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WHOLESALE ENQUIRIES WELCOME

THE UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

Welcome to 'the second issue of 'Future Days' - a magazine of local, national and international modern music - which due to my move from the Midlands, and the hazards of living in the proximity of Risky City, is taking on a 'roving' nature. So I'm back in England five months earlier than expected (but that's another story) and am back to my roots. As I've tried to work on the basis of only putting out an issue when I've something worthwhile to say, and many sounds and visions worthy of comment have come my way recently, here goes.

Stemming from issue One, which I was astonished to hear mentioned on the Peelie programme (fame at last!), I'm pleased to say that Modern Zoo have recorded an excellent demo tape at Woodbine Studios and is attracting record company interest. It consists of three songs: 'Obsolete Soldiers', 'Future Days' and 'Fabians Quest', and shows an imaginative use of synthesizers, percussion and voices with plenty of the quality lacking in much of the music of the genre: soul. If you want to read about them, The Fall, A Certain Ratio and the Dusseldorf scene then send 25p to the address below and your wish will be fulfilled. My congratulations also to Andy Smith of 'Fragile' fanzine who won THE MIGHTY FALL COMPETITION and has had a copy of 'Grotesque' duly despatched to him in darkest Cornwall.

This issue continues looking outside of these shores and follows strange lines of coincidence with three bands from Northampton (of the American as well as English variety) and assorted goings on from France. I've attracted some criticism from a few people for writing about music from abroad that few have heard (about), but isn't that precisely the diet that the 'hip' sections of the music press feed us? And then, whadayaknow, September Parnell becomes the next big thang! So I'm gratified to see Xao Seffcheque get a mention in T-Zers (13th June) debunking the 'knowledge' of a journalists 'expertise', but just remember where you read about him first!!!

I've been really pleased to receive letters from all parts of the isle and I'll try to reply to my correspondants as soon as I can. Many of you offered constructive comments for improving 'Future Days', and to those wanting to contribute feel free to do so, which applies to any potential scribes. I'd welcome articles, graphics, photos - anything from anyone anywhere. So send your creative musings to:

'Future Days',
60 Cromwell Road,
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ENGLAND.
Telephone: Bristol (0272) 44949.

Special thanx to John Eames, Andy and Kath,
The Padded Cell inmates, Pete B and of
course Messrs Eursocamp Ltd, especially the
Social Dilettante. The Dordogne doesn't
know what it missed!



SKANK TO THE CRANK

CAST: Craig O'Donnell (Ranking Crank) - bass, guitar and vocals.
Cris Vine (Mr Downbeat) - guitar, guitar synth and vocals.
Jim Whittemore (Luther Maggot) - keyboards and vocals.
Sean Elias (Steppin' Sean) - dubbing/mixing.
add: Adrian Zea - guitar and percussion.

PROLOGUE:

Americans dont seem to appreciate the genuinely talented bands they have, i.e those that are prepared to venture outside of the limits imposed both by the conservatism of 'rock' consumers and the downright reaction of the record industry. There is also a rigid compartmentalisation of tastes, which is further reinforced by the lack of any widespread cross-over between 'black' and 'white' music. Its therefore difficult for creative influences to permeate into the musical organism and aping of the market-leaders becomes the norm, while the avant-garde thrashes impotently outside. But things are slowly changing.

One of the most interesting attempts at stretching the nations ears emanates from the unlikely surroundings of Northampton, Massachussetts where a quintet of white guys operate under the name of the Scientific Americans - which can be pruned acceptably to the Sci Ams. An earlier version of the band released the Devo-derivative 'Beyond Rational Thought' E.P, which in its aftermath had the effect of shedding a musical cocoon, thus allowing the positive absorption of more liberating ideas. This was given added impetus by the experience gained by Cris when studying in England. During his time here, living near Birmingham, he listened to a lot of reggae and dub and played regular 'live' guitar improvisations, based on the percussive possibilities of the instrument and using distortion and other effects. As a result the Sci Ams developed a wide range of electronic aids for processing sound (but critically in a 'human' manner) with a dub-like emphasis on space and subtle re-structuring. Armed with this mental and physical equipment their aim was the de-mystification of rock and roll because in its present form it was ripe for change, both in its musical content and business organisation.



These aims bring to mind the similar sentiments of our very own Public Image, who are admitted to being a model to build upon by the Sci Ams, but they regard their own approach as being different especially that they are prepared to be humorous in their activities. Luthor sees their efforts as part of the overall onslaught against the 'block-buster mentality' of the giant record companies, and they have their own label (Tekno Tunes) which releases records by both the Sci Ams and Northampton bands such as the Paper Dolls and Higher Primates. Tekno Tours acts as a promotion company, spreading the word and developing business contacts, as well as organising tours. But the Sci Ams primarily see themselves as a 'dance band' where they are utilising fundamentally what is a studio device to create what I regard as the ultimate 'fusion' music - but unlike the sterile connotations which that term engenders there is a music with heart and soul.

The best example of their success on record is the 'Beyond Fiscal Distress' E.P. released last year, which received some attention from the usual Radio One source and is available via Rough Trade. It's a flexi-disc consisting of two studio cuts, 'Call Home' and 'Taking Time', and the 'live' 'Service Dub', with the latter two tracks featuring excellent drumming from ex-member Jim Square. 'Time' has a PIL-ish bass pulse, off-the-wall shouted exclamations and lots of treatments to the guitars and synthesiser, the net result being very hypnotic. 'Dub' was recorded at the main local club Rahars and fully justifies their own description of playing high-tech electronic dub music.

Lobster Sound

Finding a replacement drummer has led to a good deal of head-scratching and discussion as to whether to rely solely on Dr Rhythm, the faithful Sci Ams drum machine, or bring in another human. This writer has various misgivings about their use, stemming from musical and economic considerations, i.e., it puts drummers out of work! There are pros and cons and Crank was frank in his summation of the problem:

"Drumboxes are of course very limiting in themselves but processing them is a lot of fun on tape, so it can be thought of as a sort of electronic music percussion rather than just a lazy man's substitute for a drummer. Everything we play (through) is highly processed and we play fairly quietly and rely on the PA to make things grossly painful especially as regards the lower end. A real drummer gives a great boost to any sense of dynamics, the drawbacks are inconsistent tempos, sloppy accents and of course less volume potential on stage. An old acquaintance of mine who was a good drummer is back in the area so then again we may hire him, play together and get the feel of things.

One solution could be to use the box for 'rote' items - kick-drum etc - and a drummer occasionally doing most-of-a-song: these are approaches that we are looking at."

The major body-blow to a smooth progress towards corporate aims was the decision this month of Cris Vine to leave the band. He's decided to join up with the Valley Pigbag equivalent called Urang Otan, a combo stacked high with brass and percussion. Fortunately the remainder of the Sci Ams plan to be pretty busy over the summer, the organisation now revolving around Crank, Luthor and Sean, and plenty of "product" emanating from their four-track studio. The future as far as gigging goes depends on how effectively any prospective new members can be absorbed in to the collective unit.

"We are working on several videos this summer, one being a document of the last version of the band complete with interview and some 'live' footage, another being geared to more 'abstract' things. We are recording material for a 45 or EP with Bush Tetras drummer Dee Pop. This involves 'outside money' and is set for possible, but not certain release on 99 Records in New York. Finances have been holding up this session up for about six months - also the tour of Europe they did came right in the way - and we will be doing a bunch of demos to "shop around" New York. We've also put together a surf band to fritter away a few hours this summer - no-one plays the 'right' instruments, but it keeps the fingers limber."



soundman Sean Elias.



A Aram Zoo

"I'm a little outta touch with newer bands in NY and England but by and large nothing AMAZING seems to be around, a slump. The NY club scene is (mega-clubs, owners arguing, everybody has to have a high-pressure agent, woof woof) so to the chances of our coming to England ironically enough are probably good. We've played up and down the East Coast and out to parts of the Mid-West and Canada, and of course NY and Boston. There are lots of people in those two places we don't like so it doesn't seem that playing there more will do much at the moment. I guess it means we're becoming integrated into the "Rock Underground" when you dislike people ya hardly know and they dislike you all because of this music thing...sigh. Did you know that MOST of the people who are big in NY music or music press are from the Midwest, especially Minneapolis the Midwest Mafia it seems."

A move away from the confines of Northampton is now essential as saturation point, as far as gigs go, has now been reached. It's not an unusual situation for a group to find itself in, Crank reflecting on both the 'political' and geographical limitations of their home town.

"I don't know how much geography of the States you know but Northampton is about three hours due north of New York City and 1½ hours west of Boston. In "Western Massachussetts" 0 dear, not much goes on, but here in Northampton there are five colleges and universities scattered about within 12 miles.

The place is off Route 128 so Boston club owner can't book us as a local act, nor because of it can we be presented as some glamorous out-of-town supported by the publicity machine."

Projecting a little into the future the Sci Ams entertain high hopes of getting some dates fixed up in England, which will be a valuable publicity and promotional exercise for the just released cassette album (see review on page 15). The cassette asks the musical question "How do you spell North-HAMP-ton!?" and the initial pressing of 500 copies is only available to those inquirers who previously asked about the earlier E.P's. Each copy is recorded in highly processed stereo, especially intended for head-phone listening, and comes complete in a Ziploc bag, colour cover and picture sleeve. It's available from: Sci Ams/Ken Reed; Main Street Records, 213 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060, USA. Two pounds for the tape, or for three pounds you can get a copy of the 'Beyond Fiscal Distress' EPic. You won't be disappointed: free your mind and your ass will follow.

The choice when listening to music in France, whether on the radio or in discos, restaurants or clubs, is limiting to say the least. Its either silky-voiced singers with sunning figures, or ghastly MOR outfits. The alternative seems to be jazz or those flirting with Latin-American exotica, and its otherwise left to foreign luminaries to provide the contemporary reality.

There has been more French music that has attracted the attention of their countrymen, stemming from the rich regional cultural variation but for the rock Grand Public the situation is being dire thunder with such a history of rebellion against authority and regulation that on the surface acceptance is their response. But the situation is being dismantled, just as Mitterand defeated Ciscard and over the past couple of years there is a heartening movement into a parallel alternative, harking to the strong avant-garde traditions. There has been a heartening movement rooming of self-produced music and two examples which roused my interest are Illusion Productions and Bain Totale.

Illusion Productions is the brain-child of three art students from Caen and was formed in 1979, along with Deficit des Annees Anterieures (DDAA). This is the vehicle for their musical adventures into the world of plastic art and has seen performances at theatres, art exhibitions and mixed media events. Inspiration is derived from a number of artistic and musical sources, like Pere Ubu, Gavin Bryars and the Beatles. Magical Mystery Tour (!), as well as films by such directors as Fritz Lang, switching from Euro-Rock to Japanese finesse and the recurrent African topicality. But the use of these forms is rooted in DDAA's reality of advanced industrial society, reflected by DDAA's structural application of basic rhythms and synthesised textures.

A good example of this mix can be found on the recent 'Aventures en Afrique' E.P. particularly 'Guava' - part one, with its splintery guitar, synthesiser and bass grumbles.

Their past catalogue of records, tapes and first issue of a magazine includes an intriguing collaboration with one of their professors. Joel Hubart has developed the concept of 'Epidemic' in Art and like DDAA is prepared to link up with all manner of creators. This indeed is the reasoning behind Illusion Productions, future plans including the release of material by such crazies as Prince Emile de Ly. But you can bet your life that whatever these guys and girls get up to next it won't be what we or they expect.



deal in singles, international compilation albums, cassettes, and also what they term 'graphic products': fanzines, photo booklets, poetry and cartoons. They are refreshing internationalist in their outlook illustrated by the presence of our own Clock DVA and the more avant-garde Metabolist on two of the records produced so far. They also have contact with like-minded souls in Belgium and Germany, though they regard the former as having greater creative capabilities. The four singles on their catalogue give a good insight into the general direction of the label and provide a stark contrast of styles.

The erratic Die Form appear on two joint ventures, one with the delightfully named Eva-Johanna Reichstag on a strange yet humorous tribute to 'Loilita' - perhaps the Nabakov heroine, but certainly in a different context to that used by The Police! Its more like a Nico elegy but using synthesiser drone instead of a harmonium. Metabolist feature on the other and offer a typical soundscape, almost lapsing into a Hawkwind-style bass/synth riff, but shows the content gulf when compared to D.F.'s insubstantial 'Situation Base'.

The remaining singles are in a more melodic, accessible, perhaps even rockist mood, but I find them most enjoyable. Lucas Trouble suffer a little from a soggy production job but 'El Verolo' is propelled along jauntily by the military-style snare drum patterns, while is more experimental, the voice distorted by echo and synthesiser and set against shuddering guitars. But my favourite of the quartet has to be the Hot Club de Paris atmosphere generated by Tango Luger on Bogartist 'Meurtre a Casablanca'. From the opening hurdy-gurdy organ figure the song speeds along evoking the spirit of Django and long hot summer nights filled with wood smoke and clouded by potent rose. In fact the flip 'Scorpio' maintains the sense of drama and setting (Existentialiste!). T.L have made the most derivative music on display here but its quite irresistible. Go to it.



Like all of the independents in any country, that are trying to build on the gains of the last three or four years, Bain Totale do occasionally hit the bulls eye or miss the mark by a mile. But they do offer an intriguing contrast of sounds as well as yet another potential outlet for new music. Thankfully they are not taking themselves too seriously although its like the tap dripping, each step forward is slow in coming but eagerly awaited. Their activities are starting to filter into the mainstream with local and national publications giving them valuable column inches. French bands have generally made little impact in this country but music of this calibre could change that.



INFO

ILLUSION PRODUCTIONS: 15, rue Pierre Curie, 14120 Mondeville, France.

Ref: IP001 - "Deficit des Annees Anterieures", a 60 minute cassette.

IP002 - DDAA "Miss Vandann", their first single.

IP003 - DDAA "Front de l'Est 3", a double single.

IP004 - Joel Hubaut and DDAA "Epidemia", first single in collaboration.

IP005 - DDAA "Aventures en Afrique" e.p.

IP006 - Ecole classique Anfratuosite "Lignes paralleles Anfractuositisme", a 60 minute cassette

Also available is the I.P magazine "Sensationnel le journal", as well as an intriguing board game to go with IP005.

BAIN TOTALE: 5, Rue de la Prevoyance, 01000 Bourg-en-Bresse, France.

Singles

Ref: S01 - Eva-Johanna Reichstag & Die Form

S02 - Lucas Trouble

S03 - Metabolist - Die Form

S04 - Tango Luger

Albums

A.01 - Compilation Internationale No 1.

(Die Form/Metabolist/Clock DVA/Lucas Trouble)

A.02 - Compilation Internationale No 2.

(Fab Two/Bomis Prendin/MagnetiquecBleu/M.B)

Cassettes

K.01 - Die Form 1 (C60)

K.02 - Krylon Hertz (C30)

K.03 - Etant Donnes 1 (C30)

K.04 - Die Form 2. (C60) "Virgin Flavour"

K.05 - Krylon Hertz 2. (C30) "Smuggle Death"

Graphic Products

G.01 - T.V Scream No 1/2 fanzine

G.02 - Shaved Girls 1/2/3 fanzine

G.03 - Report (photographs)

G.04 - Editorial No1 (&K7 Die Form cassette)

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BY **ÉTANT
DONNÉS**



TRANCE

Northampton:there you may have the chance to be entertained by the likes of Bauhaus, Trance,The Army or Mystery Guests.You could be at the Road-Mender club,Nene College or the Guild-hall,and be surrounded by bodies clothed in rags from Rags.The Spirit of 76 is still strong here.



"Lost in a room
It's walls made of feelings
Lost in a room
There's darkness outside"

TRANCE

Met at the shopping metropolis where the gaunt figure,dressed all in black,takes me to his van parked nearby,and carefully drives me to a dilapidated terraced house which serves as rehearsal premises.The day outside is crisp and bright,but inside little light filters in.



Three other figures, two dressed in like manner to my guide, the other crouched behind his battery of mixing and lighting equipment. The three instrumentalists - guitar, bass and drums - proceed to paint distinctive shapes and form, the ears detecting a covert nod to Joy Division, Siouxsie, Gang of Four, but its not important. Its what's felt in the heart as pure emotional movement that counts. Dark, almost to the subterranean, but not plummeting to the depths of a totally distressing negativity which can so often afflict the music of intense intentioned interludes.

The canvas screams 'paint it black'; the rhythm is solid, is broken, is re-assembled; elastic Rickenbacker bass thunder; guitar and its accessories are united through the awareness of their master. And then there are the voices carrying lyrics of omen to interrupt any complacency that may linger. Find an escape route and take yourself there.



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CHICKEN SKIN MUSIC



In the beginning there was rhythm. From this statement springs the eternal desire for personal space, which expresses itself in so many ways, music being a prime form. Hence the much exposed concern/trend for inspiration by a quest for the Spirit of Africa, the most SPACIOUS of the continents. There the drum and its accoutrements are part of an explicit ritual of sound and time and still constitutes in the untamed regions a prime (depeche) mode of communication, able to span long distances, free of technological or geographical obstacles then to reach the maximum possible listeners.

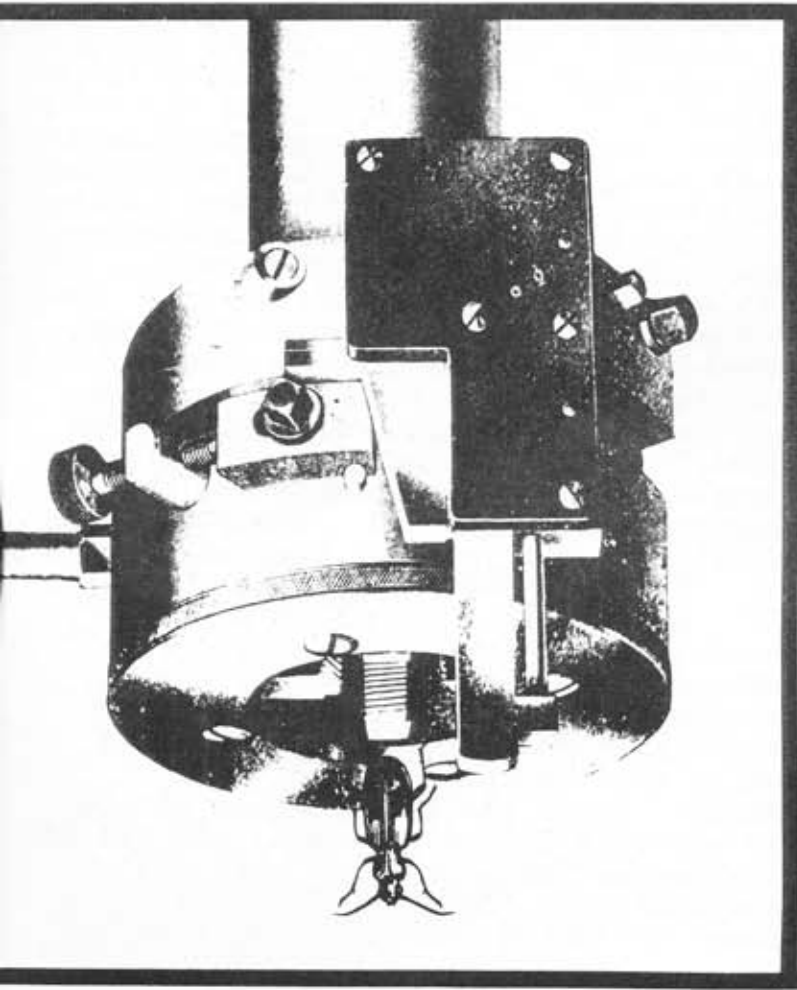
Rhythm is action inducing (body) movement - dancing - the freeing of inhibitions, celebration and the releasing of tensions out of an uptight WASP Man. A high sun and lush vegetation is not the circumstances from which the post-industrial strut of the likes of A Certain Ratio have emerged, but what they have in common is riding a wave using the power of percussion to reach all parts of the musical compass. Success has been found at various levels and degrees, but they have reached far into the mathematic circuits of the night. They brought past reports to lone resorts, twelve-inch messages of awe inciting 'shack-up and fly', and received just praise, even if the actions of the Factory parent requires clarification to the many questions they provoke. Esotericism breeds confusion.

The second side does'nt scale the same peaks but 'Winter Hill' has a greater affinity to its base: battering drums, clicking clattering percussion chanting ethereal voices, lead a swirling dervish dance - a true climax of Clouds and Rain. The doors of ACR could be opened wider for their type of attitude contributes to negative tribalism, schism and polarisation, and disturbance to rhythmic flow.

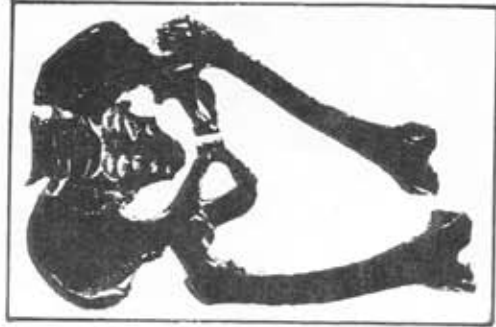
Flirting with rhythms of a 'black' nature was also a prerogative of the Pop Group and their ex-bassist Simon Underwood went back to his own roots in Bristol, linking up with various members of the areas Musicians Co-Operative to form PigBag. Plenty of percussive persuasion here as they inform us 'Papapap' got a Brand New PigBag', a safari to the heart of all that jazz, but it don't make it baby. There's a pounding beat, sax and trumpet solos, followed by the obligatory thrash, but for a more expressive example of the genre any Santana album up to 'Caravanserai' is what cuts the mustard. PigBag merely are putting on the clothes of a (style), in search of an ethnological sound(ness) and it does'nt fit. O.K. for parties but shut your eyes and it could be ACR on a wooden night.

No such contradiction can be highlighted in the aims of the purveyors of electro-pop, who use rhythm of the machine - pulse - worked into the rock format. One of the young pretender putfits are Depeche Mode and 'New Life' is a strong follow-up to their debut, even if au milieu de la chant there's shades of Twist and Shout in the harmonies. Their stable-mate Fad Gadget makes use now of human time-keeper who'se drumming works well on the funky 'Make Room'. This record sounds, in the best tradition, better over a sound system, which accentuates to advantage the gutty bass and rattling timbales. The futurists still place the priority on beat, be it disco, funk or latinate: their problem is flexibility as their technological programming

but then its objectives have been re-defined. Mut will continue to make themselves heard, and to more and more pairs of ears.



In the true chronology of the music biz, the fires of anticipation eagerly fuelled, its inevitable that a first L.P will be subject to intense (critical) analysis. 'To Each' has been assaulted by the NME Hatchet-man Pen-man, brought in to do a Basement 5 igno-demolition job. I too hear tales; a 25 minute set at a recent gig in Bristol (including encore) a sign of petulance or arrogance? a semi-audible sense of lyrical accessibility, or bad production (with Hannett at the controls?!) - who knows, but the danger is to have Titles without a Song. Are they then nothing more than air-conditioned wind, walking trumpet paths with mouth-piece spit? I think not because the balance of evidence is too much weighted in their favour. Deep listening coupled with relaxed openness brings its rewards and the whole of the first side, especially 'Forced Laugh' blows me away.



Fashions come and go, the Burundi Buffoons make even bigger fools of themselves and their audience, while the cultural deserts that are record company boardrooms study profit and loss, boosted by Adam Ant temporarily - a true cannibal of shuck and jive. Some still keep their heads out of that sewer and The Fall retain a front row seat. Ten inches of 'Slates' continues the multi layered spells Mark Smith casts. Whereas the jungle line heads for polyrhythmic perfection and a smooth journey, The Fall stand for a savage progress routed through subjective and objective. They readily eschew any use of 'black' priorities, theirs is to focus on the white mans own burden. Just to keep them fit and working again and the whole vicious race goes on, following its own logic, and of course, rhythm.

FIX

NIX

&

LIX



Thanks to a combination of its own ethnic diversity, intense activism and open-ended competition - aided by copious and regular Brit press coverage (stand up NME) - New York is now regarded as one of the prime movers in the left field new music of present and future. That's not a unique position for the Apple to find itself in: throughout its chart through the post-war age, linking be-bop, jazz, poetry and the beats, Velvet Underground and the Hell-thesis pre-punk, right up to the Television/Talking Heads axis, there has been a cultural vanguard pointing the way forward. At the moment it's the 'intellectual disco' of Ze grabbing the headlines, no defunct mutant mutandis in a hubble-bubble mix coconut shy. I wanted to go more 'outside' and take chances and an enquiry to the recently launched Reachout International brought forth the first of their 'live' album-length cassette-only releases, featuring James Chance and the Contortions and Eight-Eyed Spy.

Looking at the array of information contained in the cassette packaging it reminds me of the old debate on record inner sleeves about the advantages of owning records instead of tapes. You know the blag, they look nice; track selection is quick; more detail about the music and musicians etc. Well Reachout have countered all of those arguments, and although economics have made tapes a more favourable proposition this has taken the C60 War a step further.

And so to the music itself. Chance has been travelling his own torturous route to the limelight and 'Live in New York' offers a welcome opportunity to see if the 'legend' is all that it's been cracked up to be. Assembling a suitable back-up unit has been a frustrating problem according to reports, but I'd be surprised if there was cause for dissatisfaction with this version of the

Contortions - they are magnificent! and pack a mighty collective muscle. The fact that Bernie Nix is an ex-Ornette Coleman provides a useful key to the directions the music follows. A dominant feature of the arrangements is the inter-play between Nix and fellow-guitarist Tomas Doncker, skimming, bubbling and overlapping creating a swampy voodoo edge slithering in and out of funk, jazz and jive. The rhythmic foundations are equally off-the-wall, permitting the maximum elasticity underpinned by Colin Wade's growling, probing bass playing.

Side One was recorded at the 80's Club and presents Chance in a more restrained musical mood, although the subject matter is less comforting. The Sinatra classic 'Old Black Magic' is demolished, reassembled and stretched while the interpretation of 'King Heroin' sends the fear running between my ears. The second side was recorded at the Peppermint Lounge and sees the temperature going up as the band 'gets down' to 'White Cannibal' and eats the



JAMES CHANCE, 80's CLUB CASSETTE A100.

R E A C H O U T

audience alive and kicking. In the same way that Chance's voice is not a genuinely 'soulful' instrument, neither does his alto sax ventures conjure any virtuoso notions, but his cartwheeling solo at the climax of W.C careers across borders instrumental. 'Money to Burn' reaches the Weather Report ideal of everyone and no-one soloing, each player dodging deftly into a gap left by another. This is quite stunning music by which to contort your self, and I look forward to seeing JC doing that on these shores soon.

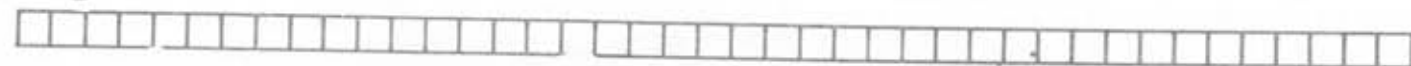
By contrast Eight-Eyed Spy according to the cassette liner notes, are the first (s)punk rock band. I'd tend to look on singer Lydia Lunch and bassist (the late) George Scott as a possible alternative duo for an alternative making of 'Grease'. Lydia as Olivia! and all that. For grease is the predominant lubricant of EES and their music: guts, human odours and a sense of the sinister and the macabre

- a short, sharp shock treatment. EES operate by Hit and Miss and a track like 'Motor Oil Shanty' places the listener on the target as the music thrashes around like a manic monster with open blind eyes. Over juddering dyslexic distortions offering no room for escape or compromise Lydia's lyrics are thrown out and tossed aside. 'Love Split with Blood' stabs at the heart until the blood and adrenalin flow in torrents, but the message is clearer on the anti-ballad 'Looking for Someone': 'seduction, deduction, me minus you'.

Unfortunately the overall standard of both material and recorded sound is patchy. The recording quality is much flatter than that of the JC tape, and is at times quite messy. Spread over thirty-five minutes the limitations of both Lydia's voice and the bands approach do start to become apparent. Their sound can be best described as the Ramones speed coupled with quirkiness of Pere Ubu, but without the formers dumb sucks attitude and the latters sense of humour. The net effect was to feel a bit bludgeoned into insensitivity and disinterest. All the same there is some great music here in places. The difference between EES and JC is that he'll getcha and you'll feel good!



"EIGHT EYED SPY LIVE." ROIR CASSETTE A101.
L TO R: GEORGE SCOTT, PAT IRWIN, LYDIA LUNCH,
MIKE FAUMGARDEN, JIM SCLAVUNOS.



TAPES <XTRA

THE Scientific
Americans

A mixed bag of styles, forms and locations, presenting a worthy testimony of the second phase of this intriguing quartet. It was recorded in four and eight-track studios and at Rahars and constitutes an hours worth of imaginative, effervescent and amusing dance music which will also make you stop and think.

There are effectively sixteen tunes and its hard to give star status to any one in particular

as the overall standard is so high. But personal favourites are the amusing 'Fascist' (who's a dirty fascist, who's a closet creep?) - take note of the approach RAR; the atmospheric 'El Salvador' and dreamy 'Water Underground'; and the instrumental version of Lenn on's 'Cold Turkey', no words were needed.

In fact the music more than speaks for itself so what other recommendation could do want.



FRONT LINE

THE GRANARY:

Out West 'Rock It' Final.

Talent contests always serve a double-edged purpose. The ostensible reason for their presence is to give latent talent an opportunity to take their career a step forward, perhaps towards the big time, or is just an excuse for having a good laugh in public. My own experience of participation was that the whole thing was ultimately assiduously and insidiously rigged, so it's the best hyped act that wins.

I'm pleased to say that this wasn't the case with the Out West competition as both the audience and judges were of one mind on deciding the winners - Emotion Pictures, with their own infectious brand of Latin-inspired rhythms - and they won by a mile. The choice of Mr Smith's 21st Century etc as runners-up was both honest and brave as their avant-garde accapella was performed faultlessly.

An honorary mention too should go to The Builders who have mastered the Television tensions inherent in New York new wave and blended it into a dancers delight. I caught them the following night at the Green Rooms and they were even better then. The Controls evoked memories of the metallic butchery of Discipline seen at the Granary a couple of months earlier, while The Rimshots will be best suited to the poseurs cabaret of the Venue.

So a big plus to the organisers who ran things smoothly in spite of last-minute equipment availability hassles and gave the assembled multitudes a value for money night out.

FOLK HOUSE: Maximum Joy/Scream and Dance/Animal Magic

Agh:art: a new hybrid is born out of attempted cultural bridge-building constructed from anything that can be beaten, shaken or blown. All God's chillun go afro! be they ransomed cutie fellas or ary(an) women from upp in the skies. A jackdaw flew over Scream and Dance as suitably equipped they did just that. The voices/drums chants worked well, especially 'Crow' and the Gate-way finale.

They were a breath of fresh air when set against their stage predecessors, the two guitars, bass and drums of Animal Magic. They flaunted turgid Gang of Four/PIL bombast at its most sickening when mixed with stench of the burning incense from the stage. There was one number (title mumbled inaudibly) where the music was allowed some breathing space and a glimmer of potential shone through, but otherwise the power and feeling sought were out of the bands scope.

Maximum Joy started with all the subtlety of a sprawling drunk. They scratched, belched and farted to no good effect at first, but then they sussed the source of irritation and got the rhythms fusing. Tony's sax and trumpet established its terrain and sparks flew. But after half an hour of the set proceedings were interrupted by a 'friend in blue', there in response to complaints about the volume from near-by high-rise residents.

After (unkept) promises to turn down off went the electricity, but this proved to be the turning point as drums and horns continued playing acoustically, three of the players dancing into the crowd like Pied Pipers. All inhibitions had evaporated and everywhere was a mass of writhing bodies, joyful and carefree. The power came on again after further bargaining but the most important energy was between audience and performers. We had been set loose.

SHOES FOR INDUSTRY

The second assignment for my newly purchased "interviews" cassette recorder. A long walk up to the leafy avenues in Clifton and entry into a palatial pad, but at this point any connection with normality ends. I was in this situation thanks to a chance meeting with this ordinary enough chap at the Granary the night before, he said something about playing for a group called Shoes for Industry, so an interview was arranged. Little did I know that I'd acceded to deal with a collection of the looniest individuals that any aspiring journalist is ever likely to come across. Discussion of musical/lyrical content, influences, favourite cafes and all the usual stand-bys were the signal for loud guffaws, so pre-planned questioning was out.

More important topics were what constituted "the Elaine Page mould", the Club Sandwich Incident and, perhaps understandably, shoes. These were remarked upon when Paul Davis (vocals, guitar and sax) commented on how his preferences had influenced the course of his career, and how my choice would adversely affect my own. Following the E.M Forster principle of "there is only one god but God" there is a pair of shoes which best reflects the individual spirit and will be a crucial aid to life-chances. Forget gurus, enlightenment is at your feet!

The greatest show of sartorial unity was the sanyassin-like all-red garb of John Schofield (drums/syndrum), never off-duty like the others, although Andy (Boot) Leighton (Guitar) retains his 'professional' Doc Martens. They come in useful for his work as Administrator for the Crystal Theatre, and were also handy in the past when he edited the re-born International Times. Funnily enough I'd called round to his flat in London a few years back to discuss the possibility of being a regional correspondent, but inevitably he was 'nt in. Another coincidence was that the recent SFI mini-tour of Holland and Germany was arranged by the same agent my own band were planning on using. Apart from hassles at the last gig in Rotterdam the tour was a success and the lads found the identity/fashion confusion of some of the German audiences most

intriguing. For John the punks there were just 'hippies with extremely radical hair-cuts.'

According to Andy SFI have now entered a crucial phase now that the individual members can now play their instruments properly!

"We've now got to the stage after two years together that we can play a bit. When we first started the emphasis 'live' was on the visual, to disguise the fact that we couldn't play - essentially we were trading on the weirdo side. It was impressive in that context, but it meant we were a bit jerky on record."

Their debut 'Talk like a Whelk' l.p goes a long way to contradicting that belief, and its certainly an admission which is invalid now. I listened to three new tracks recorded recently at Crescent Studio and they constitute a marked progression on earlier structures and material. In particular 'Trousers' has a definite 12" disco potential, the song building with a nice blend of synthesisers and percussion, while 'Luxury' provides a menacing wall-of-sound backdrop to icy Davis lyrics. It was an unsettling experience as on the T.V screen at the same time was a flow slow motion film of the birth of a nuclear fire-ball, and it resembled a human brain.

After ritualistic incantations of Allen be Praised the symbolic squad of Turkish hit-men manifested itself in the shape and sound of Paul urging swift movement to the pub. Escape from their seminary was now possible, but on the way home I realised I'd left the recorder lead in Paul's car so (oh no!) I will have to call again at Andy's flat.



The music available now must be nectar for the inhabitants of the dance-floor; the waving wailing souls who - one, two three, let their bodies shake. Coming at them in all shapes and sizes are tropical tangos, hustling into everyday language and movement, and totally irresistible save to those who retain a stiff upper lip, and are limp everywhere else! You'll find plenty of that sad species in the bourgeois splendour of Cheltenham Spa,

but also surprisingly that's where the belly-busting Pigbag were born.

Opposite the Grade-zero Odeon cinema is Driftin' Records and their basement provided the practice room used by Chippy Carpenter, James Johnstone, Chris Leigh and his friend from Birmingham Roger Freeman during the latter half of last year. They needed a bass player and Chris contacted Simon Underwood

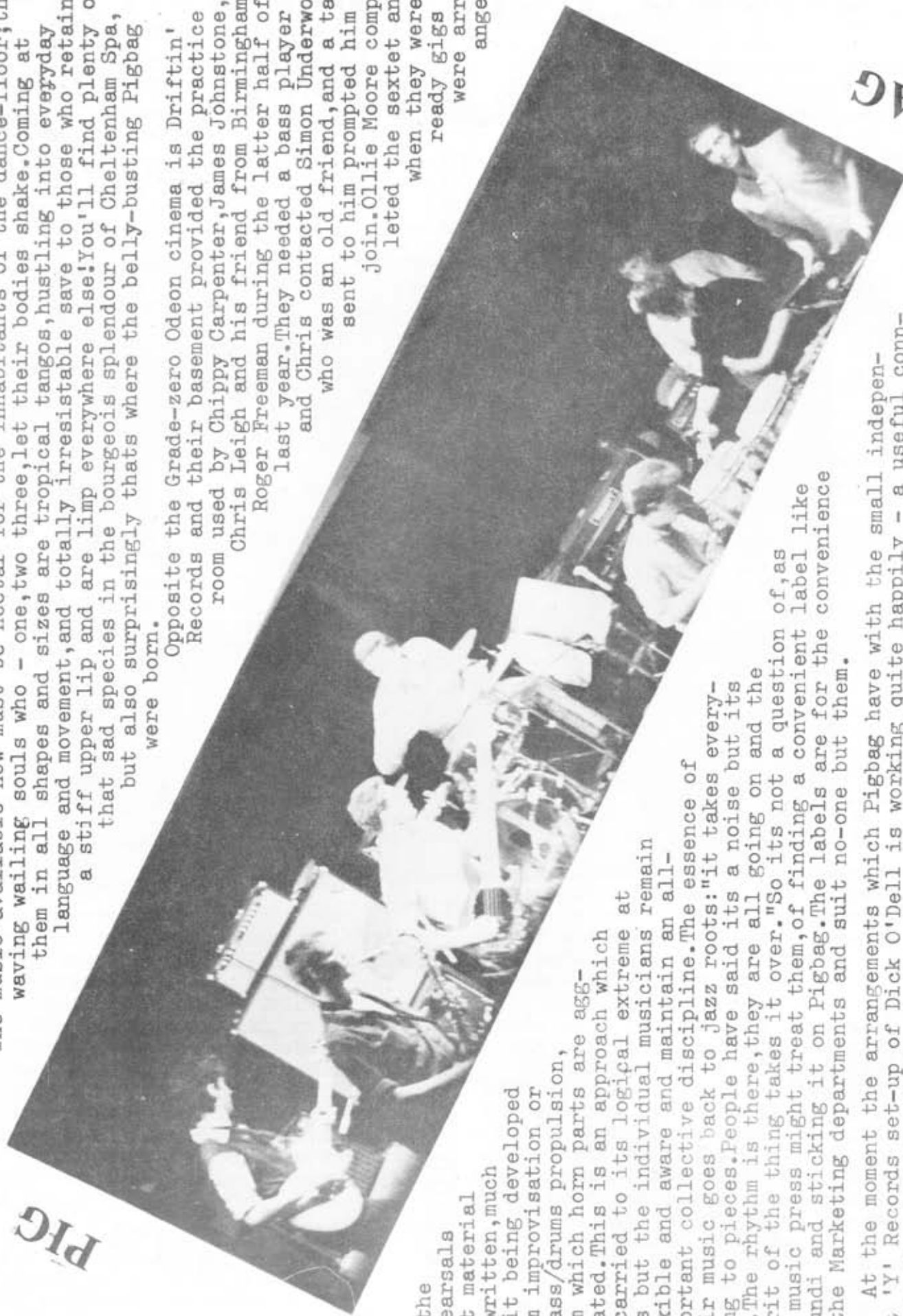
who was an old friend, and a tape sent to him prompted him to join. Ollie Moore completed the sextet and when they were

ready gigs were arranged.

Its rehearsals in the that material is written, much of it being developed from improvisation or a bass/drums propulsion, from which horn parts are aggregated. This is an approach which is carried to its logical extreme at gigs but the individual musicians remain flexible and aware and maintain an all-important collective discipline. The essence of their music goes back to jazz roots: "it takes everything to pieces. People have said it's a noise but it's not. The rhythm is there, they are all going on and the spirit of the thing takes it over." So it's not a question of, as the music press might treat them, of finding a convenient label like Burundi and sticking it on Pigbag. The labels are for the convenience of the Marketing departments and suit no-one but them.

At the moment the arrangements which Pigbag have with the small independent 'Y' Records set-up of Dick O'Dell is working quite happily - a useful connection as a result of Simon's Pop Group period, which he now regards as something of the past which needs no further discussion. They recorded the single before Chris left for travels off to exotic climes, and have been astonished at its success, sales now well

PIG



BAG

HA HA

STOP PRESS:Last minute gig of interest.

TRINITY HALL:Josef K/The Builders

The mad river flows on a warm Sunday summer night and the only fun in town was at Bristol's very own answer to the Paradiso in Amsterdam.Goddammit and once again I end up at a gig where The Builders are playing,and with each viewing they grow in my estimation.Strengths and weaknesses become more apparent as they try to win over the seated-at-table mass,and with some success.With more vocal and stage presence they may break on through yet.

Josef K constitute part of a trinity of their own - the journey round the Horne,a bi-focal burp.They evince entry into the pathways to our hearts - mainly by two routes - alternating between scritch-scratch Delta 5 lumbars,or anchored ballads.Its on the latter that Paul Haig shines,but at the same time swims perilously close to Echo beaches:unintentionally I hope.Thats a comment prompted also by having heard 'Rescue' three times this afternoon so its prejudiced,but its a dis-tracting feeling:kinda funny.

Josef K provide plenty of jingle-jangle for the evenings,and a whole lysergic loop but in the end it does'nt seem to be going anywhere.Send me a postcard when you reach your intended destination lads.

over the twenty thousand mark and rising.The 'deal' they have raises no monumental contractual hassles,the only pieces of paper being signed was a distribution deal with Rough Trade.Dick is in the process of organising a set of dates in Europe,concentrating on Holland and Germany,which is hoped will take place in September or October.'Y' have also taken Maxim Joy under their wing and a single from them should be out at some time over the summer.

Apart from gigs Pigbag have made audience contact as a result of the session they did on Radio One for Richard Skinner - yea he of the unmoving upper lip and Sheena Easton suitor.Apparently the session was the first to be recorded in a swank new 24-track studio the Beeb had installed,computerised an' all,and the engineers were very uncertain how it all worked.But the swinging six were undaunted:they knocked off the required tracks,even composing one of them in the studio.They had the offer of a Peel session but declined on the grounds that it would be an unnecessary duplication of time and effort.

Further recording will be on them soon as there is the release of two new singles envisaged.One will be a 7",with two cuts,the other will be a 12" which will have three cuts,one of them being an extended work-out full of dance-floor delights.

At the moment the future looks very promising although the band are very conscious of some of the pitfalls that await them,as the moguls outside start showing some interest and the pressures are starting to build up.They have no grand illusions of being household names,and nor do they want to be,but the feeling is one of quiet confidence:

"We think we could do pretty well,but its all a matter of how you take it.There's so much shit in the music business and once you get to the stage where you could make a lot of money then you get problems with the people you work with.Problems can come more out into the open,you get tensions and start fighting each other.That can break down a band and you could crack up as individuals.We supported the Gang of Four once and seeing what was going on between them made us think a lot."



For the record Pigbag are:
Simon Underwood:basses and violin
"Chippy"Carpenter:drums
Ollie Moore:tenor sax/percussion
James Johnstone:alto sax,guitar and percussion
Roger Freeman:congas,timbales,organ and trombone
Chris Leigh:trumpet/percussion

WHITE
LIGHT

* Searching for my main-line
* when the smack begins to flow
* thank god that I'm good as dead
* I'll be your mirror reflect
* Beginning to see the light

The Velvet Underground were about extremism: the soft elitist luxury of velvet contrasting with the hard subversive deprivation of underground. This contradiction is central to their music, which focuses on the turned on world of drugs and sex. Its function is the negation of socialised hive-consciousness and the resurrection of the Body/Mind:

BLACK
DEATH

ANGELS
SONG

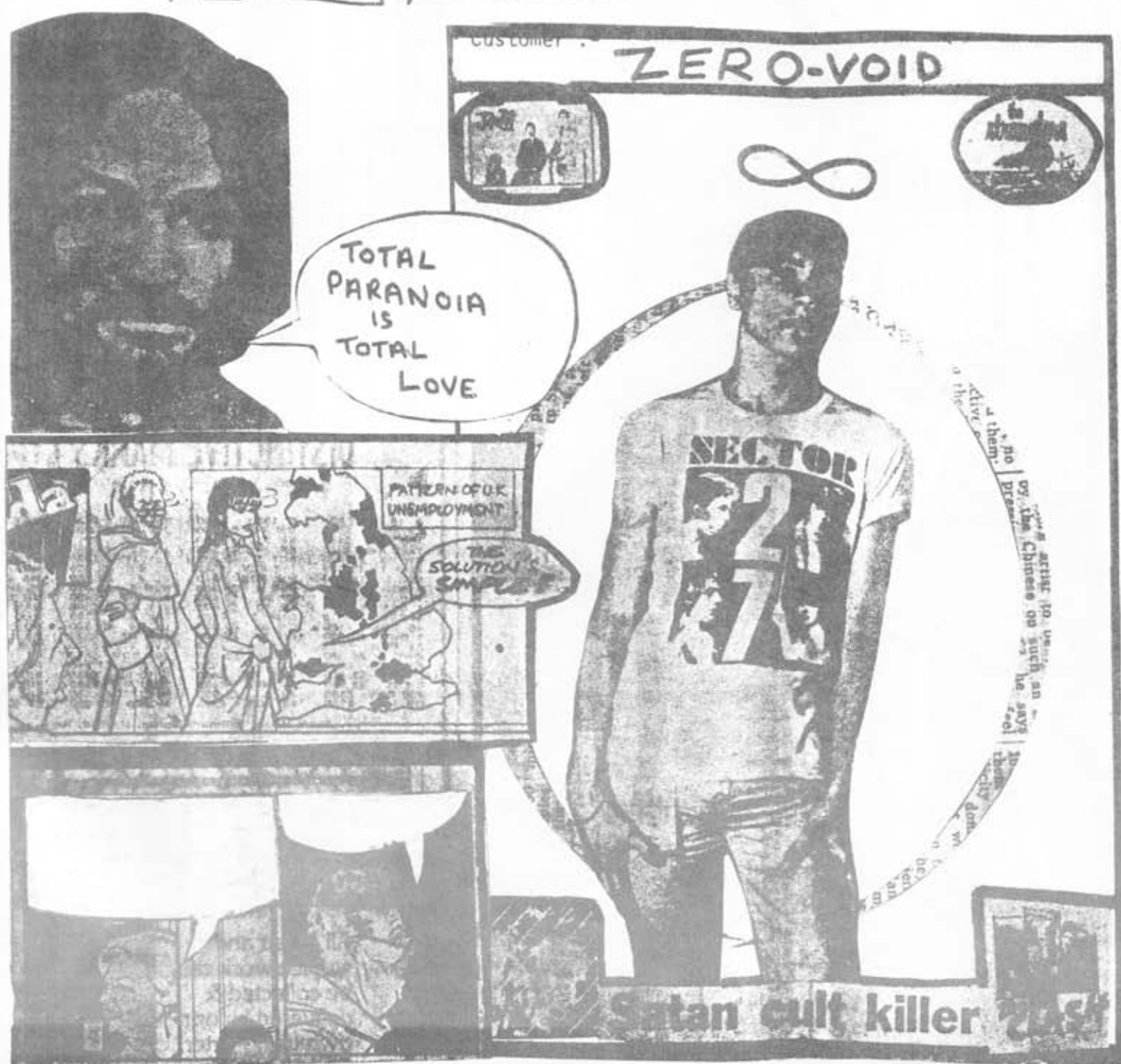


KUNDALINI
SERPENT



NEGATIVE
FEED-BACK

The intensity of the drug rush and orgasm are right there in the Velvets music, but the vocals are flat, the mood detached and bored. Violence erupts in the dischordant rhythms of 'European Son', but the only escape is the void of heroin addiction. Ultimately the sounds of the VU are an inverted image of a blighted and alienated landscape.



MYSTERY GUESTS

...made mention of a curious dream; singers burst into flames, an imaginary audience yellowed its gums with peculiar drugs, but no wait!, it was before that; take a deep lungful and look. September 1979 at the then very popular and fashionable Paddock venue near Northampton, an oddly dressed Radio announcer presided over a non-stop circus of jabbering salesman, jazz ghosts, jarring melodies and jokes.

Care for
cigarette? Would you smoke
your best friend?

The perfect start
to a shaky reputation,

that has gradually bristled to infamy with
the Guests activities throughout 1980. The long gaunt glamour mask of Titus
Aaron has become a figurehead for their own peculiar brand of musical theatre,
which is so far removed from conventional rock and roll media that audiences
have found it difficult to approach.

'We found it very difficult to approach'

said one baffled member of the audience at West Hampstead's Moonlight Club,
'especially with the barbed wire surrounding the stage. We could'nt get anywhere
near.'

With tactics such as masquerading as other bands on the same bill, advertising hoax concerts, and releasing fake
publicity, the Mystery Guests obviously come in for a good deal of criticism.

'Yes', sighed smokeswoman Betty Wayne, toying with a white throat.

The Guests are now in their third incarnation, one of which has just bred their second vinyl sacrifice, a Hollywood
gangland epic called 'The Sparrow' that ate New York' copies of which contain a free gift that could change your life
(apparently) as a surprise item.

Scene cuts to a small discotheque, low-lit, subterranean, and buzzing with adolescent excitement, where six spangle-
suited players have unexpectedly pumping out a strange, compelling, but slightly eerie dance tune in the darkness.
Have you worked it out yet? Just a lot of Bad Mythology.

Rough Trade are probably one of the leading proponents of what I'd dub 'anti-mood music'; that is, its of such a nature that I'm never quite sure when's the time to listen to it. I have records which match up to the way I may feel at a given moment, and are suitable for certain situations as well. As a result with many of the labels bands it merits a special effort and concentration when listening in order to appreciate the complexity in the music. The degrees of 'difficulty' inherent in the labels product is typified by the Raincoats on one co-ordinate, and Red Crayola on another.

'Odyshape' is The Raincoats second L.P, which has been a long time coming - a year in fact - mainly due to the perennial personnel hassles, resulting from the departure of drummer Ingrid Weiss. She in fact does play on three of the tracks, notably 'Shouting out Loud' and 'Odyshape', both songs being highlights of the record. The former has a Slittish feel with its ringing guitar and splashing drums, but with a change in gear when Vicky's corruscating violin

enters. The Raincoats move into psychedelic Islam! quite delicious, and the whole record reminds me of a kind of new wave Incredible String Band, for they too took the sounds of the Celts, Africa and the Far East. The emphasis is on retaining an overall group feel, and the choice of supporting musicians to the core trio of Ana, Gina and Vicky is impeccable. A special mention should be made for Georgies Born's cello on the kabuki reggae 'Dancing in my Head', and the elastic drumming of Charles Hayward

Looking at the lyrics on the back of the cover of 'Kangaroo' you could be excused for lapsing into a Julie Burchill-style harangue against the 'Marx and Muesli Set', so commonly found in the households which buy Rough Trade records perhaps? That aside Red Crayola's aim is to urge us to 'forget the contradictions of the present and contemplate what you cannot help feeling'. Using Art and Language (in its organisational and substantive forms) their search for 'the reflection of contingency' brings to mind the fine work of the late-lamented Henry Cow, and happily as the record reveals, something of the humour of Carla Bley.

There are many treasures to be found on this intriguing and immensely enjoyable record: so explore.

Thats an important element here as similar projects are often heavy-handed and ultimately tedious. So you can appreciate the irony of exhibitions of prisoners art being subsidised by multi-nationals, the Leninist distortion of language whereby a defeat becomes a 'phase', and best of all that Jackson Pollock was'nt killed by the narrow mindedness of the Art world but by his missing a bend and driving into a tree!

There are several other social/political points scored, but the songs represent convulsions of various sorts - they are not the convulsions of the performers.



religious overdose



Tapes

UK

(takes the chill off the sheets»tea in bed) Cinema product 002 various

9 egerton grove Chorley

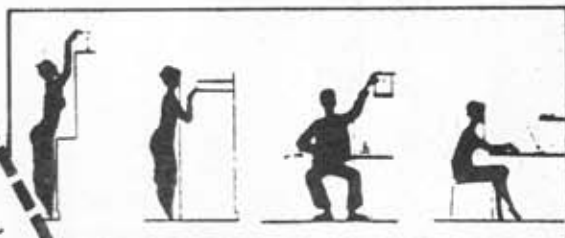
(another crack in the void) alternative capitalists 007 various

14 suffolk close wigston Leicester

AUSTRALIA

(fire on boat) Terse Tapes various

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