



The band's first album, AND REASON FLEW, debuted in 1998 on the German label, Trocadero and was released in the U.S. on the NYC label, Thirsty Ear Records in 1999.

Carrie's initial description of what she was originally aiming for (a rock orchestra) may strike some as a harkening back to the days of bands such as ELO, Kansas, Shooting Star and the like - while the description of what 100 watt ended up as (rock/Pop based on symphonic principles) makes it sound like an art performance \*cup. On listening to AND REASON FLEW, I think there's a case to be made that they fall somewhere in the playful middle of those two poles.

A lot has been made about Carrie's connection to The Breeders, and how much influence that may have on 100 Watt, which is a sign of rock journalism laziness, since it completely overlooks the time she spent in ERQ and her initial background in writing-and that background remains a huge part of 100 Watt; while the music is a collaboration

of all the band members, the lyrics are primarily Carrie's, and part of the appeal of the songs is the odd twist of phrase that manages to

stick in your head along with the tiffs. ["You put a shot with my ball and chain/And you pump your arms and fly through me,



like an angel from a gun"]

Most of the wordplay on AND REASON FLEW has to do with flight and birds, metaphorical and otherwise - one could make correlations such as 'leaving the nest' to 'fly on one's own', but that would be a bit precious... In any case, it's a solid and self-confident debut, with a sound that's more than accessible - "Flagrante Delecto", 'Birthmark'. "Sleep, walkers" and "Aorta" would be welcome additions to radio play, if radio were actually geared to play music rather than to sell ads

The second album, self-titled 100 WATT SMILE (which can be ordered via CD Baby), finds the group more than comfortable in their roles and the music on the pop side on the rock equation ('Fancy Me', 'Red Cherry Suit', 'Club 23') but following through on the promise that AND REASON FLEW showed.

One last project to mention..

GUESS WHO THIS IS, a tribute to Dom Leone, was released by Guy Capelcelatro III'S label, Two Ton Santa, in early '02, proceeds of which will go to The Dom Leone Writing Competition, which has been active for over a decade, helping kids in grades 1 - 12 find their own voices. A noble endeavor, but you also get the added benefit of hearing these songs in a different light, if you're familiar with Dom and ERQ. And if you're not, than you have the opportunity to be introduced to them.

I had mentioned earlier that Dom was - is -the heart of ERQ. Not to take away anything from Carrie, Da". Neno and Jonah who were, and are as equally valuable. But the one thing that hearing this disc really made clear, for perhaps the first time since discovering ERQ, is how much of his personality is in the songs. People talk of the 'charm' of ERQ, and that IS a huge part of what attracts People. But listening to these songs, by

different artists and by ERQ members in different settings, finally made me realize just what a huge part of ERQ is Dom - and knowing what one knows now, probably an inkling on just how difficult it was for everyone to carry on after he left so soon. Dan Leone and Guy, in their notes, put it across much better than I do.

As to the interpretations, all the bands featured did great work - taking a glance at the track listing preceding this review reveals some familiar names, particularly if you live in the SF Bay Area. Granfalloon Bus, Virginia Dan, 86, Cory Porter (ex-Pupcase and Buckets), The Funny Bunnies" (actually the band Fuck, but I suspect that the name change indicates there may have been a slight problem with the printers), and Warm Wires are but a few whose tracks are A+. The Buckets make a reappearance, and ERQ members Carrie Bradley (100 Watt Smile), Dan Leone (Music Night), Jonah winter (Perth Amboy Society Tea Orchestra) and Neno Perotta (The Hot Tubs) make appearances with their respective new groupings. Also, several recordings of Dan reading some of his work are interspersed throughout the disc

some of the reinterpretations are merely slight shifts in tone, keeping close to the original arrangements; there are a few

that stretch things, such as The Pea Wee Fist's country with-a-rap-beat version of 'Scofflaw of Gravity'. Perth Amboy's giddy and fun take on 'Spider' (that's Jonah's wife on vocals), and Music Nights calypso-ized 'My Apartment'. But the truly radical reinterpretation on disc is Calexico's, with their deconstruction of 'Drivin' on 9'



"I'm not a musician... you might've realized that by now, but in case you haven't, I'm just kinda comin' right out with it. I ain't even a songwriter. What I am is... uh... - I'm pretty good at scrabble." - Dom Leone

which is sure to raise some eyebrows of those familiar with the song and with the cover The Breeders did a few years ago. Some of the best interpretations are those that keep it simple and acoustic, such as Mark Kozelek's version of 'My Friend Bob' and Bob & Guy's take on 'Buck Tempo' (for my money, the best version on record since the one on ERQ's MORE BAD TIMES album).

The packaging is A-1 also: in addition to the notes by Guy and

Dan mentioned earlier, various artists also offer their visual interpretations of Dom's songs.

(In regards to Dan's assessment of his skills, I bet that he was on the money about being a pretty good Scrabble player. I'm sure he'd be tickled to see he was wrong about the rest of it)

And with that, we finally come to the end of the interviews-. 4 years after most of them were committed to tape (and 2 years before that when I first wanted to do this particular issue).

Believe it or not, there's much more that I could add - on groups and genres that have briefly been touched upon here and there in conversation, as well as interesting music finds in the KC area and beyond... those extra bits will be added to the webpage.

I find that mod of my main musical tastes haven't shifted very radically in the last 10 years or so - aside from a revulsion over the narrowness of radio playlists; I can't really say that most of the musical discoveries that I make come from the radio anymore... and I'm finding a satisfaction in investigating certain areas rather than looking for 'the next new big thing' - which only proves that I won't be working in the music business anytime soon.

Hope that's it's been interesting for you...