

# ECCENTRIC SLEEVE

PALE FOUNTAINS

MIGHTY WAH!

RED GUITARS

JULIAN COPE

FELT

**SMITHS**

BOURGIE BOURGIE

ORANGE JUICE

**BLANCMANGE**



**SPEAR OF DESTINY**

**GANG OF FOUR**

RED LORRY YELLOW LORRY

**NOTES**

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NO MORE ESN: THE EDITOR HAS RUN OFF TO  
LIVE WITH EDWYN COLLINS. LOVE'S ONLY WAY.

# gang of four



The Gang of Four's later offerings were not consumed in great quantities. Their fourth year with EMI was a stable foundation. After almost a two year gap between record releases 'IS IT LOVE?' appeared from nowhere. The record company were wholeheartedly confident of it being a top ten single. They even threw a play-back party. The group had dwindled, now containing only Jon King and Andy Gill of the original line up. Sarah Lee had been in the band since 81/82. A lot of time had been spent in the USA recently. "Is It Love?" had plenty of initial backing. Radio 1 was playing it three times a day. It was aimed at an audience unfamiliar to the band. They were dabbling in a saturated area. Their record was not strictly uniform, and went unappreciated. "After a years work, it was disappointing that the record stiffed," comments Andy Gill.

The original Gang of Four at least found themselves in the position to turn down Top Of The Pox in 79 with 'AT HOME HE FEELS LIKE A TOURIST'. That was a fairly harsh sounding record. "We were more of a shocking new thing when we first appeared," reflects Andy. That was the first single on EMI, having left the independent Fast Records after one EP.

"At the time you had to be independent. When we signed to EMI people I knew would walk straight past me in the street. Advances are essential for getting anywhere, otherwise you are condemned to operating on a small scale."

Andy Gill has always had a lip and dimpled chin to the Gang's vocal microphone. The last LP HARD saw him doing a few lead vocals. Jon King, was not left much in evidence on these. The guitar was dominating on all of the songs.

When the Gang of Four disbanded in '84 a parting shot from an innocent ex-Mekon fingered the pulse, "Yeah, they're going to reform as the Andy Gill Experience." Musical differences? Their music differed from consumer taste, definately. EMI stepped down. Trying to find a new label had seemed fairly hopeless.

Time spent in America had speeded the musical transition....but so far beyond the comprehension of a British audience? In America the band were asked, "How come you're doing all this funk stuff?" "Comparing the records; that feel is one thing that has always remained constant. It has always been completely rhythmic stuff. "Andy answers himself. The arrangement has always been based on similar ideas.

When we started we were a band very much supported by friends, we'd play any old rubbish for a laugh." Some of their early songs were as profoundly named as 'CALL ME ANKER', they covered Mekons. Rezillos and others of that era. They have always been moving in a certain direction though. I've always liked American music more than English. So has Jon really. I've never liked the Beatles, and so much English music has been in that vein. I can now appreciate what is good about the Beatles, but I preferred the Stones. They were heading straight on from Chuck Berry."

The Gang Of Four got a better reaction in other countries. "We could play all over the place in America, which is basically what kept us going. We have toured seven or eight times there, over the years. We could get 1,000 people a night, 3-4,000 in the larger cities. We were in the position to offer a band that were big in Britain support with us, that they would benefit from."

Before the split was decided I had asked Andy Gill if he was as close with Jon King in songwriting, as he had been previously. "Intellectually, we can tune in a lot of the time, of course we had disagreements. He knew the ideas we were talking about, which was the reason for us collaborating." At this point Andy imagined himself doing a lot more on his own, but still working in

the Gang. "Everything that I start is changed, when it is taken to the group. The approach is different."

Andy's fairly unique guitar style gained the ultimate accolade when he was recorded for *Rockschool*. Wow! The programme did not present him as well as they presented other musicians. The demonstrations he recorded at their request were not used instead a fairly inept OGWT clip. Andy sums up his style saying "he likes the guitar to do both things, reinforce the rhythm, and sometimes go off on it's own."

Sarah Lee is well recognised for her excellent bass playing. She only played on five of the nine tracks on *HARD*. It was purely a style problem. John Astrop suited the songs. Sarah was not exactly over the moon about the prospect.

The Gang Of Four wound up at Leeds and London. The only really fitting cities. Reception was warm and well attended, mainly due to the circumstance. The last four was in '82, badly attended, but extremely enthusiastic. As far as Jon King was concerned it started and finished with the Leeds date. Not strictly true. The original two missing members DAVE ALLEN and HUGO BURNHAM appeared from nowhere at Hammersmith on the 'TOURIST' encore.... but it should have been Leeds.

SIMON MCKAY



# PALE FOUNTAINS

The Pale Fountains debut LP should have immediately followed 'Palm Of My Mind'. A year later 'Pacific Street' actually emerged. The delay gave vent to rumours about the band's multi million pound deal with Virgin, falling through. The delay was actually to do with not having a suitable producer. The Pale Fountains eventually resigned themselves to this and produced 'Pacific Street' themselves, aided by an engineer.

The Pale Fountains wrote new songs in this time and recorded them in preference to others that have slipped away. It was not a case of throwing away the dross; *Pacific Street* was released. (cheeky). They just could not get the older songs down before the mood changed. This applies more so live. The tour to promote the LP contained two songs from the LP! The rest was new material.



"When we play to an audience we want them to enjoy themselves. We want to enjoy ourselves too, by doing the new songs. We rehearse a lot, and we're prolific song-writers anyway. We're always on a high when we have a new song to find it's feet," emphasises Michael Head.

"We were being judged on a couple of singles. It couldn't be helped. The LP was a massive relief, we couldn't wait to finish it. There are a lot of influences within the band, and it shows throughout the LP. The music doesn't drastically change, but different influences creep in. I think it's a really good situation," asserts Michael. "We all seem to know how a good song should be done. If Andy says something doesn't sound right, I'll change it otherwise he wouldn't be in the band, if I was likely to ignore his opinion. Everyone has to like the songs."

Virgin do not actually realise that the tour included only two songs from the LP. The Pale Fountains decided if they did an LP set in London, where the Virgins are, they could get away with it. What do Virgin know? Michael supposes they are content to leave a band to find their own feet, as a matter of policy. "They've had good cause to get pist off with us, but they haven't."

Chris assures me that they are going straight into the studio to record the second LP.

One of Virgins big men telephoned Michael, before they had actually signed, and asked him his ambition. It was said to be writing songs for Shirley Bassey! "It can be arranged, Michael," was the fatman's reply. The Pale Fountains only met Richard Branson when they signed....they are now pressing for free air travel.

The Pale Fountains seem to ignore current trends, but pick at a span of what has happened in the last twenty years.

"Everybody has their faves, they go home and listen to. I love sixties music. Cover versions that they have performed include 'Purple Haze' and 'Walk On By'. The interest extends to films....they have not borrowed anything for videos or anything. A still from Saturday Night Sunday Morning was considered for the cover of a recent single. At the same time Morrissey borrowed a still from 'A Taste Of Honey'. The Pale F.s were put off. "Albert Finney was a real person. They didn't just go for a star of the time when they made the film." Michael finds what he has read or heard influences him through mood. "It comes out in song-writing, and the lyrics. I went through a twelve month phase of not writing any lyrics, then I read a book 'whoosh' it came out. I couldn't believe it!"

The moral of the anecdote is 'don't judge a book by the cover'. Cue Michael with the story.... "I think people see things through two sets of eyes. We did an interview with some hip French magazine. The guy was over to interview the Smithe or somebody. His boss told him to interview us too. Half way through the photo session he said that he hadn't really wanted to do it. We did it anyway. There was a theme; songwriting. He wanted to see the surroundings that inspire us. He was potting about all over the place; through books; video lists and records. All of a sudden he just freaked out. He had heard the album and formed his opinions, but when he realised what the album was influenced by he saw it in another way.

# FELT

Lawrence takes himself quite seriously. The degree of seriousness he attaches to the art of Felt however, is absolute. Some of the points he makes are vague, and only fall into place upon further questioning. This contradicts his fear and anguish of being misinterpreted in print. With a swish and a nod; the cutting of his own throat....

Crumbling *The Antiseptic Beauty*, the title of their first mini LP came from a line in *One Of Lawrence's* poems. Lawrence claims to write a lot of poetry. How does he separate it from lyrics? "I hate poetry these days, it makes me feel ill. When I got a guitar at the end of '77 I stopped writing poems. Maybe I grew out of it, it is completely different. I like to retain a poetic theme, and have used a few old segments."



Lawrence sees Felt as more of a melody band. He loves instrumental music. The earlier records comprised of nearly fifty percent instrumentals. "A lot of the new stuff is completely different, and isn't long epics. That was what people couldn't get into or understand." Lawrence does not

see this a commercial move, "I think all of our stuff is commercial." Of course Felt think of money as they write and record their songs....imaginative titles flow later, when they are in the position of any other listener. They then title the piece as to how it seems. Some of the pieces are a trifle dreamy. The Japanese have flipped for it all, a bit. As well as the usual British mega bands, Japanese magazines are also prone to carrying a page or two on Felt. Lawrence did not actually tell me this but it seems those laid back Japs fell forward for the pic of Big Lol. on the '*Antiseptic*' cover. There is talk of a fan club being run over there too.

"We've never been to Japan. They are quiet people, they just seem taken by the delicate feel of our music."

Maurice had been sitting with Lawrence for this interview he did not say much, and disappeared. I felt he was free to butt in whenever he wished. Anybody is free to, as the cleaning lady passed I thought she was about to speak. I think she abducted Maurice in her bucket. Lawrence finds himself alone. The songwriting is always between them. Maurice is an artist though, so he has left and rejoined the band a few times. Lawrence learnt how to write songs alone in that time.

Felt left *Cherry Red* before the *Pillows And Prayers* compilation was released. "We didn't want to go on the LP. We had the choice of going on it, or leaving. So we left. Unfortunately something bad happened. to us. We had to go back with our tails between our legs. We still hated it, but were glad in the end because so many people bought it."

I could see in their view why they objected artistically - as they had no control over what else was on the record, or the sleeve.

*Pillows and Prayers* was a video too. Felt were supposed to be in that with *Penelope Tree*. The idea was they would drive along in an open top sports car and end up at an airfield. They told Felt first though.

"That's terrible, we don't drive around in sports cars. If you knew anything about us you would know we could not do that," was Lawrence's reaction speaking for all. Fantastic Something got the part instead. "The video was to end in a big church wedding. All the bands would be dressed in fifties, sixties clothes while Bid got married.

FELT >

If you think 'yeah, we'll sign to an independent and retain our artistic control and freedom, forget it. It's just the same. We have no control out of England. We are signed to Virgin in France. They put out a compilation record. All the continuity was lost. Cherry Red has not got the machinery, it is a small operation. We signed to Mike Alway as far as we are concerned so we are going to stay with him, on his new label Blanco Y Negro."

Lawrence criticises records he listened to in his youth for having filler tracks on them. He prefers to do short LPs, at a budget price and short live sets. This may change. Lawrence admits he contradicts himself, but at the moment he says "I like things to be brief....see ya!"

SIMON MCKAY

# JULIAN COPE

The Teardrop Explodes split in 1982. Julian Cope comments how good the break was that he had from then, till he got going as a solo artist.

"I'm much more together now. I fall apart more easily than others under pressure. I get bored quickly as well."

Julian called a halt to Teardrops for substantial reasons.

"I thought Teardrops should finish because the third LP was sounding horrible. We had gone far enough, and wanted to finish on a high."

The way paths parted suited Julian. He could not abide the idea of dragging it all out with a final tour and a live LP. There is a lot of unreleased Teardrops material that the record company have possession of.

Mercury held onto Julian. He likes them and hopes to stay with them for a while. On a commercial level they cannot expect too much, because Julian has never really given them much.

"They could have said that they weren't interested after the split. I'm quite a hassle to work with."

Julian feels as though he is starting again now, with new angles available.

"It's very much an album of songs. That is the main thread. It's very simple, but powerful. I would like them to get stranger, the LP is a little straighter than I expected. I didn't want to weird out good songs for the sake of it."

Julian thinks that when the Jam used a brass section it sounded cheap and obvious. The Teardrops featured what he thought brass should sound like. The trumpeters would often cringe as Julian hummed their part. They did perform the pieces without over-playing them.

Julian hopes to carry on using the same line up live. In the studio he will use them occasionally. He will play a lot of the guitars.



"I like what I play on the bass. Playing it live and singing was ridiculous though. One half of me was playing a solid rhythm, the other would be really freaking out."

Now all of Julian 'freaks out'. Now it is to small crowds, all the teenyboppers have gone.

"At the Teardrops peak I said in an interview that 'all the fourteen year olds will go'. I got a load of letters back saying 'no we won't'."

Julian played a tour to small crowds!

"It was a bit disheartening at first. The people that do come are totally into it though. That is more important, they are the ones that count."

# the mighty

# WAH!

Mouth almighty, Pete Wylie, bounces back with a 'Word To The Wiseguy' and come back to haunt WEA. Bugs Bunny cartoons are still a safe bet for them though.

ESN: So what have you been doing?

P.W: I've been to Barbados. The suntan's good innit? I stayed in all week to get it. Nah! I've been working constantly just about to cut the LP, sorting out the sleeves, the video, all that crap.

ESN: It's taken you a long time to do that.

PW: Not that long, not in comparative terms. For what it is, it doesn't matter. What I mean is lengths of time don't come into it for what you end up with.

ESN: What style is it, fairly typical?

PW: It's typical James Last Orchestra.

ESN: Who have you been working with?

PW: Anyone who will have me. I've been working with all hands. There was a basic group we started it with, but it just got further away. Washy is on it all cos he owed me a lot of money and the only way he could pay it back was by playing on the LPs. Just different people like the fellas who did the last gigs with us, Jerry, Charlie. But I'm not satisfied working that way because I want to cover a bunch of styles and obviously some people are more suited to one style more than another, so in future it will be all different people again. I don't think it will be regular people though, I have got plans for a house band for the other people on Eternal. Use Gary Dyer on some, use the Last Chant on some stuff. Whoever is right, we will draft in. I'll make records with two or three drummers on like Motown used to have it. I don't mean to imitate the Motown style, it's that style I like. Rather than double tracking using live stuff, you know. Live in the studio.

ESN: What about the LP production?

P.W: I've done it. I worked on it mainly in London because of the way we started. My ambition this year is to record an LP on our eight-track in Liverpool, to see whether I can do it there or not. I've got about two LPs worth of stuff that has been stifled

because of WEA. When we were stuck with them, I was stopped putting anything out. They caused the problem, if we had done it our way it have already been out.

ESN: The trouble and delay is mainly because of them?

P.W.: Mainly, either directly or by them blocking things and being fuckers or just putting bad thoughts in people's heads, and iffing and umming instead of letting us make the decisions. We ended up fighting rather than actually doing anything. It's the same at Eternal. They like to pretend they are a label. It's been like a war of attrition; just waiting to see which side broke first, and they broke first, so that suits us. We got out of all the debt and we made more money than the Sex Pistols did and we got more free lunches than them as well.

ESN: So what about writing, have you had difficulty living up to the pride of Story Of The Blues?

P.W: No not at all because I don't rate that as one of the best things we've done.

ESN: So what do you rate as the best things you've done?

P.W: At the moment, I don't know there is one song I have just written. The week we got out of our contract with WEA, I wrote some songs that we did just on the energy of being out of a deal, like some of the best ones I've written. I feel they are anyway, certainly potentially. At the moment, with having just done the LP; I've got that in my head a lot.

A Word To The Wise Guy is a twist of what it was to be called; The Words Of The Wise Guy.

P.W: Success wise? It succeeds on our terms before it's out so that's not a problem for me. In terms of chartwise a lot depends on that. Now I've got more important things on me blata.

# SPEAR OF DESTINY

Stan Stammers had previously told me how hard Spear of Destiny work. The band's actions confirm this. Before the 'ONE EYED JACK' LP was released Spear did a warm up tour; warming up for the LP tour. It was not demanded of them, but they felt it necessary to reinstate themselves on the music scene. They called it The Prisoner Tour. The intro tape was pinched from the ITV series. Prisoner of Love was already sliding down the charts, so that was fairly incidental. A tighter band, having sorted all technical hitches showed on the second tour of Britain, on their path to Europe.

S.O.D. are not bound by commercial considerations. 'Prisoner of Love' was expected to go higher than it's no.59 placing. Lining up a tour is no problem. They usually pull the best part of a thousand a night. "We just put out the singles, the people who come to see us like. Sooner or later the word will spread. Obviously if we were playing to 20,000 a night; a record would go straight into the top 10."

Stan was very confident about the previous S.O.D. line up, on the Grapes Of Wrath tour. They finished touring, went to Europe and split. Hypocrisy if it was musical differences, but it was not at all.

"We had a few problems out in Europe, Certain people couldn't handle it, and started getting very silly. I was really surprised. It did me in a bit; amazing how people change. To think somebody is something - then all of a sudden something's going on, it's really silly, "Stan expands, as to what did go on. "You get treated a hundred times better. The punters think you're the best thing since sliced bread. People start thinking they are popstars, basically. It has always been a problem, right through from Theatre of Hate. People think they've made it, and that's when the trouble starts.... There is no end as to what you can do. The thing about the band now, is they are all veterans. We have all gone wrong before, but we know where. Now we're all in it together. This is our last chance, basically, and everybody knows it. We've had a helluva lot of chances. I'm really pleased, we've been lucky. I'd like



to say 'thank you' to everybody out there. We've fucked plenty of people about."

For the first time Stan is really happy with the product, One Eyed Jack. "We all are. A job well done. Even if no one bought it, we'd still be happy, because we've achieved something by getting it done. The songs are stronger, the musicians are better. Everybody's working together, instead of Kirk having to tell people what to do. Everybody has studio experience, and ideas to add."

'ROSIE' is a curious piece, not featured on the LP but on the 'Prisoner's' B side. It is based on a negro prison song. The music is sparse between beats. A chain rattle sound adds a glorious touch.

Spear, in one form or another, have never been far away. They have always been coasting along on their own, taking their own time, playing the gigs and putting out the records.....durable.

SIMON MCKAY



Whether Orange Juice are shy of commercial success, or it is that success shies away from them: The periodical line up changes are hardly a solid foundation for the band. Edwyn sees himself as the figurehead of the band. He is the only poof left from the original line up. Even now he stresses, that it still feels like Orange Juice.

"Of the Rip It Up line up only Zeke and myself understood what O.J. were about conceptionally. Unfortunately the band imploded. There was so much tension within the group; bitterness, rivalry and animosity. Now none of the original O.J. are here because O.J. is just an abstract concept which exists out with the group, and we just need to tune in. The others just had conflicting ideas. That is why they left. It was a mutual agreement. Neither party would compromise. I would not abide synth; not liking their smooth funkiness. They are not very expressive and without dynamics. The sound they emulate is often inferior to the original sounds."

Edwyn certainly says why he does not like synthesizers. They could affect the whole musical output. The funky syncopated work outs were more the habitat of James Brown. Edwyn's vocal style would not accommodate that kind of groundwork. It was logical that the band should split.

This era of change left open the backdoor for a Paul on bass and a John casually playing a casual guitar. He is extremely wreckless on stage. John was only committed to doing the last two tours, and is contributing to the third LP proper.

"My initial selfish reason for doing the tours was to meet Alan Horne, because I wanted to make records; if I could find anybody I liked."

"John, fell in love with Alan", injects Eddy. Love as opposed to infatuation?

"Packing really.....two young men discovering their bodies", John commits himself with bravado.

John's casual approach is typified by the fact that he did not contribute to 'What Presence'.

"Edwyn played all the guitars on it. I could not think of anything."

"John said he had some ideas but he had to D.J. in Bristol. Even though he was on a retainer of £500. His first commitment should have been to O.J." says an indignant Ed.

"The trouble was, all my ideas for that song were on the piano. I can't play the piano."

"Funny you should say that, neither can I," relates Big Ed.

What else do the two have in common, apart from their smitten attitude towards one another?

"John has a great big mole on the left cheek of his buttock. I have a mole on the right cheek of mine", Edwyn shows his obvious boisterous and not uncharacteristically camp mood. He is no longer repressed by the overbearing David and Malcolm.

"They did not allow me to be camp because they were macho men."

John claims that his greatest influences on O.J. has been as a 'catalytic queen'. He admits he has not added much musically.

"Zeke was a bit touchy initially, about the campness when he joined the band. He didn't understand the humour in it, but now he's possibly the poofiest in the band."

# ORANGE JUICE

"He's got the best ass anyway," intellectualises John.

What of the true inner concept of Orange Juice? Take it away Edwyn Christian Anderson.

"Paul, Zeke, John and myself are great friends and we travel about the country in a massive tour bus. It is driven by Ray, who used to be a teddy boy. He calls us The Gay Teds, even though we are not actually gay." (Edwyn shows reserve; thinking maybe he has taken the issue too far. My hand gently fondling his inner thigh seemed to spark this). "Our soundsystem blares out, and we make coffee on the teasmade. When we reach the inner city we do psychedelic dances in the bus.

We stay in nice hotels. In Swansea Zeke was asleep in a massive double bed in the early hours of the morning. Grace (the manager) and myself came into get Zeke out of the bed. We were fully clothed, I might add." (My hand must have wandered again). "Rather than move him, we just got into bed on either side of him. Zeke was probably naked. After a while John came in looking for us. He exclaimed, 'I know who you are, the Thompson Twins! Look; the girl, the black, and the gay!' much to our amusement."

It is interesting to note that in that tale from the riverbank Edwyn almost stressed the straight and narrow, in case too much of the flippancy is lost in a reader's possibly unimaginative approach to cold print. A shame to have let the cat out of the bag, though.

"Today the emphasis is on toilet humour and buttocks, even though it is very childish and humiliates a group. When people are reading this they will not realise that the interviewer, Mophead, came in to interview us wielding a massive pair of 42" plaster cast buttocks."

That verged on the description of being a joke. Of course not everybody shares Edwyn's sense of humour. I ask clown whether he sees himself as arrogant.

"When I am feeling particularly confident, that arrogance can turn into obnoxiousness. As I play my current hit single 'My Ever Changing Moods' it is about how I change my moods so often. The words to that song are fairly self explanatory, and will give you more of an insight to my character. It was our first hit single since 'Rip It Up', we were very pleased of course."

I select my words carefully before asking Edwyn whether 'he checks his ego daily for growths?'

"That's a new word for it. I usually call it willy." Edwyn pauses...."I have far greater peace of mind now; completely relaxed, completely confident....a quiet sort of confidence. Often when people are feeling insecure they over compensate. That is where you find all that bravado.... quietly confident."

Smug?

"Some may call it smug, yes." Edwyn's lips point, his cheeks pouch beneath the gleam of his eyes. I even commented at the time as to how taxing it would be to transcribe that look of total self satisfaction.



EDWYN'S MOLE SEARCH

John mentioned that he had already recorded some guitar for what Edwyn has described as the third LP proper. As well as the danger of John recording more guitar, Foetus 'just popped into the studio and shit all over Salmon Fishing. In New York, which just happened to be the track on the mixing desk; defecating. This was without formal arrangement, the same thing could happen at any time really. Describing the next release as the 'third LP proper' hardly compliments 'Texas Fever' and makes it sound rather improper. Does Edwyn reserve criticism for it's existence?

"You have to remember it was recorded in the same period of time when things were traumatic and came to a head. When I listen to it, it is evocative of that period of time and the turmoil. I cannot listen to it objectively, but I think it's a very good album. The reason it is a mini is because of the split."

The split was not announced officially. I heard a few rumours. It was obvious that David and Malcolm were working together on projects that just were not Orange Juice. Was the press silence a move on the record company's part; holding back with the release of information so that it would coincide with 'Texas Fever'?

"No, they were all for a formal press announcement. We didn't want to publicise it. I didn't want people to think O.J. were no more I saw it more as a parting of ways, and that, two members had left. It still feels like Orange Juice."

When Stephen and James were booted from the original O.J. they were treated as scapegoats. Edwyn shows regret about the way they were treated. He shows caution now when David and Malcolm are the topic.

"The split didn't sadden me. I thought it was really good. It's been a massive relief."

Edwyn stresses that the more recent split was for different reasons. The problem this time was not lack of commercial success. Here's looking at the new band:

"Zeke and I are compatible obviously. John has an outlook for a solo career, so there are no ego problems in the group. He is quite lazy though, but he has said he will work with O.J. when he does not have his own work to attend to. It's all fairly democratic now.... Things have turned out well for Orange Juice and 'What Presence' is a wonderful single."

SIMON MCKAY



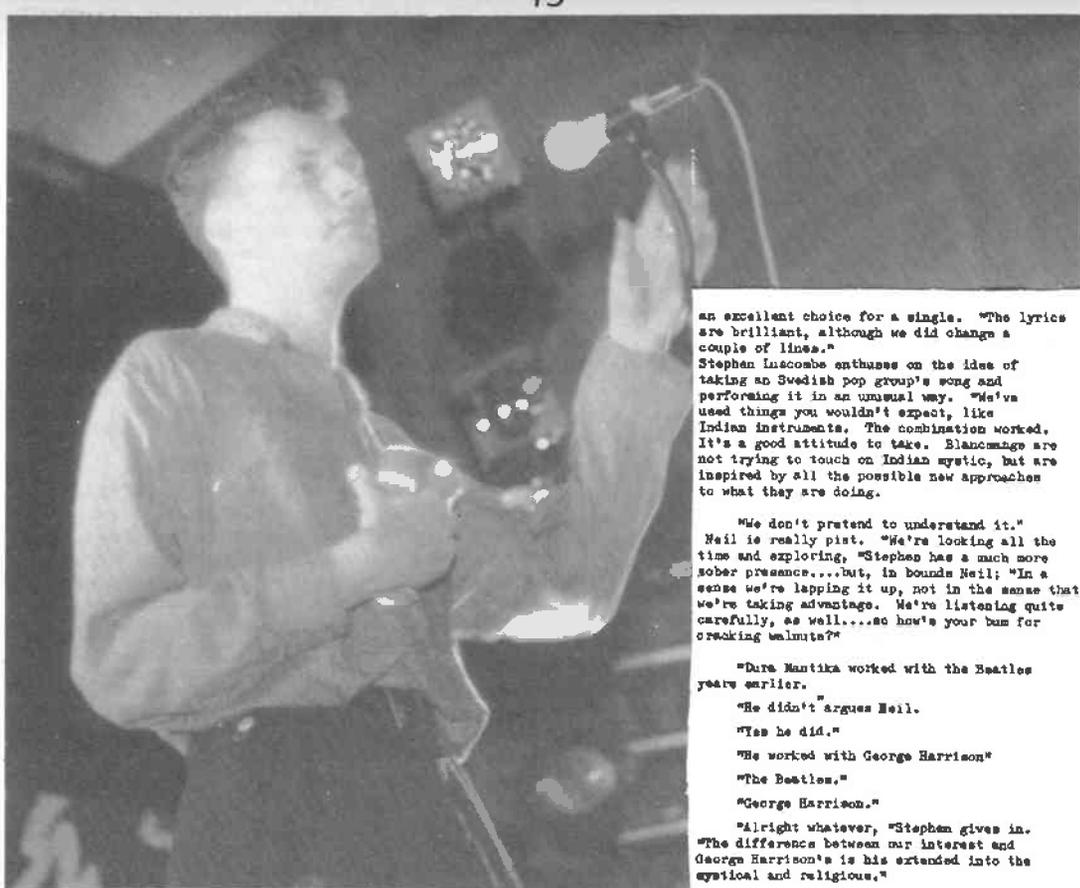
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an excellent choice for a single. "The lyrics are brilliant, although we did change a couple of lines."

Stephen Incombe enthuses on the idea of taking an Swedish pop group's song and performing it in an unusual way. "We've used things you wouldn't expect, like Indian instruments. The combination worked. It's a good attitude to take. Blancmange are not trying to touch on Indian mystic, but are inspired by all the possible new approaches to what they are doing."

"We don't pretend to understand it."

Neil is really pist. "We're looking all the time and exploring, "Stephen has a much more sober presence...but, in bounds Neil; "In a sense we're lapping it up, not in the sense that we're taking advantage. We're listening quite carefully, as well...so how's your bus for cracking walnuts?"

"Dura Mautika worked with the Beatles years earlier."

"He didn't argue Neil."

"Yes he did."

"He worked with George Harrison"

"The Beatles."

"George Harrison."

"Alright whatever, "Stephen gives in. "The difference between our interest and George Harrison's is his extended into the mystical and religious."

"Although not initially," Neil does not sound particularly smug.

"Our's does in an abstract sense, comparing the religions. On my part anyway, Hinduism, Islam and all the rest of them... connect them all together and see them in context of music and culture and work into what we're doing."

"We're into prime evil scream at the moment and trying to find our five year old selves."

"It's not just that."

"I am."

"It's taking on a superficial level without immersing ourselves in one aspect or another, remaining on the outside and holding a clearer view." Blancmange's second single 'God's kitchen' comes to mind. That was about Stephen's and Neil's Christian upbringing and their ultimate rejection of it.

"We can stand later and laugh at it, but still feel respect. Religion is a very potent force. It would not have lasted so long if it was inheritantly evil. Something as powerful as religion cannot be condemned. It, and people are basically good."

## BLANCMANGE

An eighteen month period between HAPPY FAMILIES and the new LP, MANGE TOUT to me seems a long time. Neil Arthur thinks that is not too long a gap. "Quicker than a few other bands. Elvis hasn't done much since he died, "he jokes in exceedingly bad taste. Instead of an apology he adds, "I liked Elvis, I still like him." 'MANGE TOUT' took six months longer than expected though, as the extra time was taken to remix a couple of tracks. There have been occasional live appearances. When I state to Neil the band had seemed fairly quiet, he raises his voice, "bollocks!" and then hits me with a list of hit singles. "We have to keep quiet between singles."

I was surprised when Blancmange took the pop charts by storm with Living On The Ceiling, followed by Waves. Neil is surprised everytime they get a single in the charts. I think a lot of people will be surprised at the next single The Day Before You Came. It is their interpretation of Abba's minor hit, in '82. Neil thinks this

I state that the law is based on the the commandments.

Stephen's point was not as specific as that, but he moves on to say, "Half of those were evil. They were based on an evil cult, and were due to certain conditions of the time." Stephen's aggressive statement continues. "The Jews weren't very nice. They destroyed half of Egypt and that's why they were enslaved. It's not in the bible like that, and has been distorted. People readily pick anything up in the book, the creed." Stephen takes his information from various sources, and fits the corresponding pieces.

Back to Pope John Paul Arthur, so holy is his answer when I ask him if he's conscious of what is becoming a greatest hits set.

"You're a bit of a dogsbun when it comes to asking questions. I'm going to really fuckin lay into you now. We can't help having hits. That's why people come to see us in the first place. We're doing half new and half old."

I explain that what prompted this particular question was that when the Pale Fountains toured to promote their debut LP they played three songs from it. Would Blancmange prefer to be playing more new songs. Their set list has not changed greatly in two and a half years. "There are a few tracks we could not do live on the LP, and the B side of 'Don't Tell Me' which I prefer to the A side."

"It's good to keep things like that separately," adds Stephen.

"It would be silly to attempt some of them live, with six people. If we really wanted to do them we could get them on tape. You made a point about there being a lot on some of the earlier backing tapes, but we do have a conscious....I've got you now. Sorry, You've made your point: One track on the LP featured 19 of my voices. It would be pretty silly singing to a backing tape of 18 of my voices. Maybe on the next tour though, I could explain it then."

Neil would not mind announcing it at every date. Neil was not ready to do it this time. "Neither was Stephen....only because he doesn't sing on it."

Blancmange do not have a shortage of songs though, despite the Abba cover version. Mange Tout was taken from a shortlist of thirty. The previous singles releases were included by choice. While this information was sapped from Neil he unintentionally mentioned the material he writes for himself. He does admit to keep songs separate for himself, and is sure Stephen does the same. He is not likely to give vent to any other package of performance.

Neil's vocals are very straightforward on quite a complex mix of simple sounds. "It's not complicated music that's the beauty of it, and what I really like about it, because it's so honest." The lyrics of My

Baby are intentionally as obnoxious and as cliched as possible. Part of it is purely banter. Very Paul Youngish I thought.

"Poor Paul, we knew what we were doing," stabs Neil.

Blancmange have always had a remarkable amount of stage presence even as a duo. Now there are six, they are more relaxed. Stephen still has moments of sheer terror when he is not playing anything, he relieves himself by studying his echo level monitor, as though it's flicker mattered. Neil meanwhile, has a fixation with EXIT signs. "Stephen used to look at me, that really worried me. I would look at him, and he would be worried. I ion't look at the people on the front now as much as I would like to while I am singing. In between singing I can block out the lights and see what is going on."

When Neil waves at the audience, fifteen people in one area claim 'he was waving at me, and wave back. Neil is not taking the piss though when he looks one way and waves another....not much urine anyway. The notes passed to him onstage must be pretty kinky though. "Not for me," snaps Neil ascertaining his kinky standards. The mark the band have been wearing on their foreheads, on stage is not part of a sexual ritual. It means simply, good luck. Neil demonstrates, tapping me there hard enough for me to feel justified in calling him 'bastid'. Neil sums up what he likes about me though. "You're so easy to have a go at, you encourage it." I did not wish to marry him, though. Who would wish to be Neil pecked?...poor Paul'(Young) said Neil. Poor Stephen, more to the point.

SIMON MCKAY



# SMITHS

When This Charming Man had just been released, Morrissey was finding reaction to it very agreeable. "Things seem to grow weekly, which is a very nice feeling. But obviously we have our sights set on something very high. We have the maximum faith in everything we do."

The Smiths signed to Rough Trade aware of how many groups sign to majors and disappear instantly without a scream. Rough Trade have proved, that they are not a draw-back.

ESN: Why not have signed to Factory?

M: There is a time for a different angle from Manchester. We could have joined the Factory throng and we would have possibly been just filed and forgotten, because the image of Factory as a record company is simply so large that you have to stand behind it. I think it was time for a different angle and take a different route. We were approached by many majors but Rough Trade were just a very comfortable alternative. It's really crucial to us to remain following our path in every direction. At the end of the day, if it is not our product it has no worth.

ESN: With success, are you coerced by your public?

M: Perhaps, but we feel in everything we do we just really try to please ourselves which doesn't have to be inverted or pleasant, but that's the attitude we have. We have to please ourselves, otherwise everything has no value. Really we will just follow our hearts and do what we want to do. We're really quite lucky, I suppose, that we'll find lots of friends. We have no unpleasantness or violence in any direction. As people turn to gigs their attitude seems to change....They become very peaceful individuals so I think we have a very positive effect on people, even though the lyric isn't always that positive.

There was an attempt in '83 by a daily paper to throw the Smiths lyrics back at them, coupled with a 'paedophilia accusation'. It was played up enormously, but knowing it came from one unpleasant source showed it was all desperately fabricated, which relaxed us.

I have always had a very surefooted attitude, but it is often construed as arrogant. We know exactly what we want and exactly how we can get it. It's not blind ambition, we don't want to waste people's time in idle boasts but I think you have this very strong attitude other-



wise people just think you are wishy washy. If you are weak, you will go down and you will suffer.

ESN: Do you all feel this way?

M: We all have a very dissimilar mode of thinking but it's very general, and strong determination in every manner.

Morrissey has been interested in popular music since he was five years old. "We are all very interested in music. Lyrically, the things that stir me must come from literature - I feel music and literature can be combined....there is a style of thinking so rarely expressed in popular music which I think we have. Lyrically there has always been a very rigid guideline and I think it's time they did. It doesn't have to be dangerous, it's just a forthright way of thinking.

ESN: Was This Charming Man inspired by literature?

M: Not really. It's just a particular attitude that I believe has to be pushed forward. To me there's a great deal of irony and humour in it. The whole idea of being charming and handsome and having a very positive attitude. Music has been devoid of that because pop music has been so depressed and inverted. Everything has been so sterile. The whole idea of encouraging charm is the best thing that anybody can do at the moment.

ESN: With such instant success, won't you be knocked down just as quickly?

M: I don't know any artist who has been liked by every single individual. Obviously that will happen, that's just the way life is. I find predictions about the future is all kind of futile emotions and futile worries. What happens will be because we are so strong willed and because musically we are at a very introductory stage. We will be very strong.

# RED GUITARS

The Red Guitars have opted for a very independent approach. They released 'Good Technology' and 'Pact' themselves. And Rhino were used for distribution.

"Their involvement was passive, they don't go out and push a record. They were keen on the records, more so on fact. They would people up at the right time," says Hallam Lewis, guitarist with the band. The Red Guitars are the record company. They could not afford pluggers or ads. In the music papers. "Fortunately the records sold themselves, which is how it should be."

Hallam says they are pleasantly surprised at the way people have warmed to them. The Smiths invited them to support on what was considered the most prestigious and beneficial tour in five years. Much to the Smiths' credit they turned down large bribes from major companies trying to break their bands. The Red Guitars were losing money on each date, £100 for seven people a night did not cover expenses, although the loss was an investment, they could not quite see it through. The Smiths were extremely cooperative. The Red Guitars were allowed full use of the lights P.A. and roadshow.

If the Red Guitars were not trying to be independent the cash advance of a record company would have enabled them to finish the tour. There was not even a current record out for them to promote. The two singles were to be put together with the addition of 'Paris France'. They could not finish satisfactory recordings in time.

Hallam appreciated the benefits of the broad minded audience that the Smiths attract. He equates the Red Guitars with the Smiths on the point that they both put passion into the music.

The Red Guitars pride themselves that they have negotiated for everything they have, and they do not have a manager. "We're smart cookies," says Hallam as he tells me of the major deals the band have turned down. "We were not being greedy, but we want a very large degree of control as to how the money is spent. Come the time we'll do a good deal, with a company who can't say 'no' to us enough." One problem they would have to

face with the pressure of a record company is that they sometimes take ages to get songs together. Hallam told me of the comparison between a song now and a rough tape of it two years ago. You may have all your life to write your first LP, maybe six months to write the second, and it has to be better.

"We've got the material, we can do it. Jerry is in sole control of the lyrics. We can all contribute a bit to the music. His lyrics are excellent, we can't tamper with them; no point. He has a strong idea of what songs should and should not be about. Quite often we get some good half formed songs. If he doesn't get the lyrics, they are dropped. Inevitably it's worth it, I like to think that everything that does go out is a really good song. All the way through....every part is of a song that means something, and not just a nice tune with a blab over the top of it. Jerry listens to the songs, goes away to work; gets an idea and comes back."

Hallam is realistic about the fact that they got to number 4 in the independent charts, and that you have to sell 40,000 a week to get in the top 50. "If we have any aim at all it is to see it through to the largest possible public. We don't have to compromise, just pack the right order of singles to represent the band."

## SIMON MCKAY

### MICRODREMEY - EVERYBODY IS FANTASTIC

The vocal accent is immediately striking. It could be intriguing or solely grate. The sleeve notes (and you can read them for yourself) emphasize how widely accessible the band feel they are. The sound is sparse, and excessively pleasant at times. The drum sound is particularly standard and uninviting. The music lends itself to more.

The lyrics are very storyish....Peter said, Jane looked. More likely to be an LP than a novel though.

# BACK ISSUES

## ESN 4

BUNNYMEN, SIMPLE MINDS, YAZOO, GANG OF FOUR, ROMAN HOLLIDAY, KISSING THE PINK, BLUEBELLS, OK JIVE, FASHION, BELLE STARS, CHINA CRISIS, THE DAINTEES .

## ESN 5

U2, TRACEY THORN, BUNNYMEN, THOMPSON TWINS, SOUTHERN DEATH CULT, AZTEC CAMERA, HIGSONS, HAZEL O'CONNOR, PIGBAG.

## ESN 6

ORANGE JUICE, MONOCHROME SET, UNDERTONES, SPEAR OF DESTINY, SEX GANG CHILDREN, BELLE STARS ALARM, BLACK, FARMERS BOYS, THOMPSON TWINS.

## ESN 7

AZTEC CAMERA, DEPECHE MODE, BIG COUNTRY, ALARM, HURRAH, EYELESS IN GAZA, BEN 'ATT, SOPHISTICATED BOOM BOOM, JOOLZ, NEW MODEL ARMY, CHERRY BOYS, PAUL YOUNG.

AVAILABLE AT 40p EACH (INC. P.)  
WRITE TO ECCENTRIC SLEEVE NOTES  
SEE PAGE 2, FOR OFFICE ADDRESS.

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## PALE FOUNTAINS (p.5)

One minute he couldn't wait to get out of the door, the next we couldn't get rid of him." Quite a lot of time seems to be spent doing various interviews. They occasionally do a day of interviews in the hotel next to the record company. The hotel has a 24 hour bar. Interviewing starts about 10 am. The drinks keep coming and by the afternoon the Pale F.s find themselves absolutely bladdered.... and a little without composure. In walks the stereotype Hong Kong man, according to Kenny Everett, and that just kills them.... his persistent bowing. Curiously enough 'Thank You' was no.1 in Hong Kong for five weeks, and no.1 in South Africa at some point.

Pale Fountains felt like stocking fillers when they joined Culture Club and the Simple Minds on a day of Japanese public relations in London. Chris, "but they knew us by name! They had to have an interpreter. We were sure they were saying 'get these baldies off'."

"They say 'they love your music, and when will you come and play in Japan', according to the interpreter.

The Pale Fountains will never be very tight live, it is by choice....practice loses enthusiasm. They will always fall under some criticism for that. So it is, it is the best way.

SIMON MCKAY

## MIGHTY WAH! (p8)

When you are starting a band, you are not aware of the music business so you are not bothered about it. You are in the music business for three months, and you meet the NME and all that and they put all the ideas that you are supposed to carry out a crusade against the music business, which distracts you from more important things. There are things I should have been doing all along which I drifted from, you know. I feel now that it's coming straight. That's why it is The Mighty Wah! We have always called it The Mighty Wah! but never had it in print. But it's straight now, it is the right time. Having done this, we have cleared a lot of the shit out of our attitudes and other people's attitudes and sorted out a prototype way forward. Not rules, but a set of standards. Things we won't let get in our way. We have sorted all that shit out so I think the next stuff will be easier to bring out.

Now The Mighty Wah! are concentrating on clearing up any misconceptions people have had. Under the come back circumstances a comment of optimism was a sign, although made a few weeks before 'Come Back's' release.

"People saying one bit wonders and all that crap, but we will prove to people this year.. The few people who had faith; the faith will be justified."

DAVID MARTIN

## SMITHS (p15)

ESN: What of the comparisons between your music and that of the sixties?

M: There will always be labels, the whole thing makes life easier. I can simply stand up and refute them. What does it mean, the sixties? I don't know.

ESN: Do you remember them?

M: I am 24. I am a child of the sixties. I was a very aware child. I am deep rooted in the sixties, but I'm not a nostalgic freak in any direction. I think people still have the same interests and fears. We should not look back on the sixties as

With the ambition of reaching as many people as possible - a large ambition; but Morrissey sees them doing it. They want to attack everything, exploit everything and appear on Chaggers Plays Pop, because it is there to be utilized. It shouldn't be left to people like Modern Romance and Bonnie Tyler.

DAVID MARTIN

### FLOAT UP G.P. - JOY'S ADDRESS

This is basically the new Rip Rig And Panic. It is fairly inspiring. As a dance record it is not cluttered and leaves a little more to the imagination and room for expression.



Paul Quinn is now pursuing a career as a singer, as opposed to being a band member. It all seems quite remarkable. Singers usually have a few hits, decide they are the value of group and leave. It usually takes a few years for people to realise that their musical differences are a problem.

'Breaking Point' was almost a hit for, Bourgie Bourgie. 'Careless' was not. Paul Quinn claims that there is always a market for Bowie impersonators. 'Paul is such an Edwyn. Paul stretches his voice further, the basic sound is similar, similar lips, quips. So apt, the release of Pale Blue Eyes.

Where does this leave Bourgie Bourgie? Paul Quinn is still under contract to finish the LP. He does not seem crazy about the idea. Personal promotion of the product is out.

Bourgie Bourgie had quite an orthodox approach. Back to basic, individual styles. The members had orthodox styles, although they were quite different. They complimented one another. The songs became economical,

# Bourgie Bourgie

thriving on simplicity. Their views differed to the point of confrontation, with the merest catalytic blink from myself. Keith sees himself as having responsibilities as a citizen, and responsibilities to society.

Michael responds, "You are responsible to the people you like. The things you think are wrong you should try and destroy," with a more modest opinion.

I fuel them, 'What if you are in the minority? If you take yourself so seriously? You will lead a very frustrated life.

Michael continues, "It is up to you to convince anybody around you. It is in your interests."

Paul injects in a lighter tone, "Truly subversive."

Keith is about to start up again, pauses realising how easily he has been wound up, and coolly continues "Yes we do enjoy working in the studio..." Keith resents being expected to explain himself because he is in a band.

"Entertainers often have to," notes Paul.

Bourgie Bourgie claimed to have the democracy of 'what I say goes'. What will MCA Records say to Bourgie Bourgie?

SINON MCKAY

## EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL - EDEN

The feel is natural and flowing. It draws on various styles without being narrow or copyist. Eden is not particularly twee, but never abrasive. The scope between extremes is broad enough. Tracey claims the bite is in the lyrics. They are precise, and leave little doubt as to which way the teeth are barbed. Tracey's lyrical style has changed radically, and has lost it's 'dreamy doesn't make sense to everybody' quality. Tender Blue shows two sides of the bed, it must surely stand in line as a BBC Play For Today script. Generally the lyrics are more concerned with life and love after romance. Romance is the aspect bands usually concentrate on. The lyrics on Eden could prop up any Country and Western publisher; amongst the songs of divorce.

Ben plays a notable organ, which particularly suits Frost And Fire. Tracey or Ben sing the vocal that suits them. As well as their guitars there are additional instruments including brass.

Some of the songs pass me by, but overall the collection is impressive.

# RED

LORRY YELLOW LORRY

↓ NEW SINGLE  
**MONKEYS  
ON JUICE**  
● PUSH

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry's operations have been self-perpetuating. They started with a handful of gigs, which financed a demo. Red Rhino were sufficiently impressed, and have now released four singles. The latest of which is Monkeys On Juice.

All the money made on gigs goes back into the band, they take nothing out for themselves. They play a lot of gigs, in the process of building up. In Belgium and Sweden they are gaining airplay, press and distribution.

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry was intended to be an extremely tacky name, and was created in response to Sex Gangs and Death Cults. It was intended to say nothing about the music.

It is not easy for the Lorrries to introduce new songs to the set. Apart from an otherwise conventional line up, they play with a drum track, and combine this with a drummer, Mick Brown. This adds more power.

"With the drums on top you get the 'human feel' too, the best of both worlds," claims Dave Wolfenden, guitar. "There are a lot of things a drummer can't do, which can be achieved with this arrangement," Mick impresses. The sparseness depends on what is best for the song. The idea is something gradually evolved for them. It does occasionally have it's drawbacks though.

"If we have a poxy P.A. and I can't hear the foldback, we're fucked. It's really hard keeping up to the drum machines and not losing ring. Mistakes do show," Mick Brown modestly confesses. Dave thinks Mick has reached a level of consistency, having played so much. Playing live so often reduces the need for rehearsals. They are aware that they do not always get the chance to expand new ideas while they are still fresh.

The Lorrries feel busy now, for the first time. "It's better for us, instead of having everything in drabs and drabs. When you have a month between every gig, it's like doing your first gig everytime," decides Chris. "We try to operate as a tight unit as possible."

There once was a heavy metal guitarist, before Dave, in the Lorrries. They suddenly realised what was wrong. The former guitarist did not realise until one night in the pub, when he was to meet them, but found only his guitar. Dave talks about trust.

"If you don't trust one another there is no point."

Paul Southern, bass and vocals, feels they have the right working combination. The Lorrries have a spark. Chris feels they are, and it is good to be so, commercial in their own way.

The Lorrries are glad they did not have a lot of press when they formed. "We would not have been worthy of it then. We are now, and want to release an LP, but we will need some press to go with it," says Chris. It is a shame.

"This sounds naive but we don't like pestering people to help us. It's so much nicer when people want to do something for us."

Most of what the Lorrries do is based around intensity. Chris feels the material differs, but it all has their stamp on it.

SIMON MCKAY

