

AU PAIRS

The AU PAIRS have been claiming a lot of critical success recently due to the release of their brilliant LP 'Playing With A Different Sex'. We interviewed the group the day after it's release:



JANE

PAUL

just something Martin puts together occasionally.

How did you get the Human contract? (Jane says something at this point, unfortunately it got lost on a duff recording. It was something to do with a friend of the group had some connections with Human Records.)

PAUL CONTINUES: It's run by two guys, one knows the recording side as he's had a lot of experience with RSO. The other bloke works on the business side; distribution advertising etc.

We're quite pleased with them. It all came about from this friend who saw us. The deal was just what we were looking for.

What's the next single called?

JANE: What's it called?

LESLEY: It hasn't got a title yet.

Do you have difficulty finding livework?

PAUL: We're quite fortunate working with a big agency: TBA. We can always find gigs. When we played alot of R.A.S. and R.A.R. gigs we made a few contacts there.

The subject is completely changed: Does 'Playing With A Different Sex' have a definition?

RECENT ARRIVAL LESLEY: Yeah three really. There's playing, as in playing, like in sport that sort of thing. There's playing sexually with 'different sex' being the opposite sex or 'different sex' not sex you're expected to play with, as in terms of homosexuality.

What does the cover of the LP represent?

LESLEY: The Chinese woman on the cover isn't wearing a uniform but this amazing dress. It's not like when people say women can fight as well as men, because then they

How did the group form?

PAUL: I knew Lesley, and I went to school with Pete. We were mucking around and decided to form a band. We needed a bass player. Martin, the bloke who manages us, knew Jane had just got a bass and was learning to play. We took it from there.

..... There were interesting points, like Jane was in the bath when Lesley phoned.

JANE: I conducted the conversation with Lesley in the nude.

The band decided to release their first single themselves. 'You' was released on 021 Records, with a little help from Rough Trade.

021 Records has since branched out, and discovered other excellent new bands:

PAUL: At the moment IGANDA, MUSICAL YOUTH and TARZAN 5 have released singles. When the money is available THE PINKIES and PAST RELIEF will be releasing singles. It's



LESLEY

usually dress up in a uniform. This woman is going into battle as a woman, running across a field carrying her gun.

What is Flexi Sex about?

LESLEY: Flexi Sex, like in terms of sexuality and homosexuality.

Lesley left that answer there, in search of the sandwiches. I think there is more to Flexi Sex than that and wanted her to express it, but forgot to come back to it.

Previous interviews have said you want commercial success, do you think you will get it with such strong lyrical content: The BBC censoring 'Come Again' from television as an example.

LESLEY: We're not saying that is our one aim that without that we won't be happy. We think our songs are commercially viable. The music itself is also commercially viable. The lyrics are based on the same subject as a lot of other people's songs. Only we present our's in a different way. This means we can't be put in a bag, because the music press can't decide whether we are commercial or political, which to me is a ridiculous distinction. The Beat are very commercial but their songs are also very political. A lot of music journalists want to be able to reinforce these distinctions.

What are some of the unrecorded songs about?

LESLEY: Pretty Boys will be on the B side of the next single, a wierd new version of it. It's a sendup of an Iggy Pop song: 'Pretty Girls', which has the line: "I like girls, some have nice shapes" Our version changes the sexes to show girls can appreciate boys for their bodies as well.

'What Kind Of Girl' is a song we don't do anymore. It's about images girls choose to adopt. Things like the tomgirl image, or Olivia Newton John "Oh, when I'm at home I like to wear casual jeans and T-shirts." (Lesley puts on excellent pisstake voice of sappy American female voice)

Do you think stereotyping will ever end, something the group constantly criticise.

LESLEY: It probably will, but will be replaced by something else, maybe worse.

When the Au Pairs played the Marquee last February, thereabouts, there was an

incident when a group of girls complained to the DJ for playing sexist music, the DJ punched one of them: I mentioned this 'political incident' to Lesley.

LESLEY: Yeah, that got some publicity in Sounds. When we play the three nights at the Marquee on this tour we've made sure that DJ won't be there, as it's written into the contract.

What next?

LESLEY: Who knows?

Some facts may be a bit mixed up, apologies if they are. We don't twist facts deliberately. We were having cassette recorder problems on the night.



PETE

CONCERT REVIEW

The Pinkies were supporting tonight. (We were going to do an interview with them but we put it off and didn't get round to doing it, not because we're stuck up but because we had no questions, although we could have prepared some boring ones. Apologies to them!)

They turned out to be brilliant, and interesting to watch. They played some excellent songs, although I don't know any titles they did play the forthcoming single for release on Q21 Records. I would have at least liked to have been able to print their lineup, but haven't even been able to do that through lack of knowledge.

The Au Pairs were even more brilliant than last time. Pete's often praised solid drumming. The massive pounding bass played by a stationary, smiling Jane. The pacing figures at the front were Lesley and Paul. Their excellent antagonistic vocals were at their best on 'Come Again', if you've heard it you'll get the general idea when it reaches a climax.

Everything on the LP, except 'Unfinished Business' was played, and more besides: Singles and a couple of unrecorded tracks.

I'm not sure what the first encore was, the second was 'It's Obvious' (the second version of it that night) when the Au Pairs were joined by the Pinkies (and a large percentage of the audience as well). A third encore was unexpected, so obviously people were amazed as they appeared for a fourth one; an oldie 'Piece Of My Heart' I can't wait to see them again.



LEAD PINKIE

AU PAIRS: PLAYING WITH A

'Playing With A Different Sex' is **DIFFERENT SEX** more than an eye catching title. It represents the Au Pairs sexual ideas. The songs on the LP go deeper indicating these ideas.

It is hard to pick favourite tracks on an LP so consistently brilliant. However one of my preferences starts the LP on the 'Lip Side'. 'We're so cool' describes the relationship between a couple who allow each other freedom for casual affairs. If these casual affairs went any further than one night stands the other partner would feel threatened and insecure.

'The Love Song' has been an old favourite of mine since it's days as a track on a John Peel session. The lyrics regard love and romance as a plot only building up to a business agreement: Marriage.

'The Set Up' is about a husband who needs his wife for security and a replacement for his mother: "Playing your game, your mother substitute." The wife is loved by the husband as though she is his mother. As Lesley points out this situation could occur the other way around.

'Headache For Michelle' is a very neat clever song, easier to quote than explain: "They are coming amongst and in between us." "they're selling you smack at a slightly cheaper rate, 'cos you're not a threat when you're out of your head." Mainly the song is



saying if they can get you doped, up you're not in the position to think or argue.

'Come Again' starts side two, quite a famous song, due to it's lyrical content. Paul introduced the song live by saying: "This song's about faking orgasms in bed. Not many people do though."

'Armegh' is put across in a strong way the atmosphere of deceit created is quite moving. It concerns the tortuous lives of 32 women, political prisoners. The happenings are put across as though it is all happening to the one woman: "feeling cold and sick, She gets a couple of valium, Now she's relaxed for the next interrogation."

The music is also excellent, with an LP like this I would rather concentrate on the lyrics. Lesley says the music is commercially viable, and I suppose she's right. The two guitars make some great sounds, the arrangement of these and various other breaks are excellent (and appropriate) these add depth to the songs.

An essential accompaniment to Lesley's vocals is a lyric sheet, if you're lucky you may get an iron on T-shirt transfer: "Ying With A Different Sex."



LESLEY

DELTA 5



JULZ

How did you get the Rough Trade deal?

JULZ: Fiction offered the Mekons studio time to make a demo as they were interested in them. The Mekons couldn't do it, so it was arranged that we would do it instead. Fiction liked the demo enough to want it remixed and have it released. We weren't really interested in letting them put it out.

Somehow the Gang Of Four manager Rob Warr (The G.O.F. had just signed to E.M.I.) played the tape to E.M.I. They offered us studio time as they thought we could do better than that. We used this opportunity to rerecord the tracks as we knew there wasn't much chance of taking us on. We took the new demo to Rough Trade; Geoff Travis was impressed, and wanted to put it out as our first single. So 'Mind Your Own Business' was released on Rough Trade.

after this two more singles were released on R.T. 'Anticipation' and 'Try'. The Delta 5 decided against doing their first LP with Rough Trade.

JULZ: Just before Christmas we left R.T. and survived on pig money, while attempts were made to get us signed. The day after the budget we signed to PRE Records.

What countries have you toured and what did you hope to achieve by doing so?

JULZ: Last year we toured Belgium, Holland, Finland and Canada. This year we've done Belgium and Holland again. We headlined all of these tours except the four days in Finland with the Slits.

I don't know what we hoped to achieve; we just wanted to go abroad (we were living on £20 a week). The American tour was quite an achievement, as we went there to play 23 ^{dates} when there were only two singles available there on import. On that tour we made 15 dollars! Which obviously isn't much but usually tours like that lose thousands of pounds. We did get 4,000 advance orders on 'Try' which was released there as R.T. had just set up an American office.

The setting was a noisy dressing room where the only table with a plug socket within a wire's reach was at the doorway to the hall where Pere Ubu were on stage. The interview was with Julz; usually the lead singer, and occasional guitarist.

What sort of problems have you encountered since you have been formed?

JULZ: None at the time we just formed.

How did you get equipment?

JULZ: Beethan and I were in Edinburgh with the Mekons and Gang Of Four. They shared a rehearsal room, and had quite a lot of equipment between them. They didn't use this all the time so on odd nights we bashed about. Ros got involved with us, she had been playing bass for the Mekons but left. Originally we were going to have two basses, drums and vocals, this changed though when we were practising after a Mekons session. John Langford, the Mekons drummer, played guitar for us. Until a permanent drummer was found Dave Allen, the Gang Of Four bassist, sat in on drums. The band played sets like this until John Langford had to go to Ireland with the Mekons. Kelvin then moved in on drums after being the Gang Of Four drummer for a week. Dave Allen and a G.O.F. roadie then shared the guitar, doing half a set each. This lasted until Alan moved in as a permanent guitarist.



What sort of situations and happenings encourage you to write songs? What are a few about?
 JULZ: I don't know, you just get an idea when you're sitting on a bus or something. We write about things that have happened to us, or that we have a personal experience of, rather than say: "Fly me to the moon and when I get there I'll jump about in craters." I don't know a fuck about jumping in craters on the moon. That's a pretty stupid sort of allegory but basically they're about something that happens to you or someone close has told you about so you feel part of it as they tell you. When we get an idea we slightly obscure it, so it is more accessible to people rather than a personal reiteration. Then people might say "Oh yeah, that's happened to me. Am I making any sense?"



KELVIN

Did someone take you to the Wimpy for a big night out? (Referring to a line from 'You'.)
 JULZ: 'You' was a totally stupid song. It was the second song we ever wrote. That was taken from a men's wear advert, that was shown on the telly. It said "The big night out." There were all these people standing around a hotdog stand, saying a line. So we all lumbered round the mike saying what people had done to us.

What are your views on anything that means anything of importance to you?
 JULZ: I'm really into breaking down the barriers between the sexes.....
 I mentioned Flexi Sex and the conversation subject changes to the Au Pairs, and the fact that they were currently recording their debut LP in Hastings, tentatively entitled 'Playing With A Different Sex.'

DANGEROUS GIRLS

Rob Peters (Drums) and Rob Rampton (Bass) met while failing their B.S.c's at Exeter University, playing in different bands. They met Chris Ames (Guitar) shortly, before they moved to Birmingham as a centralised point from which to break out nationally. Once in Birmingham they met Mykocupa, an Exeter exile, working in theatre groups.

The four formed an experimental avant-garde rock band (Something like ATV's unconverted style) called 'In The Jungle With No Guns' which rehearsed a lot but never gigged: dissatisfaction led to a rethink; and in a burst of creativity 12 songs were written in two weeks (The lyrics all done in one night) and the name was changed to Dangerous Girls - spotted as a small headline in a local paper.



ALAN

BETHAN

Their first gig was in Oct 78 with Dexy's Midnight Runners (Their first also) and others in Dudley.

The 12 songs at the Old Smithy Studio, near Worcester, and the demos were hawked around the major companies for several months with no results. Lots of gigs were played around the country, but the lack of response on the recording front depressed and frustrated Chris Ames, who quit the band in April 79.

Several guitarists auditioned for Chris's position, but none were suitable. Then Beetmoll, one of the roadies had a go, and was taken on. Feeling the need to get something out on vinyl two tracks from the demos were remixed:

MORE DANGEROUS GIRLS

'Dangerous Girls' and 'I Don't Want To Eat' and put out as a single on Happy Face Records, with help from the Old Smithy. This was released in July 79 after the first tour of 16 dates.

While doing a few dates with 'Here And Now', who were recording a live album, the opportunity to record the set at Norwich was taken. Four tracks emerged as the 'Taaga' EP, which served to introduce Beetmoll to vinyl! 'Taaga' was released in November 79, and was number one by the end of December. The second tour took place through November and early December, 25 dates. The third took place from May 21st until August the 9th. Truly mammoth! Some of the problems were too; such as the rear axle parting company with the rest of the van at a festival in Bristol.

At the end of the tour, negotiated with Human Records, a new London independent label and the double A side single "Man In The Glass" and "M O ?S" was released at last.

THE FASHIONABLE IMPURE

As The Fashionable Impure have played only two gigs, and have no vinyl releases in their own right you may wonder why they are getting a good sized article. Apart from the fact Chris Simpson has given us two good interviews, the group are brilliant. You may have heard their track on the Sunderland Compilation. This is not one of their better pieces, as the group were only given five days notice that they were to be on the LP. The recently formed band had hardly rehearsed.

I interviewed Chris Simpson at his place: I had the usual cassette recorder problems, worse than usual. The play wheel was completely fucked. Chris set mending it as I interviewed him (Using his recorder.)

CHRIS: I'm the only one doing it full time at the moment. The rest of the band are waiting to hear from companies before packing their in.

Are there any companies showing interest? CHRIS: Six majors; WEA, MCA, Virgin, CBS, A&M and EMI. We're waiting to hear what they think of our second demo.

Is 'Awayday' only being kept in the set until all copies of the single are sold (Chris used to be the lead singer in Treatment Room, who released an excellent single. When the band split Chris was left with the remaining copies and the debts.)

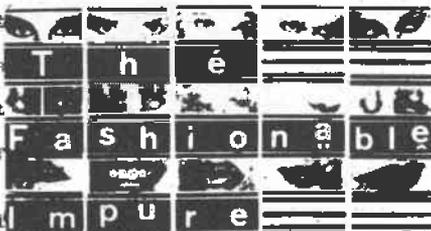
CHRIS: We'll probably be keeping it in the set, as I think it's one of the stronger songs.

The Fashionable Impure are an ambitious band trying to experiment in collage music (concrete) and incorporate visuals into the live set.

CHRIS: Our bass player, Nick, has just got a job with 'Seen And Heard.' They do shows for industry providing lighting, videos, sound etc. This could be of use to the band.

Over the Summer we'll be getting ready for some October dates. It can't be until then as there's so much preparation to be done: mainly artwork and we want to get some material recorded. Hopefully we'll have a record company to back us by then. When we are ready we'll play as many gigs as we can get. All of the group are trying to arrange gigs in their area. At the end of these dates we're hoping to play some London dates, where hopefully the companies interested will send A&R men to them.

We don't intend making videos of the band as we don't have the finance to compete in the video market. If we can't do it properly we'd be wasting our time to do it at all.



Lineup:

Steve Harvey: Drums

Nick Ketteringham: Bass Vocals

Chris Simpson: Guitar Vocals

Bronck Szerszynski: Guitar Vocals

Pat Shammon: Artwork

The Fashionable Impure play, Spurrier Arts August 8th (Saturday) Newcastle



The group have played two gigs, the first in Sunderland, the second in Newcastle (which I thought was excellent)

CHRIS: We didn't have the slides for ~~summers~~ the gig was only meant as a chance to try out the tapes. I thought it was pretty good in place as a though. The Newcastle gig went a lot better. We didn't have problems like my guitar dropping off during the set.

A while ago when I talked to Chris he said that when the band played there wouldn't be a support group, but instead they would move away from the conventional style of a concert and provide the night's entertainment themselves. I asked Chris if he thought they had done this.

CHRIS: I thought it was dismal, we had totally the wrong conception. In future we'll be bringing in other bands.

Wouldn't this be hard with all your gear



CHRIS: We're improving the equipment and making it as simple as possible, so stage changes can be done quickly, it'll be easier transporting the gear then.

Do you think the tapes add depth to the sound?

CHRIS: I think they do in places, but need sorting out so they do it all the time. The bits of tape between songs were crap, as they slowed the set down. I think if the gaps had been about four seconds long people wouldn't have known what was happening, and would have watched more intently.

Is the set going to be changed drastically before the October gigs?

CHRIS: We'll be building on it, replacing the weaker material with new.

The write up of this interview was rushed as i had a sort of deadline to meet (One more day's use of the typewriter) A lot of comments may be mixed up, i only had time to listen to the tape once. In fact this writing's not going to reach the space at the bottom, left in anticipation of photos.