

(quirk)

issue 9

***The
Fighting
Cocks * Venus In
Furs * Ciccone * The
Pocket Rockets * 18 * Mayday
2000 * Charity Shopping * Fanzines
* Demos * Albums * Singles * etc.....**

Upstairs at (quirk) 9

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It's been a funny old half year since the last (quirk). Hardly any paper copies for a start - guess this whole internet vibe is slowly trickling down to everyone, hell even I have it at home now thanks to my glorious little i-mac. So what is music and where is it going? Does anyone care anymore? The bands in this issue certainly do, but they're having to fight tooth and nail for recognition. Venus In Furs are all over magazines, the internet, and the radio yet they still don't have a deal. Why? Not even the record companies know what to do next. In short our glorious "industry" is lost and confused. But that's not such a bad thing, whilst majors dither individuals get industrious. Find the music you want, someone'll have an MP3 of it. Anyway, welcome to (quirk), subtitled "The Chameleon Issue" as you'll find the interviews skip around in style. Why? I'm not sure, possibly because i'm fed up of the trad q&a and of the nauseatingly poor "fanzine questions". Hell it's my fanzine, if it feels good do it etc etc...! There will no doubt be an issue 10 so if you feel like contributing get in touch.

If you bought this on paper chances are you don't know it can be downloaded free off the internet (in MAC and PC PDF format) or bought on a floppy disk. All future issues will be distributed in the same way. Come and visit the website (with photo gallery, archive, links, and argument board) at <http://www.quirkfanzine.com> - it's the best way to keep up to date with (quirk) related shennanigans and you can fight on the messageboard with the rest of us! Andy (quirk)

Music Live (also known as Andy reviews his own gigs...)

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GRRRI

Between February and April 2000 one "big beat" Kev and one Andy "(quirk)" reclaimed their stake in Upstairs @ Highbury Garage for three gigs to show people that Saturday nights could rock and new music wasn't dead. With nights far more popular than their previous stint with "Club EGO" it ended as quickly as it came, quitting whilst ahead as all good things should (Eleven O'Clock Show take note).

Trayscape/Comatose/Angel/Inline Sk8ing Barbies

Portsmouth's Inline Sk8ing Barbies are a three piece armed with ska punk vibes and songs about dead pet rats. Mid set they hit their punk cover of "Walking In Memphis" head on and the crowd bounced obligingly. Humorous and endearing we shall no doubt hear from them again soon. Following them were the 3 piece teen grunge kids of Angel. With a frontman resembling Kurt Cobain in almost every detail they hammered through a set that mixed Bush with Placebo. Plenty of angst, plenty of head down riffery, a whirlwind drummer and a bassist playing at knee level. Angel mean it. John Peel favourites, Comatose, were on next. An all grrrl line-up with diminutive singer Hazel packing a voice like a pneumatic drill. Pulling her boyfriend on stage for a thrashed cover of Stevie Wonder (?) they are Tampasm without the latex. Oh, and a liking for football. And country dancing judging by the break in "Real Men"... Headliners Trayscape are Surrey's answer to The Deftones, rap metal complete with scratch DJ. After giving shout outs to everyone in the building "...a shout out to Leytonstone posse, one guy..." the discordant guitar riffs came in and the bass rumbled. Subject matter ranged from getting high to race hate, vocalist Samad obviously has some views he wants heard. The crowd jumped on each others heads with the happy abandonment of self regard that makes them such special people. As debut nights go it couldn't have been better.

Ciccone/Twinkie/Venus In Furs/Belding

A gang of timid boys shuffle onto the stage. Their first gig out of school grounds starts brashly with some rousing poetry and a blast of the A-Team theme. It's enough to break the strings on one members guitar so we wait patiently as he hurriedly fixes on another. Soon enough Belding are into their punk pop fizz, all panicked vocals and ramshackle chord sequences. MP3 'hit' "Nerdscene" incites that very rare moment where people actually dance to the opening act. Then they scarper back to their alcopops with groupies in tow. Venus In Furs are next, a stunning northern four piece who encapsulate the spirit of Kenickie with the disco sheen of (neu) Bis. Lead singer Becky is a born star but thank-

fully doesn't take away attention from the other members, none of whom could be considered Sleeper-blokes/girls. Keyboard player Helena shuffles uneasily in her heels, pausing to look up and smile every so often. "Spun Like Candy" is a pop number 1, whilst "Where's My River" could easily take the indie chart without the slightest of effort. Something for everyone then. Twinkie are indie. And pop. But not really indiepop. With a frontman sporting a dapper moustache they are quirky yet straightforward. With catchy hooks and endearingly ramshackle choruses they are indie as it should be. Ciccone complete the night, a bargain bucket assortment of tacky and cheap punkpop songs wrapped up in paper bought from Everything For A Pound. Cheeky, chatty, and chaotic they clatter through a set of lo-fi hits for the kids. Rebekah's vocals swing violently from smooth pop production to Mandarin-esque squeals and hollors. With a cover of A-Ha's "Take On Me" sounding like the original pulled backwards through a particularly punk rock hedge the crowd pogos and for one split second everyone thinks the eighties were actually quite good.

The Samurai Seven/Fire Apple Red/Et Unique/Mistaken Identity/Mavis

The final part in the GRRR trilogy started early with late additions Mavis. Rocking in a jangly (dare I say) Northern way these were songs of passion and the underdog. Visually Mavis aren't what you'd call co-herant. Bassist Allison dresses to impress in a short skirt and fuck-off/me boots whilst singing guitarist James looks like he's stumbled out of Help The Aged. Indie rides again, and in Jame's case, it's brown. Mistaken Identity are just as incoherent in appearance with the bassist obviously a keen fan of Korn whilst the singer/guitarist could be giving a talk on plumbing. MI are all members of Surrey Uni's "Alternative" society and with low slung guitars, thundering basslines, and squeeling guitars it's obvious where their influences lie. Grunge with a neu metal edge, for a first London gig it was impressive. Et Unique however are not so much influenced by anyone else as haunted by their former glories. Two ex-members of The Pin-Ups are here and they've ditched the humour and wit for straight forward rock n' roll attitude. Looking like Oasis, except with the lead singer in a baseball cap, the sound rips into Embrace territory whilst still vaguely punk. It failed to click with the audience and most gritted their teeth and waited. Belgium is famous for being a particularly insignificant country stuck in Europe. But that might just change with Fire Apple Red. For the 'Red (as no-one calls them) are from that country and they are skate punk complete with big mohicans and baggy trousers. Erratic and confident they blast the crowd with an assault of similar sounding songs - even causing the usually placid Sid Abuse to wade to the front, wave his arms about like he's drowning, and yell at the maniac lead singer. "This is a love song" he says, and they launch back into another power-chord whirlwind. Oi Oi Oi! Headliners The Samurai Seven couldn't compete in terms of volume but their indierock vibe kept the dancing going. Wearing shop assistant uniforms they were only too "happy to help" the night round off on a high. Their new choppy tunes should no doubt see them return to another Peel Session soon.

And that was it. GRRR complete. Will there be more in the future? Who knows, what's to stop you having a go?



We love the...

POCKET ROCKETS!!!

The Pocket Rockets are a 3 girl/1 boy (+1 girl dancer/manager) from America all aged 15-17. Sounding not unlike Gaze (on Southern Records) or a softer Sleater Kinney, they are essentially a more melodic and hummable Vyvyan.

***Please introduce yourselves including name, age, role in the band, and any fascinating facts on yourselves.**

Hello, my name is Lili S. Schulder. I was born on June 16, 1983. That would make me a 17-year old (I round up, ok?) Gemini. I play guitar and do back-up vocals. I love to cut peoples' hair. It used to be that whenever I was bored, I would go ahead and cut my own hair...but soon enough...let's just say my neck was getting a bit cold. So I took it upon myself to give certain exclusive people i.e. my friends the most mod, sexy cuts ever. Of course...

Hi, I'm Carmen. I'm 15 almost 16! and I'm the lead singer! A fascinating fact about me is that I have no belly button!

I'm Mat Lewis, I'm 15, I play the drums, and I'm developing a fetish for ties as we speak.

My name is Rachel and I am 15 years of age, I attempt to play the bass in conjunction with the other instruments of the band, and I own leg warmers

***Have you planned any gigs? any favourites/memorable moments?**

L: We have played 2 and a half gigs I believe. (The half would be the time Carmen, Mat and I played a last minute set at this horribly lame party



Lili - "guitar"

***How long have you been a band, where do you live, and why did you form.**

m: I've been in the band for roughly 7.5 months, I live in the suburbs of Washington, DC, and I joined the band because they couldn't find any other drummers. Believe me, they looked.

c: I've been in this band...since, wow, the fall of '99. I live in Silver Spring, MD. I feel the Pocket Rockets formed because there was a lack of...originality in the DC music scene. I mean, there are some good bands, but they seem either like Blink 182 or some other metal trash that I don't like. I mean, the Pocket Rockets is MY fave local band :)

l: I have been in the Pocket Rockets since...well Carmen and I first got together in July of '99...so that would be about 9 months. But we didn't actually start practicing as a band until Mat came into the picture. That was in September of '99 I believe. I served a brief stint as a bassist for a punk band (it lasted about a week) when I was 14. I live in Silver Spring, Maryland. I would rather be in Scandinavia though... I formed this band because the whole setting in which Carmen and I met was that I had overheard her saying she wanted to be in a glam rock band..

in order to save the party from choking on its own sheer crappiness..) I would have to say that my most memorable gig would be our very first gig. It was played at "Lisapalooza '99" - a big, wild party that was held at our friend Lisa's house. It was just a crazy atmosphere. No parents were present, but plenty of alcohol was. During our set, there were all these technical difficulties cos we were using this high-tech equipment that did not belong to us. I remember getting really frustrated at one point, when we were covering "Karma Police." The technical difficulties were really getting to me, so I just stepped on the distortion pedal, and started screaming the background vox. Yikes..

c: We're playing an Anti-Prom party on Saturday May 5th!

***Your song, JAP, clearly appears to be based on personal experience, can the same be said for Cookie Blows A Fag? Why did you give these two songs those titles?**

c: JAP is about Lili's sister, but I'll let her tell you more about that. I wrote Cookie Blows A Fag..I was really inspired by David Bowie and Velvet Goldmine and Lou Reed to write a song about a gay guy. I'm a sucker for gay guys :) It's a big part of glam rock, you know? I felt like it would be a good song for a "Glam" band. Well, I think that me and Lili came up with the title for JAP. Cos I mean, her sister IS one! (JAP meaning Jewish American Princess..it was funny when we performed this at Lili's totally Jewish school). Erm, Cookie Blows A Fag..well, Rachel had been telling me that in England people would say they were going to "blow a fag" instead of "Smoking a cigarette" and well, you can guess what that sort of thing means in good Ol' American English. So, I felt it was an appropriate title :) Plus, I mean, wouldn't Cookie be a good name for a trannie?

l: "JAP" is slang for "Jewish American Princess." Since the song is about my sister, and I am Jewish..well, I think you get the point.



Carmen - "vocals"

*Glam Saved The Day appears both simultaneously upbeat in content yet downbeat in sound, did you intend for this? Does it represent the way that many extrovert and outwardly happy people are fragile and insecure deeper down?

c: I wrote this song because, well I was bored. This of course was written during my Velvet Goldmine obsession. I mean, I was completely immersed in this film. I was really angry that shite bands like Lit were getting airplay and not goodstuff. So I wrote a glam rock fantasy about all the kids turning into glitterbabies. Lili wrote the music, and well, she is a fragile person. I guess she can tell you why she wrote the music the way she did. I feel it's a nice tune..i never thought it was downbeat before...wow. deep man!

l: The music is meant to sound sort of bummed out. This character in the song has discovered a whole new world with glam rock, a world in which he/she feels more comfortable in expressing his/her nonconformist self. But there is a price to pay with this fact - it being that even though this person feels comfortable in their own skin, society looks down upon them —whether seeing the boy with nail polish on as a queer, or the girl with the vinyl miniskirt on as a slut. There is always a price to pay with trying to express yourself in this world, unfortunately.



Matt - "drums"

*Who is more radical, Marilyn Manson or Britney Spears?

l: I think Britney Spears is more radical. I find nothing that Manson does is original. It was all done by Bowie 20 years ago. Britney Spears is more shocking than Manson, because she is much more personable, a figure that more people can relate to. So when she goes strutting around dressed like a tramp, flaunting her boobies, and singing about some pretty sexual stuff - she makes a huge impact on the little girls who idolize her. Whereas Manson is much more difficult to relate to. He looks like an alien. Therefore if he goes about doing something that he thinks is so radical, people will be less motivated to imitate him. Britney, on the other hand, exemplifies everything that a teenage girl should be to her fans. So I think she is quite a radical in the fact that she is manipulating her audience, turning them into the skank that she acts like.



Rachel - "bass"

*You sing about liking David Bowie and cross-dressing boys, do you like the idea of blending gender barriers? Are boys in makeup sexy?! What do you think of the more laddish images portrayed by britpop bands like Oasis and metal bands like Korn?

l: I think the idea of blending gender barriers is great when you are in rock and roll. As Bowie proved, rock and roll isn't only about the music. Presentation is just as important.

c: Ok, obviously I love guys in make-up! But not dumb makeup like Kiss or anything. I mean, watching Velvet Goldmine as much as possible, I dreamed of walking outside and finding sexy guys in hot glitter makeup. It still hasn't happened :) Erm, I love britpop, but, well, there are better bands than Oasis :) I'm more for the images of Pulp, Auteurs, Gay Dad, Supergrass etc. Metal can just kiss my arse!! It's all horribly selfish and pitiful music. No flair at all. Just middle class suburban kids whining about...for fucks sake what are they whining about?!

m: As the male representative of the group, I'd have to say that I'm personally not attracted to boys in makeup, but I respect anyone who does their own thing because they feel like it. Also, I dislike Oasis and Korn, and pretty much every other britpop or metal band (sorry guys!).

*"a gig should be more than some people playing instruments on a stage", discuss.

r: agreed, there is nothing worse than watching some boring loser just stand on the stage and moan into a microphone, at least he should be dressed prettily. but the best bands are those that have a great show, that put on an act, if i pay money to see a show, i want to see a damn show, not JUST hear the music. if i just wanted to hear the music, i would have listened to the cd. bands like the iggy and the stooges had the right idea, do as much as you can to give the audience something to watch as well as listen to.

*any messages for the world?

l: I want to achieve world domination with my music...muhahaha...

r: i dont really have any messages and i dont as of yet have any terribly astute comments to make or send out with the music. someday id just like to make pretty noise...

c: Hello world! You sure are awfully big! I hope you enjoy the Pocket Rockets!

m: Stop, like, bombing people and stuff. That's getting really lame.



Lisa - "other"!!!

contact the Pocket Rockets at their website and download MP3s: <http://www.angelfire.com/myband/PocketRockets/>



Resistance is Fertile!

Mayday2000, London

I won't try and write this like a "professional" article, it's too hard to express my feelings on the day in that way. Instead I can relay a personal account of my 4 hours spent between Parliament Square and Trafalgar on the day the alternative had their say.

It was 1pm as I came out into the fantastic sunlight at Westminster tube station and the first thing to greet me, a line of police. Yes there were police everywhere. As I politely shuffled through their line onto the street I walked down to the square past another three lines standing across the road and dotted at regular intervals around the perimeter of the parliament building.

The square itself look fantastic, thousands of people wandering around, chatting in groups, enjoying the sunshine. Others were shinning up lampposts to attach their banners proclaiming slogans against capitalism and exploitation. From somewhere across the square I could hear drumming and singing. Sitting with some people I recognised I saw carnival dragons, fairys, aliens, and all manner of other weird costumed types. And then the paper started to descend like confetti. Flyers for rallies, flyers for demonstrations, even an invitation to join the Turkish Communist Party! Minority groups were clearly out in force taking advantage of an event headed by a coalition of Reclaim The Streets, The Socialist Worker Party, and an anarchist group. I wandered around the square, someone handed me a sticker proclaiming "I am a terrorist", apparently I am according to a new bill soon to be passed in government... At one corner a wild eyed man was talking into a distorted microphone urging us to stop sitting about and start some "guerrilla gardening". This was the theme for the day, reclaiming land and using it to produce vegetables thus defying the capitalist use of food as a saleable commodity. Some people were already at it, tearing up strips of the turf in the square, placing it on the surrounding road, and replacing it with compost, saplings, and seeds. An hour later the square hardly had any grass left on it and resembled a sprawling community garden with a green border. Some were digging a hole for a pond whilst other determined masked activists were smashing up paving slabs and planting vegetation in the resulting gaps.

Although the general mood was of planting and relaxing others took it upon themselves to indulge in a little graffiti. Well, okay, a lot of graffiti. Winston Churchill never looked so colourful, the words "Conservative Scumbag" painted on the stone beneath and a mohican of grass on his head. Somewhere a spokesman was talking to an assembled about workers rights and the rise of globalisation that threatened them. I picked up some more leaflets strewn about the (original) flower beds and found the usual suspects - McLibel included. There was also a leaflet on how Barcardi were funding anti-government uprisings in Cuba and working with America to cripple it's (communist driven) economy. To an onlooker these people looked like thugs and dropouts, but it was clear at least a few of them knew more than your average person ever wanted to know. With the time approaching three I was beginning to feel hungry and the protesters were drifting. Considering the fuss the police had made over what seemed to be such a calm event surprised me as I trudged towards the bridge. Then I head one man call to another across the street "you're going the wrong way, it's all kicking off in Trafalgar Square". Being the inquisitive type I changed direction and made a scenic back route towards the area. I saw things most people obviously weren't supposed to see. In every courtyard and blocked off ally away from the main area were police. Riot Police, mounted police, police in vans, police with cameras, and tracker units with satellites dishes. I heard there were dogs to, but did not see any myself. Entering the connecting street between parliament and Trafalgar from the side an overwhelming view greeted me.

Thousands of people were massed in the square and spilling out down the street right





to where I had entered, some 500m from the centre. They were waving banners and flags and I could here a sound system pumping out a frantic beat. Then it happened. I saw five or six guys leap off the roof of a bus shelter and start to kick in a shop front. Macdonalds had already been attacked before I got there but this was what really provoked the police. As the glass started to crash down a line of regular officers came out from the side and jumped the vandals. That's when the missiles started raining down on them and they pulled back. However, this was a short retreat as they were replaced by a huge line of riot police, shields out and visors down. They lined up across the street cutting us off from the main group. Some individuals jumped at the line and were repelled, a line of mounted police trotted in and a police van ploughed through the crowd with a lone protester riding the bonnet with his video camera, who was jerked off at the line and removed.

The crowd on my side faltered, no-one seemed very keen to fight but neither did they want to retreat. That was broken as the police line charged a short distance scattering the panic stricken crowd in all directions. I was carried with the crowd and deposited myself against a group on a corner. A group of police. Whoops. As an officer made to ask me to move along he cut short with a shout of "watch out, missiles!". I hurried away as bottles and bangers crashed around the squad and they tore into the crowd after an individual who fired something that sounded like a firework at ground level. A little bewildered I decided to look back to Parliament Square. A woman with a staff was calling for people to come back with her before the police cut us off as well. Walking down the quieter end of the street I saw all the police coming to the gates of the entrances which they had previously been hidden from view. A line of riot police guarded Downing Street's entrance with a small crowd jeering at them. Two men armed with a trumpet and a saxophone played "God Save The Queen" before pulling down their pants and wiggling their arses at the silent unsmiling guards, a bizarre and amusing event which I will remember for a long time. I walked on past the graffiti strewn signs and posts, the ice cream van doing very little trade, and a lone whistle seller who seemed puzzled why no-one was buying his goods. To be honest I was surprised someone hadn't mugged him in the name of anti-commercialism.

Parliament Square was peaceful with a few hundred spread out on the newly turf covered roads and many dancing around a maypole. A family who looked like a bad acid trip were having a loud picnic and offering journalists cucumber sandwiches whilst onlookers laughed and joined in. There was no grass left on the square and after a soggy walk around I walked back up to Trafalgar to see what was happening.

The crowd in the square were surrounded and trapped in a stand off and all I could do was watch with the bemused American tourists in a side alley. The police line was holding despite continual, sometimes explosive, bombardment and any activity outside the siege was quickly dealt with by small teams of regular police. As a group headed back to their vans and changed into riot gear one said to the group I was with "don't wait for trouble, move on while you still can". And I did, after all, I wasn't looking for a revolution.

The media made out that the day was a continuous riot and that the crowd were thugs and idiots. There were the violent minority who were looking for trouble but the main demonstration was peaceful. Much has been made of the spray paint vandalism that documented the day (especially that on the war memorial) but without the context (which the media choose to ignore) the reasons behind it should always be open to question. Mindless thuggery or perhaps anti-statements on the way we glorify our tragedies and misrepresent them? I'd like to think the latter but the former is unfortunately more likely.

More info @ www.reclaimthestreets.net



At home with *Ciccone*



Kev ensures Mick gets his daily calcium

The bohemian communal kitchen



Sleeping arrangements are novel but spacially economic

It's a sunny day as my good friend and I emerge from Mornington Crescent tube and decide to drop in on our good friends, the band known to you as Ciccone. The flat is a tasteful subterranean abode only a few minutes from the fashion capital that is Camden. This is where our friends live. As we approach, singer and guitarist Rebekah greets us and shows us in, past the fine decorative bars criss-crossing the windows and storage space opposite the door which looks to be used by all manner of visitors.

As we take a walk through the reception hallway we see the compact bathroom and well kept interior walls. Into the sitting room and the band are sat amongst the derigour juxtaposition of bed, television, hi-fi, and beer cans. We sit and are offered refreshment from the lady of the house, a swig of beer down, and returned to her, we greet those here.

Ciccone have been playing their punk pop sound to the London crowds for almost a

year now, both Mick and Rebekah formerly played in northern soul band, Agebaby, whilst bass player Kev cut his teeth in Olivier Honey. The foursome here is completed by baby of the band Luke o' Zade who takes care of rhythm duties. Fifth member, Emma, is currently in Europe. Venues they have performed at include The Highbury Garage (Mick's personal favourite due to it's ample space and clear sound) and Fulham Kings Head (Rebekah's favourite). Obviously they also immensely enjoyed playing Upstairs@The Garage, on a night run by a fine club you have no doubt heard of.

But who would they like to play with in the future? "I'd love to support The Make Up, or Ah-ha, or The Primitives!" states Rebekah between quenching her thirst with the grain. Mick sums it up, "Basically I'd like us to support someone bigger than us, a bit like us, but not as good!" We all laugh, our friends sure tell a good rock n' roll

joke! When discussing their contemporaries, bands like the Dum Dums and Blink182 crop up, although they really don't rate either. Kevin is keen to point out though that "we don't want to be pigeonholed". Mick speaks of his dream to write more anthems "but not like Oasis" but has to admit he sat down on a stool and played acoustic guitar once. The NME would be proud.

So why live in Camden? It's clear to Rebekah and Mick as they talk fondly of it's rock history. The whole band enjoy a good drink in one of the number of good ale houses in the area. The Good Mixer is mentioned, who everyone must remember from those "Britpop" days with Menswe@r and Elastica. However, their favourite place is their local, the Hope & Anchor, which apparently does a mean karaoke night!

So is style important to the band? Luke talks about how the image is important and how the internet has helped people across the world see their pictures and hear their music. Ciccone may come as a pop package, but it's their package. As for the flat the style is very much theirs. Chairs rescued from rubbish tips (it's cool to recycle!) and liberated from shop fronts in a drunken haze (Mick is officially the Wicker Man!)

"Basically I'd like us to support someone bigger than us, a bit like us, but not as good!"

Why queue to use the bathroom in the morning? This is rock n'roll!



The neighbours run a successful small business

The local eatery has a vast selection on it's menu



Celebrity endorsements are Ciccone's speciality



Kev is keen on their fine curtains that "don't quite reach the floor" and Luke agrees with Mick that if Changing Rooms visited they'd like a swimming pool in the back yard (a compact square with a high wall "ideal for diving off"). Ciccone's favourite shop for decor turns out to be Cargo because, as Rebekah puts it, "Ikea is so passe".

"Ikea is so passe"

Ciccone does not just begin and end with the band though. Future plans include setting up a film company and a theme park (Ciccone World). Rebekah talks of how she'd like to live in Paris one day, the sign of a truly artistic individual. Mick stresses how the band comes first though, "songs just come into my head and i need to play them" he explains. Lyrically the depth of emotion expressed in anthems like "La La Disco" could have teenagers everywhere studying them. But as a band Ciccone don't see a place for printing lyrics in their cd covers, "Besides, I make most them up at the time anyway" concludes Mick.

Being a rock n' roll band as well as a punk pop phenomenon Ciccone all like the occasional tippie. Luke describes his favourite cocktail, "the

Brain is great, you put spirits in with Malibu and it congeals in a blob". Rebecca and Mick are more direct with their cocktails, Rebekah believes she has a tolerance to wine and so she and Mick talk of their "Special Brew and Sleeping Pills" parties. Our friends are indeed wild party animals and I'm sure they'd throw a telly out the window if they didn't live below ground level. Kev adds that he and Mick emptied Mick's sister's cocktail cabinet some time ago - even drinking the sugar syrup mixer by accident! So is all this rock n' roll quite self destructive Mick? "well we all smoke and that's quite self destructive so yeah".

So what are the neighbours like? Mick talks of their local men of the road, "those guys out there are richer than us, by the time I'm leaving for work they're already on their fourth can!". I suggest they employ them to flyer, they all laugh, but there's a glint in their punky eyes... Luke

chugs from his Hooch alcopop and comments on how he likes the new design. Kev proudly announces that you can get free lambrini from his local chip shop. Rebekah admits she occasionally eats Big Macs. Mick seizes on the Macdonalds link to claim the awful mess caused by street people on Mayday was a sign people should do what they want to do. "We are leading a revolution of hearts and minds" he concludes.

Fabulous.

"We are leading a revolution of hearts and minds"



Reviews: Singles, Albums, Demos, Fanzines

I've changed the scoring system this issue to give one of three cd player related verdicts.

REPEAT: So good I'll listen to it twice.

SHUFFLE: If it came up I wouldn't skip it.

SKIP: Bye bye baby goodbye....

Singles

INTO THE VALLEY - The Beatmolls/Mogul (Org)

Org singles are strange beasts, this has 4 tracks from each of the bands named plus 24 "bonus tracks" from other bands! The Beatmolls are finally make some sort of impact on me, they still generally sound like the backing music to a pre-schoolers tv show but third track 'Apathy In The UK' is better. Shouty, chaotic, occasionally moronic, but in track three - almost thought provoking. Mogul still sound like they always have, lo-fi bedroom music all fuzzy and mumbly with wit. Best of the bonus tracks are the live recording of Charles Angels (supporting PJ+Duncan!) and Globalistic. The Fighting Cocks contribution lacks any vocals and so is only about a quarter as good as it could be. **SHUFFLE**

MC TWIST - Baby Teeth

Oh my god, is it possible to be influenced by Northern Uproar?! **SKIP**

MOTHER PEARL - Badly Drawn Boy (XL)

Played to death on the Evening Session and with good reason. Badly Drawn Boy has come a long way recently and this is both danceable and good to listen to on your walkman. It's mellow and slightly baggy with hints of Moby in the vocals. One to buy. **REPEAT**

WORK IT OUT - Brassy (Wiija)

A funky guitar line and hip-hop style drumming along with token scratching will see this sweep across the indie discos of the country as it's 100% more rump shaking than anything else with guitars in. In terms of a dance track it can't compete because it's too lo-fi and shouty but here in the "underground" we prefer organic and noisy opposed to smooth and megamixed. **REPEAT**

TONY BLAIR - Chumbawumba (Activator)

A Christmas promo from Chumbawumba, trying to prove they're still really relevant and political. Credit to them working political parallels into what at first appears to be a love ballad, but crucially it sounds absolutely appalling. **SKIP**

HORNSFRONT - The Drum (Mantra)

Clumping almost ballad with sustained one note guitar riffs and hypnotic drumming. It's a bit of a nothing but it's a pleasant nothing. **SHUFFLE**

REASONS EP - The Drum (Mantra)

Having dropped the China from their name the Drum are still rocking and singing through hi eq settings. It's a cut above a lot of the dirge rock around thanks to their experimentation with samples and production but it's not going to inspire anyone. I suspect they're better live. **SKIP**

GET ME THROUGH THIS - Eugene Speed (Reactor)

It's nice enough as bland rock goes - I could certainly see it on a Dawsons Creek soundtrack as the token "rock anthem". The passion seems a little forced and it's all a little too easy. But still,

live I'm sure this come across better. Are they from Aldershot? **SKIP**

HEAD OF SAFETY - Groop Dogdrill (Mantra)

Groop Dogdrill are still churning out this hard edged rock which doesn't quite get as heavy as the nu-metal brigade and so is a little left on it's own. With the demise of 3 Colours Red you wonder how they're still surviving. Must be that small clique who put Iron Maiden back in the charts... **SKIP**

SHIFTY DISCO GIRL - Helen Love (Che)

Another summer and another Helen Love single. The guitar buzzes along with the lo-fi drum machine and twee keyboard line. It's a great summer pop record but can they really continue to survive selling a handful of records to the same people every time? What they need is to get over their stage fright and take their lazars and bubblegum on the road. **SHUFFLE**

BLONDE ON BLUE - Johnson (Play)

A cross between My Life Story and Younger Younger 28s (if that's possible). An indiepop beat and bass with horns and strings. bouncing along a road to Glastonbury. The vocals are still either the sort you'll love or hate, very croony and eighty's. It delves into slightly odd Kula Shaker territory with the scratch strings chugging in the back but overall uplifting and recommended. **REPEAT**

MATCHBOX HEROES - Kneehigh (Clear)

Like Feeder's "High" but not as good due to the whimsy vocals and dull guitar sound. I saw Kneehigh Upstairs@The Garage when Kitty had sold out the lower venue and didn't really pay attention. Not grabbing. **SKIP**

SOMETHING NEW - Lunch (Bluefire)

The vocals owe something to Echobelly as does the guitar line. If you can get over the similarities then this is fairly good female fronted indie rock. If it was 1995 I could see Lunch tagging along with Menswe@r in the aftermath of Blur. Having said that it's been 5 years, isn't it about time the mainstream revived bands like this. Great, if you wear Adidas trainers and skinny t-shirts. **SHUFFLE**



HEARTHE AIR - Mo-Ho-Bish-O-Pi (V2)

Clattering indie punkiness with boy girl vocals, already a big hit on the Evening Session. Unfortunately that's all there really is to say. It'll do but there's nothing here to justify the hype. **SHUFFLE**

ANY DAY WILL BE FINE - Mojave 3 (4AD)

Very retro guitar shimmy which takes bits of Simon&Garfunkel, mixing up it's jangleness with horns and Hammond. The vocal is a bit too Ocean Colour Scene for my liking but if you for-

get about the past 40 years this is fresh and enjoyable. Otherwise it's passable. **SHUFFLE**

IN LOVE WITH A VIEW - Mojave 3 (4AD)

See above except this is the ballad. Whimsical vocals and sliding guitars. Belle&Sebastian fans will probably love it. **SKIP**

WE'RE IN HEAVEN - Sgt Rock (Wiija)

Hmmm, dance track written in a bedroom most probably. Kind of Skint-lite. Does nothing for me. **SKIP**

HEART FAILED IN THE BACK OF A TAXI - Saint Etienne (Mantra)

More electro indie from Ms Cracknell, this time it's very low key. The drum machine pads, the synths play tasteful strings, and Sarah lulls along. The lyrics are worth listening to, the emotional content particularly evocative. Good, but still not as good as "She's On The Phone". **REPEAT**

HOW WE USED TO LIVE - Saint Etienne (Mantra)

A summery strum with pleasant percussion and wistful lyrics. "Sail away" Sarah implores, dream music. **SHUFFLE**

NEW YEAR - Six By Seven (Mantra)

Still very moody, intense and dark 6x7 are wailing and crashing with strings in the background. Could almost be a (recent) Depeche Mode b-side and attractive for it's passion. But ultimately they haven't moved on very far since their first single years ago, which is a real shame. **SHUFFLE**

SONG 2WO - Zinger Meats Spry 2000 Hot (Regal)

According to the press release Earl Zinger must be very old (or dead) as he made his debut in the 1940s. There is probably more information on this collaboration with some beats pioneers on the second sheet - but I didn't get that. Still, this is kind of odd and has a feeling of Arrested Development if they were fronted by a crooning aged American. Hmmm. **SHUFFLE**

Albums

THE END OF A BEAUTIFUL CAREER - Angelica (Fantastic Plastic)

They were interviewed in quirk 8, just as 'Bring Back her Head' was making an impact on the radio. At that point Angelica seemed quietly pleased with their progress. This, their debut mini album, has since made number 4 in the indie chart and assented them as more than just 'the next Kenickie' (with whom they share very little musically). Opener 'All I Can See' is a blast of attitude, "you don't want to see me cry, that's okay I'll take out your eyes...", after 'Bring Back her Head' we're into the skit-disco backed angst-storm of 'Concubine Blues'. And so it goes on - variation aided by two distinctively different songwriting styles from Brigit and Holly. You must have this album. **REPEAT**

THE HOUR OF THE BEWILDERBEAST - Badly Drawn Boy (Twisted Nerve/XL)

BDB has been recording this album on and off for over a year and it shows. Taking time over each song has made each one special. Current single 'Everybody's Stalking' plays to his strong points, melodies, brass, cello, and not too much

attention to his vocal range (which isn't that strong). It's a mature sound and one that won't really work in a live setting other than an intimate acoustic playback. Previous single 'Another Pearl' is here as well, a classic with it's slow groove backing and imposing guitar, the lyrics are simple but honest, "I don't want to live in the shade...". Unlike most of the material it's also very danceable. **SHUFFLE** (and shimmy in the case of 'Another Pearl!')

MUSIC FOR A STRANGER WORLD - Bis (Wiija)

Leaving Britain for the successful chartbound worlds of Belgium, and critical album sales in Japan, has given Bis the incentive to continue with their overhaul of their origins. We're a long way from 'Kandy Pop' now, in fact we're some distance from last years chart denting 'Eurodisco'. Opener 'Dead Wrestlers' revisits a familiar topic, fakers, but with an eighties production overload - so vocodered and smooth you expect robot voices to appear (which they thankfully don't). 'Are You Ready' has distorted beats, 'How Can We be Strange' has disco, 'I Want It All' has retro bleeps and a lonely return to the bontempi drum machine of yesteryear, 'Beats At The Office' has an obscure voice sample, and 'Punk Rock Points' is hi-fi Elastica. Still dancey and wilfully obscure Bis will forever be a cult band. But hey, i'm a paid up lifetime member. **REPEAT**

GOT IT MADE - Brassy (Wiija)

17 tracks in 41 minutes, Brassy certainly get to the point in their songs! The singles are all here, the lolling tug and push of 'I Can't Wait', the speedy funk scratch of 'Work It Out' and the sugar coated edgy pogo pop of 'Good Times'. They're mixing up traditional rock instruments with the aesthetics of dance, scratches, sampling, beats and repetitive riffs. Lyrically baron it's still leagues ahead of the nonsense spouted by most mainstream dance acts, their attempt to come across in the middle ground can be appreciated for vague originality. However, they're too dance for most indie kids and too lo-fi for dance heads, a cult following is as far as they're ever, unfortunately, going to get. **SHUFFLE**

FAMILY IS FOR SHARING - Brothers In Sound (Regal)

It's build up dance trance experimental I don't care music in the main. There are some good ideas going on occasionally though, the pulsating in your face beats of 'Brothers Go Down' a case in point. I'm simply not excited by it, a lot of the tracks I suspect could be sold onto car adverts ala Moby. **SKIP**

PARACHUTES - Coldplay (Parlophone)

Officially the next big thing Coldplay's debut album is an enchanting acoustic tinged trad rock affair (not always a dirty term!). Single 'Yellow' is a song for couples on warm nights whilst 'Trouble' has a dreamlike quality about it. They don't really want to rock and that's fine. They sometimes ride the fine line of where good music ends and muso wankery begins but on the whole this is suprisingly enjoyable. **REPEAT**

DISKIN - The Drum (Mantra)

Is this really the band formerly known as China Drum? The chuggy garage guitars are still there and the vocals still stray from grumbly to shouty, but the difference is in the production. Using a variety of effects (and not really obvious ooh-weeee-ooh we've got a wahwah/vocoder/chorus switch sorts) this is quite listenable. Essentially they're still rocking away with minimal technical prowess and maximum attitude. I might even be

tempted to watch them live, see you in the mosh pit! **REPEAT**



ROOKIE SESSIONS - Fungus (Food)

Ballsy punk pop not dissimilar to Blink182 in many ways (as half admitted on their press release). They're more intelligent though, but not in an introspective way. Fungus are observers, of rock n'roll, of life, of, erm, 'Astronauts'?! They have some anthems in them, all very lighters in the air and slow bouncing. Really not looking to push back any boundaries but as a good time live act they've got it made. 'Rebel' appears to have lifted it's verse riff from touring partners L7, hmmm... **SHUFFLE**

EVERY SIX SECONDS - Groop Dogdrill (Mantra)

Has anyone actually been waiting for this follow up to their debut, 'Half Nelson'? It's hard to know, I guess they have their fans but I can't see how they'd inspire a dedicated following. They rock, hard, there's no question of that. But so do a lot of bands. The drums are intense and the guitars are suitably angst and pain where required. Tracks like 'Head Of Safety' could have existed anytime in the last 25 years, complete with leather jackets and bad beards. That's not to say they're bad, they're not. I'm just not inspired beyond the first 30 seconds of any track. **SKIP**

HIRAMEKA HI-FI - Hirameka Hi-fi (Extreme Sports)

A mini lp/extended ep of six tracks Hirameka Hi-Fi begin with a Sleater Kinney riff, dive into Stony Sleep territory and then end up in Mogwai instrumental mode, all in the first track. These are musicians, indie musicians of the most lo-fi kind (ES being an offshoot of Che), but still musicians. It's all here, frustration, relaxation, contemplation. They're good but lack originality (there's even a little 6x7 in here). Although full marks for calling one of the songs 'Left-Eye Burned Down My House'! **SHUFFLE**

SPIRITLIGHTSPEED - Ian Astbury (Beggars Banquet)

He's in The Cult you know, this is fairly standard rock with a vocal that seems a little dated. The songs would be a bit eighties as well if it wasn't for the fact he's got 'Witchman' the 'breakbeat scientist' to impose some modern beats and loops on it. As singer songwriter stuff goes he's obviously well practised and talented in a musician type way. But it's not very immediate. **SKIP**

GOT MY 9 - Inter (Yoshiko)

They came from Aldershot, backed by a stream of SnakebiteCity appearances and released a few singles years ago. Then they were picked up by a Japanese label, exported out there, sold 50,000 units and return to the UK with a strong

album of derivative but enjoyable power pop. **11** Where Inter went bands like Gel and Midget originally followed. Thankfully Inter show that they have more than one mode of play (chug-gachuggachugga) changing to the downbeat swing of 'The Great Unknown', lyrically interesting as they debate the state of pensions (no, really!). Recent single, 'National Paranoia' is here, followed a few tracks later by the 3 year (at least) old original pogo popper 'Cherry Red Electric Blue'. Uplifting fun most of the way. **REPEAT**

SOUND OF WATER - Saint Etienne (Mantra)

They've always been a nice band, have Saint Etienne. The use of synths and the non-use of distortion has always kept their indie sound in the quiet waters. That is not to say they're dull though. Singles like 'Heart Failed In The Back Of A Taxi' show the subtle emotion they can evoke. You could feasibly play them at a dinner party and feel that little bit more credible than if you used Des Re or Gabriel (aaarrggghhh!!!). So no, this album isn't for your lo-fi indie kids with dirty hair. This is for your mature(ish) enthusiasts, probably sat down. Saint Etienne do dance as well, but nice dance, not hard trance - despite what their collaboration with Paul Van Dyke may do for them. **SHUFFLE**

THE CLOSER YOU GET - Six By Seven (Mantra)

The band of bobbing heads (see them live) return with their second lp and it's a slightly new direction. They still rely on pummeling one chord to death before moving to the next but songs like opener 'Eat Junk Become Junk' are faster and more anthemic than previous efforts. Living in the twilight world where paranoid recluse turns social butterfly it's doubtful than anyone in the band is an extrovert. But put them onstage together and the passion wells up like some bizarre Pokemon ritual and they explode. Not a life changing event but definitely one for the post night out hi-fi. **SHUFFLE**

RUBY SUPRISE - V/A (Munching Carpet)

A compilation cd which comes with issue 23 of Munching Carpet (total price, a fiver!). A fair reflection of the remnants of the underground 'zine scene' it includes contributions from Supercute (formerly Teen Anthems), Murph (mindless lightweight, but endearing guitar pop), Alcopop (a quirk favourite, but this is a weak track - sounds very old), Twist (angry girls with guitars signed to Fierce Panda), and the ever present @tomica (unadventurous but satisfying indie rock). As a package it works and for the price it's an utter bargain! **REPEAT**

SNAKEBITE CITY 9 - V/A (Bluefire)

Paul's got another cd out and it's a departure from normal play as the genres have been broken. First track, from Salena Slaiva, is a trip hop rap industrial affair with computer blips and spooky feedback sounds. Lunch do a good impression of a late seventies punk rock band (but more Buzzcocks than Pistols) and Twist also turn up making a glorious lo-fi drawl. Then, on the genre flipside the cartoonish antics of the Beatmolls come out to play. The Saffs give us some attitude and @tomica emerge yet again with their previous single, 'Dead Flowers'. Probably the most essential SBC since 6. **REPEAT**

Demos/Promos/Self Releases

All demos are marked out of **QUIRK**. Two points for an upper case letter and one for a lower. **QUI** = 5.

Aphasiac

Contact: *Me!*

After meeting Tom (bass) and Julia (keyboard) late last year at a crap gig we resolved to do something better. It's all very well writing about what you do and don't like but inside every wannabe journo is a wannabe rock star. Drummerless we operate with loops and beats backing our every move. I say we are a unique genre, "disco grunge". Other people have suggested "Placebo mixed with Bis", "a vocal like White Town", and "a heavy Sarah (the record label) band". Visually we are rock stars, but you'll have to come to find out more than that.

Belding

Contact: www.belding.co.uk

(quirk) likes Belding. Belding are five teenage schoolboys who play their instruments enthusiastically and have access to a (very) cheap computer sequencer with which they loop jungle beats through every so often. The song anyone who knows Belding knows is "Nerdscene". 5 chords, drums that sound like a couple of crates being hit, the scratching noise of a plectrum, and a root note bassline. The lead singer sounds frightened of his own voice most of the time. the kids are alright! **QUIR**



Crown Point

Contact: *Ian, 98 Smithwood Close, Southfields, SW19 6JM*

Crown Point come from the school of classic indie rock. First track, "Sun", appears to have generously lifted parts from Blur's "She's So High" - but overall they have more in common with Shed 7. Which isn't a bad thing per-se, the emotion is genuine and the music drives. But it lacks imagination. **QUI**

Fat Kid

Contact: *Mark, 01932 352234*

The boy can sing, and his mates know their chord sequences, this comes across in a very similar vein to @tomica (trad rock with good old fashioned hooks). I saw them play to 11 people at the Camden Monarch and they didn't sound as good as this. A case of a bad PA system? Or generous time in the recording studio? Either way, they need more ideas. **QUI**

Four Past Midnight

Contact: *4pm@freenet.co.uk*

Bad punk. I wouldn't want to watch them live, although they probably have a big following of crusty middle aged types who never moved on from 1978. **Q**

Malowski

Contact: *airstrippete@yahoo.com*

Possibly the worst punk band I have ever heard. Okay, so they're not strictly talent free but it's unoriginal, unimaginative, and offensively dull. And they have a song about drinking, which is never a good thing. **q**

Mavis

Contact: *James, 99 Chester Road, Sunderland, SR4 7EZ*

Home of James, he of various fanzines including Shiny Happy People Smoking Crack, Aiki Do, and Baby Moles and Baby Foles. Aphasiac actually played with them in their hometown and they're obviously a local

favourite. The sound is melodic guitar indie rock, honest, defiantly non-London sounding. Lyrically they've read a few books ("Sleeping with the Marxists") but the passion is still most definitely relationship driven. Good on tape, better live if only to see James try and trash his guitar in a pub's backroom. **QUIR**

Millhouse

Contact: *hint, put a number or e-mail on the tape next time!*

I remember this group doing the glorious "More Like Steve Lamacq", that saw them appear in Holly's demo hell. Millhouse then sounded like very fizzy Gel-lite. But with their new demo Millhouse have been playing with their presence and distortion controls and have accordingly gone very Symposium. The song titles are twee as ever, "Magic Stars", and "Hello Kitty Smile" being cases in point. If they could work at the subject matter (girls, girls, girls....) over the next year they could easily be where the Dums Dums are now. **QUIR**

Pocket Rockets

Contact: *see interview*

Originally I heard about Pocket Rockets through a music discussion list on the 'net. They're from America and they're barely 16. The songs have a girly fifties vibe with the same guitar sound as early Vyvyan. The different being Pocket Rockets don't hurry themselves unnecessarily and sing about boys. Pocket Rockets surly about the singer's little sister ("Jewish American Princess"), a gay crossdressing boy (the curiously named, "Cookie Blows A Fag", somewhat amusingly called because they thought it was "English for smoking a cigarette"!), and how David Bowie saved their teenage lives ("Glam Save The Day"). Choice lyric, "Now we know that glam is better, we're wearing vinyl instead of sweaters....", class! **QUIRK**

Pod

Contact: *Leon Tighe, 34 Warmhill Terrace, Fatfield, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 8AQ*

First track is very riot grrrl, but with a male vocal. The riff reminds me a lot of L7. No doubt on stage they stand legs apart, guitar slung just below the crotch, sliding their powerchord up and down. But then there's a ska break - minus some points for that, unforgivable. It's chuggy but not heavy enough for metal and too grindy for indie. A bit too middling. **QUI**

Strain (Springboard Records)

Not strictly a demo or self released this is just on a tiny little label. I'm not very impressed with anyway. Strain have a really generic throwaway indie rock sound about them. The chords are predictable and the lyrics are generally lousy ("there must be something in your eyes..."). Sorry, not my thing at all. **q**

The Teenbeat

Contact: *adrian_r_shaw@yahoo.com*

What sounds like a dictaphone left on during an extended jam session The Teenbeat return again doing their lo-fi Fall meets Belle&Sebastian thing (no, really). You will either hate them or love them. I think Adrian is the man as far as backroom tapes and rule breaking goes. Mail him and get a copy. **QUIR**

Venus In Furs

Contact: *www.venus-in-furs.co.uk*

Officially the best new girl fronted indiepop band in Britain right now, Venus In Furs have yet to sign but grew impatient and released this, their own cd ep. There is a distinct Kenickie vibe about them, although technically they're a lot tighter and have added plenty of sci-fi type keyboards for the disco dancers. VIF can be found playing venues around Sunderland regularly and are a permanent fixture in Steve Lamacq's Clickmusic top 10 website. Go download an MP3 or three. **QUIRK**



It really is pathetic, somewhere along the line in the last six months fanzines have stopped. No one seems to be writing them. Sure, there are the eternal goth/manics affairs and the one off teen attempts but nothing stands. Everyone says they're working on one but one never comes out. Other commitments or a general lack enthusiasm appears to be the sad reason. (quirk) has somehow become one of the biggest "London" fanzines - and the circulation here sucks so god knows how bad it is on others. There is no fanzine top ten or five this issue. There aren't enough fanzines, there is however a fanzine that rides head and shoulders above everything else. And here it is:

MUNCHING CARPET (23)

Contact: munchingcarpet@hotmail.com

This issue cost me a fiver. The reason, well there's a compilation cd with it (see reviews) showing the writer has a real commitment to the music (even if it is occasionally misplaced!). Contributions come from Timmy 2Headz and a handful of others bringing us thoughts on the millenium, pop stars, soap characters and a lot more. Music interviews are with (the almighty) Angelica, (the not as good as Kenickie) Rosita, and (the all out europop starz) Bellatrix. It's A4 and tiny type so there's lots to read and although some of it isn't as engaging as it could be it lasts for ages!

ASHAMED AND BORED (5)

Contact: timbragger@hotmail.com

A fanzine featuring far too many record reviews but notable ints with Inter, Caretaker, Monkeyboy and Spearmint. The writing style is pretty good and it feels nice to, due to the decent paper and print. There are also some fanzine reviews but this zine really needs more diversity in it's content for you to want to read more than a few pages at a time.

KITSCH 2000

Contact: kitschzine@hotmail.com

This is really old now but that's probably my fault for not writing more often. Kitsch used to be criticised (when there were other zines to criticise from) for being far too nice to everyone. Especially all things twee. It's not aggressive journalism that's for sure. Some of the interviewees are more than a little strange though. By page three we've got an interview with the Lance Gambit Trio, who appear to be middle aged and into easy listening. Strange. We're in familiar territory with Ooberman (a fantastically inoffensive band) and lengthy pieces of nostalgia involving kids tv and the fate of Jive Bunny. It's nice, but a little too nice.

MILKYBARS IN SPACE (2)

Contact: velocifera@gurmail.com

Occasional (quirk) writer, Julia's fanzine. First impressions are of a serious timewarp to 97/98, dayglo cover, scrappy cut n' paste, and lots of exclamation marks!!!!!! The interviews are in the punkpop mould to, Brassy, Ciccone, Venus In Furs, Midget, and Murph all turning up. As you'd expect there's plenty of nonsensicle irrelevance splattered liberally throughout - rock n' roll tests, pisstakes on Slipknot, stuff about the eighties... There are plenty of gig reviews from London as well, MIB having the dubious honour of being the only zine i've seen so far to review every Club GRRR night (following on from all the EGO reviews in issue 1). At one pound for something this thick you have to give a thumbs up. Not recommended if you take "music journalism" seriously though!

ORIGINAL SIN (28)

Contact: Didier, Jozef Guislainstraat 6, 9000 Gent, Belgium

28 issues later (fuck!) Didier is still writing about "...bands that aren't picked up by the big press yet..." in his typical euro-english. Bands featured this time include Saloon and Molotova. Over the issues the reviews pages have become increasingly expansive and this time they eat half the zine. Although the diversity of music reviewed is obviously a good thing I couldn't stomach reading more than a few pages at a time (the condensed text doesn't help either). If you're unsigned however, be sure to get in touch because Didier has a page waiting for you....

SPITTING GLASS STARS

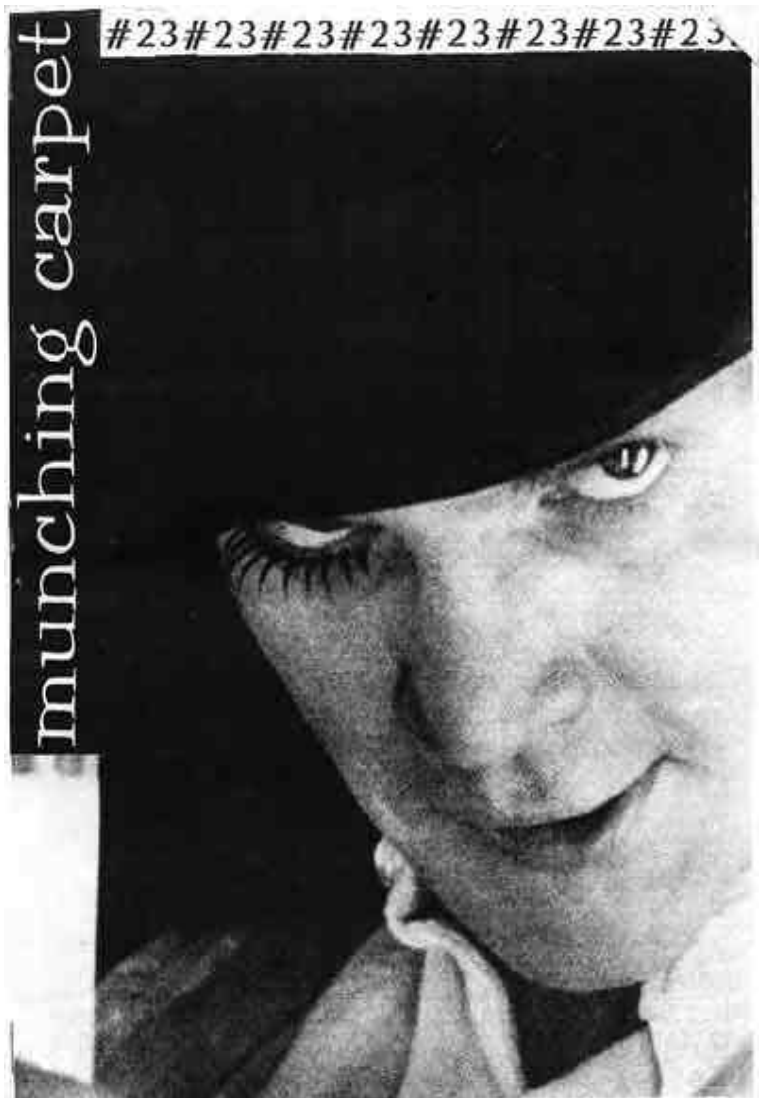
Contact: spitting_glass_stars@lineone.net

I can't remember where I got this skinny zine from but i'm glad I did. This seems to be written by a small team of, I guess, students spread about between the UK and US. There are loads of live reviews (including Rachel Stamp, Urusei Yatsura, Anish, and last year's Edinburgh Festival) plus some clever little interviews. I especially liked the e-mail questionnaire they sent Golden Wonder trying to find out just who answers them and what it's like in customer service. it doesn't sound interesting but the interviewee has more charisma than many so called "rock stars". There is also a bit of feature writing in here. Well worth investigating.

TECHNICAL EXPERT

Contact: Sharon, 20 Attwoods Close, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8QJ

A very sparse enthusiastic zine written by the girl pictured holding a plant on the Mayday2000 pages. She quite rightly points out in the intro that if you're reading it you probably know her in person so distro probably isn't at the top of her list. Content wise we have a Rachel Stamp interview spread out over 8 or so pages, a couple of live reviews, and some future event dates (kind of useless when they run to last February!). However, credit due for knowing about the Fighting Cocks first (they're mentioned in the previews) and that the writing is cool enough. It's just it would all fit on 2 pages of (quirk) so I advise more time for the next one, or more contributions.



Playing London: Due to the derth in fanzines to review this issue I find myself with enough room to review venues. Not from the perspective of the audience of course, that would be too obvious. No, for you toilet circuit bands out there, a few words of advice. **Highbury Upstairs@The Garage** - A room that resembles a scout hut, a stage that resembles some upturned boxes, and a dressing room where anybody can come in. On the plus side the PA's good, the staff are cool, and the crowd can't escape! **Islington Red Eye** - A real pub venue. The stage is 50cm off the floor and makes Upstairs@ look positively leggy. Appalling PA, no real dressing room, and it's tiny. In it's favour it's possibly the least intimidating to play, perhaps because it's so well off the beaten track it's positively "local"! **Kentish Town Bull&Gate** - This feels like a real venue, a decent size room, good lights, and a proper stage. The backroom even has it's own toilet! They also broadcast on the 'net and don't mind taking risks on very new bands. Location wise it's 2 minutes from the tube so in summary this is definitely the place to try first. **Scores:-** U@G:7 RE: 5 B&G: 8

A Family Affair...

The Fighting Cocks

The Bull & Gate looks like a very presentable London pub when you enter the bar, no different from many others. But then you take a trip to "the other side" through some side doors and you are in encapsulated toilet circuit rock n' roll. Dusty sofas and wobbly tables strewn over a slightly sticky carpet with some ominous doors in one wall leading to the gig area. We're here to meet a band that have acquired somewhat of a residency in the venue, The Fighting Cocks. Comprising 5 members (4 present) the band have managed to play just about every venue in London, appear on local television, and strike a deal with RCA through the same a&r man who signed Take That. Their sound is very hard to describe, samples of everything from gabba to banghra are strategically placed over beats with guitars that are so overdriven they sound like revving engines. Then four vocals come on, singing, rapping, screaming, shouting... Oh and they dance in spontaneous shambolic stage routines. In toilet venues. Steps meet Digital Hardcore anyone?

Talking to the band is predictably hard, with each member looking out for the others against anything they consider out of order. After getting off on totally the wrong foot by not buying them drinks (hey, what do you think (quirk) is? The NME?!) we're away.

Introduce yourselves for those who don't know.

M: I am Princess Molly, rapper and bad singer.

C: Charlie, rapper, bad singer, guitarist.

Ch: Cha Cha Demore, Bez! The one who blagged her way in and has no talent with anything!

K: That's not true!

You don't have any maracas!

Ch: Unfortunately not, but I do have pom poms!

K: I'm Kinky, shouter and bad dancer.

How did you meet?

C: We're all related.

(Raised eyebrow)

Ch: You didn't know that did you?!

I find it hard to believe.

C: Get your id out Moll. (Molly and Charlie then proceed to show me proof that they have the same last name).

So if you're all related how come it's taken until now for you to form a band?

Ch: That's a bit personal really isn't it.

C: No, no, I can tell you. I used to be in a band called Sey Coccurer, who were anglo Hungarian, and I spent most of my time out there blagging it doing Hungarian things. Molly was in The Beatmolls. What we didn't know was that we doing the same sort of music, although she was a bit more Sique Sique Sputnik. I fell out with the Hungarian singer and came back. We all used to see each other at weddings and funerals and that.

Ch: I don't normally do family functions, i'm not normally out and about.

C: I blame auntie Ev actually.

Ch: We're all a bit spread out, my family are the "West London" family who separate themselves from the other family so I don't know them all. I'm not that much of a blood relation with Charlie though, I'd like to make that clear!

So why did you form?

C: Nothing better to do.

M: Tunes going round and round our heads.

C: And what is the best way of getting into places for free?

M,Ch,K: Be in a band!

So what do you want to achieve?

C: Destroy ourselves! Destroy every venue in London - but we keep failing 'cos they keep asking us back. It's gotta stop!

Ch: We've played in 2 gigs in Germany and lots in London.

C: We have a residency here and other places we've played are the Hope & Anchor, LA2, Dublin Castle, Crystal Palace Bowl, Camden Falcon...

Ch: The Scala, the Monarch...

K: The Backyard Club...

M: Ooh, and Stuart's party! With a tape deck in the kitchen!

Ch: We're available all the time 'cos we hang out together.

With a such a self destructive streak in you why do you think a major label got interested?

C: The tunes, the tunes!

Ch: They have a meeting and decide "ooh let's get a little new alternative band".

M: The label just copies everyone else. They've got Westlife, which is their Boyzone, they've got Christina Aguilera, which is their Britney, and we're supposed to be their Prodigy.

C: Oh, I wanted to be their Slipknot!

Someone called you the mainstream version of Atari Teenage Riot...

C: Who said that!

K: It was you wasn't it!

C: (picks up the dictaphone and speels something Hungarian into it. I'm not even going to attempt to translate!)

Ch: Like he's going to be able to translate that!

C: The mainstream Atari Teenage Riot is The Prodigy. Could you see "Come on you cunts" sweeping up the charts?

Ch: It's not going to happen. The most mainstream we have, which is really quite mainstream, is "Love Somebody" but the rest of the songs we're just not willing to censor them.

K: We're going to get a Parental Guidance sticker on our cd.

Ch: For me this is the aim of the whole band. I want one of those stickers!

You like to play live but a lot of your music is pre-recorded, so what do you think constitutes a live gig?

K: Us being there doing it and getting the experience.

C: It's all about the audience, it doesn't matter if you can play instruments or not. One of the best gigs i've seen had two saxophone players and a DAT. So who is to distinguish? It's about making a connection.

M: You never know what's going to happen live.

Ch: Have you ever seen us live to make a comment like that?!

C: There are instruments on stage and people miss that. Two guitars, two turntables and 4 microphones. People forget that we really are hip hop and for that you only need two turntables and a microphone.

Ch: I think we do more than most people. Our gigs are such an event.

K: We get dressed up and have a good time.

Ch: We make it a big deal. Every gig is a big deal. You put on a performance rather than

stand around playing guitars. As long as we give people headaches it's okay! We're more live than any of the other shit you'll see at the Monarch.

What is this about a mysterious fifth member?

C: DJ Assassin hardly ever turns up because he lives in Cornwall, which is further than Brussels and harder to get to. He usually does the turntables and writes the songs with me and whoever.

So where do you get your samples from?

C: Out of my cd collection. You go shopping in Wallsy Market for second hand records that's where you'll find our samples. You get the other samples from bad fifties films...

Ch: ...and Pinky and the Brain!

C: Yeah, and if you listen to the amount of manky hiphop and jungle we listen to you'll find the rest.

How does your label deal with it?

C: They shit themselves on a daily basis. They have a sampling office where they just clear samples.

M: When we had a meeting with them Charlie said they'd be some problems but they said "they're not problems Charlie, they're just issues, they can be dealt with". Later they then came back with "ooh, there's a bit of a problem".

Ch: How many months did it take to clear 'Love Somebody'?

C: Two months.

K: Seemed longer though 'cos we couldn't do anything whilst it was going on.

(A sound tech jumps in and tells us to hurry because they need to do a soundcheck. Charlie strikes him a deal to record their set in payment for two cans of beer. Cha Cha is mortified 'cos they only have three... We have one minute to close the interview).

Your website makes continued reference to being a gypsy band, why?

C: 'Cos we've all got gypsy blood.

What do you think of the way gypsies and travellers are treated in this country and is there a difference between the two?

C: No there's no difference. And try going to Slovakia if you think they have problems here.

Could the Fighting Cocks have formed anywhere other than London?

C: Yeah, sure. There are loads of bands out there doing what we do.

But has being in London meant you were the one to be picked up?

K: We're lucky to be in London.

Ch: it could have happened elsewhere but it would probably have been a lot slower.

K: it would have happened wherever we were.

C: I know the way we got picked up, so no it doesn't matter where you're from. But it does matter what you do afterwards. It is easier to be in London, it's not hard to walk down your local to play a gig.

So what's next?

C: Single out in July/August with an album out after that but I have no idea when.

Ch: TV series. No really! LWT have been following us and recorded gigs here and at the Red Eye. They're doing a fly on the wall documentary on us because....they're mad!

And that was that as they ran off to sound check. Fighting Cocks can be contacted by e-mail on ludasmatyi@hotmail.com

The Fighting Cocks



clockwise from top left: Charlie, Kirky, Princess Molly, Cha Cha Demore

Whoah!

Ms Honey was supposed to have written a piece for this issue but unfortunately technical difficulties and general laziness prevented it's appearance so instead I did myself having to fill a page the night I wanted to upload this. No problem really though because I have a story to tell. It's a story of debauchery and brain wash, a story of low morals and high skirts, a story that took place 2 hours by plane from grizzly England in the middle of July. Oh yes, I went to Ibiza.

My reasons for going? Well, everyone needs a holiday don't they? Originally intended as a cheap getaway it all turned into a lot more when my boss suggested I take a camera and document the lot for next years Twentys brochure (for the uninitiated, I am just finishing a work placement at First Choice Holidays in the Publishing department). In exchange everything but my spending money was paid for and free excursions were thrown in for me, my brother (Stewart), and my cousin (Steven). So there we were, a late night flight heading to the land of trance music and ultimate headonism. Here's my concise diary:

THURSDAY

Fuck, we got to our hotel at 4am this morning and had to be up for a meeting at 10am. Our rep, "Jesus", knocked on the door to give Stewart and Steven a wake up call after they refused to get out of bed. They weren't happy, but shuffled down in time for the free wine and watch someone down a beer then promptly throw up in the street. Probably wasn't his best plan to not go to bed at all and instead drink away the hours. We christen him "Sickboy" and then watch on as our reps scream, shout, and dance their way through the excursion package they want everyone to buy. Most of it sounds good, we're already booked on so avoid the hefty £140 asking price. First night was reps cabaret plus a comedian in a hillside hall. Nothing more than a glorified gangshow it didn't matter as we had free beer and food all night. Stewart drinks himself to oblivion and we get chatting to a group who will be forever known as "The Scouse Girls". We head out to a club in San Antonio and are soon raving away to generic trance music. Steven pulls 20 minutes in with one of our Liverpool ladies whilst Stewart feels rejected by another and goes home with a hairy fat dwarf. Stewart is from now on referred to as "The King Of Ming". Ho ho. Yours truly gets jiggy with a girl who looks like a supermodel, but she has a boyfriend. Quelle supris.

FRIDAY

Daytime I walk into the lounge to find TKOM straddling his new found love. I go back to bed. Later we kind of stare at her, TKOM doesn't even offer her coffee, she leaves. We're out by the pool, then we're in the town, then we're back by the pool. We find the lassies from Liverpool and agree to meet up before excursion 2, the Sunset Cruise. A short walk to the harbour and we're on a boat headed for the middle of no-where. We pass the infamous Cafe Del Mar and resolve to visit it sometime as it looks less crappy than the other bars in the area. The sun sets, it's actually suprisingly moving. But we're nowhere near the end of our day. A short trip to a cove and we're off to a club set aside just for Twentys. All supplied with cup we are told to hang on to it and fill it as much as we like from the free bar. We get wasted. Especially TKOM. A few deep and meaningful with him



Andy goes to Ibiza

later and he's back in form and has snogged Rhiannon, one of the Scouse Girls, TKOM becomes TKOM(except R). Steven has disappeared with his. Time is called and we're ushered out to a waiting coach and are soon enough in Eden - the latest San An superclub. Eden is big but not busy. Water is £4 a bottle so thumbs down on that one. We rave until someone treads on Michelle's (Scouse Girl 1) foot and she has to hobble home. What time is it? About 6am.

SATURDAY

Daytime, erm, what daytime. Went to an internet cafe to see what was going on back home and to contact work. Suddenly remember no one'll be there on a Saturday. Whoops. Stop at a bar and watch Only Fools And Horses, very Spanish! Kind of hungry so we make tea back at the apartment, cheese, beans, and bread. We are not good cooks. Find the Scouse Girls again and head to the west end of San Antonio. 5 bars later (every one with a tout offering 2 beers and a shot for £2) we're in a cheesy bar with a dancefloor at the back. TKOM(except R) is very pissed and disappears for 5 minutes. He comes back and tells how some mad bloke pushed him outside to start a fight. The bloke is now lying in the gutter. TKOM(except R) feels very guilty but we all know he did the right thing. Arseholes who start fights should expect to get beat for their trouble. It's late so we're back in the apartment. Michelle (SG1) needs fags (or "ciggis" if you're from the north apparently) and promptly walks to the 24hr supermarket. In her pyjamas. We like Michelle (SG1), she rocks. Rhiannon (SG2) is podium dancing on our sofa whilst Jenny (SG3 - Steven's love of his life) is asleep and we've lost Michelle (SG4) for the third night in a row. She enjoys the company of many men's bedrooms so we are informed. It's 7am, maybe it's time to go to bed.

SUNDAY

We're around the pool at 2pm and the girls have got the attention of some cheesy new blokes who appear to be aged the wrong side of 30. These men boast that they've brought three grand each with them and don't seem bothered when they drop a hundred in the pool. By 6 they have drank the equivalent of 10 or so pints whilst trying to tank up the girls. Michelle (SG1, now known as PJ for her shopping antics) has had 7 layers of sunscreen rubbed in by old bloke number 1 over the time. He shows concern for her trampled foot, which appears to have doubled in size since it got trod on. She comes back with a bandage but isn't impressed with his molly coddling. Old bloke 2 (harmless, almost funny, looks like Hugh from 4 Weddings and a Funeral) dances on a wall, falls off and cracks his head. Is rushed off to hospital. Old blokes 3 ("whale", cos when he enters the pool the water leaves) and 4 (of no obvious description) go for a lie down. We're off to make tea (bad spaghetti) and get ready for a bar crawl. A few hours later we're back in the west end dancing on podiums and intimidating all the new arrivals. I buy redbull&vodka jelly in a packet for £3. Allegedly it has 4 shots in it, I'm not convinced. Old bloke 1 is here trying it on and buys roses for PJ, who isn't impressed and gives one to the other Michelle (ETCOMMB). Next we're in a nightclub that feels like the black hole of Calcutta. We get out and go for fried chicken. In the girl's apartment, it makes ours look positively immaculate (which it isn't). It's getting light. Go to bed.

MONDAY

Daytime and people gather around the pool. We go shopping for more crap food. Send my e-mail to work. What's the time? About 6pm! Eat. Time to "Dance With The Devil", we're back on the excursion trail! Possibly the best night, we're in the hills outside San An and there's loud dance music, quiet areas, an amphitheatre with a crap rock band in it, and a free bar. Hurrah! Mad performers enter the area spraying sparks and juggling fire. They tie one of them up and strip her. Then there's more fire and a giant penis spurring sparks. This is crazy. But good. You won't see this Upstairs@The Garage! Onto a waiting bus and we've lost our rep. Nevermind, a pissed girl has decided to take on the role and generally falls about in the isle attempting to sing songs. We're dumped at Eden and negotiate the queue in an hour. It's foam party night! But that's at 5am and



it's only 1. Boy George is here, TKOM(except R) shakes his hand, SG2(R) is very jealous. Out at 4 we go to a cafe and eat crap crisps and dodgy sandwiches. Then it's back in for the foam. Hmmm, we're all slimey and going blind as it drips in our eyes. Stagger home. It's 7ish.

TUESDAY

I want to kill whoever decided to put the next excursion at 11am. An army of zombies walk to the boat we are travelling on to go champagne diving and spend an afternoon on a secluded beach. I dive in, others follow, someone spots a tiny jellyfish. The water empties. No champagne for us. But now we're on a beach and behind it, a pool and restaurant. We have free lunch of dodgy meat and potatoes plus tonnes of salad. TKOGM(except R) hates salad. Steven (or Stevie Wonder as he is now known 'cos he wears shades in the nightclubs) is about to die from exhaustion. But who cares, there's free beer and 10 blokes have decided to take part in a "Man O Man" competition. I really didn't need to see that many willies. SG2(R) however is having a great time. We laugh at the feeble chat up lines and watch a guy rub icecream into his hair rather than smother it on the rep he's supposed to. This is cheesy as fuck, but hey, you've got to laugh. Everyone is dead on the coach going back and SGs go for a lie down back at the apartments. So do TKOM(except R) and Stevie Wonder. I take a walk. It's much later and we're out in the west end again. Our last full night. The pub is playing the Vengaboys and PJ is feeling ill so goes home with Jenny. The rest of us go down the main street and find, of all things, an indie club! We're in there, jumping up and down to Korn and Limp Bizkit. But they don't have bis. I feel oh so ironic. It's 4am. No-one's pulled, typical indie disco really then. Back in the aptment more podium dancing on the sofa and people sleep on the balcony. It's 6am, time for some sleep.

WEDNESDAY

Packed by midday we dump our stuff in the SG's apartment. They're hardly awake. Much recovery later we're on our final excursion, the mid afternoon waterparty at Es Paradise. The sexy positions game makes it's inevitable appearance, then comes the water. We get very wet. This is good fun actually. Dance around to Boom Shake The Room. We're out by 6, dry off and back into San An. The old blokes are at the first bar, still trying their luck. But failing horribly. A dodgy bloke comes by and offers us "cheap shit", which rather disappointingly turns out to be watches and neck chains. PJ barters him down to £12 for a trendy watch (they're trendy girls) and he sells 6 to various people at our table. Old blokes are distracted so we make our escape to a pub with an empty dancefloor. Some raving later (and a slow song for the lovers, ahhhh!) it's 1am and we have a bus to catch. Hugs and photos later we're on a plane back home. Stevie Wonder is curled up in a ball and TKOFM(except R) is dribbling into his lap. It's been one seriously extra-large holiday!

CONCLUSION

You may think you hate "townies" but so long as you get to know the good ones and can go with the flow of the moron massive I'd be happy to recommend a Twentys/18-30 type holiday to anyone. Except sad over thirties looking to get lucky with girls 10 years their junior. Oh, and you should probably better like dance music too. At least, just a little bit.

MORAL OF THE STORY

Townies are people too!



The next person who says “how does it feel to be 18” gets a fucking

huge slap. Excuse my French but does it really make any difference? I wasn't asked how it felt to be 17, 16 or 15 and I doubt if people will want to know what 19s like either. However, they all want a piece of 18 - despite the fact that all of those that asked, with a slight patronising tone may I add, have already done

the 18 thing- albeit most of them far too long ago for them to remember.

I am now a little suspicious- maybe theres some huge 18 experience that is about to hit me any day now. Its been 15 days now so I could have escaped it but there could be some initiation into “adulthood” (although Im not yet an adult- not really, am I?) where they come and take you in the middle of the night and do something weird, totally inexplicable, and then, all of a sudden you really are 18- and in an instant Ill know who to vote for, and what has to be done in the way of taxes and actually be able to make responsible decisions.

I do, however, doubt this greatly as my boyfriend's 21 and doesnt seem to know much about any of those things, or anything else for that matter - except, of course, football!

So am I about to be initiated? Like some African type tribe I saw on TV once who'd send their boys into the wood on their 15th (or thereabouts) birthday where theyd capture them and file their teeth- an extremely painful act may I add. I do, however, doubt this because, lets face it- this is England and any tradition or quirk was weeded out of the system many years ago. Life is dull these days, were too apathetic yet exhausted by the pace of modern life. Our bodies clogged with chemicals prevent us from any extra unneeded effort and the apparent cruelty of anything spontaneous will only be rewarded by a lawsuit so any such tradition, that these people could have been referring to, is as likely as the Sun printing something that isn't trashy.

However, I do admit to be slightly different of late. Mainly, at least, there was a short period of calm- things seemed to settle themselves out a little. Ive made a few decisions, and although the future isnt likely to turn out as I wish to envisage it I am at least planning to help things along as much as possible rather than waiting for it to happen on the settee- a far preferable route, however I dont see that anything except insanity can come from too much day-
time TV.

I wish however that I could suddenly apply myself- I am useless at it. I need to apply myself to my course work at the moment, however, it does not seem to happen. These things only ever happen in bouts and at the moment nothing appears to happen no matter how much I tell it to. It is not that I am too relaxed- more that I am too stressed.

This seems painfully ironic to me seeing as the psychology course work not being done is on the relationship between stress and illness. And yes, whenever I think about it I do get a headache!

So, being 18 does not allow you to sud-

denly be able to do A levels - pity. It does however seem to provoke decisions- decisions about courses and decisions about relationships. Or rather to expel people from my life- is this really a positive thing? But then again, is it positive to argue with the same person week in, week out attempting some friendship that can never work- its always been hard for me to let go of things, and Im glad I let go of that.

However, I always wonder what happened to those Ive left behind- theres the ex boyfriends that were part of your everyday life for a long, long time and now theyre gone- and Id have a heart attack if I saw them, Id run away and scream and wish them dead if they suddenly turned up. Yet I still wonder, occasionally, what happened?

I have found that being 18 doesnt make it any easier to forget those who have gone- not just friends and exs that you no longer talk to; but those who have died. Where would they have been today? I mean those who died young because we all know one or two- its that hint of sadness that's keeping it real throughout the day, what could have been your fate. Its hard to imagine your own death, to imagine life stopping like it did for them yet even harder to imagine that they will never go any further than where they were at before. I'm aching for them to see me now, and comment on my life. I so want to hear how they turned out, too.

People who didn't turn 18 like I have never got the reassurance of drinking legally in the pub. Or confidently walking into the cinema.

Because- at the end of the day, thats whats forced 18 to be perceived so highly- this extra responsibility piled upon us.

Therefore the pinnacle question about the feeling of being 18 is do I want responsibility? I dont think so. I'm the first to admit my actions are rarely as they should be. Id prefer to repeat 17 over and over because although not the happiest year of my life it was certainly the fullest- a lot happened and by the end I felt I had it sorted. But 18 just shows me that there's more work to be done, and there's the realisation there always will be until by bones crack, my body biodegrades with me still in it and my brain starts to fizzle out as senility takes its inevitable hold. With age we are attempting to find some kind of inner peace, arent we? But 18 just makes me think I can never touch it.

And maybe that sounds like hippy crap, with a good side portion of cheddar but my point is, what Im trying to say is, Id prefer to stay 17- I dont want to turn 18. The problem is I have no choice.

(Rosie)



Interview: Venus In Furs

Becky
Vocals/Guitar

Venus In Furs are officially the most stylish indiepop band on the planet at this very moment. Unable to come to terms with the traditional indie look (scuffed trainers, crap hair, smelly jumper) they looked to their idols and their "working class glam" as lead singer and guitarist, Becky Stefani (how glam is that last name!) explains. "The world of pop needs us" she says as if it's a scientifically proven fact. "We're not talking about bloodsucking, spirit crushing, ironic pop, created by balding, money grabbing old men in suits, for this is evil. We deal in style and glamour, sex and subversion, razor sharp wit and blazing intelligence. DEATH TO ALL FALSE POP MUSIC!", quite.

So why all the glitter? Becky again, "it's democratic d.i.y glamour! it's a fact that all the best bands look snappy. it's a working class thing - if you come from a drab, grey town you want to stand a million miles away from it. People in the north-east spend more on clothes than anyone one else in the country. It's weekend culture and we're victims of it! Plus we all love the glitz of the fifties". Oh yes, did I mention

that Venus In Furs are from up north? This is not a London thing, this is a Darlington/Sunderland thing. Which can only mean one thing to Londoner minds, are they "the new" Kenickie? "Well Kenickie were touted as the new Shampoo weren't they?? There's not many reference points if you're a girl fronted gee-tar band", and that's all they have to say on the matter. Although for the record it would be opportune to point out there are a lot of references to draw from if you're a girl fronted guitar band. Thankfully for the masses though Venus In Furs have very little in common with Sleeper or Powder. We won't even explore the possibilities of Blondie, Echobelly, Elastica, Bis, Dubstar, Linoleum, Veruca Salt, Prolapse, Saint Etienne....

Venus In Furs are a happy band with happy songs, nothing else would simply do, "It's the easiest thing in the world to learn a few minor chords and write a melancholy song about how rubbish everything is whereas writing pop songs free of irony and seen-it-all-before cynicism is a craft in itself", Becky considers. She continues, "Music is supposed to be about fun



Ashley
Drums



Helena
Keyboard



Venus In Furs say style *is...*

"I say forget that old adage "less is more" - it is the 21st century and more is more! Glitter and eyeliner and kinky boots and popstar shades!".

Becky

"spiky punk rawk hair and sprayed shirts."

Ashley

"bleach and glitter and high heels."

Helena

"smouldering understated cool."

Johnny

and carnivals and escapism and community and fireworks not whiny self-obsessed, middle class brats hunched over their acoustic guitars. There's lots to be happy about - friends and community and going out and getting off your backside and making things happen", which is true - although most "whiney brats" I know would use a fuzz box and the last Korn album rather than an acoustic. Words like "community" are a good indicator that Venus In Furs are from a small northern town. It's grim up there you know. Considering the term "indie stardom" an oxymoron a major label deal appears to be the only way to go, especially when "the only way the average 14 year old kid from Darlington is going to

be able to buy your records is if you get a major deal and get your stuff in Our Price - we have no Rough Trade shop! There is no underground!". Artistic freedom doesn't come into it, as Becky rightly points out, when you're writing pop songs with "sky-scraping choruses and stiletto sharp hook-lines" you're not going to come into conflict with any major label fat cat.

As for the future it's looking bright with the band continuously in Steve Lamacq's MP3 Clickmusic chart and their self produced cd getting plenty of airplay, the immediate months see them giving contributions to several compilation cds and playing gigs all over the country.



Johnny
Bass

Caring about people with cancer and other diseases?



Charity shopping - good for mugs...

Erm, no actually. Or maybe just a tiny little bit. But generally spoken the main reasons for the obsessed charityshopper are far less noble. It's more about finding stuff that your average fellow student doesn't have already. Thus charityshopping is more of an actually quite lame attempt to stand out from the TopShop-praising crowd (but, then Top Shop has its own vintage range by now. But that's cheating) than the urge helping the sick or poor... I chose to say

"attempt" because usually one's glorious plans of finding THAT flowery polyester shirt or THAT green plastic handbag from the seventies are being destroyed after just one quick glimpse into the likes of "Scope" or "Oxfam". But, what you definitely will find is a black and white Granny dress (believe me, they're bloody everywhere) that's ten sizes too big, anyway. And, of course, this very dress will be on a rail with about ten tweed skirts in all imaginable lengths that were presumably manufactured some time in the eighties. But, of course, you won't find the "right" length cos skirts just weren't the "right" length in the eighties. Which brings us neatly round to the main problem with charityshopping in the 21st century: following the simple principle of time, people gave their stuff from the sixties and seventies to charity in either the eighties or the nineties. And due to the fashion-flashback of especially the midnineties (as long as you didn't have at least one Adidas jumper, your plain existence was more than questionable), most pre-eighties stuff just disappeared and the formerly happy shoppers have to put up with every single dreadful aspect of eighties fashion ever since then. "But is that a bad thing?" I hear you 80s revivalfans say. Yes, that is a bad thing indeed. Cos if you put all that nostalgic shit about

how cool BROS actually looked (did they?) aside, you'll end up with nothing but mullets, carrot-shaped trousers and neon pink twinsets. And I personally believe everyone (and I mean everyone!) would rather be seen dead than sporting a pair of moonwashed tight jeans.

Right, so obviously charityshopping for clothes is dead and gone. Hence it's time to concentrate on what's left! And I'd say that's quite a lot actually, because apart from the clothes, the eighties weren't bad at all! Think toys. Think cartoons. Think music (but don't think about music too long. Or do you really want WHAM stuck in your head for the next week?).

Aren't you still upset that your mum threw away "Castle Greyskull" when your voice broke? Did you ever forgive your sister ripping out She-Ra's arms? And that's where 21st century charityshopping comes in handy! With a little luck, all your childhood traumas will be solved and it's much cheaper than psychotherapy, too.

And coming back to the above stated theory of charityshopping as an attempt to be special, what could possibly be cooler than having your lunch from a Ghostbuster's plate (which, by the way, was only five pence!)?

And if you don't agree with that, then you're either the impersonated Anti-Kitsch or you're just not ready for the Neu Eighties Nostalgia.

But if do you feel like joining in this revolution of charityshopping ("as long as it's made of plastic and looks cute, go for it" is the word), here's some general guidelines to avoid disappointment:

1. Don't shop in chain-charityshops like Oxfam. They're too expensive
2. If you see price tags in the windows, don't bother going in.
3. Run for your life if the shop of your choice does not only stock vintage stuff, eg. dried flower arrangements and greeting cards made by pensioners
4. General rule for all charityshops is: the older the lady behind the counter, the better your chances of fooling her with the change are.

(julia)

Last Minute.LiveReviews

Bis/Gerling @ Highbury Garage

John Disco still says (although somewhat belatedly tonight) "hello, we are bis from glasgow scotland" but Bis have changed a lot since they turned up in '96. If Bis were an AM radio crackling through a pair of 50p walkman speakers 4 years ago then now they are a thousand pound surround sound hi-fi system turned to 11. The sound has got larger, more bassy, more beats, more schen. The drum machine is gone and replaced by a DAT looping real drum loops and judering jungle-lite breakbeats. But with this has gone the innocence and the "teen-c revolution". The backdrop depicts sombre illustrations of the members, unsure of the future, angry at themselves and the world. But then they play and it's actually business as usual, just larger and more intense - more sweat shop than sweet shop in many cases. The new material is much

like the majority of "Social Dancing" with it's eighties sound and lyrics dealing with fakers and the meaning of punk. First album tracks are scarce, the frankly ironic "Monstar" is played - complete with Manda barking through her mini loud haler. Gloriously they encore with their own naked baby photo - the one that turned the teen-c kids on (and the vast majority off), "Kandy Pop". Where to from here? Hopefully a killer album which pulls the garage kids in with a sneaky nod to beats and live PAs in Ayia Napa. Well, you never know.... Support for the night came from the "wacky" Gerling. As a bunch of mates playing disco records it was amusing but as live band they need to work some more on the songs, those that were guitar based were too much a wall of noise. Ideas being piled in like ingredients in a new recipe - but at the moment they're mixing custard with sausage meat.

L7/Fungus @ Highbury Garage

"Hello London!", from the way they call to the audience they could be playing Wembley, but these riot grrrl stalwarts were appearing yet again in the slightly less magnificent surroundings of London's slightly grotty stepping stone between the toilets and the concert halls. They look the part of course, big hair and leather trousers, peaked police fetish caps and crosses suspended from chunky neck chains. L7 are (no cock) rock. Their audience are a mixed bag of neu metal virgins and whorey old men, pushing your way through is like the opening credits from "Nevermind The Buzzcocks". Launching in with the chugging riff war of "Andre" (now some 5 years old) the songs sling lower and grow heavier the further into the set they are. A mosh pit slams and crowd surfers are yanked out as gutterell horrors spew from the stage. Okay, so almost every song is a rip off of every other but this is not the point. This is punk rock. Fuck you. Grrr... Towards the end they announce tracks

from their new album, "Slap Happy", though they seem fully aware the only album anyone in the venue owns is "Bricks Are Heavy". So they leave the stage then return to play "Pretend That We're Dead", and everyone shouts along to the chorus and it can't get any better. But it can. For one guy at least. Because we all got a raffle ticket when we entered the venue. And the prize is the drummer. A fat bald man called Jim wins her and looks more than a little scared when she presents him with a sash, flowers, and a promise of what's to come in the tour bus... L7 are 4 real, oh yes.

Fungus are chunkier and rockier than a year ago. Final proof that continuous touring and mainstream indifference causes all bands to present their second album as heavier and more "real". The crowd enjoy it though and bounce around to the Scandinavian Symposium-like sound.

Musically the two bands couldn't be further apart but both come with the requisite attitude and passion to convince you to throw away your oh-so-trendy sequencer and play powerchords through a stack until the walls cave in!

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