

THE V FILES

Issue 20

news..views..reviews..interviews..and other stuff



the queer indie zine for the queer indie scene

We Are Two!

The V Files

Number 20

Mmmm..Cake!

Neil Ward

Going The Distance

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Phil Brooke, Sarit Michaeli,
Rick Gordon, Susan Curtis,
Mel Bird, Trevor Gordon,
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Hang The Blessed DJs!

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Sleeping.

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"More Clamour Than Glamour!"

Cor Blimey. Two whole years and still here. We made it through the opening of Popstarz, the rise of Duckie, the fall of Roxy Motel (eek, why did I bring that up?), and a near lawsuit. We've played host to some brilliant live bands and some we'd rather forget. We've also churned out 20 fanzines and opened a web site. Oh...and we played a few records as well.

In this Big, Bouncy, Bursting, Birthday, Bonanza issue, we talk to the charming men behind Handsome Devil, look at the ever changin' Comet Gain and get the 'slowdown' on Speedurchin.

Anil reports on the Lesbian and Gay Film Fest, and Sarit checks out the dykes of Holland, and you can also check out the 100 songs which shaped Club V (according to Mel, anyway). On our new Retro Page, P.A.F. looks at the seminal punk band, X and there's much more besides and NO garden shed and book-club leaflets either. Hurray, and welcome to year 3!....*Neilix*

Calling bass players

IF YOU can play bass guitar, and think you can handle the power jazz chords of Nervefeeder, they are on the lookout for a new bassist. Singer/guitarist Lin Munro says she looking for a queer or queer-friendly man or woman who is prepared to be committed. The band are very close to getting signed, and their current bass player wants to leave amicably before things get serious. For

those of you who didn't see Nervefeeder when they played Club V, Lin describes them as being along the lines of Skunk Anansie or Placebo. Contact the V PO Box if you're interested, marking your envelope "Nervefeeder" (what else?).

Speed freaks

NOW THEY'VE sorted out their name, punk boys Speedurchin will be our headline band on May 3rd. You may remember their previous set at Club V. They'll be ramraiding the stage at 10.20.

[See Speedurchin profile later]

Go Golem!

ALSO ON the 3rd we'll be having the launch party for the new Nighnurse single, "Golem". The whole shebang will start at 9pm, and there will be some special surprise guests and other stuff that even *we* don't know about. Ellyot is being a bit mysterious. Everyone is welcome, but get here early, or the Golem will jump outta the closet and getcha!

[See more Nighnurse trivia later]

Try Chi

Scottish-based trio Chi will be headlining Club V's 17th May night and previewing their new single "Haywire"/"Buttercup". The band used to be called Chicane until they realised that there were about 3,000 other bands with that name (notably those namby pamby dance merchants). The new Chi record is a split single (sharing vinyl with Belfast's Griswold) and is due for release on 12th May. Chi are good mates with The Jennifers, who may be persuaded to support them on the 17th. We just need to twist Michael's arm a little...

Davey rock it!

AT THE end of May, the 31st to be exact, the phenomenal Davey will be crammed on the V stage. Following support slots with The Wannadies, Bawl, Number One Cup and Sleeper, and an acclaimed appearance at Reading, this five-piece are due to release their first single "Save

Your Smiles"/"I'd Like To Know" on 12th May, by which time they'll be wildly famous.

First formed in prototype when singer/songwriter Kirsten was only 13, Davey now boast four women and a "male member", the lovely Luke. They're playing the Borderline on 23rd April if you fancy checking them out.

In support, Wilby will be warming things up with some gentle Indie pop. Rosie Wilby, after whom the band is cleverly named, has been described as having the voice of Kate Bush and the lyrical style of Jarvis Cocker. Thank goodness it's not the other way round.

Fever pitch!



DJ MEL got dragged into the quiz at Duckie's recent football night. Someone (um, who *could* it have been?) let slip to the Duckie crew that he liked that silly game of two halves. He didn't win though, despite some good head...er, I mean heading skills. The lad did good. Give him a Mexican wave.

Mouthfull cut it

MOUTHFULL WILL begin cutting their debut album this week at Brixton's Fuzzbox Studios. The plan is to record 10 songs including some new stuff, and get it out by the summer. Just in time for Pride!.

Web hedz

IF YOU read the V interview with former Tongue**man** bass player Andy

Fenby in Issue 13, you might be interested in a spanking new website devoted to the seminal queercore duo. It can be found at:

<http://www.wystan.demon.co.uk>

"2,4,6,8, Information Superhighway"
Yes, Tom Robinson, the grand doyenne of queer pop, also has an official web site at:

<http://www.tomrobinson.com>

And there's more! The lovely Duckie crew have just launched their web site at:

<http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~duckie>

Also, a reminder that Joe Keith has given up sleeping, eating and breathing to bring you web sites for Mouthfull, Kidnapper and Nightnurse. These can be found at

<http://www.ftech.net/~joekeith/mf1.htm>

<http://www.ftech.net/~joekeith/kidnapper.html>

<http://www.ftech.net/~joekeith/nightnurse.html>

SHIT! I guess with all this activity on the information superhighway it's time we relaunched 'The V Files' on the Internet. More about that next month.

June is busting out...

IT'S WAY ahead, but we've lined up The Mittens for the 14th June and The Controls for the 28th.

The Mittens played a recent support slot here, and made such a lasting impression, that we've invited them back for a headline slot.

The Controls used to be called Flex, and played their debut gig at Club V. They've come on in leaps and bounds since then, aided and abetted by new bass player Veronique (who I keep calling Dominique...it's my S&M training).

Make sure you see both these bands, and that's an order!

[check out the live review of The Mittens later]

Posters are (not) go

PETER KNIGHT has worked like a slave in irons to produce our hot new pin-up posters, and the effect is unbelievably stunning. We hope you'll agree that they look much better in the Club V environment than on your bedroom wall. In other words; LAY OFF 'EM YOU THIEVING GITS!!!!

The Jackson jive

LUSCIOUS JACKSON, currently fucking, sorry, *funking* their way up the charts with the slinky "Naked Eye", recently revealed their innermost secrets to the NME. Drummer Kate Schellenbach said she wanted to pick her favourite Spice Girl. Mate Gaby said: 'You like the elegant one. You told me! I like the dysfunctional one and the bulimic one.' 'Well I like the one who's in the closet,' replies Kate.

Mail man

Talking of the music press, a V diehard, Trevor, had a letter printed in the same issue of the NME (19th April issue). He accused them of overlooking the burgeoning gay indie scene, and gave mentions to Club V, Duckie and Popstarz. Page editor Mark Sutherland replied:

"Call me old-fashioned, but discovering that some gay people prefer indie music to Hi-NRG/techno doesn't really qualify as news does it? After all, plenty of straight people prefer Hi-NRG/techno to indie music and we don't report on that either."

Well, call me petty, but straight people don't get stereotyped when it comes to their music tastes. On the other hand, there are still plenty of people around who think 'gay=disco'.

Letters

- We had a very nice letter from Readers' Wife Chelsea Kelsey, and an e-mail from Miss Amy Lamé, thanking us for the Duckie interview in our last issue. Chelsea is very pleased we're backing Blur again, and confesses to

having a penchant for Elvis (the King not the Costello).

- Michael from The Jennifers has a special request. He's a huge fan of actor Ross Kemp (aka Grant Mitchell) and he's desperate to get his hands on a recent issue of 'Attitude' which featured La Kemp on the cover. There are no back issues available, so if you have one lying around in your loo, or under your mattress, and you can bear to part with it, can we have it? You can either send it to our PO Box or bring it to the club.

[See Trevor's review of The Jennifers' recent Hope & Anchor gig later]

Mark Partridge writes..

"Dear V

I very much enjoyed reading Susan Curtis' article in 'The V Files' (Issue 19). Like herself, I travelled to San Francisco in November of last year and stayed with friends in The Lower Haight. Also, like her I'm serious about moving there (or back there really as I come from the Bay Area originally). I would really like to write/contact her to exchange information and contacts. Perhaps you could assist? I have this embarrassing feeling that I've already met her as I'm a 'Club V' regular (and remember the pre-'Popstarz' 'Vaseline' - R.I.P. -). Friends will testify that my memory for names and faces is terrible...even when I'm sober.

Anyone who has been to San Fran. will know that it is a very liberal and (mostly) friendly place, even if the mainstream gay scene is stuck in the Seventies. There are some really cool dykes and fags out there however and if you pass on any information re the alternative queer scene I would be eternally grateful."

Well Mark, Susan Curtis thinks she knows you too, so it should be pretty easy to put you in touch. And if anyone else wants information for their impending emigration, or just for a holiday trip, let us know. There's bound to be somebody in the V crowd who knows something, or someone. Who needs Judith Chalmers?
Neil V

Outings

April

23

- Davey - Borderline

24

- Salad/Elcka/Fomula One - Dingwalls
- The Mittens - Bull & Gate
- Warm Jets - Garage

25

- Sussed - Garage
- Gold Blade/Gretsch Hofner - The Venue

26

- David Devant/POSH - Garage

29

- Kidnapper - Upstairs at Garage
- Cranes - London Union Chapel

30

- Symposium/Cable/Tim Wheeler - Dingwalls
- Bis/Cornershop/Drugstore et al - Garage

May

1

- My Life Story - Astoria
- 18 Wheeler et al - The Garage

2

- Jolt/Dream City Film Club - Underworld
- The Levellers - Brixton Academy

3

- Speedurchin/Nightnurse - Club V

8

- Bennett/Garageland/Deadstar - Astoria

12

- Geneva - Electric Ballroom

14

- Supergrass - Brixton Academy

15

- Subcircus - Electric Ballroom

17

- Chi - Club V

19/20

- Nick Cave - Albert Hall

23

- Supernaturals/Grass-Show - ULU

News extra!

Nightnurse

NIGHTNURSE ARE celebrating the release of their début single, "Golem" at Club V on May 3rd. The band will play a short set in what Ellyot promises will be a special line up. It's so secret even we don't know what's going on. May 3rd will hopefully also be the first Club V under a non-Tory government so it's a double reason to celebrate. Arrive early to catch Nightnurse, and Speedurchin, who are headlining.

Nightnurse were recently featured in the 'On' pages of the *NME*, and shot a video for "Golem", but not without incident. Apparently, when the video was filmed at The Leisure Lounge, somebody (an extra from the audience) nicked the massive Popstarz three-dimensional Adidas-logo mobile, which is made of polystyrene. Unlike our home made banners and photocopied posters, this cost hundreds of pounds, and the Popstarz crew were furious. So if, by any chance, any Club V regulars were involved, they are kindly requested to return it.

Also on the Nightnurse front, they recently played a gig at the Borderline supporting Smaller, Digsy's band. (the bands are both signed to Better Records) Digsy's mate Noel Gallagher was at the gig but, to Nightnurse's relief, said that they are not his cup of tea.
Sarit V

Ben, Ellyot, Charlotte and Alex



V TOP 13



1. **HIT**
2. **SONG 2**
3. **RICHARD III**
4. **BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS**
5. **NAKED EYE**
6. **CAKE**
7. **GOLEM**
8. **KOWALSKI**
9. **NORTH COUNTRY BOY**
10. **THE NEW POLLUTION**
11. **THE SAINT**
12. **LAZY**
13. **AROUND THE WORLD**

Wannadies

Blur

Supergrass

Chemical Brothers

Luscious Jackson

Kidnapper

Nightnurse

Primal Scream

Charlatans

Beck

Orbital

Suede

Daft Punk

Others:

BRUISE PRISTINE Placebo

WHAT IS FRUIT? Fruit

SPIN SPIN SUGAR Sneaker Pimps

INSINUATION Folk Implosion

ON A TUESDAY Linoleum

U16 GIRLS Travis

GINGER David Devant and His Spirit Wife

RADIATION VIBE Fountains of Wayne

THE DISTANCE Cake

EVERYBODY THINKS...Bis

NIGHTLIFE Kenickie

TAXLOSS Mansun

SHADY LANE Pavement

A TO Z AND BACK AGAIN Magoo

OH MY HEARTLESS Hopper

DIAMOND DEW Gorky's Zygotic Mynci

SUSAN'S HOUSE Eels

YOU SHOWED ME Lightning Seeds

FREAK Silverchair

DROP DEAD GORGEOUS Republica

LET ME HEAR YOU SAY YES!

to Comet Gain

The newly revamped Comet Gain are headlining the Club 2nd Birthday Bash on April 19th. Their politics are sound; their sound is movin' on up; they are, in short, the young soul hooligans of indie. And woe betide anyone who mentions Dexy's Midnight Runners!!

UNTIL VERY recently, Comet Gain were a band with a split personality. After an album and several singles, they started pulling in different directions. They'd always been eclectic, but while David Christian wanted to retain the political content and punky edges, the other four members were aching to be a pop band, pure and simple. After some soul searching, the aforementioned four left to form a band named after a French bike (mmm), and David (one of the band's two singers and its main songwriter) remained to reinvent Comet Gain. "They didn't want to be a political band," he tells me, "but for me it's always been part of the package; an attitude or stance that would be left-wing, whether it was actually in the content of the songs, or just on the sleeve notes. I felt it was important."

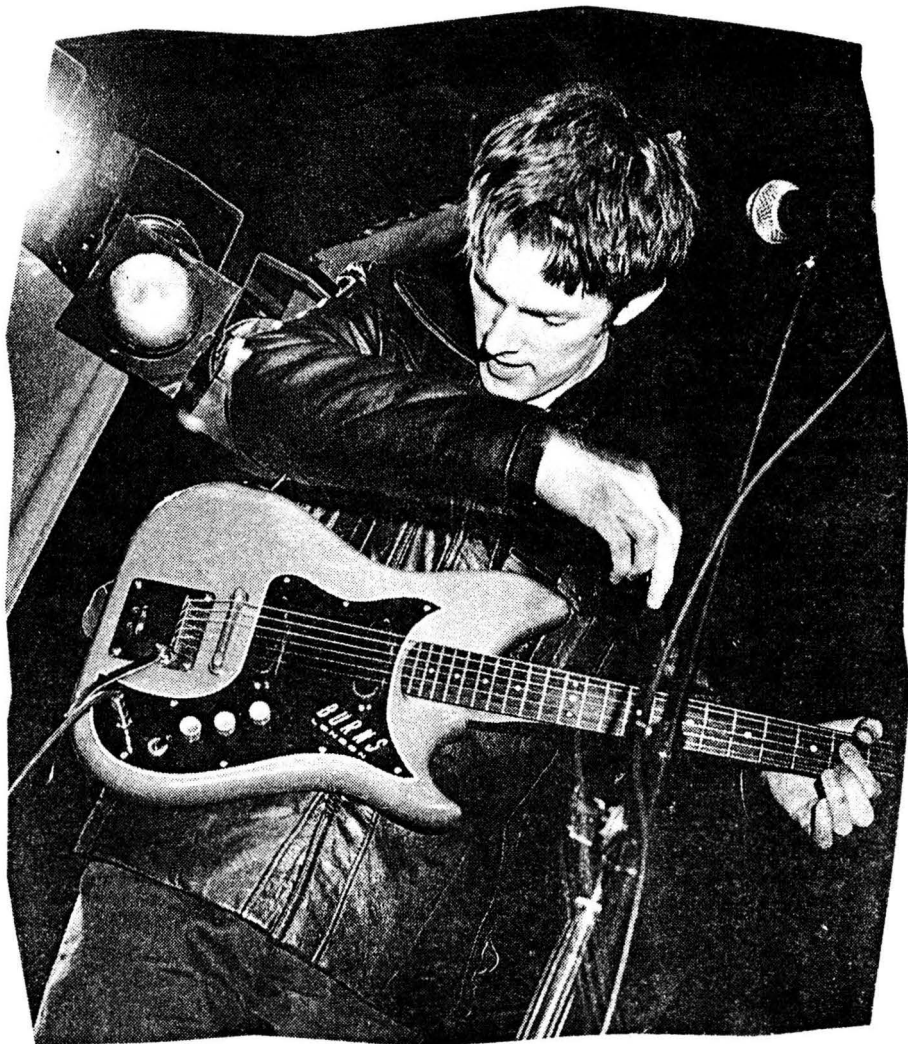
Last year's four-track E.P. "Say Yes! To International Socialism" was an example of this political bent. Its melodic blend of northern soul and punchy pop was a welcome antidote to what David describes as "a conveyor belt of bands who all sounded the same." In 1995, the band's album, "Casino Classics", had been released into the toothless jaws of Britpop, and the music press had tried, unsuccessfully, to slot it into a 'New Mod' pigeonhole. Back then they seemed happy to be set apart from the mainstream, but, in truth, this probably triggered the doubts which led to this year's split.

With the former members now departed, David wasted no time in calling up some mates who were, he confides, "probably meant to be in the band in the first place". Guitarist, Jon Slade, for example, had been unavailable because he was already part of seminal agit-popsters Huggy Bear. For various reasons Darren, Rachel and Blair (no relation), the other new members, were also not involved in the original line up, but should have been. It seems that this is not so much a new band, as David's 'fantasy' Comet Gain.

For those of you who knew them before the upheaval, the essence of the 'Gain is still there, as are many of the songs, and David is enthusiastic about the new sound: "We're very confident now. I've never felt better about the band than I do at the moment," he says. "There's more energy, more punk rock, and we're playing lots of songs that we never did with the old line up, because the others didn't like them."

The band recently returned from the States, where they played at the South By Southwest festival. *Melody Maker* gave an excellent, sympathetic review of one gig, in Texas, despite the fact that there were horrendous problems with the sound. "That was our worst one," says David. But, after a few, early disasters like that, things started falling into place. "At first the others were a bit unsure of themselves," he continues, "but our last two shows were the best, and we all felt really positive about it. It was brilliant."

Comet Gain were due to record a session for Robert Elms' lunch-time show on GLR, on the Friday before their appearance at Club V. After that they will be spending some time working on new material, and doubtless celebrating a Labour victory in the Election. New Labour. New Comet Gain. *Neil V*



David, Comet Gain

The People vs Larry Flynt

MAKE ME real, fuck you indeed. Rock cliché extraordinaire and heroine to more than several of us, Miss Courtney Love, is starring in *The People vs Larry Flynt*. Is this the shot at superstardom credibility that Courtney has been lurching toward all her life? Definitely yes and no. Because, though Love acts up a tornado as a stripper/model/bisexual junkie (not exactly a stretch) the film is a mixed bag, full of surprises and candy that's already been licked by somebody else.

The publicity for the film would have you believe it is a love/divorce story. I mean with a 'vs' in the title and Courtney Love laughing and jumping on Woody Harrelson in all the photos, this could be the perfect date movie. But don't be fooled - the film dishes out scandalous stuff - lesbian orgies (ooo!), mainlining painkillers (aah!), and courtroom scenes with Woody Harrelson in a diaper (umm...)

The film starts in Cincinnati, Ohio in the early 70s, where the Flynt brothers, Larry and Jimbo, are running a run-down strip joint and watching their profits fall. Larry takes a shine to a new stripper, Althea (Love) who immediately works her way into his personal and business life (not exactly a stretch either). In order to promote the club, the Flynts start up a girlie magazine whose full-frontal, 'labia and all' approach to photography makes it a huge hit with the public and a huge headache for lawyers and judges across the U.S.

Larry and Althea's life is no bed of roses, for, as the Flynt publishing empire continues to grow, consistent bouts with the law, drugs, and an assassination attempt turn Larry into a paralysed neurotic and Althea into an HIV+ punk junkie.

The casting is absolutely impeccable. Woody Harrelson is perfect as the lovable sleaze-merchant, keeping his dignity even with bad hair. Edward Norton, who plays

Flynt's lawyer is undoubtedly the cutest actor in a while. Though his part is a bit one-dimensional, he has loads of great scene-stealing moments, and one can understand why he's lined up to shoot something like 70 films this year.

Courtney Love, however, is astonishing as Althea, and I'm not just saying that to gush. Her whole approach to acting is what most actors spend their entire careers trying to achieve - instead of 'acting', she just 'is'. Perhaps it's more than a coincidence that

Love is so terrific in the role, because her life is similar to Althea's reality; she has been half of an intense showbiz couple, she has done loads of drugs, she slumped it in her early days. It is really heartbreaking to watch Love's character fall apart in front of you. I cannot think of another actress who could play Althea's tragic existence as aggressively and brutally as Love does. It will be interesting to see what roles she takes on next. I just hope her magnetic

performance has not been a one-off.

Performances aside, *TPVLF* is far from perfect. The story is edited together so quickly that I couldn't help but feel cheated out of some substance. The screenwriters also wrote the terrific *Ed Wood*, and though the irony of a porn publisher becoming a lightning rod for free speech makes for an intriguing premise, any subtlety featured in their previous film turns into broad comedy here. It was frustrating to see potentially great dramatic moments sweep by to make room for choice moments from Flynt's life.

The film is worth seeing for Courtney Love's superstar turn, but be prepared to be let down by the overall outcome.

I even went to the newsagent to look at a real life copy of Flynt's *Hustler* to see what the controversy is all about, and all I can say is: Forget the book. See the movie instead.

Rick V



"When I was a teenage whore...!"
okay, forget the 'teenage' bit

films

THE 1997 LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL

Porn and corn. AIDS and AID. Bigotry and despair.

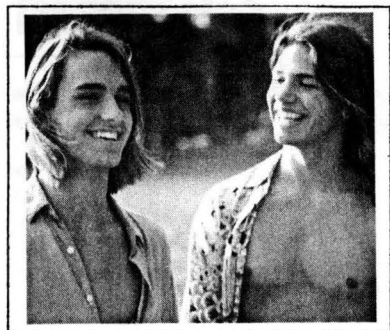
WITH HOLLYWOOD making more mainstream gay and lesbian films, gay and lesbian movie-makers are increasingly being forced into one of two directions. One is to follow the trend and make films for a wider audience, whilst the other is to delve deeper into gay and lesbian sub-culture. At this year's *Lesbian and Gay Film Festival* at the National Film Theatre, both sorts of film were on offer: there were lots of low-budget, first-time movies from up and coming directors looking for their first break in the big, bad world of movie-making; and there were also many - too many, in fact - films about porn stars, transsexuals and rent boys

Having said that, one of the best films at the festival, *Johns*, was a persuasive, sympathetic and surprisingly funny portrayal of the lives of street hustlers on Hollywood's Santa Monica Boulevard. The director, Scott Silver, asked genuine hustlers to share their experiences for \$20 and the evidence of this meticulous research was apparent on screen. Moments of humour are never far away from those of violence, but the two main characters, both called John, and played by Lukas Haas and David Arquette, try and survive by revoking the adage by which all street hustlers live: 'friendship ends where money begins'.

It's in the Water was also about friendship, but was an amiable and irony-laden comedy. The people sticking together here were gays and lesbians in a town full of bigoted conservatives (is there any other sort?). Opposition to an AIDS hospice in the town of Azalea Springs separates the inhabitants into intolerant bigots and defenders of liberty. But nothing is quite what it seems: those without gaydar are unable to spot the numerous homosexuals in their midst; whilst supposedly straight men and women have their eyes (and other bodily parts) opened.

There were other films about the relationship between queers and non-queers - an increasingly significant issue, it seems. In the comedy, *Jane Street*, laddish Brian, despite initial tolerance of his two new lesbian flatmates, reacts with horror and bewilderment when he finds out that the couple are planning to have a baby using a combination of a gay friend and a turkey baster. Clearly it is immoral and perverse for a straight man to be excluded from the sacred act of conception, so he decides to intervene. The result is left in doubt until the very last minute of the film.

Many of the films at the festival were followed by question-and-answer sessions with the director and actors. *Jane Street's* director, Charles Merzbacher, was on hand afterwards to give us his recipe for fabricating fake semen, but perhaps the most informative of the discussions was with Svend Wam, the Norwegian director of *Sebastian*.



Sebastian

He told the audience that the film, which concerns a 15-year old boy who finds himself falling in love with his straight best friend, was selected by Norway's education ministry to be shown in schools throughout the country. The festival programme noted 'in a country where such enlightenment can exist in the education system, it is hardly surprising that Sebastian's rights of passage are so comparatively painless'. But Wam pointed out that after the film was shown, he received dozens of letters from gay and lesbian teenagers who were in despair but received new hope from the film - which suggests that no matter how tolerant a country is, many gay and lesbian teenagers continue to live in despair through isolation. *Anil V*

HOLLAND

Sarit checks out the what's on offer for a queer indie grrrl in the land of dykes.

THIS PIECE should not be regarded as part of the occasional *V Files* travel features. The reason being that the conclusion I reached is: If you're going for the music, don't go! Stay in London. The main reason for my trip to The Netherlands was to meet up with my friend Lisa and not to sample the musical delights on offer, so I wasn't as disappointed as I could have been. (although that didn't stop me from moaning, naturally).

Rumour is that Amsterdam is a gay capital of international standing. This is true, to a certain extent. If you are a gay man you're pretty sorted. The Amsterdam gay scene is wide and varied and you can get accurate info. about it from *Time Out*, and the city's Gay map, given away free in lots of clubs, bars and queer shops (which are quite easy to spot as they display the consumption, sorry, Freedom flag). The trouble starts if you are a lesbian, or worse, a queer indie kid. The Dutch dyke scene is quite mythical, but in actual fact, not much has remained of its former glory.

As to music, there is no queer indie scene, not even a Popstarz equivalent. The clubbing scene is the usual mixture of House and Disco. Gabba (very fast techno) is quite big at the moment on the radio. The two main gay capps in Amsterdam are *Vive-la-vie* (quite central) and *Saarein* (women only, pool table). Both are quite relaxed and friendly but they don't offer anything exciting music-wise. The weekly women's disco (Saturday nights at COC, the gay and lesbian centre) was well attended, but not

recommended if you like anything more left-of-centre than "Mr Vain" by Culture Beat.

The straight Indie scene is much more promising. Amsterdam and The Hague have some good venues, and the record shops offer a wide selection of Indie imports. Most big British bands touring this summer will visit the Netherlands, and it's relatively easy to travel to the big music festivals around Europe. The only Dutch band I'd heard about, which was gigging during my stay (in fact, the only Dutch band I'd heard about, period), Bettie Serveert played both Amsterdam and The Hague, but I missed them. Another disappointment as their recent single, "What Friends" is brilliant, and who could resist a band whose lead singer and guitarist's name is Carol Van Dijk?

So there. Visit The Netherlands for the tulips, windmills and dykes (but mainly the ones little boys, not girls, shove their fingers in). Also for pancakes, cheese, wafers, cheap lager, your drugs of choice and generally for a good time, uninterrupted by mobile phone rings (hardly anyone has them there). But don't expect to fulfil both your taste in music and your sexuality. It's either/or. *Sarit V*

"not recommended if you like anything more left-of-centre than 'Mr Vain' by Culture Beat."

Amsterdam's Saturday night dyke disco



Don't ask!

Retro Page

X - "Los Angeles" (1980, Slash Records)

- Your Phone's Off The Hook
- Johnny Hit and Run Pauline
- Soul Kitchen
- Nausea
- Sugarlight
- Los Angeles
- Sex & Dying In High Society
- The Unheard Music
- The World's A Mess It's In My Kissx

Exene Cervenka



Talking out of harmony. You can't remember what you said. Cut it out, you feel retarded. Take the scissor, saw the head. Nausea, bloody red eyes go to nausea, bloody red eyes go to nausea, bloody red eyes go to nausea, bloody red eyes go to sleep. "Nausea"

Friends warehouse pain, a chapter of time. A thousand kids bury their parents. There's laughing outside. We're locked out of the public eye. Some smooth chords on the car radio, no hard chords on the car radio. We set the trash on fire and watch outside. "The Unheard Music"

No one is united and all things are untied. Perhaps we're boiling over inside. They've been telling lies. There are no angels, there are devils in many ways. Take it like a man. The world's a mess, it's in my kiss. "The World's A Mess It's In My Kiss"

Speak in secret alphabets, light another cigarette, learn to forget. "Soul Kitchen"

Classic early American "hardcore" punk, combining rock'n'roll and rockabilly rhythms and fierce impassioned vocals by Exene Cervenka and John Doe. Nine songs about substance abuse, nausea, sex, alienation and love.

X was one of those bands I used to love seeing play live in the days when I used to hang out at the Starwood and Whiskey a Go Go in L.A. You never knew what to expect, be it Trouble, a Mad Buzz, or just a Fucking Brilliant Performance!

X emerged from the late 70's L.A. punk scene along with Black Flag, The Circle Jerks, The Plugz, Fear, The Germs and The Go Go's (long before Belinda sold out). On certain tracks Exene is vaguely reminiscent of an early Patti Smith and her duets with John Doe are wild and wonderful affairs. They were joined by Ray Manzarek, keyboardist from the Doors on a brilliant cover of the Doors' "Soul Kitchen". This record encapsulates some of their best work and is highly recommended for those interested in learning more about early American Punk. *P.A.F. V*

SPEEDURCHIN



SPEEDURCHIN LAST graced the Club V stage about a year ago with their tight n' spikey modern punky sound. Since then the band have had a rather weird year.

They split a while ago, with members Donagh O'Leary (vocals and bass) and Jimi Bolyn (guitar and vocals) forming what was initially intended to be a new band, Daytona. New recruits Gav King (guitar) and Croatian Igor (drums) completed the line-up. After some live performances, the band were informed that there was another British band, signed to Virgin 2, with the same name. They hastily changed their monicker to Daytona 500 and played another gig, only to find out about yet another band, in the USA this time, with a very similar name! Deciding to cut their losses, they reverted to Speedurchin for their next gig. They must be the only band to perform three successive gigs under different names.

To add to these troubles, the band were unhappy with the recording of their supposed-to-have-been-released-by-now single "Long Time Down". They've just been back in to the studio to re-record it, and, fingers crossed, it'll be out some time in June on Fluffy Bunny records. It won't be their first venture into records: they have had one song on the "Snakebite City" compilation CD and have contributed five songs to a recent German compilation, "British Punk Invasion 2".

If you like your punk loud, fast and tuneless then don't miss them performing live on the Club V stage at 1015pm on May 3rd. You can even get a sneak preview when they play a 'warm up' gig (!) at The Hope And Anchor in Upper Street, Islington on Wednesday 23rd April. *Me! V*

© Shane Brownie - Duckie @ the Royal Vauxhall Tavern - 17.11.

ON THE SCENE



MAIN AROUND
Holidays of a Lifestyle.

You're nothing special "on the scene"
A stud each ear and space between
Your techno nights of empty 'E'
Your fast fuck fests and homo hells
Your coming up's and coming down's

You're nothing special "on the scene"
With tight tits tops and fuck me jeans
Your chat line wanks and sauna sleaze
Your uncut cock and Paris pecks
Your handbag house and dj decks

You're nothing special "on the scene"
With G.A.Y and Geena Gee
Your adidas, Your tired white T's
Your "freedom" flags, and charities
Your summer Pride and apathy

You're nothing special "on the scene"
On your knees on Hampstead Heath
Or mincing down Old Compton Street
Your well hung trade and straight acting
Your skin head sham and leather themes
Your Gay UK, your hierarchy

You're nothing special "on the scene"
Another club night opening
Your biased press and magazines
Your guests lists and conformity
Your victims and your tragedies

You're nothing special "on the scene"
And on the scene, or so it seems
The streets are full of partying
There's no room for community
It doesn't bring the punters in

You're nothing special "on the scene"
You're nothing special, not to me

PEANUT

100 SONGS THAT SHAPED CLUB V

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | GOLDFINGER | Ash |
| 2 | FIRESTARTER | Prodigy |
| 3 | WEAK | Skunk Anansie |
| 4 | BORN SLIPPY | Underworld |
| 5 | TIPP CITY | The Amps |
| 6 | DEVILS HAIRCUT | Beck |
| 7 | KEVIN CARTER | Manic Street Preachers |
| 8 | COMMON PEOPLE | Pulp |
| 9 | VIOLET | Hole |
| 10 | NANCY BOY | Placebo |
| 11 | TRASH | Suede |
| 12 | RACE | Tiger |
| 13 | BOOKLOVERS | Broadcast |
| 14 | BULLET WITH BUTTERFLY
WINGS | Smashing Pumpkins |
| 15 | SLIGHT RETURN | Bluetones |
| 16 | JUST | Radiohead |
| 17 | BLACK STEEL | Tricky |
| 18 | KUNG FU | Ash |
| 19 | STUPID GIRL | Garbage |
| 20 | SONG 2 | Blur |
| 21 | STEREO | Pavement |
| 22 | BREATHE | Prodigy |
| 23 | A DESIGN FOR LIFE | Manic Street Preachers |
| 24 | WIDE OPEN SPACE | Mansun |
| 25 | DRINK THE SUNSHINE | Symposium |
| 26 | ONLY HAPPY WHEN IT RAINS | Garbage |
| 27 | DOLL PARTS | Hole |
| 28 | GIRL FROM MARS | Ash |
| 29 | HIT | Wannadies |
| 30 | 1979 | Smashing Pumpkins |

31	BUDDY HOLLY	Weezer
32	TEENAGE ANGST	Placebo
33	NEW POLLUTION	Beck
34	WAKING UP	Elastica
35	ALRIGHT	Supergrass
36	BLUETONIC	Bluetones
37	KEWPIES LIKE WATERMELON	Urusei Yatsura
38	LUMP	Presidents of the USA
39	LADYKILLERS	Lush
40	YOU AND ME SONG	Wannadies
41	BEAUTIFUL ONES	Suede
42	LOVEFOOL	Cardigans
43	BASKET CASE	Green Day
44	2 KINDSA LOVE	Jon Spencer Blues Explosion
45	GODI SHOW ME MAGIC	Super Furry Animals
46	DRINK THE ELIXIR	Salad
47	AUSTRALIA	Manic Street Preachers
48	IN YOUR CAR	Kenickie
49	GREAT THINGS	Echobelly
50	QUEER	Garbage
51	THIS IS A CALL	Foo Fighters
52	SHARK	Throwing Muses
53	NOVOCAINE FOR THE SOUL	Eels
54	KANDY POP	Bis
55	HE'S ON THE PHONE	Saint Etienne
56	DAYDREAMER	Menswear
57	WONDERWALL	Oasis
58	SIX UNDERGROUND	Sneaker Pimps
59	DISCO 2000	Pulp
60	WHERE IT'S AT	Beck
61	SETTING SUN	Chemical Brothers
62	SINGLE GIRL	Lush
63	TWISTED (EVERYDAY HURTS)	Skunk Anansie
64	NOT SO MANIC NOW	Dubstar
65	DA FUNK	Daft Punk
66	CARNIVAL	Cardigans
67	LEAVE HOME	Chemical Brothers
68	ROLL WITH IT	Oasis
69	SLEEP	Marion

70	TALK TO ME	60ft Dolls
71	LAVA	Silver Sun
72	IN THE MEANTIME	Spacehog
73	FIGHTING FIT	Gene
74	SCOOPY SNACKS	Fun Lovin' Criminals
75	ON A ROPE	Rocket From The Crypt
76	SORTED FOR E'S AND WIZZ	Pulp
77	BEEBLEBUM	Blur
78	LITTLE ARITHMETIC	Deus
79	SELF ESTEEM	Offspring
80	LOSE IT	Supergrass
81	BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS	Chemical Brothers
82	ROCK STAR	Hole
83	WAKE UP BOOI	Boo Radleys
84	YES	McAlmont and Butler
85	TATTVA	Kula Shaker
86	YOU'RE ONE	Imperial Teen
87	SWEET CATATONIA	Catatonia
88	MANSIZE ROOSTER	Supergrass
89	PUNKA	Kenickie
90	BLEED	Catatonia
91	SOUR TIMES	Portishead
92	REJECT ALL AMERICAN	Bikini Kill
93	ONE TO ANOTHER	Charlatans
94	MISS DANDYS	Bandit Queen
95	NICE GUY EDDIE	Sleeper
96	YOU'RE GORGEOUS	Baby Bird
97	DOWN BY THE WATER	PJ Harvey
98	GIVE ME DAUGHTERS	Jonathan Fire*Eater
99	WONDERFUL BOYFRIEND	Emperor Julian
100	VOW	Garbage

This list doesn't include anything released before Vaseline opened in April 1995.

Write and tell us what we left out and why it should have been there. *Me/V*

Blur

The Supper Club New York City

Despite the well-documented debacle of Oasis on their last American tour, British bands will never give up in their attempts to break the vast cross-Atlantic market. So in a week where the Boo Radleys, Bis, Cranes, Catatonia and Comet Gain all make their appearance in The Big Apple, we visit the Supper Club, where Blur continue their low-key recovery tour.

USUALLY THE Supper Club is a posh nightclub, where people can wine and dine while being entertained by New York's best jazz and cabaret singers, and served by waiters in immaculate white jackets. I wonder if they always have the 'No crowd surfing' signs on the walls. An odd choice for Blur, who look completely out of place, just like the teenage crowd, except for the celebrities on the balconies, which include Lenny Kravitz and the Beastie Boys.

Neither of the two support acts

Assembly Line Progress

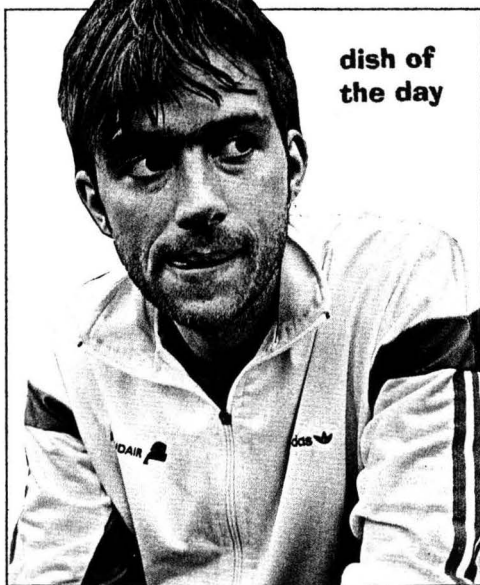
People, a mixture between Make Up and the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, and **Papas Fritas**, Spanish for French fries, can provoke anything else than hostility from the audience; half of them pubescent girls desperate for eye contact with Damon, and the other half anglophile boys, dressed in football (oops, make that soccer) shirts.

The set is very similar to what Blur did on their small venue UK tour, so they kick off with "Beetlebum", which was not a single in the States, and continue with "Song 2", the perfect track to get the ballroom bouncing. Although the album has been out for a few weeks, none of the other album tracks get a great response. But even though they play most of the new album, they interlace the set with some of the hits, such as "Girls And Boys", and they keep the big ballads such as "The Universal" for the big finale, and obscure B sides and the *Trainspotting* track for the six song encore, as well as the "Parklife" sing-along.

Damon doesn't restrain himself, climbing on speaker stacks, trashing his keyboards and threatening to jump in the crowd, which he never actually does, because he is bound to get sued by a fat dumb American girl who claims she is mentally scarred by the close-up of his bum [*his Beetlebum perhaps? Ed*].

But the most important change is that they prove that their natural habitat is in these small clubs, without all the stadium rock gimmicks, such as horn sections, video screens and flying hamburgers. Let's hope they never make it big again.

Arthur V



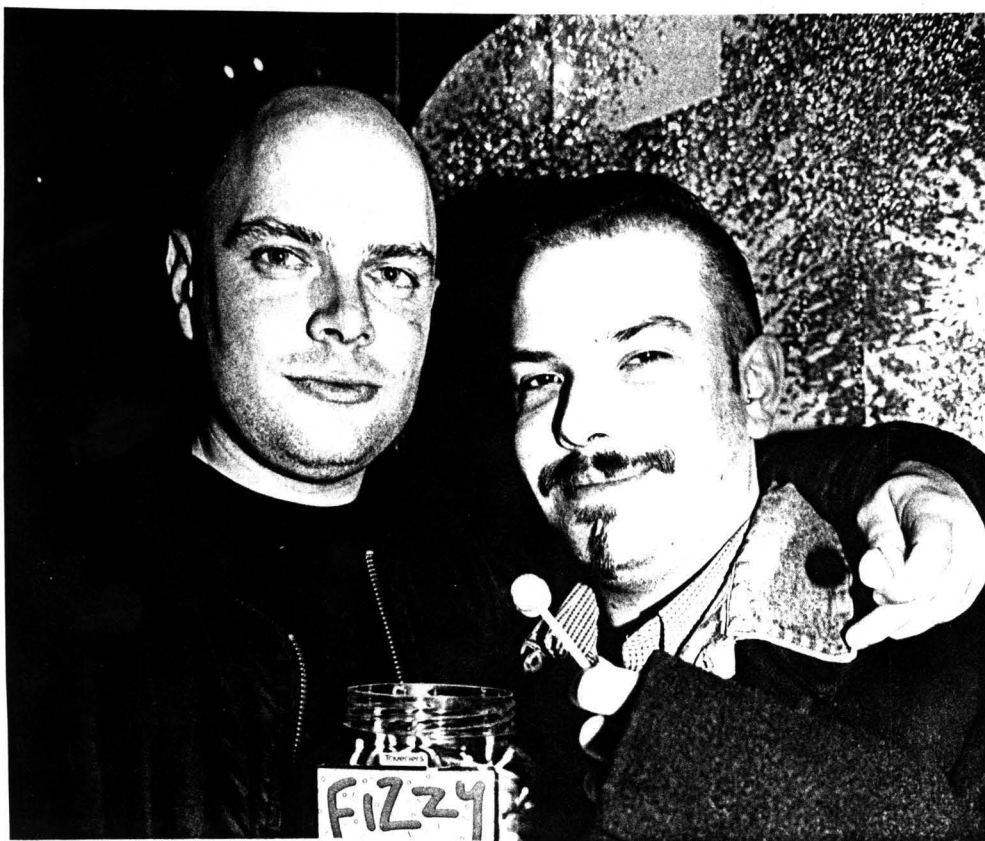
dish of
the day

Handsome Devil

Interview: Neil

pic: Piers Allardyce

A year ago, a King's Cross cruise bar would not have struck anyone as a likely venue for a successful Indie club, but 'Handsome Devil' has changed that. The monthly club will soon be celebrating its First Birthday at Central Station, and boasts a growing legion of fans. The V Files phoned DJs Hudson and sidekick, Fatboy, while they were eating their dinner. After wolfing down their pudding, they phoned back...



Club V: *A year ago, the gay indie calendar was pretty packed, so why did you decide to start Handsome Devil?*

Hudson: I saw a slight gap in the market. The clubs that were going at that time (and I suppose I include Club V in that) weren't very cruisy. I thought there was room for a club which had that sort of 'atmosphere'. And I wanted to run the sort of club that I'd like to go to myself.

V: *Central Station has a reputation as a bit of a sleaze joint. Did you choose it because of its sexy background?*

H: Well, it was my local pub, and I'd always had a good relationship with the people who ran it. It's definitely got a more sexual atmosphere, and it does have its seedy, sleazy basement. If I could have anywhere, my ideal place for a club would be somewhere with sofas, and a place to chill out. Somewhere you could take anyone.

V: *Even your Mother?*

H: Well, I wouldn't go that far.

V: *Do you get many women coming to the club? It does seem to be rather male-oriented.*

H: I didn't consciously try to aim it at men, but I am aware that women are put off because of the venue, and the fact that it's called 'Handsome Devil'. We do get women coming along, especially more recently, but not that many. I knew Central Station would attract a male crowd at first, because it's totally male run and established on the men's scene, but everyone is welcome.

V: *What do you think of single sex clubs and venues in general? Do they serve a purpose or are they divisive?*

H: Yes, they do serve a purpose, but I'm quite happy that they're on the periphery of the scene. I can see why they're there. Personally, it doesn't bother me if women are around, but some gay men are very misogynistic. Women only clubs are different, but men only clubs are really redundant.

V: *What's your music policy?*

H: I play the sort of stuff I'd like to hear in a club. At one point I was thinking perhaps I should play more Chemical Brothers/Prodigy or more American grunge, but I think you can only go so far to suit other people's tastes.

V: *Do you play requests then?*

H: I do get a lot of requests, and if I've got it and it fits in, I'll play it. They do tend to be mostly of the Stereolab/Orbital kind, though, or Siouxsie... old punk stuff. There are a lot of Siouxsie fans out there!

V: *What sort of music do you listen to at home?*

H: I've always been a big Suede fan, and I like Mansun at the moment. I quite like individual songs by Beck, Fountains of Wayne, Cake, and the new Blur album, although I was never a fan of their previous stuff. My taste is very narrow. It's pure Indie.

V: *So you don't go home and stick on some classical music?*

H: No! Classical music is crap! There's a quote for you.

V: *When you first came across 'Vaseline' and 'Popstarz', did you think: 'great', or 'they're mad'?*

H: When I first heard about 'Vaseline' I thought: 'Brilliant. At last, somewhere I can go'. The Bell had closed down

**"Classical
music is crap!
There's a quote
for you."**

Hudson,
saving me a job

and it seemed to come at just the right time. Then when 'Popstarz' opened at the Paradise Club, I thought 'Good', but I also thought it wouldn't last. I didn't know Simon Hobart's history then, so I didn't go for 3 or 4 weeks. I kept hearing really good reports about it, though, so I went eventually, and it was really quite good.

V: *It's a bit obvious to say it, but the scene has really taken off since then.*

H: Yeah. Just about every pub and club has tried to do an Indie night. Most of them have no idea what they're doing. I think we have to remember that Indie is still quite a minority interest on the gay scene. Just look at how many people go the 'Club V' on a Saturday night, compared with clubs like 'Love Muscle', 'G.A.Y.' and 'Heaven'.

Apart from being a top DJ, Hudson, known to his parents as 'David', is also Deputy Editor of 'Boyz', and the man responsible for most of the Indie output of the paper. When it's not creating minor sexist scandals [see 'The V Files', No 19], 'Boyz' has been a champion of Indie music, through record reviews and major interviews with such stars as Skin and Martin Rossiter. For queer Indie kids this is great, but how does it go down with the regular readers?

H: 'Boyz' is aimed at the widest common denominator and I'm unsure how much of the stuff about Indie music is appreciated by the general readers. I think some people just see that it's there and think: 'Oh, Indie - that's trendy at the moment,' rather than really being interested in it.

V: *I think we have the same doubts about our review column in 'Lowdown', but it's important that the gay press reflects all aspects of the scene.*

H: Mmm. The thing is 'Boyz' is seen as a hair gel, fluffy, Kylie type of publication, but we've done quite a few major interviews with Indie stars, and featured some of them on the cover. People tend to overlook that. Apart from myself, Mark O'Flaherty is also quite an Indie fan. He was responsible for all the Gene stuff we published. He's a Gene addict.

V: *Do you think the Indie scene is a 'trend' that will eventually fizzle out?*

H: There's always been a basal level of interest in Indie music on the gay scene. I think Britpop had a major effect on the recent interest. For its sins it caused an explosion in the amount of Indie being played on the radio and in clubs. Four years ago I would have struggled

to name many albums that I thought were really good, but that's changed. I hope people will stick with it. Let's face it, if they're spending £15 on an album, or paying to go to clubs playing Indie music, there must be real interest there. If anything, the success of the Indie scene has illustrated that we're not one big, homogenous group. The gay community is as diverse as the straight community.

V: *You're always probing other people in 'Boyz', so I thought our readers would be keen to know your "worst drunken escapade". Can you think of one?*

H: Yeah... [laughs] waking up in bed with my ex-boyfriend's brother. His twin brother.

V: *You knew it was his brother?*

"If anything, the success of the Indie scene has illustrated that we're not one big, homogenous group. The gay community is as diverse as the straight community"

Hudson

H: Oh yes.

V: Can you name three songs which define Handsome Devil?

H: There'd have to be a Suede song, let's say "Beautiful Ones", and there'd have to be a Smiths song; "Sheila Takes A Bow" is the one we always play, or "Handsome Devil" itself. And the third? Ooh, I should say a girl group shouldn't I? I quite like little bands that no one has heard of. Have you heard of Hopper?

V: Yes. I like "Oh My Heartless."

H: I quite like them, even though they're about to be dumped by their record company. Their last album was very good. I also like David Devant. Maybe Elastica for the third one?

When Hudson met Jason Mannings a few short months ago it was love at first sight. However, written into their relationship is an agreement that Jason does the early DJ slot at 'Handsome Devil', so that Hudson can take the weight off his slingbacks for an hour or so.

So, Jason became DJ Fatboy by virtue of his generous physique ("I don't have a problem with it" he says), and the rest is history.

I managed to drag him away from the TV for a few closing words.

Fatboy: I was just watching "June".

V: "June"? You mean "Terry and June"?

F: No "Dune", on the Sci Fi Channel. It fills time until "ER" comes on. Ewan MacGregor has a walk-on part this week.

V: That sounds unmissable! So, are you a skilled Indie DJ now Jason?

F: I don't think so. I hadn't done it before, but it's not that hard. I get nervous though, thinking: 'Will people turn up?' 'Will they dance?' But, sod them if they don't dance.

V: What sort of music do you play? Is it different to David's set or more of the same?

F: It's more of a warm up slot. I suppose what I play *is* different. I like more American stuff and I play more B-sides: If we get new CDs in I'll usually play track 3 before I play track 1. I think a lot of really good tracks are missed, and it's good to play unfamiliar stuff by artists people know, or styles they recognise.

V: Has 'Handsome Devil' changed since it first started?

F: Oh yeah, I think it has. It's changed since I started DJing there. I'm the manager at The Edward now, and I get a lot of the pub's regulars coming along. People are coming earlier. Word is spreading...

V: But isn't Tuesday a bad night for a club?

F: At first, I thought: 'Oh no, Tuesday. This is *really* not going to work at all. But it does work. There's nothing else on that night, and it's a good alternative. You can have a few drinks and it's really cheap at £2.00. You can always go upstairs for a chat if it gets too noisy, and there's a really good taxi service available...

V: ...I think you've sold it to me. So, do you reckon it'll become a more frequent event?

F: I'm not sure. We've got full time jobs, but it's a good break from the routine for both of us. It's nice to DJ where I can hear the sort of music I like.

V: I'll second that. So, when's the next 'Handsome Devil' happening?

F: It's on 13th May.

'Handsome Devil' is a monthly ritual for Indie kids. Central Station is at 37 Wharfedale Road, King's Cross. The club runs downstairs from 10pm till 2am. See you there! Neil V

PASSIONATE MOMENTS

*With 'The V Files' resident Mills and
Boon auteur, Xenia Bardsley-Smythe*

This Month: "A Bis-ness In Love"

AFTER OUR wedding at my small *chateau* in Brittany, my new husband, Jean Escargot Von Goldberg, whisked me off in his leet jet to Mongrovia, a small and picturesque island located off the coast of Italy. We witnessed upon our arrival the most beautiful sunset the world has ever seen.

'My darling,' Jean-Escargot intoned as we approached the runway. 'I have never felt a love like this. Anything you want, anything my precious little *fleur*, and it is yours.'

My lips began to quiver with a

catalogue of deep emotion. I knew what it was I wanted, but God had dealt a cruel hand to my biological purpose when I was born. Still, Jean-Escargot need not know my secret... not yet. 'Thank you, my darling. If I think of anything, I will be certain to inform you,' I said as I chastely kissed his bearded cheek.

Our driver met us on the runway and ushered us off to the Von Goldberg kosher Vineyard, where we would be staying for the duration of our honeymoon. When we entered the estate, it was bathed in the glow of summer moonlight. I grasped Jean-Escargot's hand as he pointed out the different areas of the sprawling island landscape. 'Here is where the grapes are crushed, and here is where the wine is stored before being shipped to kosher markets around the world,' my new husband whispered tenderly in my ear.

I saw an orange light shining in the distance. 'Pray tell, Jean-Escargot, where is that light coming from?'

'Yes, my *petit grenouille*,' he said with a sense of Gallic urgency, 'that is where the seasonal help resides. You are never to go there - they are underclass heathens and we will have no business with them.'

I wondered why he projected such annoyance over the gregarious lower classes, but it was not for me to comment. 'Alright, my dearest, I will respect your wishes as long as you are my husband.'

That evening we stayed in the largest of the 472 bedrooms in Von Goldberg Castle. Jean-Escargot slept fitfully after our night of passionate love making, but I lay awake, consumed by my husband's reaction to the seasonal workers' lodgings. My travels around the world had exposed me to a great many common people, and aside from their occasional odour, they seemed to live quite fitful existences. Though I did not want to lose Jean-Escargot's trust after less than one day of marriage, I needed to prove to myself that my theories were correct. I slipped out from under the silk sheets and let the moon guide me to the forbidden resting place of the working classes.

After gliding through the vineyard like a young rabbit emerging from his cubbyhole on the first days of spring, I found my way to the rather ramshackle workers' lodgings. I made my way to the rear entry and slipped in quietly, only to see the entire room filled with joviality - everyone was jumping up and down in a repetitive fashion to the hypnotic beat of the local troubadours, playing strange instruments on a raised stage. Once I was able to garner a better view of the musicians, I realised why Jean-Escargot was so vehemently against my association with these people - they were using children for entertainment purposes.

I looked at my Guerlain watch - it was 4am. The thought of these young children playing and singing for the benefit of the adult workers sent exploitative shivers down my spine. They were only 14 or 15 at best. The two boy musicians were pale and underfed, and the girl, though not underfed, moved her head in a convulsive manner similar to psychiatric patients in need of sedatives. These poor, poor children were in need of proper lodgings and the comfort only a privileged woman like myself could supply, where their obvious musical skills could be parlayed into classical studies by the finest teachers Jean-Escargot's

inheritance could buy. I felt a tsunami-like wave of maternity pass over me - something I thought I could never feel, due to my absence of child-making facilities.

The children finished playing and the workers shuffled off to sleep. I approached the youths cautiously, knowing they were probably quite fearful of adults telling them what to do. Speaking slowly, I addressed the waifs in broken English in an attempt to communicate. 'Who are you children? Are you without parental supervision?' I asked them.

'Hoo err yuh?' the girl said. 'We are Bis from Gles-gee, tho' I'm really frum Dunoon.'

'Don't be afraid, Bis, I want to help,' I said, knowing her grasp of English was poor. 'My name is Xenia Von Goldberg and I live in the castle, over on the north end of the vineyard.'

One of the boys chirped up, speaking in a thick dialect. 'Ye go' a place tae bide? Our record company screwed up our degs.'

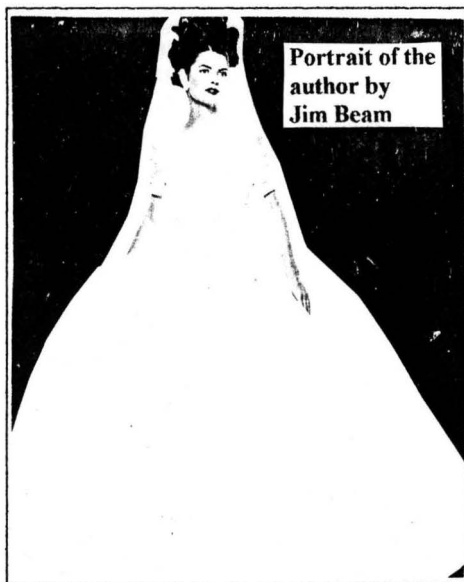
'Yes, of course you could stay with me in the castle, children. We have 471 bedrooms to spare. You can stay as long as you like and you will never have to work in the fields again.'

The three children looked at each other quizzically. Bis said, 'I dinna ken wha' you're spikin' aboot.'

'Do not worry, I will provide for anything you need. Come with me back to the castle,' I said in my sweetest motherly voice.

'Could we get somethin' tae eat? We're starvin'.'

'Of course. My husband will have a tremendous smorgasbord back at the house. He is a very generous man.'



Suddenly, the door burst open. With the Mediterranean sunrise shining behind him, there stood Jean-Escargot, with a large rifle in his hand. 'Xenia,' he said, abruptly yet lovingly. 'What in *Jeanne d'Arc's* name are you doing here? I thought I told you never to come here.'

'I...I...' I stammered, suddenly. Tears started to well up in my eyes, knowing that leaving my husband on our honeymoon night was a sin even The Pope and Chief Rabbi could not forgive.

'Who are you, her faither? You shouldnae speak like tha' tae anyone,' one of the boys said.

'Yeah, she's nae poster parent, man. Back off!' yelled Bis.

'Do not tell me how to speak to my wife, you ignorant little bastards,' Jean-Escargot said, cocking his rifle.

'Tha's it. Out of th' way,' said Bis. She pulled out what looked like a futuristic laser Ninja vampire atomic disco-pistol. 'Eat this, teen-C Anti-Christ!' A blue-green beam of light came out of the end of the gun, making Jean-Escargot disappear into the mists

spreading over the fields.

'You didnae need him any-wee,' one of the boys said.

'Yeah, you've got us noo. We'll be your bairns noo, Xenia,' said Bis, packing her pistol away.

And as I watched the morning sun rising over the fields of Mongrovia, I realised that this would be a day I would remember for the rest of my life. For though my husband may have dematerialised into millions of small atoms, I now had the children I'd always wanted, and another adventure to fulfill with them. **V**

18 ALL DAYER

Going 'Underground' at The Garage

It's only April and the festival season has already started. This year's debutante is the '18 All Dayer', a joint venture between Club Piao! and Lovetrain, which takes place both downstairs and upstairs at The Garage, where the latest in lo-fi, noise and punk gather for a fine day of music and pleasure.

THE COCA COLA CUP FINAL goes into extra time, so we miss the first two bands, but my spy tells me that **Hood** were quite interesting.

When we arrive **Spare Snare** just finish off their set, which today was an acoustic solo effort. **Eska** are another one of those promising bands from Glasgow, but don't get too excited, because their noise rock is not much different from what Superchunk have been doing for years. Hardcore specialists **Bob Tilton** need a while to get warmed up, and the fact that they play with their backs towards the crowd doesn't make life easier either.

The only American band on today's bill is punk trio **Lunchbox**, who are the last in a long line of derivative copyists from the other side of the ocean. Quickly we escape to the upstairs room where arty farty boys **CVI** are doing their thing, which is one

walk this way...



Tunic

bloke pressing the keyboard in random order and three other blokes in white plastic suits programming one dimensional graphic images which are displayed on a couple of colour TVs. A load of pretentious wank basically. By the time **Prolapse** come on we feel an urgent need for some food, so we escape to the pizza joint across the road.

After dinner both the mood and the expectations rise, as the incredible **Tunic** take the stage. Their handling of the instruments is still as shambolic as ever, but the songwriting has improved drastically, and the new songs have a rather poppy feel about them.

I have praised the qualities of Glaswegians **Mogwai** before in this publication, and tonight they are the largest crowd puller. I thought they were as excellent as before, but not everyone is convinced and an intense discussion develops. Just as I am about to grab Simon by the throat he is saved by the gong, because **Ligament** take the stage and they completely blast us away. Normally I don't mind a bit of high powered noise rock, but tonight it's the wrong band at the wrong time. We take another look upstairs and **CVI** are still mucking around. It is now about three hours later, so their set takes on Pink Floyd type proportions. The keyboard player has slipped into some revealing leather pants, and I can't remember anything else interesting about them.

The third and last delegation from Glasgow are the increasingly popular **Urusei Yatsura**. They can only play for half an hour so they make it a sharp, short set, with the usual hits ("Kewpies", "Plastic Ashtray") thrown in. The set ends in a bit of chaos when they induce a stage invasion, which is cleared by a visibly annoyed bouncer. What ever happened to quiet Sunday nights?

Looking back, the '18 All Dayer' is an excellent initiative and for a lot of people the ideal way of getting into new underground bands. Personally, I wouldn't mind a slightly more adventurous line-up. After all, there are more flavours than Scottish. **Arthur V**



urusei yatsura



**"I DON'T
WANT A TINY
PENIS, NOR
DO I WANT A
HUGE ONE"**



Gertrude

Acton Arms

I HATE it when a friend makes me come to their band's gig for the first time. I mean, what if I hate them? What if they're embarrassing? Should I be honest? Slink off during the last number? Or be really English and say they were great while desperately thinking of excuses to never see them again? I've seen Gertrude, a mate's band, twice now, and thankfully I had nothing to worry about. The first time I saw them I genuinely liked them a lot and thought they'd end up being very good. This time, with decent sound and equipment, I realised they are already very good, one of a batch of all-or-mostly women bands I've seen recently that kick ass. If I was younger and had just picked up a guitar for the first time, it'd be bands like Gertrude that I would be inspired by. Their quirky guitar music reminds me of the stuff I used to listen to in the early '80s, when I fell in love with Lesley Wood of the Au Pairs, and, later, Pylon, one of the most underrated pop bands of all time. Gertrude can really play, have some great songs and a sense of humour without coming anywhere close to that awful phase of '80s music, wacky pop.

The gig was put on by the Colin Roach Centre as a benefit for the Liverpool dockers, on strike for well over a year now, and the sight of Lefties dotted around the place worried me a little, but I was reassured by guitarist Ayesha that the band were political in that, for instance, it was important to them that the band was all women, but party politics was not their bag. Unfortunately I haven't got any of Gertrude's lyrics or even song titles to refer to, but I gathered from what I did pick up in the songs that they're a mixture of straight grlz and dykes with attitude. I have to say that sorted, independent straight women have in many ways a harder time than us dykes i.e. it must be damn near impossible to find any decent hetero men to fall in love with that'll give them the respect they deserve, so it's a good mixture to have in a band. I reckon they'll go down a storm at V's second birthday bash. *Susan V*



**"You're
wearing
it for a
bet, right?"**



The Jennifers

Hope & Anchor

'V' REGULARS may remember a certain bonnie wee spunky threesome from Perth called The Jennifers who, aided by their hi-tech equipment, deafened, and by apparent consensus, delighted us back in January.

So hungry for success is the singer/songwriter Michael that he has given up his day job in order to concentrate on writing, rehearsing and promoting the band. They sold 300 copies of their Human Condition single, "Yesterday" (a feat that would have achieved a chart entry at No. 3 if we

Fourpiece laddish Peppermint Lounge were first on, with an undistinguished set of bluesy Noelrock played at breakneck speed. Play they could, sing they couldn't and it was much more Nuttall's Minto than Extra Strong.

The Jennifers predictably kicked off at 600mph and 1000 decibels, and with Michael's voice inaudible, my heart temporarily sank. This was quickly sorted before the second song, however, and all was well. He has been prolific over the past two months and has a whole crop of brilliant new songs to show for his sabbatical. The melody beast seems to have grabbed him by the balls, resulting in several of chartworthy catchiness, and with titles like "Stink Like A Man", you can guess the lyrical content. Very little of what was heard at 'V' was included in the new set, which was predominantly brand new material, and played with total energy and passion - not to

mention polish. The place had filled up during their set and the crowd, though slightly startled at Chris's "unusual" exit *through* the drum kit as the last song ended, responded warmly.

This was however, the P.A. Skinny crowd and they knew who they'd come to see. Hard to pigeonhole, they play fairly hum drum punky-pop noise, with a theatrical lead singer who, whilst well preserved, was even older than I. We've all got a lot to thank cryogenics for. Sounding like a hardcore Space, it was pleasant enough, but without a hint of

the drive and sweat of The Jennifers. Their devotees even burst into a "Skinny...Skinny" chant to demand an encore, to which the singer declared: 'we haven't got that many songs' - and proved it by playing their opener again.

I know it's me mate's band and I'm biased, but I'm convinced The Jennifers have what it takes. Surely the first TOTP appearance is a mere formality.

Trevor V



The Jennifers

believe what we hear.), other material has been heard on John Peel and the Evening Session, and various A & R men have been sniffing around.

Keen to be seen in The Smoke, the H & A gig was arranged at short notice and I did my best to arrange as large a rent-a-crowd as possible in the time available. It must be daunting for a young band to play such a gig so far from home, with no local support.


Rock Bitch

Royal Oak

"Hello? It's Rock Bitch tonight. Rock. Bitch. No, you can't get tickets in advance, they're onstage in about an hour. They're hard sex rock. They're very explicit. Yes, the bar stays open after the show. No, you have to go to H2O for that...."

THUS WAS one half of a telephone conversation I heard between the barman of the Oak and who knows who else, while the pub was still quiet. I thought everyone knew Rock Bitch. They hit the front page of The Sun last year when they played a gig at a school (the kids loved them, their parents were horrified), and they were on a recent edition of the Girlie Show. They claim a cause, a mission - to sexualise the world, to show that women have power and should be proud of their sexuality. They also claim to be married to each other and living in a commune in France, but I don't believe that either. The presence of a man ('The Beast') on guitar and another doing most of the technical stuff made me very suspicious. Oh, they're a shit hot rock band, brilliant musicians (which does a hell of a lot for women in itself) the songs are certainly sexual and the stage act is explicit to say the least - fisting, rimming, some light SM - but I'm not convinced they're anything more than a.n. other grebo HM band.

The show, though sexual, was not erotic in the slightest. Even when their slave girl danced around the audience, it seemed false rather than empowering (and she was a rotten kisser - no tongue....). That's not to say I had a bad evening; it was the best of fun, and the heroic HM posturing had me on the floor laughing. It's just that I seriously doubt their politics. They don't hold a candle to, say, Tribe 8, who are sexy, do use sex as a form of empowerment, and would kick Rock Bitch's butts all the way back to their alleged French commune. I hesitate to suggest they play Club V, but you have to admit, the thought is kinda fun. *Susan V*



"Can I see
you again
tomorrow?"



"Nah.
I'm
washing
my fleece"

THE CLONES

The Mittens

When Julie Andrews sang "Favourite Things" she included in her hotlist "raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens/bright copper kettles and warm woollen mittens" What a silly woman! Myself, I'd pick 'Star Trek', 'The Simpsons', chocolate biscuits,... and an extremely hot band called The Mittens.

I recently caught the extremely hot band in question playing at the highly over-rated Dublin Castle. They were first on, before a trio called Venus Inc. and the headliners Dirty Sod. Oh dear, those names alone were enough to make anyone run for the hills. But, more of them later.

The tiny back room was packed when I arrived, and The Mittens were on stage, battling against a muddy sound mix. Marianne's vocals, already a little croaky because of a cold, were drowned by the guitars and this was entirely the fault of the sound engineer (who couldn't mix a Martini let alone a band). The sound improved gradually, and the crowd were right behind them. Those who didn't know them were probably amazed to be getting such fine entertainment so early in the evening. More to the point, the band seemed to be having a good time, with bass player Simon jiggling away to Marianne's right and guitarist Kate doing some fairly impressive things with her instrument, to the left.

Unfortunately, I can't name any of The Mittens songs, although there is one in

which Kate plays twiddly bits and slidey bits on the guitar, which I just can't get out of my head. I was too busy thinking: 'Wow, they're really good!', to remember any lyrics. As musical reference points, I'd say they have elements of Belly, The Pixies, Elastica and Veruca Salt. Obvious comparisons aside though, Marianne has a great voice and writes brilliant, catchy songs, which rip along one minute and lull you the next. From shouty, punk thrash to barely accompanied voice, the next generation of indie pop is right here.

Venus Inc. had a hard act to follow. They turned out to be a sort of Curve-lite, with two blokes with spread legs thrashing around on guitar and bass, to a pre-recorded backing, and a Supervixen crooning away in the middle. She was sporting a one-piece outfit in what can only be described as shit-coloured lamé, and she fancied herself a bit. They weren't dreadful, but they were unmemorable.

I decided I couldn't lower myself to watching **Dirty Sod**, and this decision was expedited when I saw them tuning

up. The singer was wearing black 'Tom of Finland' PVC trousers and had his hair in little Björk bunch-knots. He was also sporting huge tattoos of black flames on his bare torso. Very impressive, until you learn that he'd painted them on earlier in the dressing room. The man was a charlatan! It was time to leave,

before he began his Sepultura-like posturing.

So, I walked to the tube, with The Mittens' songs still in my ears, and thinking of Julie Andrews' favourite things again: "snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes"? "brown paper packages tied up with string"? What was that woman on, eh? **Neil V**

Subject to final confirmation, The Mittens will be headlining Club V on June 14th. Watch this space....



Bis - "The New Transistor Heroes"

(Willja) 7/10



Armed with their chosen weapons of a "sawn off hairclip", "mirrorball" and "vicious vampire teeth" our teen-C heroes rollerblade past their wolfish detractors, and like the three little pigs, save their glass house from destruction. But a word of warning: If you fall into the Bis trap, make sure you take yr incendiary pencil case, or you might never escape into adulthood.

The album opens with a trio of alluring punk pop songs. On the ska-sational "Tell It To The Kids" they shout "Hey you homophobe/life without yr frontal lobe/yr prejudice lies while innocents die." Sweetly put, don't you think? Next up, recent single "Sweet Shop Avengerz" is fast and frantic, taunting us with thrashy guitars and a kinky toytown keyboard break. "Starbright Boy" was also a single, and behind the 'pop muzik' steal of the backing track it's a charming sneer at Hollywood bratpack stardom.

On the rest of the album there are some less engaging songs, but with sixteen to choose from these are easily skipped. "Mr Important" for example, sounds like it could have been on the

last Blur album. Hey kidz! Britpop dropped dead. Didn't you hear?

Manda Rin uses Ninja-screach vocals to vent her spleen on various touchy

subjects. For example, unhappy childhood on the heads-down thrash of "Poppyra", and the perils of plumpness on "Monstarr", "Funny how your life depends on your waistline," she bleats, "I don't want to be a model, at least I'm not a fake," she squeals. 'Okay dear, now...put...away...the...hair...grip'. Phew!

The biggest diversion from the familiar Bis comes on the piss-take,

"Skinny Tie Sensurround" which casts the gang as a 'Stars In Their Eyes' Human League, evoking an era in which they could only have existed as newborns or glints in the eyes of their parents.

Talking of parents, the brilliant "Poster Parent" finds Sci Fi Steven singing about puppy love for idols, adhered to the bedroom wall with Blu-Tac: "Wanna know he's mine, and that he'll never cheat on me/Cuz everywhere I go, his face is all that I can see," he sings, later assuring his boyfriend that he loves him equally, but that he "needs his poster parent". "Photo Shop" has similar gay-hinting lyrics: Sci-Fi does everything because his "boyfriend says so," while Manda screams "Hey girlfriend, yr suffocating me/I got friends and other people to see." It's hard to tell whether these are revelations of their own sexual preferences or objective gender confusion à la Huggy Bear. Either way, they seem admirably cool about it.

I have to mention the Stereolabesque instrumental fade-out on "Rebel Soul", and the gentle, questioning pop of "Lie Detector Test", but my biggest gold star

lp reviews

goes to "Everybody Thinks That They're Going To Get Theirs", out soon as a single.

If, in the past, you've dismissed Bis, dissed Bis, or missed Bis, now is the time to get THIS, and get with it. *Neil V*

Magoo "The Soateramic Sounds of Magoo"

(Chemikal Underground) 6/10



Mr. Magoo: "Wooh-oh-oh, Waldo!"

I've fallen in love. With seven inches of vinyl. It has the words "A To Z And Back Again" and Magoo on the cover. It's weird, and I was hooked right from the first fuzzy chord (I think there are only two or three in the song). A bloke sings in an alarmed voice, a bit intense, like an angry dalek. Cue Mr Special FX who starts playing with his feedback pedals. Add an 'Ooh la la la' chorus and another couple of singers who sound like they're so tired they're singing lying down and there you go. A brilliant song. That was Magoo's single.

I loved it so much that when I saw their album (and the bargain 7-inch single you get with it) I thought I'd give it a go. I also saw that they were on the revered Chemikal Underground label from Glasgow. It might be a trendy label, but is it really that good? It's not so simple as saying it's good or bad.

It's way out there on its own doing something different. Just like Magoo.

This album is an eerie listen. They've got a knack of finding chords and sounds which create feelings and say more than the words. "The Guilt Club" sounds wracked with regret. "The Advantage Of Noise" is bizarre - there's an experimental intro, after which a disco beat shuffles under a mantra which goes, 'She's got the advantage of noise.' With all the transistor-like squelches, hollow noises and out of tune sighing, this song gives me the creeps. "Have You Heard" has a dual vocal which is twisted and distorted almost out of recognition - it's a sweet but sad song.

Think harmonies. Now think the opposite and that's Magoo. If one singer sounds druggy, low and flat, the other will be high and sharp, being careful to skip over any notes which are in tune. At times they are painful, at others, fantastic. Overall this LP's patchy, but in places it's one of the best pieces of music out this year. I keep turning the volume up and down. It's love and hate.

It's one of those albums that you can't work out. The word in the title, 'soateramic', isn't in the dictionary. That's 'cause it doesn't exist. They made it up. And there's a fuzzy picture on the back of the sleeve which you try looking at from the other side of the room to see if there's anything there. There probably isn't. Pretentious? Maybe. Any good? Depends how you're feeling.

"Sometimes music is your only friend." "Your Only Friend." *Phil V*

Fruit "Hark At Her"

(One Little Indian) 8/10

The last time I spoke to Fruit (known to his friends, and most people as Patrick Fitzgerald), he told me that One Little Indian had dropped him from their label and that he wasn't sure they would even release this album. He was pretty pissed off about it, to put it mildly. They'd previously ditched his former band, Kitchens of Distinction, and had insisted on his doing live gigs

to promote Fruit before they would release anything.

Anyway, knowing all this, I was surprised to see the single "What Is Fruit?" sitting on the shelf at Virgin recently, and even more surprised to see reviews of the album cropping up in the music press. The surprises didn't stop there, because "Hark At Her" is a great record, deserving a big fanfare of trumpets rather than a note saying "so long and thanks for all the hits."

Actually, I guess there weren't all that many hits, just good songs. As the Kitchens' singer, Patrick's sexuality was no secret, but he has injected some very queer vitriol into his current songs. Perhaps this had the chiefs at One Little Indian literally whispering 'hark at her' behind his back, and waiting to drop the Acme 20-ton weight. 'Killing in a cartoon way' indeed.

The album opens with "What Is Fruit?," a catchy self-analysis, riddled with camp humour and mock laxity. Things get retro on "Pleasure Me" with its laid-back 70s guitars and Bowie-tinged vocal, before the protest and angst of "Vile", confides: "I've grown into a monster a fat monster vile."

The CD booklet has Patrick's sardonic notes attached to graphics for each track. His friend Sally once told him his songs were dreary, and that he should write one about her called "Sally's Car", and then he'd be successful. Ten years later he took her advice, and the resulting pop thrash sounds like Dinosaur Junior mixed with Bowie circa "Heroes". And it's fab. "Fuckin' Relationship" (politely listed as "Starring Relationship") is dark and stark. "I don't wanna hear about your fuckin' relationship," sings Patrick, nastily, while various people, including,

for some reason, Miki Berenyi, echo the same sentiments in the background chatter.

There are a couple of touching duets, both highlights. "Close Personal Friends" is sung with Drugstore's Isabel Monteiro, and has a charming lo-fi chorus, while the chilling "Prowler", features the lissome tonsils and co-writing of David McAlmont.

"Leather Jacket" evokes the sentiments of the Kitchens' "Breathing Fear" - a song about bigotry, gay-bashing and the straight male herd instinct. As the finale of "Scatter Me" nears, the vaguely jazzy bossa nova feel of last year's single "Vienna Weirdo" illustrates the variety of styles on offer.

Overall, this is a great album. The freedom to be eclectic seems to have brought out some of Patrick's best, and most personal, songs, including some that might have otherwise lain dormant for years. I hope there's more to come. *Neil V*



No, it's not me.

Ganger - "Fore"

(Domino)
6/10

Do you know something? My friend Ruth would rather spend money on a Ganger record than on the crust of bread which would lift her from the jaws of extinction. This tells you two things. One, that Ruth doesn't eat properly, and two, that Ganger may be worth starving for.

Of course, Ruth is not your average record-buyer, and anyone else prepared to fork out the excessive asking price for this collection of EPs, will need to have tastes which extend beyond the charts and into the twilight zone.

Enough about Ruth already! What about Ganger? Ganger rhyme with

'banger' and dispense with the inconvenience of vocals, which so often ruin a good song. Instead, they jam away to their hearts content for lengthy periods, in a glorious fusion of jazz, funky vibes and heads-down, no nonsense guitar frenzy. The mention of jazz probably conjures up polo-necked sweaters nodding along sagely, and whooping politely after each musician clocks in a three-hour solo. It's true Ganger songs are not slender creations (eight tracks in 72 minutes), and there is a sax parping away in there, but they play together, and it's a worthwhile experience for your ears. If names like UI and Tortoise mean the slightest thing to you, you will know Ganger, and have this record. For the rest of humanity, it's indie jazz progressive ambient funk rock. All clear?

Their titles are intriguing: "Prisoner of My Eyeball", "Anomovieshot" and one

of the best tracks, "Drummer's Arms and Bionic Thumbs", and, while we're on the subject, the drums are very tight and sharp where they appear.

I've never seen Ganger play live, but I'm willing to bet that they stare at the floor, or into the far distance. Perhaps, like Flying Saucer Attack, they leave the stage mid-song (probably "Jellyneck"), eat a three course meal, visit the loo, do the crossword, and return before it all finishes. Who knows? Maybe they have a dance routine like Mud.

I tried to get Mel to appreciate this album on the listening post in the Virgin Megastore, and he just screwed up his face and said: "Sounds like a Roxy Music B-side..." What better recommendation could you have?

Neil V

GANGER



Singles

"I deserve a....HIT!!!"

("Hit" - The Wannadies)

Placebo - "Brulse Pristine"

I suppose it was inevitable that they would release this again. My first encounter with Placebo was the Fierce Panda split single which featured this song and am I glad I bought that now. I remember turning the speed down to 33, and getting quite near the end of the record before I realised it *was* a 45. It was played at not so much breakneck, as spine-snapping, speed and Brian sounded positively inhuman. The version that ended up on the album seemed less raw, more 'produced', and a bit of a disappointment, but there are plans to remix it before the re-release, so get ready to sustain some pristine bruises as people attempt to mosh to it at Club V. It could lead to fatalities.

Hefner - "A Better Friend"

When I see 'Boogie Wonderland' on something, I think 'Sidi Bou Said' because they have some sort of involvement with the label. The recording studio is also just down the road from me. Not usually a good thing, as I live in Lewisham. Claire and Mel Sidi also play with the label's Umbrella Heaven, and Gayl Sidi produced this single by a bloke called Darren, "who sort of is Hefner". He also "sort of is" a genius of emotion, with a singing style as intimate as Robert Wyatt's and a talent for suspense. This is touching, acoustic, and recommended.

Crowsdell - "Popsick"

"I don't wanna be popsick like Madonna/I wanna be all me."
Crowsdell's last album was criminally underexposed, especially as it was

produced by Pavement's Steven Malkmus. Singer/songwriter Shannon Wright is something like Juliana Hatfield but she has a delightful country twang to her voice, and a knack for singing about very sensitive subjects, like child molestation. There's a vibrantly good, deep guitar break towards the end of this which lifts it above the average. The other tracks on the CD are also well worth a listen. Messy, hard and satisfying. Sounds like a good wank, eh?

Kenickie - "Nightlife"

"I can't work with heavy coats/they're not revealing," sings Lauren harshly, indicating that the song is probably more about about kerbcrawling than goin' darn the disco wiv yer mates. This is not quite up to the standard of "In Your Car", but it has hit potential in a headbutting sort of way, and hints at a more polished incarnation of Kenickie, the cleverest nearly all-girl band on the scene.

Mansun - "Taxloss"

This is neatly timed to coincide with the election, but I doubt if any of the major parties will be stealing it as a battle hymn for broadcast from their campaign buses. It's the umpteenth release from the album, but because "Egg-Shaped Fed" and "Stripper Vicar" weren't big hits, it doesn't seem like overkill. They can do no wrong at the moment, but they should sack their fashion consultant: Tartan and safety pins are *so passé* darling!

Linoleum - "On A Tuesday"

This is just brilliant. Breathily, talked vocals over the verse and a big, big, BIG sound to match the singer's BIG bouffant hair. It seems to be full of drums and orgasmic guitar riffs before it even reaches the chorus. Then it takes off, and never comes down. Towards the end the lead guitar goes completely ape-shit and then cuts off in stunning fashion. A slight resemblance

to Eighth Wonder should not put you off, because there are slight resemblances to loads of things, none of which I'm going to mention. I want you to think of this as unique. I want you to dance when I play it. OKAY?

Subcircus - "You Love You"

Ages ago Subcircus sent us a tape sampler of their album, and I remember thinking: 'Why, pray, have they sent us this?' I had no idea who they were and I thought they were angling after a gig. I soon realised that they were already a weeny bit famous for Club V, but I thought the songs were very good in a wimpy 'Radiohead' sort of way. This fits that estimation, and somehow has

some added 'something'. I'm not sure what. I prefer it to "86'd", but I just have a feeling they will never have a big hit, ever.

Pavement - "Shady Lane"

Apparently everybody wants a shady lane. I'm not sure I do. I prefer broad daylight and no trees that could possibly fall on me. This is a funny song to release as a single, but has a such a poetic charm that I can understand the decision. I love the way it stops, and then starts again, like chapters of a book gently unfolding. Pavement are, and always will be one of the best bands on the planet. Until they release a crap record, that is. I always hedge my bets.

Neil V

"Trying to be ruthless in the face of beauty"

"Bruise Pristine" PLACEBO



there's a pain in the membrane of my brain



The wits end

v dates:

3rd may

17th may

31st may

with Speedurchin & Nightnurse single launch

with Chi and special guests

with Davey & Wilby. Issue 21 of The V Files

April 1997

CLUB V
nasty queers!

