

## THE SEXTANTS

It took roughly 6 months after I moved to San Francisco to have time to really check out the local scene - my first jobs were 25 - 30 miles outside of The City, which meant getting up at 4 am to catch the bus "I train & going t" sleep early. When I found a job in The City, I finally had the opportunity to check out the local scene - thinking of music in SF, I tended to think either Hippy (Jefferson Airplane/Starship, Big Brother & the Holding Company, Grateful Dead) or schlocky (Sammy Hagar, Huey Lewis, Journey, Starship, Grateful Dead). Yes, I know the Dead Kennedys were from SF, but they had broken up a while back & Biafra was doing spoken word.

I'd started going to the Paradise Lounge (9th & Folsom), which also had Above Paradise, where most of the spoken word and acoustic shows took place. One of the bands I kept coming back to was The Sextants, a 4-piece group originally from Las Cruces, NM. I first saw them at an Above Paradise show in '90 and immediately responded to them: their sound having elements of folk pop/country with tinges of blues-gospel and some psychedelia, and extensive vocal harmonies

They had a definite following: I was able to watch their gradual rise over the year. There was a lot of buzz about SF bands at that time, and The Sextants were in the midst of it along with 4 NON BLONDES, with whom they performed with from time to time. (4 NON BLONDES, at that time were a talented group - they did help pave the way for bands like TRIBE 8, although singer Linda Perry did work the 'Grace Slick of the 90's' schtick way too hard. When she made the big grab for fame, it imploded the band & resulted in a shitty album, BIGGER BETTER FASTER NOW with that damn song, 'What's Goin' On'). The failure of her solo album, IN FLIGHT, just proves there is



Max Butler, Brennan Hester, Lori Hester-Arthur, Matt Boudreau - the sextants

some justice.} In May of '92, they released their debut album on Imago Records, LUCKY YOU. Eagerly awaited, the album never took off, and The Sextants were consigned to limbo.

The Sextants were: Brennan Hester- vocals & guitar, Lori Hester-Arthur- bass & vocals, Max Butler- guitar & vocals, Matt Boudreau- drums & percussion. This interview was conducted at Above Paradise in March of '91 when Lori, Matt & Brennan were kind enough to answer questions about the band's beginnings.

RH: You're from Las Cruces, all of you?

LORI: Yeah, all 4 of us grew up there. I was born in Santa Rosa but I moved to NM when I was pretty young and Brennan was born; actually, we were all born in CA, but we grew up in NM.

RH: What was growing up there like?

LORI: Well in some ways it was really cool. We lived outside of town, down by the Rio Grande. We had an acre of land and all these trees; pecan orchards & wheat and alfalfa fields, and it was beautiful & really pleasant in that way, but as far as anything cultural or exciting to do, sometimes it seemed like there wasn't

that much. I mean, you could go to movies, but there wasn't that much of a live music thing going on there. It was a little frustrating, the town itself, but it was beautiful too.

RH: When did you get interested in music?

LORI: Well, we've always kind of sung & stuff like that. My grandparents were in a band and my mother was a piano teacher & played for a long time. When we (Brennan & I) were little, we'd sit around and listen to my dad's Mamas & The Papas album & sing along, learn all the harmonies and stuff. We always sang together.

RH: Were you all involved with other bands before?

LORI: This is my first band; the boys were and they can tell you more about that...

MATT: Brennan & I had gone to elementary school together. We really weren't close friends at that time. We went on to jr. high and got to know each other more. About that time, Max & I met, played a little bit put a hand together — we clicked really well, personality wise. Brennan was in a band called MFC — Manson Family Christmas ... BRENNAN: Real funky stuff there. Hardcore punk kind of band. We were just starting out on our instruments & listening t' D.K.'s, BLACK FLAG, that kinda thing. MATT: So Max & I went over to record them one day & he developed a relationship with

them and eventually stepped in on bass.

BRENNAN: The first song I ever wrote was in that band. It was making of the National Enquirer. That was my big cause at the time, which proves what a true artist I really am. (laughter) M.A.T.: Anyway, Max was playing with MFC and I was playing this cheesy Top-40 cover Land and MFC eventually broke up. They didn't have a drummer: it was just Max & Brennan together, so they called me and said, "Why don't you come play with us, see how it goes?" said okay, came over, played with them. Max had then got his guitar back he had picked up the bass just to play with this band — and I said, "I'm gonna stick with these guys. This appears like it's gonna go somewhere." So I dropped the

other band and started playing with these guys full time. We then became The Sextants. The first show we played was an Amnesty International show in Las Cruces — it was a local band kind of thing & we went over really well. Couple of years passed: Brennan moved out here Max & I graduated and filtered out here & Lori had been living in Oakland. RH: The major thing that drew me to the band was the harmonies, plus the mixture of styles. How did that develop? BRENNAN: When we moved out here & Lori got into the band, well actually, it started before that. We got tired "i playing the

punkish stuff because it got boring after awhile. Started getting into other stuff like "college rock", which is a lot more refined. We (Lori & I) grew up listening to the Mamas & The Papas — lots of vocals, real harmony oriented stuff & that started to come into play in a big way. After I moved out here, we started playing around with that. We'd make up harmonies, sit around in her (Lori's) kitchen and record them on a box like this (indicates my recorder), with our brother hitting cardboard boxes for drums.

RH: You and Lori share songwriting duties?

LORI: And Max also. But we usually collaborate: that helps us to have some sort of unity in the band.

RH: What was your break in the SF Scene?

BRENNAN: Matt, Max & I were all working at the Fillmore at the time: we worked with this girl who was secretary there...

MATT: Liz Peppin, yeah. She was big in the Mod scene — really cool lady. She managed us at first.

BRENNAN: She would get us shows around town very sporadically. She booked us a show at Marsugies in San Jose with BIG LOVE

REUNION. We were really blown apart by BLR. LORI: We just loved their music. We talked to all of them & got friendly that