

ECCENTRIC

25p

SLEEVE NOTES



AU PAIRS



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BLANCMANGE

NUMBER 3

ORANGE JUICE

CONTAINS NO VITAMIN C PUNS

ORANGE JUICE

Edwyn - Vocals
David - Bass
Malcolm - Guitar
Zeke - Drums

Orange Juice are on their first tour with the new line up. Stephen and James have been thrown out, Edwyn and David are continuing with new arrivals Zeke (the hip black drummer from Rhodesia) and Malcolm (ex Josef K). They're playing Newcastle's Soul Kitchen tonight, and before they rush off to do a soundcheck they agree to do an interview for our magazine.

We all sit round a table in the Five Bridges Hotel drinking coffee and eating cheese and ham sandwiches. They explain that they have just done an in-store appearance, their first, at the Newcastle branch of HMV Records, and David says that his hands are still moving as though he were signing his name. He then goes on to destroy four copies of our magazine, with the graffiti he calls an autograph.

ESN: Did you feel stupid standing in front of all those people signing autographs?

EDWYN: We did before they came in because they had shut the whole shop so there were hundreds of people just waiting outside. It was very flattering indeed, but also very embarrassing.

DAVID: Zeke was standing behind the record counter waiting for something to sign when someone handed him another band's album.

EDWYN: He thought he had to sign it but the boy actually wanted to buy it.

ZEKE: It was just as well he didn't want me to autograph it as I wasn't going to put my name on a Whitesnake album.

DAVID: He was very embarrassed. He must have thought the shop was doing a roaring trade.

After a few minutes of everyone taking hysterics and acting very stupidly, we manage to control them and the interview continues.

ESN: What do you think of the "hip Scottish band" thing?

DAVID: It's very good.

MALCOLM: There are a lot of good bands in Scotland but there is also a lot of rubbish.

ESN: Obviously you got a lot of publicity from people who say "this is a Scottish band, listen attentively".

EDWYN: I think that was a press thing which has now seemed to have subsided a little.

ESN: There was a double page feature in the NME on the Scottish band scene.

EDWYN: I think that was when it actually took off.

ESN: There were two funny people on the front cover of that issue, can't remember who they were.

(Clare Grogan of Altered Images and Edwyn were pictured on the cover of the NME mentioned.)



EDWYN: Two great friends, two great lovers.

Zeke doesn't seem to be doing much in the interview so we ask him if he plays the keyboards.

ZEKE: We do all the jokes around here.

EDWYN: And it's about time you got your hair cut.

ZEKE: And I must say, your magazine is rubbish.

MALCOLM: I like it, I think it's wonderful.

ESN: Does it seem as though you have come a long way since you first started?

EDWYN: (adopting posh English voice) Progress has been slow, eventually we're going to reach our aspiration, which is to be the biggest phenomenon in the World.

DAVID: And that's not excluding the planets.

EDWYN: As David said, why settle for world domination when science has made inter-galactic travel possible.

ESN: It may be hard to get an audience up there though.

DAVID: We know several people from different planets.

ESN: There won't be many local bands up there.

DAVID: There is. They've got a scene going.

ESN: Has being in a band changed you, attitude wise? Obviously you're still stupid.

ZEKE: The interviewers are being awful to us.

EDWYN: We are aspiring to make more professional records, we're considering producers at the moment. Just better arrangements, better production, better players, better sleeves, better records, better bloody everything.

DAVID: Better musicians. That's why we threw out Stephen and James.

EVERYONE: Ah!

EDWYN: (posh voice again) That's a fact, I'm glad you mentioned that lot. There was no animosity between the former members and ourselves. Musically I don't think

they came up to scratch and when you are on a major record company if one wishes to have any status whatsoever, you must press upon them that one can actually play one's instruments. So hence we got bloody old Zeke in to play the guitar and Mal to play the drums.

ESN: How did the split come about?

EDWYN: I had to act as a sort of co-ordinator between all of the members of the band. You see they didn't get on with each other. When we were in the studio recording the LP, I had to keep running from member to member smiling in their faces to get some feeling of empathy between this stupid group. I was relieved, to say the least, after the recording of the LP, and then I thought, bloody hell, we've got two more albums to record because we asked Polydor if we could only do three

albums as we didn't consider it to be a long term project. I realised that we couldn't sustain or create that output.

MALCOLM: There's a review of our single in this magazine.

(The single was "L.O.V.E. Love", and we slugged it off.

DAVID: I think that was quite a good review.



"EVERYONE IN POLYDOR THINKS WE'RE NUTS"

EDWYN: (walks away from the table calling us all sorts of names) Bloody hell, I've never been so insulted in all my bloody life.

(Edwyn returns after a few sulks.)

ESN: Do you think this line up will be a long term project?

ZEKE: Yes, we batter each other every night.

DAVID: I think we'll stay together as this line up for quite a long time, we've managed to get quite a few new songs together and we have another LP coming out very soon.

EDWYN: (picks up our cassette recorder and begins to talk into it as though it were a walky talky) We're in the foyer of the Three Muns Hotel in Newcastle, and we've got two people from Eccentric Golden Idiots Sleeve Note thing here asking about our motives and ethics.

DAVID: (joining in) Hello Bingo, this is Magral. Still got them under surveillance. Over and out.

EDWYN: How many copies of your periodical do you sell?

ESN: Somewhere in the region of 60-80.

DAVID: 60-80!:

MALCOLM: Don't know why we are even doing this.

ESN: Well, we were going to tell you after the interview. No, we sold around 500 of the last issue. How's this tour going so far?

EDWYN: Rubbish!

DAVID: It's only been going for three dates. At Durham there was no one dancing, so we told the audience to come on stage and they did! It was hilarious.

ZEKE: I had to fight everyone who came on to the stage, and of course they took my drumsticks away.

ESN: If we had been there you would have lost a few drums.

DAVID: Let's have some more questions.

EDWYN: This chaps's got good questions.

DAVID: Yeah, not like mophead there.

EDWYN: This lad's a much pleasanter looking lad than you.

DAVID: You've insulted him and hurt his feelings.

EDWYN: Sorry mophead.

(A pause as mophead recovers from his extended lip.)

ESN: What is the difference of being on a major record label to an independant?

EDWYN: More money, more efficient.

DAVID: What we said to many of the other little fanzines is that we're trying to...

EDWYN: Let me tell you we love the fanzines. To see you kids doing you own thing. We love you. The whole thing's very healthy.

DAVID: ...have our own label in Polydor, so we have complete control over what we do, and Polydor just manufacture and distribute the records.

MALCOLM: We have our own independant press officers, manager and photographers.

EDWYN: Because we have absolutely no confidence in Polydor's Art and Press department!

ESN: How did Polydor grab you?



shambeko!

say wah!

"Shambeko" was to appear as a backdrop on Wah's last tour. It didn't appear there but is now part of Wah's new name, "Shambeko Say Wah!" We first encountered "Shambeko" when talking to Dave Dubwise, spokesman for the band.

"The Shambeko business is something that Pete's really interested in. The Shambeko bands were a group of kids in Germany prior to the war. They used to listen to Frank Sinatra, which was something the Third Reich were strictly against. Loads of them went to clubs that they weren't allowed to go to, that the authorities didn't even know existed. They'd get pissed, living the kind of life American teenagers were living. This was the stage before Elvis Presley. These were the first teenagers, as it were. They used to go out and beat up the Hitler Youth Patrols, which was taking a big risk. If it happened in Newcastle it would be like a certain group of people. We're not saying that's what Wah! are going to do, but it's the equivalent of it. The Shambeko bands were taking a lot of risks. If they were caught they had their heads shaved. They were beaten, then lead through the streets on a donkey with placards saying what they'd done written on them."

"They were taking real risks to do what everyone in the Western world took for granted. They had no press or television to champion their cause. There wasn't going to be a nationwide probe into these poor kids getting taken off to concentration camps - only the people in the groups knew about it. They were called the Swinging Youth. There were about ten bands, all over Germany. It wasn't just one city."

"Remember" was originally on the Radio Wah! cassette that went to local radio stations, throughout the country. "I Knew There Was Something" and another track were also on. The tape lasted 15 minutes, with a backing track in-between songs, which will probably never be on record. Over it there's Pete saying things from "Part Of Darkness", the book that "Apocalypse Now" was based on. And there's "Wahy" saying a few things. The cassette was meant as something from the group to appeal to the people that were interested. It's very informative and at the same time breaks out from the "radio announcer only type thing".

SIMON McRAY

ORANGE JUICE

FROM PAGE FIVE

DAVID: Right by the buttocks.

EDWYN: There was a strong homosexual element within Polydor. - Adrian.

DAVID: Adrian works in the Art department and he told them about us. So they signed us for a six billion pound advance.

EDWYN: Adrian hates us now because soon after we signed to Polydor we split up. They think we're absolutely nuts.

EEN: I mean, how's that? Your group seems so serious about things!

DAVID: I don't know. We now use Ian Crommel, our manager, as our link with Polydor.

EDWYN: Zeke's written all of our next album. He can also play the bass standing on his head.

DAVID: No, he can't play bass.

EDWYN: He can, he's better than you.

MALCOLM: He's also an extraordinary guitarist.

EDWYN: He's also a good singer.

The truth about Zeke the solo artist going under the name of Orange Juice is now made known to the world.

STEPHEN JOYCE

BLOODS - "BUTTON UP"

Photographs of The Bloods openly indicate that their individual playing careers stretch back much further than this debut single on O21. The New York based band got together because of their musical similarities, not because they attended art school together. Previously the members have played in various blues, disco, funk and soul bands, and with various people. An exceptionally musically competent band, The Bloods play what they must have been playing for years, collectively.

"Button Up" shows how important arrangement of the various instruments and vocals is. It also shows a lot more depth and initiative than many bands trying to plod into this field of music. Why do the wrong bands gain the recognition.

depeche mode

Early last summer, I went to see a then-unknown band in a Manchester club not much bigger than Newcastle's Balmbras. The group were Depeche Mode, and within weeks, their second single, "New Life", charted. Later offerings, including the excellent debut album, "Speak and Spell" and the top ten hit, "Just Can't Get Enough", as well as the recent smash, "See You", have made Depeche Mode a household name. Subsequently they've had to change from playing the smaller venues to the larger establishments, like the City Hall. I asked Depeche Mode's Andy Fletcher what difference it made:

AF: Well, the feeling's different ... there's not much atmosphere at the larger gigs - it's harder to get across now.

ESN: So why not play more gigs at smaller venues?

AF: It's more work, and we don't like touring anyway. It's a decision we made 'cos we ran out of places to play.

ESN: How has the audience changed since last year?

AF: The audience is less and less trendy - more schoolkids, fourteen and fifteen year olds ... a good mixture. People who used to come and see us don't really come any more.

ESN: Does that bother you?

AF: Yes. When you go for the teenage market, in a couple of years the teenagers will be grown up and they'll forget you.

ESN: Who is Vince's replacement?

AF: Alan Wilder. He's a much better musician than us - he learnt the set very quickly and he's got a good voice as well ... but it's still the same format.

ESN: Why did Vince leave?

AF: Vince used to control the music, and he didn't like the way the music was going, he didn't like the band becoming public property - I agree with him to a certain extent. They care more about the way you dress, the way you look ... they never think about the music.

ESN: Is Vince still connected with Depeche Mode?

AF: Vince was going to do some writing, but he's writing for his own band, Yazoo, now so

Martin (Gore) is doing all the writing. (Martin wrote "Tora, Tora" and "Big Muff" on Depeche Mode's album.) Martin's really good. He wrote "See You" five years ago when he was sixteen ... he's got a lot of old material as he used to write all the time. He's got twenty or thirty songs so if we get desperate, we can just turn to one of them.

ESN: What about recent work?

AF: We've just done a reggae track - our answer to the critics. It's about the doldrums of Britain. Everyone said we should write about the dole and not about love and happiness ... I can't see how it's going to change anything anyway.

ESN: How popular are you in Europe?

AF: We're selling quite well in France and Germany. And we're massive in Portugal where we're number one with "Dreaming Of Me" (their first single here).

ESN: What about America?

AF: It's too difficult. We don't want to tour like some bands. Some tour for two years and don't get anywhere.

ESN: And so to current plans for Depeche Mode?

AF: Well, this tour is a bonus tour to show we're still together as a band. We're also going to tour in September to promote our new album. We've already recorded four tracks and we'll do the rest in June.

And then the interview was quickly terminated. When I met Depeche Mode last October, David Gahan made a comment about The Human League which is quite relevant to his own group now: "They've changed as well ... as people. They're stars now."

DAVID MARTIN

MAXIMUM JOY - "White and Green Place"

Following on from their great single "Stretch", Maximum Joy with their heavy bass lines and horn section produce an unpredictable style which I suppose you could link with Pignag. "Building Bridges" is the best track on the single, in my view, I look forward to hearing the LP when it comes out around July.

ravishing beauties

VIRGINIA ASTLEY - VOCALS, FLUTE, VOCODER
NICKY HOLLAND - KEYBOARDS, BACKING VOCALS,
VOCODER
KATE ST. JOHN - OBOE, COV AUGLAIS,
BACKING VOCALS, VOCODER

You could well be mystified by the array of instruments the Ravishing Beauties play. The instruments are not used satorically, but quite conventionally as classical instruments go. The band's instigator, Virginia Astley was classically trained. Before forming the Ravishing Beauties she had done session work with Nicky, who had previously studied music at University. The pair worked on the Skids second album, and some sessions for Capital Radio. Kate had also been to college on a modelling course.

Nicky's humour can be blamed for the group's name. Bill Drummond demanded a name so Nicky said "Raving Beauties" as a joke. Drummond misheard it, and billed them as "Ravishing Beauties". The name stuck, despite suggestions for other names. No one would accept a change. "We hate the name."

Presently the Ravishing Beauties are in the strange position of having played about 20 dates, always supporting The Teardrop Explodes. Virginia: "We knew Troy and Dave, of The Teardrop Explodes, who asked us to play at the Club Zoo. That went well so they asked us to do this tour. Our first gig without them is on 14th February at Wapping."



As a band the Ravishing Beauties don't actually have a record deal. Virginia released a solo single on Why Fi Records, "A Bao A Qu". The Ravishing Beauties will probably release a single on the same label in the not too distant future.

The lyrics fit in well with the melancholy style of music. Death is one subject some of the songs concern. "Arctic Death' doesn't mean too much, it's about what's going on in a soldier's mind when he's just died." Virginia explains, "The songs are introspective and soul searching" retorts Nicky.

Virginia: "Angels crying through all the laughter, I can hear the sobbing of the angels" is about even when you're having a nice time there's always someone who is unhappy. Or you can be happy on the surface but still be conscious of a problem.

Nicky: We use metaphors, rather than "I fell this, I feel that". We don't deliberately obscure the songs, the words remain simple.

The Ravishing Beauties play very informal sets, judging from tonight's performance. Being on a friendly level with the audience improves the atmosphere, the audience become more responsive and appreciative. Between songs there was almost a conversation between Virginia and the more loud mouthed faction of the audience. People may have regarded the music as unsuitable, but fell for the novelty of it's charm. I found the band most entertaining.

SIMON MCKAY



THE SLITS



The Slits seem to have gone through continual phases of obscurity, getting music press and not getting it, releasing records and not releasing them. Since "Cut" was released in September '79, the Slits have been inactive apart from a couple of singles and some re-dug tracks on a 12" through Rough Trade. They had some involvement in the New Age Steppers. Neneh: "New Age Steppers was a project, one name and many people working under the one label. It was a very loose thing that might get back together again."

It had been over two years since the Slits played Newcastle. Neneh is now working with the Slits. She had been on the "Cut" tour, as her father, Don Cherry, and Happy House were one of the other bands involved in that tour. Neneh: "Never forget Newcastle. That was a rough one. We were coming into the hotel, the Centre Hotel it was. All these heavies came along and they were calling all the black people "wogs" and the white people "nigger suckers", just picking on everybody."

The Slits signing to CBS to release their third album was a flat calculated thing. Viv: "We're not a commercial thing on the surface. To us we sound easy on the ears. There are some reasons, rather dubious one, why we're not accepted in certain areas, like TV and radio. We realised we needed a big corporation behind us to balance it out. Obviously we want our music to be heard, we don't want to be digging away underground. It gets you nowhere. The music has got to be for everyone. I'm sure if everyone heard it a lot of people would like it and benefit from it, but they've got to be able to hear it. That was the point of signing to CBS."

The Slits have now passed on to their different ways. The previous members are now doing other things. Ari Up's gone to Africa to have her baby, I don't know what the rest are doing. During the interview Viv had commented on the Slits' association with the Pop Group, which had dissolved, which could easily apply to the Slits as well: "We ain't so close anymore, shame, I don't know why, but it just doesn't last forever. In anything you have to go different ways." She laughed with some regret.

SIMON MCKAY

PINKIES

After recording and releasing a single it should be safe to assume that the band's name is yours. The Pinkies didn't register their name, as it didn't seem necessary. If you have heard a Pinkies single on daytime radio recently (reports of it are not strong) don't blame the Birmingham Pinkies. Whether intentional or not, there is another Pinkies in the air, gaining more success. Due to that factor, the Birmingham Pinkies are having to consider a name change. The relative success of "Open Commune", the gigs played and publicity gained will have lead to nothing. This will not affect the music, but progress to reach people on as wide a scale as possible will be stunted, should the name change be deemed necessary.



AU PAIRS

It is now nearly a year since "Playing With A Different Sex" was released. Since its release the Au Pairs have played Newcastle three times. This merely represents how consistent and absorbing their livework is. After unwinding from the third appearance, Paul sits opposite with Rico, his dog. (A crack troop dog, well trained in the art of disposing of idiotic would-be journalists.) As Rico sat poised, the questions rolled.

ESN: What have you been doing this past six months?

PAUL: Eating shit.

RICO: Quack.

PAUL: After the last British tour we went to Europe, which nearly put paid to all of us. At the start of this year we all took six weeks off, then played a few gigs to get back into playing again. Then we went down and recorded the next lot of stuff.

ESN: How will you release it? Are you still without a label?

PAUL: We don't want to sign with Human again because they no longer exist as a label. If the contract's right we'll sign with a major, because it might have to be brought through the courts. The major who took over Human are trying to claim us. Our contract was with Human so we have the right to a different label. We were going to sign with Simon, who used to manage UB40 and who now runs Dep International in Birmingham. It's a similar thing to O21, but with more finance. It was pointed out to us, if it does go to court a thing like that could ruin the label. It could cost £2000 a day in court. The other company don't really have a good case to claim us, so if we sign with a major they probably won't do anything about it. If we sign with an independant they might, for the hell of it, take the chance in court.

"Inconvenience" was the last record released, as far back as July of last year. Although it caused a stir in the B.M.R.B.'s lower regions, it wasn't a great chert success. Au Pairs gigs are always well attended though.

PAUL: We've got where we are as a gigging band, although it's great doing records. We've always been a gigging band though, because that's what we like doing.

A new LP has been recorded, although there's no means of releasing it, at the moment. Presumably it will include tracks like "Slider", "Intact", "America", "Sex Without Stress", "Down My Back" and "Ego". Three of the tracks are said to have the addition of a synthesiser played by an additional member, Tina.

PAUL: When we went down to the studio, we had only written five songs, and we wrote another five down there. Before this tour none of them had been played live. They're still very much coming together. In the studio we just put down one version. But when you play, especially if you play regularly, you'd do your brains in trying to play exactly the same way every night. Within a certain format, they tend to be very different.

We played at the ICA last Wednesday. We hadn't even had a chance to rehearse the new stuff because Lesley had had a cold, and her voice had gone, the week prior to that. Basically we did all of the new set as a jam, trying to remember what we were doing in the studio. It was fun, that's what music is about. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. If you're having a good time it usually sounds okay. Personally speaking, I'd rather go and see a band who've got the feeling, although they may not be technically correct. Although what is technique? I think anything goes really because everything you play is valid. If you feel good when you're playing it it's good. That's why people don't give a shit if you miss a beat. Who notices? As you write the songs, it's just a different interpretation. That's the beauty of music. Whatever you play is different, because you can't go backwards. It depends a lot on how you wake up in the morning as to how you play. Fortunately, we're quite rected. We were just going through the motions at the end of the last tour. When we went to Europe it picked up again. After the album we did a British tour, European tour, then America. Then back to Britain and then on to Europe again. No matter how much you enjoy it, occasionally it does tire you physically. At the end of last year everyone was really nackered, that affects your playing, but now what we need is a couple more gigs and we'll be back into the swing of it. When you haven't played for quite a while it's quite strange.

ESN: Do you still intend releasing "Chake-down" as a single?

PLAYING WITHOUT STRESS (CONTRACTS GIVE YOU CRAMP)

PAUL: It might be on the B side of "Flasco" That's a new one. We didn't do it tonight because we didn't have time to go through it at the soundcheck. It's different to a lot of stuff we've done, it sounds quite oriental and very Indianish.

At this point Rico roared into action, devouring many useful limbs on the Sleeve Note interviewing staff. The tape was salvaged. This article was brought to you through a seance. It will be held in honour and respect. The memories of two potentially great journalists will be cherished by the nation for ever more.

SIMON MCKAY



LESLEY; FAB ARCHIVE FROM ESN 1

THE REVILLOS



The Revillos finally managed to book a concert in Newcastle that non-students could get into. They didn't realise what a dump they would find. The Bier Keller where the band had better not be too tall or they bang their heads on the ceiling. The venue gives the impression of being a junior school canteen, not a social event.

The interview began with Rocky Rhythm, the Revillos' drummer:

ESN: Do you feel as though the initial popularity of the Revillos has faded?

RR: We feel that way in Britain, because of the lack of success, although most places we play are better attended than even the Revillos gigs. Audience response seems better as well. We don't get music press anymore though. Britain is so arty and a fashionable place as far as music is concerned. If you're a hip band you'll probably last about six months to a year, and have a couple of hit singles. It doesn't matter how good or bad you are. Bands like Blue Rondo are on the front cover of the music papers, you hear them on the radio but no cunt goes to see them.

ESN: Do you feel as though the band is more popular abroad?

RR: People in Europe aren't as influenced by music press trends. About a year ago people over there were asking us about Secret Affair. At that time Secret Affair could sell out one and a half thousand seat venues, now they can't even get a gig. Now we get asked about the new movement of Scottish bands, like Orange Juice and Aztec Camera. We're not part of that movement. As a name the Revillos/Rezillos have been going for six years. People who ask us about Britain think it's some big fantastic place. It's hard to explain to them that it's not.

ESN: Have the Revillos changed much since "Where's The Boy For Me?"

RR: There's been a slight mutation of style. We're not as 60's influenced as we were. We're getting more into Glam, the Glitter Band type thing.

ESN: Without the high heels?

RR: We're getting into that as well, I'm getting some big glitter boots soon. Fashion conscious people can note that platform heels will be the next big thing.

ESN: Have you still got the Rev-ettes?

RR: Yeah, they're both pretty ill at the moment with stomach complaints. They're coming down on the train later. Dragsy's leaving soon though.

ESN: Seven's a lot for that little stage.

RR: Yeah, this venue's really shit. It needs a better stage so everyone can see. We were thinking about not doing it, we don't want to play this dump. We're only doing it for the people who might come tonight, not because we want to. We've been trying to get a good Newcastle gig for years where it's not students only. Nobody would put us on anywhere else, though.

ESN: What went wrong with your Dindisc record deal?

RR: It ran out of money, basically. They wasted so much money pushing little groups. It's run by two people. The only band they made any money on was OMD. They would have put out more Revillos records, but they weren't prepared to back them. We weren't very keen on that so we left. We've gone independent now, with our own Superville Records. We've released "Monster Man" and "Songo Brain". We're just playing Superville by ear really. We're recording a new LP at Wallsend of all places at the moment. That

should be out in about six weeks. We're doing a single as well, during the next two weeks of recording.

ESN: What are you doing after all of that?

RR: We're going to tour Scandinavia, then France, then a week in Ibiza (that's off the coast of Spain). We're just going to get out of Britain as fast as possible. We're off to America in July as well.

ESN: Will the LP be released abroad?

RR: There might be a different version in Australia and the States, it'll probably have different tracks.

ESN: Have you given up Britain completely then?

RR: Yeah, unless something happens with the album and we take off. I don't know if anybody will buy it. Maybe if we got some bongos, a synth and had a bloke with make up or dressed in clowns gear, the music press would think we were fashionable again. We're still the only band to sell out the Venue recently. People still come and see us.

Live, the Revillos are amazing. The music is quite simple, so lively. The image and attitude is over the top but fun. The Rev-ettes add a good dimension fitting in well with the band's zany image. With the ceiling being low Eugene had a good time hanging from it. Pay clambered about, legs astride, on the ape bouncer at the front, and Eugene had his cap on. (This is apart from the stage lights blowing out) Good fun this band. "Do the hippy hippy shake."

SIMON MCKAY



A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS

And it came to pass that there was a place in the West called Liverpool, and from this place, there did come many good things - The Beatles, Teardrop Explodes, OMD and me. But then this sacred breeding ground went barren and the prophets looked verily towards Scotland. Many voices cried out, and after two score moons and ten (50), Liverpool was once again blessed. And they came forth - China Crisis, Hamblin And The Dance and my own favourites, A Flock Of Seagulls. Surely not another immaculate concept? Read on, and all will be revealed.

A Flock Of Seagulls formed about two years ago. The singer/synth. man, Mike Score, while at the same time was working at a local hairdressers, played bass in a band, later to become Hamblin And The Dance. Frank Naudsley applied for a job at the hairdressers, but after a while, the pair decided that the life of Brillcream and bleach was not for them, and started jamming in their spare time. Bringing in an old friend, Paul Reynolds, on lead guitar and Alli, Mike's brother, on drums, practices took place in a rather crowded hairdressers shop somewhere in deepest Liverpool. Cue the gigs and the first single, "(It's Not Me) Talking", which flopped. A subsequent deal with Jive, and releases such as "Telecommunication", "Modern Love Is Automatic" and the current single, "I Ran", as well as the excellent debut album have proved A Flock Of Seagulls' strength and depth to everyone except people who buy records. Surely it's only a matter of time.

But, in these days when the look is so often used to sell the band, are you to expect more Liverpool pseudo-Copes in flowing khaki etc? Not at all. A Flock Of Seagulls don't want to be fashionable while at the same time they don't want to be unfashionable. The look is a "Cargo space ship in the next century" thing, not Human and the plastic jumpsuit, but men doing real jobs in dirty surroundings. Yes, it's jeans with a difference, but from Mike with his plastic wellies and Frank with the Space 1999 haircut, it's different without being stupid.

The music itself is stonily based around the guitar of Paul Reynolds, often like a watered down American rock band, but the sound is highly infectious, and mixed with a very tight set, A Flock Of Seagulls are building up quite a following from Liverpool to Newcastle all the way to London.

It's enjoyable, it's fun, it's pop with a difference. A cargo space ship? Well, grab a ride while there's still room.

DAVID MARTIN

STEEL PULSE

The Sound System disco created the right atmosphere for the gig itself by playing infectious dance music from the likes of U-Roy and Gregory Isaacs. How many gigs have you been to where the punters dance before the band comes on?

As far as the concert itself went, Steel Pulse played a tight colourful set consisting of old favourites such as "Babylon Makes The Rules", "Biko's Kindred Lament", "Soldiers", "Uncle George" and "Ku Klux Klan". However, songs such as "Handsworth Revolution" and "Jah Pickney" were conspicuous by their absence, reflecting the band's reluctance to live on their past record. A heavy emphasis was placed on the new songs from the forthcoming album, "True Democracy", recorded, believe it or not, in Denmark (reggae is apparently very big in Scandinavia now).

Talking to the band afterwards gave a greater insight into Steel Pulse than just listening to their music. Steel Pulse are more than just a band, they are a voice of Rasta and thus of black culture.

ESN: How did you feel about playing to a predominately white, middle-class audience?

PHONSO: We don't mind, we enjoy it. Students are learning all the time and are always ready to listen to people and what they are saying.

ESN: Why isn't reggae commercially successful?

PHONSO: Reggae is always bubbling under the surface, many bands feed from it like The Police and UB40 but the system represses true reggae. People have an inherent fear of anything different, especially when your neighbour is black and even more so when that person is Rasta. Appearance creates an immediate impression on people, it is hard for a middle-aged housewife, for example, to relate to Rasta for precisely those reasons.

ESN: How do you feel about the efforts of the late Bob Marley to introduce the Western world to reggae music?

PHONSO: Marley was primarily a hybrid, a bridge between rock and reggae, he used rock guitar a lot.

ESN: What do you have to say to people about your music and especially Rasta?

DAVID: As Peter Tosh said, you don't have to be black to be Rasta. Rasta is a vibe, a feeling, it's an awareness of Black history, culture and consciousness.

Reggae is the music of joy, and Rasta is the living expression of that.

PAUL HULLOCK

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teardrop explodes

Recent additions to the shelves of Newcastle's record shops include "To The Shores Of Lake Placid", a venture of Bill Drummond's Zoo label and including such stars as Echo and the Bunnymen and Teardrop Explodes. Or should that be Kevin Stapleton's Whopper? I wasn't too sure so I asked Julian Cope, lead singer of the Teardrop Explodes, about the seriousness of the whole thing.

JC: Oh yes, it's very serious. Kevin Stapleton co-exists with Julian Cope, the sort of ghost side of Julian Cope.

ESN: The dreamer?

JC: Oh no, Julian Cope is the dreamer. Kev's the daft side of me, really...

At this point, Teardrop's synth player, David Balfe, interrupted:

DB: Kevin Stapleton is a dickhead!

JC: Yeah, yeah he thinks he knows what's going on and he doesn't... he's got his own group, Whopper, co-existing with the Teardrop Explodes ... it's hard to grasp the real point of it.

DB: It's thought provoking creation-creativity on a weird level.

ESN: A further ego trip for Julian Cope?

JC: Oh, no.

DB: It's like Gulliver's Travels. Every so often, he keeps running up and down the coach telling everyone the next chapters.

JC: (Laughing) I was thinking, at one point, of selling off the Teardrop Explodes and concentrating on Whopper, but the trouble is Whopper would pack in two years later ... I don't need to pack in Teardrop because they CAN co-exist with Whopper.

ESN: But can Julian Cope manage it?

DB: Can he hell!!!

JC: Oh yes, Kevin, sorry Kev, is too thick, a bit like Simon Le Bon (Duran Duran's lead singer).

In between all this, Cope and Balfe discussed whether the rest of the group understood the Whopper/Stapleton concept, but they weren't sure. They're not the only ones.



And now, with both Cope and Balfe in the same room (well, a coach actually), I couldn't resist the temptation to question them on their relationship.

ESN: So how did David (Balfe) return to Teardrop?

JC: He kind of sneaked back in really. (Laughs with Balfe.)

ESN: And how are Cope and Balfe getting on?

JC: I find it very easy to write lyrics for his music ... Me on my own can be great, but it needs friction. Him on his own is also great and it also needs friction, but the two together gives far more of a double edge ... I'll still be working with him in ten years, after many more splits. (He and Balfe laugh.) See, the thing is, he keeps getting this insidious sense of power ... the rest of the band don't really understand what's going on between the two of us.

From what I saw, the relationship is very unstable, at times brilliant, but at other times explosive.

Phil Oakey, Adas Ant, Debbie Harry, David Sylvian, Julian Cope - all faces that have flooded the front covers of music papers and comics, NME to Jackie. I wondered about Cope's attitude to the "pop star" image.

JC: I don't mind it.

DB: It's just one of those weird things that are OK.

Previously, Balfe's jealousy of Cope's position of "star" of the group has resulted in arguments and Balfe (temporarily) leaving Teardrop. Did he wish Cope's role upon himself?

DB: I wish it was me if I could have it for a day ...

JC: But I've got it all the time. I can't sod off ... It's something that appeals to me far more than outdome ever did! It's far more of a challenge because I want to weird people out ... Music is sex and when I'm on stage and there's girls at the front of the stage,

I don't want to have to deny it ... I'd rather accept the whole thing, embrace it, because they're thinking "He's nice, he's nice looking", which is a fourteen year old's translation of sex - well it's not even a translation now - the girls relate through me. You should be more self important, trying to create something far greater than you will ever create.

ESN: And the haircut?

JC: I got fed up with having a pop star hair cut, it didn't seem to go with what we'd arrived at!!! Need I say more.

ESN: What about your present musical tastes?

JC: All the stuff I ever listened to plus a whole lot more ... Kyle, Monkees, Velvet, Doors, Neil Young, Beefheart, Drake, Syd Barret - people who are basically anomalies. (That's irregular, thickie!)

ESN: Everyone you mention seems to be dead.

JC: That's because they didn't get it together!!!

ESN: What about Teardrop?

JC: Oh definitely yeah. I enjoy listening to them.

ESN: And to end, what's in the pipeline?

JC: A Whopper twelve inch, that's what's keeping me going. A new Teardrop album in May and a Julian Cope solo album in July, though I don't think there'll be any number

ones on it!

DB: And I'm supposed to be doing a solo album too.

ESN: So are you finally going to live up to the early potential?

JC: I don't think I'll ever write a number one, the best they ever do is number 25.

DB: I think there's going to be bigger hits than "Reward". (Number 6)

JC: As I see it, I think it's going to be a long career so I'm not that worried about it. If it wasn't I'd be worried.

ESN: But a long career as Teardrop?

JC: Who knows?

And with a quick "I've gotta go", Julian Cope disappeared into the distance. I saw the live show later that evening, and perhaps due to the lack of atmosphere, too many of their slower songs, or an audience that expected too much, Teardrop didn't come across at all compared with previous outings at the University and Mayfair. Cope did his best to arouse the audience, but they didn't want to know.

And so to bed. Final impressions are of Cope, less gushing, just as brilliant, and only a matter of time before the Teardrop Explodes become a major musical force. But do they want this? The last words, surprise, surprise, belong to Julian Cope:

"I want everything - I'm greedy in that respect. I want people to think I'm a great songwriter, I want people to think I'm a great singer and I want girls to think I'm a great looker."

He should go far.

DAVID MARTIN

APB - "PALACE FILLED WITH LOVE"

The Aberdeen based APB follow up their great single, "Shoot You Down", with "Palace Filled With Love", their third single for Oily Records. The first one is unmentionable "Shoot You Down" was a favourite on American disco floors because of its funky beat, and it also got the band a session for John Peel. "Palace Filled With Love" continues on from "Shoot You Down", adding a more commercial sound. The B side, "All Your Life About Me", is an instrumental which starts off good, but the beat never changes so it gets boring after a few minutes play.



About three years ago, Neil Arthur and Stephen Luscombe got together to form Blancmange after being in separate groups at the same Art College. The initial venture, "playing bedroom music" for their own amusement "...with cardboard boxes and Tupperware tins" progressed to an interest in synths and the resulting early single, "Concentration", though showing great promise, faded into relative obscurity. Then, after a quiet period, the inclusion of their instrumental "Sad Day" on Stevo's futurist compilation album, "Some Bizarre", created interest from various quarters, including Daniel Miller (mentor of Depeche Mode, Grace Jones and DAF to name but three), and earned them consequent supports with Grace Jones and then Depeche Mode at the end of last year.

But then back to work as graphic designers, wondering where it had all got them. A subsequent 'phone call to Neil Arthur, offering Blancmange the support on the Japan tour was treated as a joke and he slammed the 'phone down. The offer was genuine and fortunately everything was worked out to give Blancmange this prestigious support.

And then, at last, interest from the record companies and eventually a deal with the London label (through Decca). But the rush of interest meant some hectic work for the duo, as Neil Arthur explained:

"We signed the contract on the Thursday after I'd quit work that morning. On the Friday, we recorded a Seven Up demo, then from the Monday to the Wednesday we prepared the backing tapes, Wednesday evening we played in Leicester. From Thursday to Saturday we did the single, Saturday afternoon the John Peel session, mixed the single through Saturday night and Sunday and then straight on tour with Depeche Mode. But that first night, in Portsmouth we gave our best performance ever, though I had to move about to keep myself awake!"

That single, "God's Kitchen" and "I've Seen The Word" was released on 26th March and has already gained considerable airplay. The production work of Mike Howlett (of OMD fame) is stunning but it's you, the public who decide what will happen to the single.

(And before you wander off thinking of Blancmange as religious freaks, here is a brief explanation of the single. "God's

Kitchen" by Neil Arthur, is based on his childhood when he had a religious upbringing and then out of the blue, Neil's mother started questioning the existence of (a) God. And since statistics say that the Kitchen is the most important room in the house, maybe God should be in there! "I've Seen The Word" is based on Neil's memories recorded in words and not a lot else!)

BLANCMANGE

So only time can tell now. Neil Arthur, the voice and guitarist, is loving their increase in publicity while Steve Luscombe, slightly less frivolous, seems to have got bored with the whole thing for the moment, at least. Success would be welcomed, "So we can get some money together and expand a bit, doing things we really want." The way things are going, that time isn't too far off.

At last, a tour in their own right, and even though it meant a trip to Edinburgh's Nite Club, it was well worth it.

Starting out with "I Can't Explain", the small audience warmed to the duo, and with the new backing tapes as well as the addition

of slides to illustrate and compliment the songs, it's clear the Blancmange aren't just going to sit back and let it all happen. The next single, "Feel Me" was executed with perfect expression, "Waves", as dynamic as ever and beautifully illustrated on the "Tardis" on which the slides appeared. And the people danced.

Then both sides of the single with the usual variations in vocals on "God's Kitchen" still good, and the only complaint was just one encore, another rendition of "God's Kitchen". Neil Arthur may smile at all the wrong times, but it's quite clear how much he's enjoying himself, and on this very night, we even got a reaction from Mr. Luscombe. And the only way to finish is to quote Neil Arthur just one more time: "I didn't like it at the end 'cos it stopped!"

DAVID MARTIN

DRINKING ELECTRICITY

DRINKING ELECTRICITY

ANNE-MARIE HEIGHWAY - VOCALS
DAVID ROME - ALL INSTRUMENTS

Drinking Electricity formed in January 1980. They released their first single on Scottish based, Pop Aural Records in May 80. This was followed by two more singles, 'Cruising Missiles' and 'Shake Some Action'. In March 81 they left Pop Aural, after it was agreed that they were not doing as well on the label as well as they could on the label as well as they could, on the label. After they split from Pop Aural they joined forces with Paul Edgley, of 'The Limit', and in June 1981, they formed their own label; Survival Records. The label has so far released:

Singles:

DRINKING ELECTRICITY- SUBLIMINAL
THE LIMIT- SHOCK WAVES
ANALYSIS- SURFACE TENSION
THE LIMIT- TAKE IT
DRINKING ELECTRICITY- GOOD TIMES
RICHARD BONE- DIGITAL DAYS

Album:

DRINKING ELECTRICITY- OVERLOAD

The debut album from Drinking Electricity contains eleven tracks, with lyrics written by David Rome, who also plays all the instruments on the album, except bass which is played by Paul Edgley. Most of the bands



around at the moment who have an electronic sound are either, boring, or too overbearing, but Drinking Electricity have got a sound which is danceable and very interesting. The main part of their sound must be the great voice of Anne-Marie. Best tracks on the album are; 'Discord Dance', 'Good Times' and 'Twilight Zone'.

STEPHEN JOYCE

THE CURE

When The Cure play live, they seem dull and repressive, and indeed I won't contradict that statement. Robert Smith's general view of life is so pessimistic we might as well all wallow in the Tynes. "A lot of the early stuff was all taped when I was a lot younger and happier. '17 Seconds' was like a turning point in my life. Life becomes bleak as you become older. I don't have that much to look forward to. When I was younger I was naive enough to think there was something to look forward to."

Robert, in general, comes across as a depressive person. Although like Simon and Lol, they are very friendly to talk to, and easy to approach. Simon, "I'd love it for everyone to be able to come into the dressing room. We could all get drunk and everyone would be free to do what they want, but because of the security it's impossible." There was a queue of people going back into the hall to get autographs and indulge in a ten second conversation with each of the band. Simon, "It's funny, I don't understand why people want autographs, but I'm only too willing to give it. It gets really horrible sometimes, like tonight. It was like a factory line. It makes me feel like a real cunt. People must think that I think I'm a real superstar. I don't, I'd like to sit down and talk to them but there's just not the time. It's a horrible situation. I'm sure everybody goes away thinking we're fucking bastards."

Visually the band do very little on stage. To supplement this they introduced various projection screens, and play amidst lots of pretty patterns. "We felt we needed visual dynamics on some of our songs, so that people don't start to look at their watches and get bored."

ESN: Do Polydor help finance the visuals?

SIMON: No, Polydor don't do anything. They weren't even going to pay for the pressing of the LP. If any money came back they'd claim a share of that, despite having put nothing in. I don't think about them much. I don't like them ... Correction, there's a few blokes from Polydor who are really nice.

ESN: The music has changed a lot since you came into the band, it's progressed radically.

SIMON: You think it's progressed?

ESN: From the commercial sound it had, yeah.

SIMON: It's changed... Yes, it has progressed. I'll agree with you. There's nothing else I can say.

ESN: Why has it entered such a dismal surrounding?

SIMON: It's just us growing old. I suppose. Before I joined, Robert and Lol had been playing together for ages. They were more influenced by the time when they were younger. Now we're a bit older, we're not as influenced as we were. We have more of a, as bad as it sounds, direction of our own.

ESN: Why does that sound bad?

SIMON: I think it sounds pompous.

ESN: Not really. It seems unusual for a band to start with a commercial, accessible style of music and delve into a more subdued and depressive atmosphere. So many bands tend to sell out commercially.

SIMON: Robert and Lol were playing songs like "Killing An Arab" and "Fire And Cairo" for two years. That was before they even started touring. It's not until you start touring that you become aware of what you really want to do, because you're having to do it twenty four hours a day.

ESN: Bit of a cliché question, but I am interested to know how this tour's going.

SIMON: It's funny really, a lot of people still want to hear "Killing An Arab" and that sort of thing, which is a bit depressing. Some dates have been really good. Down on the south coast it was really awful. The further north you go, the better it tends to get.

ESN: A lot of people say that. Are you playing European dates to plug "Pornography"?

SIMON: We've got four days off, after Hammersmith, then we're going to Europe for six weeks. We've played most of the places before, Holland, France, Belgium, Germany, Australia and New Zealand.

ESN: How do the audiences react to you?

SIMON: They tend to be more patient than English audiences. Our musical style of two years ago was more popular in Holland, than our present style is now. There as two years ago in Germany and France people came to see us as an English punk band. Now they come for us, which is much better.

ESN: Are you going to release a single to follow up "Pornography"?

SIMON: We want to try and do a single when we come back from Europe and become rich megastars. Like the Associates.

STON OKAY