have been truly hardcore record instead of merely a very good one. The fact that they're practically unknown here just underlines the gulf between the still thriving and vibrant U.S. punk movement and the idea-bankrupt, fast disappearing U.K. scene. Maybe forthcoming C.D. re-releases from the Avengers and (Canadian) Subhumans will inject some life.

**THE WOODENTOPS:** Move Me (Rough Trade 45); HORACE ANDY Elementary (Rough Trade 12"); PRINCESS TINYMEAT: Sloblands (Rough Trade 12")

Rough Trade have always been a company to stick their necks out and give release to material they regarded as deserving rather than profitable and they've faced extinction as a result before now. If they've been forced to join the music biz rat race to survive at least they're still accessible, and honest. They admit that the success of the Smiths supports the rest of the operation. Some of the new releases are realistic shots at a similar hit and some total indulgence.

The Woodentops obviously fall into the first category - 'Move Me' is a fine tune that shakes, rattles and rolls along like a freight train through your consciousness. It's missed the charts, but so did 'Hand In Glove' so maybe the transition can be made. Maybe you'll know by the time you read this. Horace Andy, a reggae artist who's been recording for nearly twenty years could also hit. The sound is Eddy Grant-ish, the style more rootsy, but there's enough in there to hint at a possible crossover.

Indulgence? Princess Tiny Meat (a.k.a. ex Virgin Prune Bintl) makes one of the most godawful racks ever committed to vinyl, like a bad quality bootleg of a Swans gig played at half speed. Twelve inches of this? A tastefully obscene sleeve is the nearest thing to a redeeming factor, but printing the sleeve probably cost more than they'll get back in the sales.

**MOOSE AND THE MUDBUGS:** Milk Crate Takeover (Art Art 12"); NEXT BIG THING (a fanzine).

This record took nearly two months to arrive (from P.O. Box 954, East Dennis, Massachusetts 02461) being redirected twice along the way. I'm glad they found me, because apart from the Bluberry Hellbellies, this is the only record I've received where the performers actually sound like they're enjoying themselves. Vocal style not too dissimilar to W/Jayne County, wild kazoo playing and music sounding like I'd imagine the Undertones' first rehearsal... a welcome change if not exactly a milestone in rock history. Records like this just don't seem to get made much in Britain anymore around the world the garage pop/trash ethic survives and thrives. If you're not an aficionado Next Big Thing will introduce you to literally dozens of bands in this field you've never heard of but will want to know more about. The detail including solid and reassuring, the layout an extravagant labour of love. The latest issue is a double header - read from the back it becomes 'Rockin' Bones', the ex Cramps zine now covering all things psychobilly though presently undergoing a public identity crisis. Essential reading - 80p includes post, from Lindsay Hutton, 10 Dochart Path, Grangemouth, Stirlingshire FK3 0HJ. While you're about it enquire after their 120 page Cramps retrospective.

**WORKFORCE:** Skin Scraped Back (Doublevision 12")

What with the new style Cabs, Hula, Chakk and now Workforce all making highly rhythmic noises the Sheffield sound may now actually exist for the first time in the seven years that journalists have been writing about it. Workforce include ex Cabs/Hula drummer Alan Fish, Rod Leigh from the criminally ignored I'm So Hollow, and Tim Owen, once of the semi-legendary and notorious Naked Pygmy Voles. Screaming subterranean funk is the order of the day, with a bass sound which will shake the floor even on the tinniest stereo. A worthy debut, though who's winning the war on the dance floor I can't say, since I've yet to go to a club where anyone actually dances to this stuff, whatever they like to think.

**ERIC RANDOM:** Time Splice (Doublevision LP)

An LP of leftovers, but none the worse for that; Eric appears in Arab headgear on the sleeve thus setting the tone for part of the album. He's been involved with Indian/Western fusion group the Sons of Arqua, so it's not all pose. The feel is understated tunes, bubbling base rhythms and lazy, jazzy strolling. An LP of mood rather than melody.

**BASS TONE TRAP:** Trapping (BTT LP); THE BOX: Muscle In (Doublevision 12")

If I knew anything about jazz I'd probably be able to tell you Bass Tone Trap are pushing back its frontiers. Certainly this is odd, interesting original music, well worth repeated listening. 'Sanctified' is brilliant, cutting right across categorization and making a good case as a vibrant, uptempo single. The rest is more 'difficult', but easy to like.

The Box were another outfit with a blend of influences including a touch of jazz (called Charlie Collins). Sadly this is their last testament, failure to fit in with Go! Discs' new commercial aspirations and apparent public apathy having contributed to their demise. The possibility of future reunions is not ruled out but until such time treasure this jagged, shaking and infectious celebration of sound.

**THE SMITHS:** That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore (Rough Trade 45)

Smiths releases should be much more of an event. 'How Soon Is Now?' could have made the top five if it hadn't been an LP track and a 12" B side first. Here's another cut from 'Meat Is Murder'. I reckon it'll be a minor hit but not much more. Am I right?

**GEISHAGIRLS:** Slave Of Love (Dog Breath 12")

The Geisha Girls' main claim to fame is having the video to their earlier single, 'I'm A Teapot' or something, held up on The Tube as a fine example of DIY promo films. Let's hope there's a video for this because the music won't get them far.

**THE LOVED ONES:** Locate And Cement (Metaphon LP)

Imagine you've got a hangover and you go into a cathedral. There's a service going on in some distant part of the building and you can hear that along with noises from outside, cars, aircraft, voices, a ghetto blaster playing electro. Don't dismiss them as hippies, implies the press release. Right, this is a great record.

**BITING TONGUES:** Feverhouse (Factory LP)

A slowly moaning electronic soundtrack. Might mean more if I'd seen the film.

**GENERAL STRIKE:** *Danger in Paradise* (Touch cassette).

A very wonderful tape — a collection of strangely familiar and yet not-quite-right music from Beresford — Toop — Cunningham (Frank Chickens. Flying Lizards are their highest profiles in the 'rock' world, where the accelerated headache 'rules'). This is offbeat music of danger and disbelief, except that it's very friendly and takes such trouble to explain itself... a cute booklet accompanies with blurb by the incalculably erudite Richard Cook. Nice photos of dialectic dogs, liberator graveyards in Pacific paradises, couples leaning voluptuously against the Beaches of Desire... all life is here, human and otherwise. A constant soundtrack to a summary of sin (and I mean public not private).

**SONIC YOUTH:** *Bad Moon Rising* (Homespeed LP).

Use a lot of noise feedback etc., to create a sort of Car/iggy headache sound, but there is a strong rock base — as in far out experimental rock with wailed poetry about doom, Death Valley, headaches... Some of it is quite mournful — its such a drag to be an artist in NYC, with the weight of the world's problems on your young shoulders. Some of it is brilliant. Much better live.

**COIL:** *Scatology* (Force And Form LP).

This has been out for ages, but missed last issue. A great record. Get the 12" Tainted Love as well.

**WHA HA HA** (Recommended LP).

Along with General Strike, my most played thing at the moment. Seems to be a collection of theatre music from Japan, by Wha Ha Ha, or a compilation — anyway a wide range of music from very odd uptempo show songs to slow bass driven atmospherics... addictive stuff.

After many playings as an LP, I discovered it should be played at 45. But don't believe them — it is much more hypnotic and also comprehensible at 33. This is actually a good technique for rehearsing music — lots of tedious stuff sounds much better at 45 and there's always the quarter speed version of Metal Machine Music.

**DAVID THOMAS** — *More Places Forever* (Rough Trade LP).

With the Pedestrians (Lindsay Cooper, Chris Cutler, Tony Maimone) this is David Thomas' fourth LP since the demise of Pere Ubu. Thank you RT press release, I had wondered about Mr. Thomas. A set of fine songs, idiosyncratic, melodic, pleasant and very musical (as you might expect). Each song makes some point, has some purpose — a very thoughtful and balanced LP. No headaches with this.

**MNEMONISTS** — *HORDE* (Recommended LP)

World noise from USA that sounds a lot like Industria UK circa 79-80 yet comes with artwork that is, well, open bodies and surreally infested front parlours, and the sound mergest Faust like textures and those machine noises that could be operating room or factory... another addictive record when played very loud, the sound is inaudible (in it's 'true' state) at normal volume. There's even a bit that sounds like Last Few Days at the Georges Bataille festival 84, if I dare say such a thing... It's loathsome to describe music by comparison, so just check this one out, as they say. Which might prove difficult unless you live near Recommended Records. (see ad).

**REGULAR MUSIC** (Rough Trade LP)

Systems music with a Smile. Very nice, very Nyman. This is actually very good, difficult to fault etc. There is a very good article in a recent

Performance magazine about the rise of systems music as a sort of 'new progressive' music for people who used to listen to ELP as teenagers, and are now too pooped to pop and yeuched-off with the ghastly 'rock' headache. This stuff is pretty mega now after all — and the musicians have moved as much as the audiences (Michael Nyman says "my attention span used to be 40 minutes — now it's 4"). Philip Glass plays for a million years in Trafalgar Square and everyone thinks they're making an ad for Channel 4... which isn't saying a great deal about this particular album. It's really fab, brilliantly played by musicians as diverse as Charles Hayward (This Heat, Camberwell Now), various ex ABC, Ultravox Andrew Poppo, Style Council, LPO, LSO session musicians who can all sing, dance, do acrobatics, calculus, the ironing and play their multi-instruments simultaneously and at the same time whilst swallowing a glass of water backwards. In other words, amazing but breaks no new ground.

**THE DEAD GOLDFISH ENSEMBLE** — *Structures And Strictures* (Peeved Tapes).

Now this lot use a couple of mono synths and a microcomposer to make a sort of Johnny Moped version of Glass classics. Lacking any sensible dynamics due to the programmed source this is a charming sort of anti-music that is much better than most human groups produce. Very pleasant on it's own but fun to scratch into very loud yeuchy rock music — the yeuchier the better. (Peeved Records, 37 Pointout Rd, Bassett, Southampton SO1 7DL. £1.50, £2.00 overseas).

## fanzines

Did you know that the 'legendary' Sniffing Glue consisted of twelve badly written, sparsely filled, dull looking, single sided pages which sold for 30p (at a time when the weekly music papers cost about 15p) and when they turned an entire issue over to readers' contributions it was the biggest load of garbage ever printed. No, I'm not saying it wasn't IMPORTANT. I'm just saying that despite the current vogue to write off fanzines in general in fact the quality, style and value is 100% better now. Sure half the 'zines around are crap. That leaves a few hundred that aren't. Some (like Next Big Thing, already mentioned) are worthwhile because they cover a particular musical or geographical scene not adequately reported elsewhere, others are just vital for their attitude. Some, like Debris, could be mass publications if they ever got the capital facilities for growth: others have no pretence to be anything other than fanzines. Wanna know which? Here's four which I DEMAND you buy. Debris 40p + (A4) see from 148 Gt. Western St., Manchester M14 4SN; Catch 22, 25p + SAE from 124 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glas. GL53 7JX; Pure Popcorn, 15p + SAE from Sushil Dade, 70 Iain Rd, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 4JA; Texas Hotel Burning, 20p + SAE from Stephen B. Hunter, The Alangrange, Kenilworth Road, Bridge Of Allan, Stirlingshire.



PERFORMERS



# gillian of new

## ■ Do you enjoy playing live?

Yes, or else I wouldn't be doing it would I?

## ■ Some bands think of it as a necessary evil and make it out as a chore.

Oh no, I think we quite enjoy it, but we like to play in a smaller way, we don't like playing tours, so everybody thinks we don't like doing gigs. I think it's better playing in smaller halls than huge places where you just don't get any contact with the audience at all, you're as well just playing to yourselves in a big place.

## ◆ Do you see many other bands?

No, I don't see as many as I used to, because where we live we have to travel into Manchester to see bands and that can be choring.

## ■ When you were young was music a big thing to you, what kinds of bands did you go to?

I used to go and see all the local bands in Manchester, it wasn't any trouble, and I didn't mind travelling! I used to see bands like Buzzcocks and Joy Division, that's all I really did with my spare time.

## Do you ever picture yourself through the eyes of someone your own age then, now?

Oh yeah because being in a band with somebody who you used to sort of look up to, because I didn't even know Joy Division before I liked them, so joining a band that you used to like you know how people feel towards a band. Like, I used to buy bootlegs, everything I could get my hands on by Joy Division. Other members of New Order just think it's wimpy to buy bootlegs and that, but when you were once in their shoes you know how it felt. When you see them all queuing you'd think they were mad, but I know when I was like that I'd go through anything to see my favourite band play.

## When did you join New Order?

I'm not quite sure, it's sort of a grey area, 1981 I think, when the three of them came back from America after deciding to play on, they decided they needed a 4th member, so I was picked, I don't know why!

## ■ An audition?

No I don't think so, I think they decided that if they picked another lad it would be obvious or if they got another singer he'd try to copy Ian or he'd always be compared to what Ian used to be like so they decided to let Barney take over the singing and get somebody else in to take over the keyboards and guitar.

## ■ How do you write the songs?

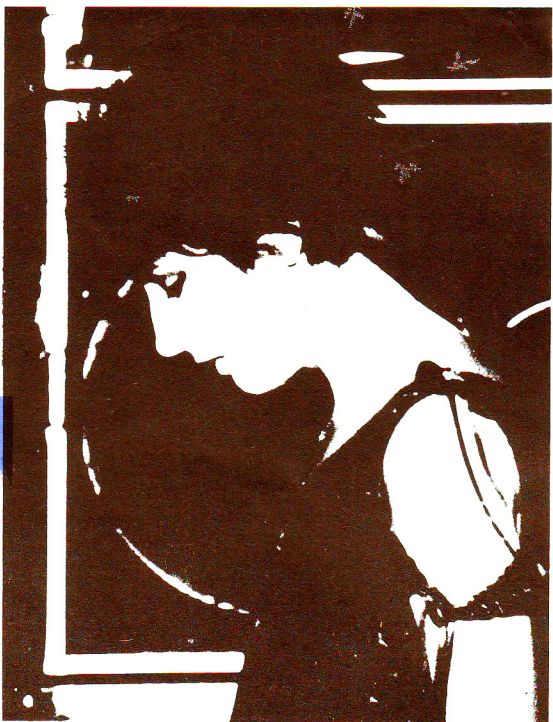
We still write as Joy Division where everybody joins in but when I first joined up I used to just get told to play this and that because I didn't know anything about writing songs, but now it's got a lot easier for me because I know how we do it now!

## ■ A lot of people would try and make you out as philosophers or say that your songs have deep hidden meaning to them, are you philosophers?

(pause) I don't think so, no! After Joy Division when people started reading so many things into the songs and saying that this must have meant this, instead of just 4 people writing songs and making music. Now I think people try to read more into our music and say things like, this song must mean this and this must mean that. People always do that though. It's good if everybody has a different view of your songs and thinks that it means different things. When I used to like Joy Division I always thought the songs meant something else and when you found out what the songs meant it almost disappoints you!

## ◆ I thought Blue Monday was a very powerful song...

That's because you've read so much into it! We wrote it in the studio. We wrote the music in the rehearsal room, but when it came to the vocals we just did it off the top of our heads. I know it's hard to believe, but when we're in the studio everybody just panics and tries to come up with lines and we fit them all together.



## ■ Do you write an album at one time, or is it just whenever you feel you've got a lot of songs you go out and record them?

Yeah, we don't go out and say write an album every year, we just decide when we've got a load of new songs that we haven't recorded or if we've got a few and then write a few more in the studio, because it's nice in the studio cause you get a different angle, we do a record.

## ■ How do you describe your occupation on your passport?

Oh! When I had to get one I put the truth as a musician, but I wouldn't say that myself. You get quite a row laughs when you're going through customs. I remember when I was in Australia, they had to check all our luggage and they said, 'what kind of music do you play?' and we said 'rock, punk rock', and they said 'oh my god, these aren't punk rock clothes', frilly dresses and everything. I think they were really disappointed that we weren't a punk rock group with leathers and studs and everything on our faces. It's quite interesting going through customs. If I knew now I wouldn't have put musician!

## ■ What would you be doing now if you weren't with the band?

I was going to be a graphic designer in advertising but I completely hated advertising. I was at college Stockport College and I did a course in graphic arts and business studies cause when I was at school I used to really like painting and drawing and the only way to get a job was to go into advertising, so I did a course at Stockport and I hated it, it was awful. They hated everything you did off your own bat. They always wanted a set thing and if you didn't do that set thing they thought you were really weird. We had to do a film show, and me and this girl did it all to music, all that was happening in Manchester and doing it to all these bands, while all the others in the group were doing it in zoos and things like Bus Stations. They thought ours was dead weird but it wasn't it was just because it wasn't in the advertising world. I had to do accounts and economics and all that and it was dead boring, so it was a good job they asked me to join the band, otherwise I'd still be stuck in Stockport!

Reprinted with permission from the May issue of *Drainbeat* (4 Marshall Road, Edinburgh). We were unable to contact Gillian to ask if she minded so we hope she doesn't think we've taken liberties!