

MAKING WAVES

#2

THE NIXE
PUSSY RIOT
BRILLIANT COLORS
REVERSIBLE CORDS
TOXIC SHOCK
JANE HUDSON
GUDRUN GUT
+ OTHERS...

Taken from the name of a comp which featured 'a collection of 12 women bands from the U.K', Making Waves aim to explore the intersections of punk, feminism and womanhood.

EDITO

Once again (and even if the finalization of the fanzine always takes much longer than we wish) we present you with the second edition of Making Waves.

This issue, though mainly composed of interviews, features new kinds of contributions, such as an abstract from a paper (Diane's work on Look Blue Go Purple) and an article written about a current event that relates to the subject of the zine (concerning the the three jailed members of Pussy Riot, that seemed necessary for us to mention). The previous issue featured an interview of Chuck Warner. A similar interview of Tony Coulter, a radio host at WFMU, can be found in the current issue. We hope that this type of interview will become a recurrent section in which we can discover music together.

We're delighted to continue to work with everyone who was excited about this project from the start; but as our goal is to meet new people and share our discoveries with others, we're also thrilled to welcome new contributors who came up with great articles and ideas. All said and done, we hope that Making Waves will live long and prosper, and we encourage you to contribute in any way to future issues; please, feel free to contact us at mwzine@gmail.com. -----

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PUSSY RIOT BRINGS ARTISTIC DISSENT AND POLITICAL ACTION TOGETHER AGAIN

Julie Gorecki

On February 21st 2012, a swarm of women wearing multicolored balaclavas, dresses and tights, surged the altar of an orthodox church in Moscow. Inside Christ the Savior Cathedral, the group strapped on their electric guitars and preceded to wail a “punk prayer” titled “Get Putin Out!” The Russian lyrics asked the Virgin Mary Mother of God not to “pray for us sinners”, as the original prayer goes, but instead, to “put Putin away, put Putin away, put Putin away!” The ladies then recited the words, “Virgin Mary, Mother of God, become a feminist, become a feminist, become a feminist!”

Immediately after their fist pumpin’, heel kickin’ performance, Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina, 24, Yekaterina Samutsevich, 30, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 22, were arrested and held without trial for 5 months. On August 17th, the three were sentenced to two years in prison on bogus charges of hooliganism and religious hatred. The rest of the world has seen the act as a brave and peaceful political protest for free speech and an artistic triumph against the censorship

of the anti-democratic Putin regime. Since then, the feminist art collective has taken the world by storm. They have reignited a burning new cultural feminist street movement that has been lying dormant for longer than most of us would like to admit. Their predecessors, “Riot Grrrl”, very dear to the formation of all of our punk feminist hearts, date back to the early 1990’s. The twenty or so years in-between, we’ve seen many irreplaceable female head banging acts. However, with all due respect, none have matched the magic that was the combination of females creating musically killer punk tunes, while shrieking revolutionary lyrics, as did groups Bikini Kill, Huggy Bear, Jack off Jill, and Bratmobile. I mean, one can never forget the utter awesomeness that is the “Riot Grrrl Manifesto.” Some of my personal favorite statements within manifesto include: “BECAUSE we must take over the means of production in order to create our own moanings”, “BECAUSE we must create non hierarchical ways of being and making music, “BECAUSE we hate capitalism in all of its forms...”, and “BECAUSE we are angry at a

society that tells us Girl = Dumb, Girl = Bad, Girl = Weak”. Ahhhhhh (exhale), it was enough to politicize the soul of any rock lovin’ preteen girl. Yet, while Riot Grrrl certainly left more than a third feminist wave in the world of underground rock, since then, the socialist feminist music scene has been left without a soundtrack for quite some time.

Until now, that is. Pussy Riot has reinvigorated the political punk rock feminist in all of us. They have broken the long silence of cultural protest. They have reminded us of the irreplaceable intersection between activism, protest and art, and its potential to wake up the world with a vengeance against the systematic injustices that plague our societies. The aftershock of their performance has already inspired countless forms of creative protests around the world. Moreover, they have inspired a wave of politicization among many of the musicians that represent queer and feminist music today. JD Samson of Le Tigre and Men has loudly proclaimed the need for, and importance of, feminist bands while organizing readings of Pussy Riot lyrics. Peaches, Simone Jones, John Renaud and other artists and activists have recorded and released a full-length song and video called “Free Pussy Riot”, with murmurs of a call for anarchism in the background music. Austra has released a video showing vocalist Katie Stelmanis calmly lighting herself on fire, followed by the caption “If you can’t say, ‘Fuck’ you can’t say, ‘Fuck the government’... Peace for Pussy Riot and all political prisoners who are unjustly silenced”. Pussy Riot was designed to politically shake things up.

The collective was formed with the objective of reigniting the power that music and art can play in societal change. The militant attitude of the group couldn’t be more obvious. As Maria Alyokhina stated after being given a 2-year sentence, “When we talk about Putin we have in mind first and foremost not Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, but Putin the system that he himself created. The power vertical, where all control is carried out effectively by one person, and that power vertical is uninterested, completely uninterested, in the opinion of the masses...”. Standing beside Alyokhina was Tolokonnikova, wearing a «No Pasarán» t-shirt with the image of a raised clenched fist to symbolize her belief in resistance and revolution.

After the global uprisings of 2011, Pussy Riot has laid the groundwork to reunite the world of artistic dissent and political action on the street. Moreover, after the arrests of the three members, the rest of Pussy Riot has kept on keepin’ on. The group is growing and has just released their new single “Putin Lights Up the Fire”. Their newest creation is an online video that undoubtedly seems like nothing less than a Pussy Riot Manifesto. It shows members of the collective burning a large photo of Putin while hanging off the side of a massive building, yelling for calls of protest into the camera. At the end of the video, Pussy Riot asks their supporters for one thing - “Start a Pussy Riot and never stop” ●



We Were The Malcontents

An interview with
REVERSIBLE CORDS

In a review of the Reversible Cords' only LP in *The Daily Texan* from 1980, Tom Huckabee is described as someone "who makes considerable virtue out sheer unpredictability". It is exactly this virtuous unpredictability that has made the

ReCords stick in my mind, ever since I came across a clip of "Malcontents" on Youtube a couple of years ago. They seem, at all times, to be travelling at great speed between opposites -between loud and quiet, between spiky social commentary and goofball self-parody – creating an energy and an urgency that never relents . With these thoughts in mind, I spoke to Tom, the band's drummer - along with singer Lynn Keller and keyboardist Bert Crews - about playing in the state capitol rotunda, lacklustre orgies and being Roky Erikson's valet.

All responses are Tom's, unless otherwise stated.

Could you tell us a little bit about how the Reversible Cords came about and how involvement with the band began?

Bert Crews, the keyboard player, assembled the band in late 1978, first bringing in Doug McAninch on guitar. Doug was the little brother of a friend of Bert's from college. Ty Gavin (of the Next) was the original drummer. Ty introduced Bert to Lynn

Keller, the lead singer. They had a successful debut at Rauls, all dressed in police uniforms, as Bert was already having legal troubles, having been arrested the day after the Huns [Tom and Bert's other band] bust for posting handbills that said, "Kill Officer Steve Bridgewater."



When Bert decided to take the band to the streets with himself on accordion, Doug on acoustic guitar, and Lynn singing, Ty balked at playing the steel drum, which was actually just a toy and terribly out of tune. (Bert, having studied avant garde music at Rice University had an appreciation for atonality which was lost on most punks) When Ty balked at playing it, Bert sweet-talked me into it. To my surprise the acoustic version of the band was an immediate success, with audiences and critics alike. Where the other punk bands were limited to playing at Raul's, we played all around Austin, mostly unsanctioned, at restaurants, blue-grass clubs, movie theaters, even the state capitol rotunda. We played for the queue of people waiting on line to see Elvis Costello, who recognized us later on stage, referring to us as the ReTards.

What was the music scene in Austin like at the time? Were you surrounded by a lot of like-minded bands and strong sense of community or did you guys feel like you were blazing a trail on your own?

Blues, reggae, jazz, classic rock, heavy metal, rockabilly and outlaw country were the standard genres, popular in the clubs. (We had our superstars, Willie Nelson, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Joe Ely, Doug Sahm, Asleep at the Wheel, roots-oriented music) Most of the musicians who ended up forming the core of the Raul's scene were ten years younger than the aforementioned artists, and somewhat alienated and/or intimidated by their accomplishments and virtuosity. A lot of us were film students and art students, or working-class kids, many who could barely play, who just wanted to get on stage and go crazy like the Sex Pistols or play simple three-chord rock like the Ramones. There was camaraderie, but a lot of

competition and enmity, too. Punk rockers by nature are anti-social contrarians, add alcohol to the mix and there was a lot of conflict between bands and within bands. Bert and Doug could be loud and obnoxious, provoking other musicians and their fans. Their shenanigans got us banned from Raul's for a few months early on, which might have been the end of us if we didn't have the acoustic thing to fall back on.

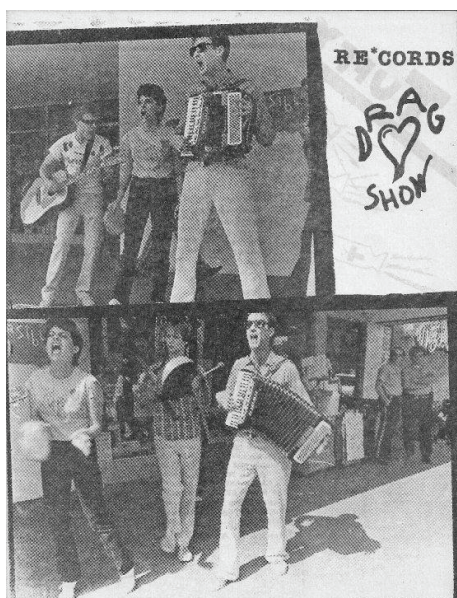
You mentioned just now that the ReCords often used to play impromptu acoustic shows all across Austin. What do you think this 'portability' added to the band?

We were the only portable, acoustic punk outfit in Austin, the first in the world as far as I know, and this forced people to take us seriously who might not have done so otherwise. Our first recording, the 33 1/3 EP, was all acoustic. It was the second recording (after the Bodysnatchers single) was the first EP to come out of the Austin punk scene. When Lester Bangs did a survey of the Austin scene in Musician magazine in 1980, he gave us an inordinate amount of ink and international validation.

The acoustic thing did other things, too. It focused attention on our songwriting. It allowed people to sing along with our songs. It took us out of the punk ghetto and presented us to a much wider audience. We had lofty artistic and political ambitions. We knew we couldn't compete as an electric rock and roll outfit with other local bands like the Skunks, the Huns and Standing Waves, not to mention international acts like Talking Heads, Devo, Sex Pistols, The Clash, the Ramones.... so the acoustic thing - a great leap of faith on our part at a time when punk rock was synonymous with electrified music - allowed us to distinguish ourselves from the pack.

Also, we were no longer preaching to the choir of orthodox punks, we were evangelizing to the general public. We were directly shocking the bourgeoisie, going way beyond the punk crowd of a few hundred people

and even beyond the university crowd to reach people who had never even heard of punk rock, like when we played in the rotunda of the state capitol, disrupting the Texas legislature and getting on television. Another aspect of the acoustic set was that it harkened back to a longer tradition of avant garde and agit prop music - a la Stravinsky, John Cage,



A ReCords acoustic show

Harry Partch and Weil/Brecht - with whom we identified. The Situationists, who inspired the Malcolm McLaren and punk graphic style, were also an influence; their desire to take art to the streets, beyond the confines of exclusive dingy smokefilled bars, safe from people "who understood". We were actively seeking to confront mainstream listeners. In this respect, we didn't care if we were punk rock or not; we were forging our own path, in some regards trying to be "more punk" in attitude, by breaking with punk rock conventions. Which also led us to performing with Roky Erickson.

Ah yeah, how did that come about?

Roky was a legend among punks in Austin, because of "Two-Headed Dog" and "Burmuda" and rumours about his bizarre behaviour. He hadn't played in Austin, or anywhere as far as we knew, for several years. Nobody even knew where he was or if he was alive. Doug Sahm and his crowd knew, but we didn't know any of those people. We didn't know that Roky was recording with a new band in San Francisco and a new album produced by Stu Cook. All we knew was the EP Sahm produced and the 13th Floor Elevators albums. The Elevators had been validated by their appearance on the first Nuggets collection by Lenny Kaye, which itself was a big influence on American punk rock. The Elevators were to Texas punk rock what the Velvet Underground was to New York punk rock. This relationship was underlined by the fact the Velvets' Sterling Morrison was teaching English at UT Austin and had already embraced the Huns and the ReCords.

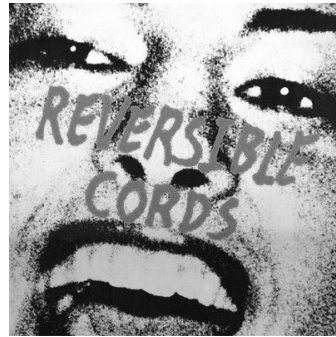


The poster for the ReCords show backing Roky Erikson in Austin

Still, there had been no direct contact between Roky and the punk rock scene that I know of, except through Lenny Kaye and Patti Smith. Then as fate would have it, a friend of ours at the time was working as an operator for the phone company in Austin. She handled a collect call between Roky, who was living with his mother in Austin, and his manager in San Francisco. Illegally, she copied Rocky's telephone number and gave it to Bert. Bert called the number, spoke to Roky's mom and asked

if Roky was home. Within a few days Bert, Doug and I were rehearsing with Roky in a vacant house. The songs were things like "Creature with an Atom Brain," "Night of the Vampire," "The Damned Thing," all the songs that ended up coming out a few months later on his album "The Evil One."

We booked a show at Raul's on May Day 1979 with the ReCords opening for Roky Erickson, backed up by Bert, Doug and myself. It was a sell out, and the first time that hippies and punks partied together without incident in Austin. Once again the ReCords were broadening the scope of punk rock in Austin. We played one more show with Roky before he was snatched away by another band The Explosives. The simple fact was that as musicians we weren't up to the level we needed to be to back up somebody of Roky's musical calibre.



That was not the end, however, of my association with Roky. He moved in next door to me and hung out daily at my apartment. I became his defacto valet and chauffeur, taking him to gigs, to get cigarettes and ice cream. At the time, he was in my estimation clinically paranoid schizophrenic, off his meds, hallucinating demons (mostly friendly)... but in a very fertile time creatively. We had a common love for film and discussed making a movie out of "The Damned Thing," his song based on the Ambrose Bierce story of the same name. That was in 1980. In 1982 on a trip back to Austin, Roky told me he was mad at me because I never followed through with the Damned Thing. Ten years later I wrote the script. Only in July this year did I reconnect with Roky to give him a copy of the script.

Do you have a favourite ReCords track?

Not an absolute favourite. I love "Guyana Holiday". It has a great beat and melody. Great lyrics. Bert wrote it the day that news of the Guyana massacre was broadcast.

The lyrics are ironic, of course, written from the point of view of one of Jim Jones' executioners. It was an instant success with the punk crowd, as close as any band from the era in Austin got to writing an anthem that everyone could embrace and which everyone remembers. Especially when we played it acoustically people would sing along with the chorus. There were lots of punk rock songs about the Guyana tragedy. I think what was so appealing to new wavers was that it illustrated the worst excesses of hippie group-think.

"Plastic Money" is another favourite. I think Doug and Bert wrote it together, making fun of punks who were being supported by their parents, which interestingly enough, including 3/4ths of the Reversible Cords. So, it had a very self-deprecating aspect to it, which was a hallmark of both the ReCords and the Huns: making fun of

ourselves. Everyone was a target of our disdain, including and especially ourselves. That may have been something that some of the other Austin musicians didn't get, that we were just as hard on ourselves as we were on them. What we did have in common with punk rockers worldwide is that we didn't do love songs! We

didn't do peace songs. We sang about things that were bothering us, socially, personally, interpersonally, almost always with an ironic, jaundiced eye. We were know-it-alls, aware of our utter know-nothing-ness, and to a certain degree that we were just imitating the Sex Pistols, which reminds me of that great Allen Ginsberg poem, "Punk Rock You're My Big Crybaby."

Then there are my songs, "Big Penis Envy" and "Teen Orgy," which were comic confessions of sexual insecurity, turning the rock star mythos on it's head. "Penis Envy," was like a whacked-out musical theater piece, where I got to be like Ringo Starr, stepping out behind the drums to assume lead vocals, a bit off key just like Ringo singing "With a Little Help From My Friends."



“Teen Orgy” came out of an actual experience. One Friday evening I was having a beer with friends at Raul’s and it was dead. A couple of girls I knew walked in drunk and invited us to an orgy, which seemed like a great idea at the time. The next couple of hours were very memorable but not particularly sexy. In fact, I ended up being the first to leave and on the way home I wrote “Teen Orgy,” a lament over my inability to enjoy what had been a life-long fantasy of mine. One week later, we were performing it in the same club where the event had begun. That right there was one of the greatest pleasures of those days, having an experience on Friday and be singing about it on the following Friday.

Two other songs I love are “Sabotage” and “Highway Tomorrow,” both by Bert. “Sabotage” revealed his anarchist political leanings, knowledge of history, and love of Brecht/Weil and “Highway Tomorrow” his whimsical, extroverted side. “Malcontents” by Doug is some kind of masterpiece, an admission of weakness by a teenage rebel who knows he’s outmatched by the forces aligned against him.

I’m curious about the band’s move from the early acoustic sound to predominantly electric sound of the LP. By the sounds of it, the acoustic set-up was a very successful one, so why the shift?

***Bert:** The band had pretty much broken up when Tom’s brother offered the use of his studio. I had a huge collection of recorded materials: live shows, practice tapes, stuff that members of the band had worked on but never brought to the band. And Tom and I went into his brother’s recording studio with the intent of creating a **Reversible Cords** post-mortem album. But after transferring many tracks, Lynn and Doug got interested and joined in. So oddly enough, the album started off as a sound collage. Electric or acoustic was never the issue, rather songs vs. sounds.*



Lynn ,I'm interested to hear about you experiences as the only female member of the group. Was your gender difference something that you were conscious of? What was it like being a woman in the Austin punk scene at the time?

The band was not an issue, as far as treating me like a 'girl', but I was really young - only 18 - and had never been in a band so I was more agreeable than I might have been if I was more experienced, but it wasn't because I was a woman. But there was a time I was singing on a table top, and a biker came up to me afterwards and said he almost left because a woman (me) was singing 'Sabotage' on top of a table. I didn't even understand his problem with that. I never cared about putting myself in some woman role, because I was a tomboy, and I never adhered to the female games. I was just there to be myself, and if someone had a problem, it was theirs. And we were more artsy than punk, although art punk really was a huge part of the scene worldwide, but most people think it was all Ramones and Sex Pistols sounding stuff.

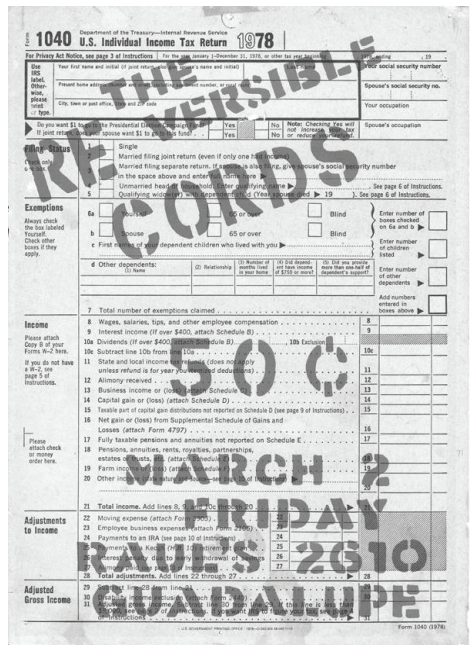
We had bottles thrown at us on several occasions, and no one stopped because I was a girl. They just starting feeling a riotous kind of energy, and started throwing things.

What kind of issues preoccupied the band?

Sexual identity and power; Authoritarian control vs. youthful rebellion; Consumerism; being innovative musically and making a contribution to culture at large; having fun; blowing people's minds and our own. Breaking through to higher states of consciousness.

I've always been really struck by the band's artwork and I heard a really great story about how you once printed posters on some government tax paper. What exactly is the story there and what do you reckon the importance of the visual was to the band?

We all had artistic ability and enjoyed making posters. Mine were usually sexually obscene. Bert's were either very colourful or political, or in the case of the tax poster, both. He also was well versed



The infamous 1040 tax form poster

in Dada, Bauhaus and Situationist design.

It was a couple of weeks before income tax day. Bert got the idea to "steal" as many 1040 tax forms as possible (they're given out free at every post office) and transform them into handbills. Using an old offset press, he printed info for an upcoming show at Raul's and then spread thousands of them around Austin. On the day of the show, two federal treasury agents showed up at soundcheck and arrested Bert for "destruction of government property." He was released on bail in time to play the show.



The band was around for little more than a year - are you happy with the ephemeral nature of the band or would have liked to carry on for longer?

We accomplished a great deal in a short period of time. I'm very proud of both our records, the EP and the album, and many of our live shows and political/publicity stunts: inventing acoustic punk... helping to popularize Roky Erickson among punks....

Would you be open to a Reversible Cords reissue?

Absolutely. Why not? Let's do it.

What influence do you the internet and digital media have had in reigniting possibly overlooked bands/scenes and musical communities?

I imagine it's speeded up the rediscovery process and gotten our music to many thousands of people who wouldn't have otherwise ever heard of us.

Lynn, these days you are pretty heavily involved in interfaith ministry and spiritual music. I was wondering, what, if any, role do you see your involvement with punk as having had in where you find yourself today?

First, I am really the only band member still actively performing music. I sing mantra music called kirtan. There are a lot of punks who are into or who have been into this music.

It has an energy similar to punk, it is call and response music with the audience repeating the line after the leader. It is very ecstatic with lots of high energy, and it is quite spontaneous; it can't really be rehearsed because it occurs in the moment. The crowd I am with now are all about opening the heart, which is opposite than the punk scene. The punks had that defense fronting whereas I was always into the idea of just being able to express myself creatively even if I wasn't an expert musician. I loved that freedom, and that has certainly carried me throughout my life.



A still from *The Death of Jim Morrison*

Whilst you were in The Reversible Cords you were also studying at film school. I came across a student film of yours, *The Death of Jim Morrison*, and, aesthetically at least, the film reminds me quite a bit of the work of so-called “no wave” filmmakers like Vivienne Dick and Amos Poe who were working in New York at around the same time . Were you aware of these guys and did you identify as a “punk” filmmaker?

Yes, I was aware of the New York filmmakers especially Amos Poe. I identified with them to a degree and with others like Jerry Casale of Devo, David Byrne, The Screamers, The Doors, The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Lydia Lunch, who were making movies and music. Death of Jim Morrison was picked up by an San Francisco

distributor who mostly handled punk films. Jim Morrison like Dylan, John Lennon, Lou Reed, Neil Young, were 60s era acts that appealed equally to to punks as they did to hippies.

How do you feel your filmmaking has progressed? Where do you take your visual cues these days? Are you working on any projects at the moment?

My last major film work was Carried Away, which is a semi-autobiographical family drama. It is not edgy, certainly not punk, like much of my earlier work, which surprised some people, but not people who know me well. It does have a big music component by a group called The Theater Fire, my favourite band from Fort Worth. They've got an acoustic folk rock cowboy Americana kind of sound, like a down-beat version of The Band, but they all came out of punk rock. I'm inspired by all kind of music - if it's good and if I like it.

These days, I rarely listen to punk and only then if I have control of the volume. I'm 57, and never particularly loved loud music. The Huns were too loud for my taste. I actually prefer to hear unamplified music. If all the amplifiers in the world fell into the sea, I'd be okay with it.

I'm the story editor of a comedy ghosthunting TV series called "Ghostbreakers" which debuts on the Youtoo Cable Network in October.

I'm also co-producer of The Starck Club Project, a feature documentary about a nightclub in Dallas in the 80s, which we are arguing led to the world wide rave movement, that is, it is the place where MDMA and Techno music first came together in a big way and inspired the first illegal raves in Dallas in the late 80s.

The interview was carried out over email, September 2012.

You can find out more about Tom's film *Carried Away* at:
www.carriedawaythemovie.com

The Death of Jim Morrison is available on Vimeo:
vimeo.com/37711057

You can find out more about Lynn's current musical project, Sri Kirtan, at:
www.srikirtan.com

All images courtesy of Tom Huckabee and Bert Crews (www.bertcrew.com)

THE NIXE: UTREG LADY PUNX

Interview with
Nikki Meijerink



MW How did you get in touch with punk?

NM I got in touch with punk mid 1978 by meeting Ton Bosma, Lex Vermeend and Gerben Reyers at the Spinnhok, some alternative Youth Centre in Utreg in the 70s. They were punk and my best friend Bunny and I kind of liked their bad attitude that really shoke up the hippie scene that the Spinnhok (and so were we) was at that time. My friend and I were volunteers there and sometimes we were the DJs. To shock the crowd we asked the boys to give us their punk records and a list what to play and that really worked. Bunny got into a relationship with Ton Bosma who became the second

singer of The Duds, the first punk band in Utreg. I got into a relationship with Lex Vermeend, who started The Lullabies with Gerben Reyers. Through me they met Robin, my brother, who became the singer of The Lullabies. By the way: he hang himself in 1997.

Ilva was Robin's girlfriend since 1975 and also one of my best friends. Because our boys were in The Lullabies from the end of 1978 and we got bored when they were away rehearsing we decided to start our own band. We asked Bunny but she didn't want to. So Ilva asked Marian who was her best friend since they were babies. Marian could play "Smoke on the Water" and "The House of the Rising Sun" on guitar which made her a guitar virtuoso in our opinion. I decided to play bass cause I thought it was easy and Ilva, being even more lazy than I was, decided to sing.

Marian said yes immediately. Now we only had a drummer problem. Being with three girls we really wanted a girl and there we hadn't met other punk girls yet in Utreg so when Ilva and I were walking through town one day we saw a gorgeous little punk girl (just 15 years old) waiting at a bus stop. We attacked her screaming and yelling and asked her if she wanted to be a drummer in our band. Though she never even touched a drumstick she said yes and we told her to come

to our rehearsal place soon because we had our first gig two weeks later. And so it happened. We rehearsed two times and did our gig in De Baas. It was a complete mess but great even though I don't remember much of it being too drunk.

MW What was the first punk show you attended?

NM The first punk band I ever saw was indeed The Ramones in 1977. By that time I was also working as a volunteer in RASA and that was where they were playing. I didn't like it at all! But that was probably because I was on a LSD trip and I thought these guys were scarily ugly (which by the way they also would have been if I would have been sober) and made terrible noise. I kind of liked The Talking Heads though... They were the support act that night. The first punk band I saw because I wanted to were The Duds. I think somewhere late summer 1978. They were great! Being a really bad dancer I liked to pogo which I was pretty good at being 1,85 meters and always prepared to show any guy that I was tougher than they were.

MW And the first record you bought that changed your life?

NM I'm not sure but I think it was The Clash album *Give 'Em Enough Rope* that I really liked first. I saw them as well in August or September 1978. That

was in Paradiso Amsterdam. But... hate to admit it... I was so drunk already at the beginning of the gig that I went out somewhere on the balcony and woke up just at the moment they ended the gig and smashed up their equipment.

MW How was the early scene in Utreg?

NM The early scene in Utreg was really small. Just a handful of punx in the first year. And nothing to do for us really.

MW What was your favourite venue to hang out?

NM We visited the squat parties in Utreg out of which Tivoli was created and the only other place to go out for us in the beginning was the reggae club in the NV huis which later became the residence of Tivoli. These reggae guys kind of liked us being "outlaws" as well and they had the perfect way to control us, wild annoying kids that some of us really were. Especially from mid 1979 when there was a real birthwave of young punx (from 12 to 16 years old!). They could be really annoying which made us unwanted everywhere else. But the reggae guys gave us free joints and a movie every night they were open at 2 o'clock so we just sat there and fell asleep... like babies.

We weren't welcome in most bars and discos but that didn't matter, we didn't want to go

there anyway. The only bars that wanted us were De Baas and Café Eigenwijs. The last was a music cafe and we played a lot of times there in the early days of The Nixe and The Lullabies. But somehow the owner started to hate us at some point and we weren't welcome anymore. We didn't care cause one other reason for us to start the bands was to play all the alternative venues in Holland so we had fun with other punx and free drinks to go with it... What else could we need.

The fact that we were not welcome at the bars and clubs in Utreg was the main reason, I think, that there were so many bands. From mid 1979 there were about 30 or 40 punx and most of them were in bands. The Lullabies, The Nixe, The Raketax, The Bizon Kids, The Wogs, The Noxious, The Cold War Embryos, The Avengers and more.

The Nixe had the most gigs outside Utreg. I don't know why. We really didn't make the best music but we were girls of course and that was special and besides that we were funny.

The first year we had a Ford Transit van to go to our gigs. We usually played with two or three bands at a time. That means that we had the whole equipment and about 10 to 15 people in the backside of the van. Can you believe that! We were really on top of each other... fighting for air. Later when there were too many people

wanted to come with us we hired trucks. The kind that was meant to transport cattle... They were the cheapest. It's amazing we never had accidents with it. There was no door at the back, just a sailcloth, and if one of the guys needed to piss they just did it out of the back... on the highway... while they were drunk as hell. Miracle we never lost one... I think.



MW What were your favourite local bands?

NM I really loved all of the other Utreg bands but I think that The Lullabies, The Raketax and The Bizon Kids (with my younger brother Buffel on bass) were my favourites.

MW How many gigs did you play?

NM We had a lot of gigs. How many I don't remember. We existed for almost five years and had one to three gigs a week. Maybe not in summer when most venues were closed. But even if we didn't have gigs then we managed to play. Tivoli, Vrije Vloer and the squat parties were the places

where it sometimes happened that Ilva, Marian, Simone and I were going out at the same time. Ilva had a baby (my nephew) and Simone was mostly visiting The Rocking Ball House (a place for rockabillys) and I was helping my older brother Robin being a roadie in the weekends that we didn't have any gigs. So it didn't happen a lot that we were going out at the same time and the same place. But if that happened we always wanted to play. And we were always allowed to use the instruments and equipment of the bands that were playing... All because we were so charming and sweet of course.



MW Did you play “women only” gigs?

NM We actually did one “women only” gig. I was the only one in the band that was strictly against that. Ilva and Marian wanted to play these gigs as well and Simone didn't care where she had to play. We once had a gig in Tivoli where only women were allowed. Ilva and Marian “forgot” to tell me.

Probably because they thought that if I was there I would play anyway. But I didn't. I didn't get mad either, I just laughed and said “Bye bye”. I didn't wanna do gigs where a lot of my best friends were not allowed to get in.

I surrendered once. That was for the Pink Saturday in Den Bosch I think. That's a yearly gay event. They offered us something like fl250 to play there. We were usually playing for expences and free drinks so that was a lot of money for us and Simone needed a new drumset so I let go of my principle and played anyway. Nice detail: I never tuned my bass myself, cause I was bad at that. So one of my male friends always did that for me. For this gig I had to do it myself. I was in tune but just one octave too high which made the top of my fingers bleed and my strings almost bend the neck of my guitar... So far feminism.

MW How was the Berlin gig with The Lullabies?

NM Berlin was great! The gigs were a lot of fun. I only remember four things very explicitly. The first was when we arrived at the Eastern German border and the Vopo's asked for our passports. We had a problem cause one of the girls forgot hers. But they didn't even notice. They were just laughing their asses off because of the differences

between the pictures on the passports, on which some of us were still sweet nice almost children and these punx in the van being all so weird... They let us go while having the giggles.

The second was that I was in a metro with Lex and Gerben. There was a big group of German rockabillicies in there as well. Then Lex and Gerben started to sing The Tits song: "We're so glad Elvis is dead". The rockabillicies were probably so amazed by their nerve that they didn't start a fight or anything... and I was just glad that we were not dead.

The third was that we were with a group of about 15 walking on the streets somewhere in Berlin and a police van came, stopped and 10 cops with truncheons came out and ordered us to walk on the pavement instead of the road. They actually threatened to beat us up if we wouldn't. We really had to breath our anger away because we knew we couldn't win but... Really shocking for us cause the Dutch cops would never do something like that.

And the fourth thing was that I had to stop a very drunk Lex that was trying to climb over the Wall to escape to East Germany.

MW Was there any band outside Utreg that you became friends with?

NM We got in touch with a lot of other Dutch bands on festivals

and in the venues but I don't remember being real friends with them. Maybe The Ex but they were partly from Utreg, we hung out with them several times. And The Neopogos, we hung out with them as well, they were from Haarlem and Ede I think.

MW In Utreg, with which bands were you friends?

NM In Utreg I was friends with all the bands... Loved them all.

MW How did you form part of the now legendary *Utreg Punx* EP?

NM I don't remember much of the making of the *Utreg Punx* EP. It was just there at some point... Sorry, black hole in my memory. I guess The Lullabies and The Ex made that happen but I'm not sure. Some of The Ex were from Utreg, I think, at least at some point. Nice people, great band. Still exists as far as I know. We were definitely friends with the other bands as well.

MW What do you remember of the making of the *Nixe* EP?

NM The *Nixe* EP we recorded in some small studio in Zwolle I think but we have also been to some studio nearer to Utreg maybe for the LP we made with The Lullabies, The Bizon Kids, ZeroZero and The Rapers. In both cases Gert van Veen helped us to produce the thing. Gert van Veen was singer and keyboard player in a couple of bands from Utreg like The Hi Jinx and The Secret Sounds.

He is now in Quazar, a house act. He studied musicology and worked as a music reviewer for De Volkskrant. He liked the Utrege Punx scene a lot and did everything he could to help us.

I don't remember how much it costed us but not much I'm sure. And I think we made 1000 copies but it could also be 500. We didn't have money to buy the covers. Ilva and Marian were at that point both working as kindergarten teachers. They first let all the toddlers make nice drawings on folding sheets. Yes I admit... child labor... guilty as charged. And when these poor little toddlers were tired of it we started to do the rest ourselves. It took a whole night but some bottles of wodka, pizza, amphetamines and music made us go through it. I don't have any one but on the Myspace Nixe page there are some people that do have them. Really funny. On the most we just wrote "The Nixe" but as it got later we just wrote or draw on it what came up to us so some of it just say "I want pizza" or "wodka" or "I want to go home".



MW By the way, who was behind Rock Against Records?

NM Rock Against Records was made up by Willem Koppenol. He was friends with The Rondos, a band from Rotterdam – they were communists and quite serious about everything. So was Willem. The Rondos told him where to make really cheap records (somewhere in Belgium, I think) and how to distribute them. He was sort of friends with the Utrege Punx scene and he started Rock Against Records. He was also in The Megafoons wich was a political band. He was a funny guy always busy with local and national politics. I have no idea what happened to him.

MW What do you remember of the Rock Against Religion Festival?

NM The only thing I remembered from the Rock Against Religion Festival is that it was Christmas 1982 and that it ended up in a big fight with the cops. They came in at about 3 at night and wanted to stop the festival because there were nasty things written on the wall of the City Hall which was next to the place where the festival was, and there were always nasty things written on it. It was just a stupid excuse to "play" with us. I didn't mind at the time, I loved to "play" with them.

MW Why did The Nixe disband?

NM We disbanded The Nixe in

March 1984. No fights or musical disagreements or anything. Just because we got bored with it, I guess. We were no musicians and our music making didn't make much progress through these 4,5 years. It was OK for that time but now it was time to move on.

MW Did you play in other bands?

NM None of us ever played in a band again even though I did some jamming with some roadie friends of mine. The four of us were working as volunteers in De Vrije Vloer in Utrecht in 1986, I think, and we loved to bring our guitars and jam on the stage while the place was closed. Very weird music we made, Sonic Youth weird[ness].

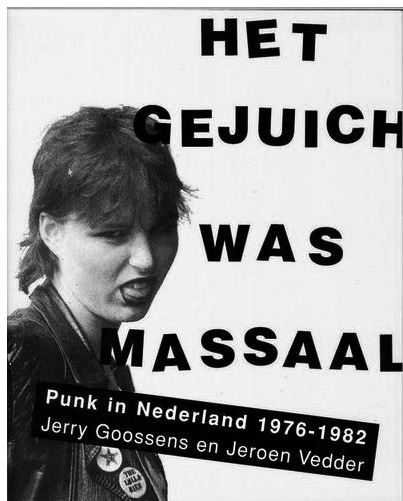
MW How did the 2008 reunion gig happen?

NM The 2008 gig was great! In fact it came out of the LP that was made. The initiative for that LP was made by Jaques and Lily, they're French fans! They wanted to make a compilation of The Nixe and asked Jeroen Vedder to arrange it and so it happened. By the same time Rob van Scheers, a historical writer and once a fan of The Nixe, wrote a book about people that meant something for the city. And guess what... we were in it. He wanted to present the book on a Cultural Sunday, which meant that through the whole town theatre and music was played that had something

to do with the book, and he asked us to play as well. And so we did. It was great fun but I do think this was really the last time.

We also played in De Melkweg in 1996 with the representation of the Epitaph CD *I'm Sure We're Gonna Make It* and the book by Jeroen Vedder and Jerry Goossens *Het gejuich was massaal*. A CD and a book about Punk in the Netherlands from 1976 til 1984. Jeroen and Jerry are friends of us and they asked us to play. When we got there and the official party of the night started I found out why: My picture is on the cover of both of them, the CD and the book. It really knocked me of my feet.

By the way: I still see Ilva a lot, she's like my sister. Marian I don't see a lot but we do phone or mail sometimes. Simone is still missing.



MW What was the most important thing you learnt of being in the punk/underground scene?

NM I really don't know what's the most important thing I learned from being in the punk/underground scene. I could say: Don't give a fuck about what other people think about the way I'm dressed and the things I do, but I was like that long before my punk years. It's just a character thing. Maybe I learned something about how "normal" people can get shocked by people that don't fit in what they think is normal behaviour. I once did a test with Buffel. We were walking on the streets of Utreg and people were watching us as if we were pariahs. Then Buffel took one of his arms out of his leather jacket and put it behind his back so there was an empty sleeve which looked like he only had one arm. I walked about 10 meters behind him and watched the people's faces. When they saw him their faces showed clearly disapproval but when they saw his empty sleeve their faces turned to compassion. We had a lot of fun with that one.

MW How has it affected your life?

NM The way it has affected my life? It brought me a lot of fun and an open mind to everybody that's different, but here it's the same thing: I was like that before my punk time.

MW Any advice to young kids?

NM To the young kids today I could say: Go YOUR way, live and let live and have fun. But that's easily said, there are too many kids in this world that will never have the opportunity to do so.

THE NIXE

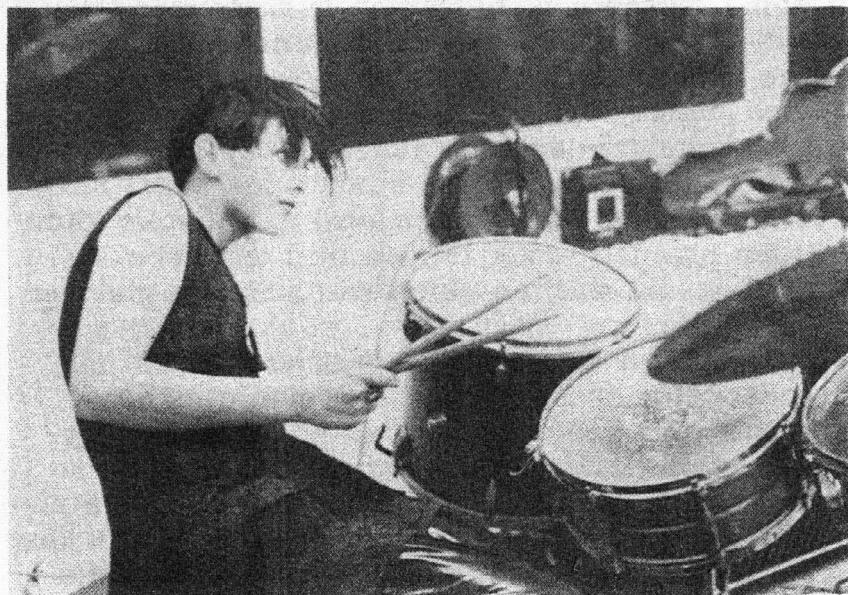
"Formed in 1979, The Nixe appeared on the legendary *Utreg Punx* EP alongside The Lullabies, The Ex, Noxious and Rakketax and released one hard to find self-titled EP of their own, complete with hand-made covers drawn by school kids. Their sound was extremely primitive, with exuberant almost Shaggs-style no technique breakdowns supporting cute/snotty songs full of teenage ennui and anti-establishment sarcasm." *David Keenan*

Interview by
Eduard Barcelón

Pics by
Jeroen "Buffel" Meijerink

Barcelona ES—Groningen NL
October 2011





Gudrun Gut beim Schlagzeugspielen

GUDRUN GUT

Interview by Maren Karlson, Summer 2012
Edited and translated by Maren Karlson
With finishing touches by Gudrun Gut
Photo taken from WOLFGANG MÜLLER: GENIALE DILLETANTEN.
MERVE VERLAG, BERLIN 1982

WHERE ██████████ DO YOU COME FROM, AND WHY DID YOU COME TO BERLIN?

I grew up in the 70ies in the Lüneburger Heide (RURAL AREA IN NORTHERN GERMANY), ██████████ and at one point I got to an age where everything got too small and narrow there. I felt like there was no room to express myself any further. Luckily I had a friend who always took me on trips to Berlin, which is how I got to know the Berlin scene. I still remember exactly how I got off the train at Schlesisches Tor for the first time - it smelled like kebab and all kinds of things. Where I came from it didn't smell like anything, except maybe of the heath, and everything was very tidy, the typical small western german suburb. When I was in Berlin for the first time I thought "OK, I have to try anything and everything to come and live here." - and ██████████ that is what I did. I was working to finish my Abitur (GERMAN EQUIVALENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, OR A - LEVELS), and while I was doing that I also applied at HDK (TODAY UDK, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS BERLIN) for Visual Communications and got in, and then I didn't even finish my Abitur anymore. I was really ██████████ lucky!

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE UNTIL YOU FELT AT HOME HERE?

About two years. I guess the first two years in Berlin are always a bit hard. This city has its very own toughness, it can be really harsh when you're new here. After two years that feeling unraveled though, I exactly remember that, and it also happened to others like this. It was quite difficult for me at the beginning. These things need time, it just doesn't happen so fast. I met a lot of new people, but those weren't necessarily friendships at once.

HOW DID YOU MEET BETTINA KÖSTER? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO HER BACK THEN, AND WHY DID WORKING WITH HER GO SO WELL? WHY DID YOU DECIDE THAT AFTER YOUR FIRST BAND ██████████ MANIA D. (WITH BEATE BARTEL AND BETTINA KÖSTER) HAD DISBANDED YOU WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE MUSIC TOGETHER? HOW DID YOUR FRIENDSHIP INFLUENCE YOUR WORK PROCESS?

I don't remember exactly how we met... she also studied Visual Communications, but we didn't meet at university, rather in the cafés everyone went to, or through some mutual friends, or maybe through Beate Bartel. I think we had ~~tasted~~ blood with Mania D., and we both also had a lot of fun playing live. We just wanted to go on doing that. Bettina was more of a frontwoman, and I was the one responsible for the background, for the music. My

first band in Berlin wasn't Mania D. though, it was Din A Testbild. But this didn't last long - Mania D. was the band I felt really comfortable in and it really was exciting.

WHAT OTHER BANDS FROM THE LOCAL SCENE INSPIRED YOU? WHAT WERE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES? CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN BERLIN IN THE LATE 70IES / EARLY 80IES A BIT? DID YOU SEE YOURSELF AS PART OF A PUNK / NEW WAVE SCENE IN BERLIN BACK THEN?

There weren't any Berlin bands really. We listened to Can, and we thought Kraftwerk were also quite okay. I was a really big NEU! fan. German music back then didn't have any reputation at all. That is completely different today! Back then everything came from the UK or the US. That whole punk thing was really important to me. Just doing what you want! I also really loved Throbbing Gristle, anything that wasn't too commercial. I quickly realized that I did not want to go into that normal punk direction. To me that was just rock'n'roll played faster. With music it can be like in fine arts - a completely perfect painting doesn't always have to be the purpose.

We had quite a good exchange of ideas with Düsseldorf. There was this really good zine called Ostrich for example, which was made by Peter Hein and Charley's Girls. Later with DAF. There was always this little group of people, in Berlin we shared our practice space with Die Haut, and Blixa Bargeld (OF EIN - STÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN). I studied with Niki from Die Tödliche Doris. The Zensor recordshop. Frieder Butzmann. Sprung aus den Wolken. Die Unbekannten. P1E. The Risiko bar.

CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR SHOP IN SCHÖNEBERG? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN, WHO WAS INVOLVED AND WHAT DID YOU SELL THERE?

"Eisengrau"! Now there is this vampire fashion shop in there. We sold second hand clothes there, self dyed shoes, clothes by Berlin designers. I had bought a knitting machine and sold knitted sweaters there. Later we also sold tapes there, and zines. Of course we didn't make any money, there were only very few people who actually bought something - it was really more of a hangout. Today those self made shops are totally normal, but back then it was something completely new!

DID MALARIA! SEE THEMSELVES AS AN APOLITICAL BAND? HOW DID POLITICAL EVENTS OF THAT TIME (THE WHOLE RAF ISSUE, OR THE FACT THAT YOU WERE SURROUNDED BY THE BERLIN WALL) INFLUENCE YOUR MUSIC?

I wouldn't say we were apolitical. Politics in pop music are always a difficult matter, because it quickly becomes a protest song. And that typical singer - songwriter (LIEDERMACHER) guy was kind of our enemy. But at the same time we were of course interested in politics! We played women's festivals where we got booed off stage because we were too loud, too masculine, as they put it. We created political friction in society with how we presented ourselves. We completely lived our concept of womanhood as we wanted. We also had a song about squatting. We were interested in politics, but we did not want to make protest songs. We were totally fascinated by the RAF of course. There is this song by Judy Nylon and Brian Eno where they sample sound files of suspected RAF members speaking on the phone, I thought that was great! And her name was Gudrun (Ensslin). I obviously thought that was cool.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT YOU DID IN MALARIA! WAS THAT EVERYONE PLAYED AN INSTRUMENT THAT THEY DIDN'T PLAY BEFORE. WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

That was the idea of Geniale Dilletanten (=INGENIOUS DILLETANTS. FIRST A FESTIVAL IN WEST BERLIN THAT FEATURED PERFORMANCES BY DIN A TESTBILD, EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN, DIE TÖDLICHE DORIS AND OTHERS, THE PHRASE WAS LATER USED BY MUSICIANS WHO CHALLENGED THE TRADITIONAL STANDARDS OF POP MUSIC). At first we also swapped instruments while playing, but after a while we thought that the pauses inbetween songs were too long because of it. On top of that everyone had started doing it. There were shows where you had to wait 5 minutes between songs! The idea was to get away from the typical musician that has to perfect everything, to not have the aim to be completely flawless at something. To us, the opposite was interesting: to make mistakes, and to create something new from that. I still work like that today: extracting from the chaos. The production is always very time consuming because I have to find the gem in the mess I created. The music industry back then was very clean and glossy, there ~~was~~ didn't exist any kind of alternative culture. Today that also gets ignored by the press again, but back then it was way more extreme. The mainstream pop culture just didn't have to do anything with us. It was completely lifeless. That is why punk was such a raving success here. The Neue Deutsche Welle - those simple lyrics were easy

to understand, but they still got a lot of things straight to the point.

YOU WERE DUBBED AS "THE MOST MODERN WOMAN OF THE WORLD" BY SEVERAL SOURCES. DID YOU EVER SEE YOURSELF LIKE THAT?

Haha, yes, I also read that! Even though I never saw myself like that, I often still was a little bit ahead of time somehow. My guess for a reason is: I was born dead. I had the umbilical cord wrapped around my throat, and was already blue in the face when I came out of my mother's womb. I then was beaten back to life. My mother always says that she was so relieved when I finally started crying after one hour. Maybe I was already one step further even back then. I know this is quite an absurd explanation, but if ~~you~~ you're asking like that...

THE MUSIC OF MALARIA! IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS VERY HARD, SERIOUS, BRUTAL, DESTRUCTIVE. WHY WAS IT SO IMPORTANT TO YOU TO EXPRESS NEGATIVE FEELINGS / PAIN?

Our live shows were always very euphoric. Someone once said our music was Teutonic, I find that very fitting. Most of the "hard" sound came from the two drum kits. It was harder, way harder than ~~the~~ The Raincoats for example. Malaria! was very beat oriented. Our music might have been a bit melancholic sometimes, but I wouldn't say it was (self-)destructive. We talked a lot about topics that were off-limits, e.g. death. Back then the goth movement didn't exist yet, but later we totally distanced ourselves from it, because we thought it was such a conservative movement. We didn't want to have anything to do with it, people got it confused a little. The same thing happened to The Birthday Party, and to Einstürzende Neubauten too. We just thought "What happened? How did we get here? This is not us!". We were friends with Siouxsie and The Banshees, but they were also different from that goth scene. X-Mal Deutschland for example played a lot more with that goth image. I always thought that contrary to Malaria! their sound was ~~very~~ very obviously UK oriented, whereas we tried to orient ourselves more openly. We wanted to create something completely new. With them you could exactly tell where they got what from. We thought that was too easy and a bit boring.

WHAT PARTS OF THE GOTH MOVEMENT DID / DO YOU FIND CONSERVATIVE?

Musically I think the scene is not really that open to experiments and uses mostly [redacted] 80s sounds and structures. And I think it is conservative to only look in your black circle and excite yourself about [redacted] the glory of your [redacted] dark thoughts and glorify your pain - I know there is darkness and I know there is sadness and pain but it shouldn't become [redacted] an end in itself. One has to see reality and life can be wonderful - it's a gift.

WHAT WAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF FEMININITY AS A BAND, BUT ALSO AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

When I first started making music I never really thought about gender questions. I was female, but I felt like a human being. That was the idea of punk: everything is equal. The gender issue was already big in Berlin since the 70s, so it was discussed on the street and quite normal. I was interested in their topics, and took part in that discussion and also read a lot, e.g. about how I wanted to maintain a relationship. In Berlin we always discussed things like that, everything: How do I want to live my life? How seriously do I take different things? That distinguished us from the UK. It really shocked me when I first got there: everyone was always perfectly styled in punk manner, but in the end you'd still marry and all of a sudden you were all bourgeois. It was a lot more about content here. There was this huge space for discussion. But the music at these women's festivals was really boring... kind of hobby - ish.

A "HARD", MORE BRUTAL, MABE EVEN AGGRESSIVE STYLE TO PLAY MUSIC AND APPEAR ON STAGE WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS ALWAYS RESERVED FOR MALE PERFORMERS. FEMALE PERFORMERS WERE (AND OFTEN ENOUGH STILL ARE) EXPECTED TO BE HAPPY, FRIENDLY, IN A GOOD MOOD, EASILY ACCESSIBLE. ONE COULD CALL MALARIA! A FEMINIST AVANT - GARDE, BECAUSE YOU [redacted] DIDN'T FULFILL THOSE EXPECTATIONS FOR WOMEN ON STAGE. DID YOU SEE YOURSELVES AS FEMINISTS?

That was always depending [redacted] on who we had to deal with. When we realized they were machos we said "Yes, we are feminists!", but when I had a feminist in front of me I claimed the opposite.

WHY THOUGH?

Because you don't move forward like that. I only just got used to the idea that I might be a feminist after all recently. I have never seen myself as one. I have also never really considered my record label Monika [REDACTED] to be feminist.

WHAT [REDACTED] CAUSED THAT CHANGE THEN?

[REDACTED] I think I realized that the power of women is still at the beginning - if you look at history, it hasn't been long that we can vote, and there are still countries where women can't. That look at time made me reconsider.

HOW WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER WOMEN IN BANDS? DID YOU SUPPORT EACH OTHER OR WAS IT MORE OF A COMPETITION BETWEEN ALL OF YOU?

There were a lot of women in bands back then, Hans - A - Plast from Hannover, The Slits, The Raincoats, Kleenex from Switzerland, Die Ätz - Tussis. When it is about social upheaval, women are always involved, because they are interested in change. But then, when it's about [REDACTED] building careers, they disappear! I guess men are more likely to feel like they have to earn [REDACTED] money to feed a family. It was more of a competition than supporting each other. Of course we wanted to be the best! There were friendships between bands obviously, but rather with who we played with, who we liked music - wise. We played a lot with The Birthday Party, and shared our practice space with Die Haut. Those Berlin constellations always held together. Take Die Ätz - Tussis for example: it was ok that they existed, but that whole hardcore punk thing didn't interest me that much.

WHAT ABOUT NEONBABIES?

That was way too Schlager - like for our taste, as was that whole Neue Deutsche Welle thing. I knew Inga and Annette from Neonbabies and Ideal, and I got along quite well with Annette, because she had intelligent political opinions, but musically Neonbabies / Ideal were really not my thing at all. Way too nice, way too commercial.

AND KLEENEX / LILIPUT?

They were also a bit harmless and nice for my taste. But Switzerland was a completely different world back then. All the bands from Berlin were way more "dangerous". It wasn't as beautifully renovated everywhere as it is now,

it was dirty, bullet holes from the war everywhere, and there was no money for anything. The apartments had an outhouse and coal heating. That was different in Switzer - land, which is why their music sounded different too.

WHAT IMPACT DID THE PUNK / NEW WAVE ERA HAVE ON SUBCULTURES IN BERLIN UNTIL TODAY, AND WHERE DO YOU SEE REMAINS?

I think everything that happned happened here leaves traces and develops into something else somehow. You can't ignore that there were the 20s. You can't ignore that there was Hitler. You can't ignore that there was the wall. And on a smaller scale and especially on the musical side: without the 80s and the emancipation of German pop and indie music the 90s with techno and all these new clubs would never have happened.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM PUNK? HOW DID PUNK INFLUENCE YOUR WAY OF DOING THINGS?

I learned impertinence, to not be afraid, to just do it.

Gudrun Gut has been one of the most important and most consistenst people in the Berlin music scene since the late 70s. I believe she knows the city and what is going on here like no one else does. One of her earlier projects Malaria! is still more popular than ever (even Beth Ditto wanted an autograpgh, she told me during the interview). Malaria! being only one of her many projects, she played in bands like Mania D., Matador (definitely check out the album "Sun"), Miasma, and Greie Gut FRraktion, and is also releasing her solo projects since 2007. When she wasn't ~~playing~~ playing in those, she kept busy the last 30+ years by organizing shows and festivals, by starting a weekly radio show callesd Oceanclub with Thomas Fehlmann (Palais Schaumburg) in 1994 that is still running, and by found - ing two record labels, Moabit and Monika Enterprise. She just released her second solo album "Wildlife" on the latter.

When I found out that Gudrun Gut had studied at the same university I'm studying at now, it made me wonder how she perceived West Berlin back then, how it cnanged, and what it meant to be a woman in the very early stages of the West Berlin punk / new wave scene. I met her in a cafe in Berlin Schöneberg, a neighbourhood that is mostly pop - ulated by expensive kitchen tool shops and tidy looking restaurants nowadays, just a five minute walk away from her former university.

Brilliant Colors are :
Jess, Michelle & Diane



Brilliant Colors have been one of my favorite bands to come out of California in the last decade. This interview took place on 8/22/10 at Lanesplitter, a pizza place & pub in Oakland right before a Neonates/Brilliant Colors show at Sugar Mountain. BC is releasing a tour flexi 7" this spring.

Also check out Jess & Diane's rad punk band, Index! I got to see them last summer at a taqueria with Hysterics and they blew me away. Not sure if they're still active but keep your ears open!

How did you guys meet?

Jess: I think we were set up on a band date. We (Jess and Diane) met at Maxim and then they met through me bringing her

Diane: I had known Michelle from New York..

What were you gals doing in New York?

Diane: I went to school; well both of us went to school there.

Michelle: I moved there to go to school. I moved there to go to Pratt to follow in my parent's lineage and go to art school. Normally you rebel against your parents by going to art school but they were like "oh excellent, right in the family line." I got a design degree and I don't really use it very much.

When did you start playing music?

Jess: I got a guitar in seventh grade. I got a four track in ninth grade. The rest is history.

I don't know anyone else's songs. I can honestly say that. I pretty much know Tally-Ho but that's it. But yeah, I've never had the patience for that. Diane: I played violin and clarinet in school growing up but then I stopped. I didn't start playing guitar until 3 years ago and then drums until about 2-ish years ago. Michelle: NATURAL AFFINITY.

Mary: I used to play clarinet too...

Diane: Yeah, I can tell.. Clarinet people.. I feel like you can always tell..

Jess [to Diane]: Did you play drums in another band before Brilliant Colors?

Diane- [Shakes head 'no.']

Jess: We [Jess & Diane] did a little band before Brilliant Colors called Essential Tremors, I did a demo tape that I'm gunna 'repress' sometime. I'd heard of Diane because she was in Carnal Knowledge in New York.

Michelle: I played flute in school but before that I would mess around with the keyboard we had in the family. So I started off hearing stuff and then figuring it out.

What did you figure out, what kind of stuff, Do you remember?

Michelle: I remember trying to play tunes on the radio that I heard and just sitting there for like hours and fuck around with harmonies and stuff. It was really entertaining. But I got a guitar when I was like 11. And I played that thing for a long time. I still play that thing. I started playing bass like 3 years ago.

What kind of guitar was it?

Michelle: It was a Squire. Stratocaster, sparkly teal, I still own it. It's really heavy. Sounds awful.

Jess: You should give that to me, I still

have the same shitty guitar I got...

Michelle: I can't give you my guitar!

Jess: I'm just saying I have the same shitty guitar people don't play with. I have a Peavey that I got for \$200.

What's your first guitar?

Jess: It's that piece of shit. I still play it.

What? It's the one you're playing?

Jess: Yeah. I got it in 7th grade. I traded in my violin; I even got it 'set up.' Now I like it. It's got really low action. I have a Japanese twelve-string too.

Do you play it much?

Jess: Ah I play it on the record, but live it's too much of a hassle.

Are you playing with any other bands?

Jess: No. I sometimes record songs with people but no, this is all I have time for really.

Michelle: I play guitar in this band called Honors, we're going to do an October tour.

Diane: My first band was a band called Carnal Knowledge. It was an all-girl hardcore band from New York. And now I play in a band called Opt Out and I play drums in a band called Livid.

How long have you been playing with this lineup?

Michelle: A year and a half.

Jess: I've had two other drummers and another bassist, Hollie and John were on the first demos which sort of accidentally became the first two 45s. I set up a big show with Finally Punk and Sex/Vid on New Years 2009 and that was the last show with our old drummer. When Diane came in it was instantly solid.

Michelle: Yeah, that was a really good practice. I remember that practice.

Jess: Sealed my suspicion that you should only play with punks because it's just so much better. Everybody else is like «Oh I don't really wanna play» "How long is this practice going to be" et cetera. They're such whiners.

What have been your experiences playing music with guys versus girls?

Michelle: My first band was with Matt from Matt and Kim! [everybody laughs] I didn't really start playing with people until I moved out to the Bay, which was right after that. I have definitely played in bands with heinous dudes who were absolutely crazy and mildly or fully misogynistic.

Jess: It's because Michelle's so good. She whips circles around them usually. I like the story of you playing with the other bassist.

Michelle: Oh yeah, the "two bassists" tour. We had rhythm bass and then lead bass. It sounded incredible.

Jess: And Michelle was the one whipping around and everybody thought she was the one doing rhythm. And the rhythm bassist was some bump on a log



dude who would still get all the compliments. Anyway, John was an original founding member of this band and critical to getting me to want to play shows. Diane: I was fully against playing with men for a really long time. 100%. But I play now with three. But yeah, I def prefer playing with women. I dunno, It's more chill, less pressure or something. But it kinda just depends on the person.

What are you guys listening to now?

Jess: Neonates!

Michelle: I've been listening to a lot of Fugazi lately.

Jess: I've also been listening to this band called the Proper Ornaments from England who are going to have a single out soon on Make-A-Mess. I really like that Weird TV demo I got, a band from Olympia.

Diane: I've been listening to The Proletariat and Rudimentary Peni.

Jess: I love Rudimentary Peni. That's basically what we try to sound like... meets The Beatles.

What was your last tour like?

Jess: Europe was a glorified vacation. But the UK had good shows, and we toured with La La Vasquez which was so much fun it didn't matter how the shows went. Non-stop giggles tour. We all stuck together, it was cool, we all had our specific support techniques.

Michelle: That was the easiest tour I've ever done in my life. You guys are amazing.

Jess: Diane was really good at telling me: «We're all really hungry and tired» and that would calm me down instantly when I was starting to freak out. That was basically what the tour was, Diane telling me we were all really hungry and tired and I had to keep it together.

Michelle: We're all halting, we're all fine.

Jess: Yeah, we had HALTING which is

an AA acronym that we'd use: Hungry Angry Lonely Tired. This is what you'd say when you were about to snap and then everybody knows you mean business. You have to have a safety word, especially on tour!

Michelle: Or FINE. Frustrated, Insecure, Nervous and Emotional.

Jess: Yeah. I'm fine I'm fiine. I keep saying that off tour but nobody knows what I'm talking about.

Gwendolyn: Do you have any memorable moments on tour-- good or bad?

Michelle: I think that the most memorable moments were when we were being berated by sound dudes.

Jess: Oh yeah, the sound guys in Europe. Man. They felt like it was 1979 and we were Josie and the Pussycats or something: «Oh so are you trying to go for a punk sound there?» «Oh you need reverb -- 'cause you can't sing» «Oh these girl bands are really funny» –literally to your face. It was like anxiety dream sexism. It was so intense. Actually that was in the UK too. It was so hit or miss, like the good people were so nice and so friendly and made you like lasagna.

Did you guys play with any amazing bands?

Diane: My favorite was this one from Geneva called Massicot. They were the best!

Jess: We played with them in Lyon on a boat. And also this band called.... ha I dunno what it's called. I don't want to say the wrong name..

Diane: Former members of Pussy Patrol

Jess: Ooh yeah, this is a small world.

Michelle: It was named after a food item that I can't remember.

Jess: Yeah, it meant like really spicy? It was two girls from China and one girl from France and they were from Paris but we played with them in Lyon. Yeah,

try to find that Carmen San Diego! I know the drummer's name is Zha-Zha. [note: band is Malatang Machine]
Jess: And then La La Vasquez were really great. Every show felt special with them. They're doing a 7» on M'lady's and one on Sex Is Disgusting. I think they're just going to keep getting better and better.

Michelle: Yeah Andy and James!

Jess: They set up the best show on the tour in Brighton. It was so fun! People were literally singing along with us and dancing. The latter definitely never happens.

Michelle: Yeah people were freaking out, it was a great show.

Jess: We felt a little, and I never thought I'd say this... exotified? It was a like Dufest/California/Isn't America so funny/Palm Trees/beer pong thing. I didn't think it was possible for me to feel that but it was really weird! But it was really fun and they were all so sweet and made us delicious food and took care of us.

What was the venue called?

Jess: Cowley Club. It's been in MRR before. It's like an anarchist cafe/space/gift shop.

You guys did the UK tour with La La Vasquez and then the European tour by yourselves?

Jess: Yeah.

Michelle: It would have been really cool to have another band on tour with us in Europe.

Jess: Yeah but it could go terribly wrong. Like you could hate them and their music. But these girls [La La Vasquez] were probably the three funniest people we have ever met and we loved hearing their music and they were really chill. And they had phones! We didn't have phones, maps or GPS for this

entire tour, by the way, I really want everyone to note the date on this interview: 2010! We showed up like two and a half hours late to everything.

Michelle: Yeah, we drove from London to Paris without a map, without a GPS, without a cell phone. We didn't even realize it would be an hour in the future when we got there.

Jess: Plus Diane and Michelle are blind when it comes to street signs. I will say there were two hardcore tour stories.

One is a long boring thing but we couldn't take our tour van from the UK-leg, it was a stick shift and gigantic. The guy who rented it for us wasn't there and then Diane ended up having to front all the money for the deposit, which they doubled because they didn't know we were going to Europe with it. That was awful. Diane came threw. And also we went from Berlin to London (at the Berlin show we met Stef Petticoat and her girlfriend) in one night on the way back and literally we were all like 'yeah yeah I'll drive!' and then we all got narcolepsy, most of which was me.

Michelle: Yeah, Diane did most of the driving. I took the early morning crazy hours.

Jess: I woke up and Michelle was talking to French radio by herself and drinking a hundred soda pops.



Jess, since you lived in LA for like 9 months, do you wanna talk about the

differences between the LA music scene versus SF?

Jess: Well I feel like I went to a fair amount of shows but I don't feel like I have my finger on the pulse or anything. I'm sure there are more punk things than what I was going to, but it felt like people took more pictures and did more drugs which I found really boring. There seems to be like no shame about wanting to be on this label and that magazine there. It doesn't seem as taboo as it would be here.

Michelle: I feel like whenever I'm in LA somebody is offering me some crazy drug. Like «Oh, you're going to do tires? That does something?»

Do politics play a role in your music?

Michelle: Maybe indirectly.

Jess: We're obviously total weirdos so you have to be down with weirdos to be down with us.

Wanna talk about the songwriting process?

Jess: I bring lyrics, humming, guitar, the space for the music. They throw in bas and drums, and then A Hard Days Night is born [laughs]. I'm making more four-track demos now which is really exciting. I've always been way too lazy before now.

How do you usually record your stuff?

Jess: Well I have a 4-track but I think it's a pain in the ass to record yourself in any kind of real way. For the first singles, John, and I and this guy Reid May recorded us. We did the LP in a proper studio and our friend Ty did the last two singles in a day.

Last question! What was it like meeting Stef Petticoat?

Jess: Oh it was cool and her girlfriend is so cool and has the best hair cut, that's

what I mostly remember! They were both very sweet and friendly and encouraging and Stef took pictures of us as well. I love Stef's music and her story.

Did she go to your show in Berlin?

Jess: Yeah and also Marlene Marder from Kleenex came to our show in Zurich! That was so fun! She hung out all night. She gave me a little shit and some nice compliments, we talked about our dedication to Patti Smith, it was great. The kids at the show couldn't believe she was there and played Kleenex songs all night on the turntables. All of them were asking how we know each other and then in German she said a bunch of stuff to them.

Michelle: ...That equated to "We are punk. We are women. We are family"

Jess: It was a lot of German I didn't understand and then in English she said something to the effect of «This is new punk, I am old punk, like mother and baby." I died!

*Photos by David Armstrong

MEDICAL TOURISTS,

St Louis' finest...

by J.F.

photo: Greg Black.



Can you talk me about the lineup. How can you describe your music ?
Did you play in various bands before this one ?

Ann: Medical Tourists are Jason, Doug and me. Jason and I have been in a lot of bands together before. We had a synth punk band called SYNTAX ERROR a couple years prior, and I wanted to try another band with keyboards. We started the Medical Tourists while we were still playing in yet another band. We met Doug through a mutual friend. We all love early punk and quirky/good new wave, and all play instruments, so we decided to form a band. We knew that we wanted to use a drum machine, and we just played around with the music until we found our sound. I don't think it's a good idea to go after a specific sound or style. We just let the music come out naturally. It turned out to be quirky new wave with a clean cut punk attitude! Jason programs the drum machine, plays keyboard/synth and does backing vocals. Doug plays guitar. I play bass and sing. We all write the songs. I really just love playing music for fun. We don't take it too seriously. It's a just a great creative outlet.

St-Louis' scene : how is the crowd/promoters ? Some bands who shared the stage with you

Ann: Part of what happens when you've been around for awhile is that you end up discovering there are cycles in every scene. We've played with a lot of really good bands around town. Ashley from Binge and Purge (a now defunct vintage clothing store) was a big supporter, along with Tiffany from Apop Records.

Jason: We decided that we didn't want to play very much in bars with indie rock bands or whoever. The only other option where they'd tolerate us was at the non-lunkhead hardcore shows and other slightly off the map events. Our first show was in Apop Records on Record Store Day. We played a couple times with a bunch of hardcore bands in the back yard of Binge & Purge and some basement shows, including a great one opening for (Aussie bands). Lots of cool St. Louis bands like Glass Teeth, Maximum Effort, Sweet Tooth and several more. We did end up playing a couple music clubs/bars, too.



What does it mean synth punk for you? What do you think about bands like Bob or Schematix, The Maggots to name a few. What are your influences ?

Ann: I love both BOB and the Schematix, but a lot of what influenced the direction of this band for me was nerdier punk and new wave. I have no shame about proclaiming my love for bands like the Judys, Suburban Lawns, Plastics, Silicon Teens, etc.

Jason: I love BOB! I reissued their 1st 45 and they are a big musical influence for me. Many of my favorite records and songs that influenced my role in Medical Tourists are things like both bands you mention. I know some punk purists despise anything resembling a keyboard, but I love it when punk is mixed with synth and/or some

electronics and done right. Things like the Rock Bottom & The Spys EP, the Ice 9 and Count Vertigo records, "Corporate Food" by Anonymous, early Units, early Voice Farm and of course DEVO. I've been a fan since I was a young kid and "Whip It" was first on the radio.



The story of Rerun Records: How many years ago do you exhume some bands? the beginning? Talk me about your position to create with Rerun a serious label specializing in punk reissues as Sing Sing, Artifix, 1977, Last laugh...differences /point in common with them? Official reissues?

Jason: Rerun Records was started in the mid '90s, when I still lived in Wisconsin. I had released a few 7"s with a friend, under a different label name 1991-1993. After a couple years of not doing a label, I decided I wanted to try it again. The first 7" I ever released was also the first record by '90s pop punk stars Boris The Sprinkler. They had become popular, so I decided to re-press the record. That's why I called it Rerun. I released a few more records, but I stopped when I moved to St. Louis in 1998. I met Bruce Cole of local legends the Screamin' Mee-Mees, and I ended up helping put together reissues of their material for Gulcher records. Ann and I had been doing a long running radio show that only played '70s-'80s punk, DIY, new wave, etc., as that's our favorite era of music, and what records we mostly collect. I always had the idea of starting it up again, but it took me about ten years before I took action. The reissue of the BOB 7" was the first thing I released with this new phase of Rerun. I don't have strict guidelines as to the style of music, but I plan to only release reissues and collections of early punk, proto punk, DIY, powerpop, etc bands. I release music that I really love, no matter if it's KBD punk or a no wave record.

There are several labels reissuing old punk records these days. They all have released great records, many I would have loved to do myself. I'm happy so much of my favorite music is being made available again to the general public with all of these reissues. I may not be cranking out as many reissues as most of the labels you mention, but they're all doing quality work. It's not just about reissuing a record to me. I like to include things to differ it from the original release. Liner notes, extra photos and other material that most people have never seen are things I always try to include, when available. I think providing some perspective on the band and era lets people appreciate the music even more. Plus, records are expensive enough these days. I feel you should get a nice package, so I put a lot of effort into my releases.

Do you have a link with another St-Louis' label, BDR ? Can you explain the relation between Rerun and BDR ?

Jason: BDR Records is a label I run with Matt Harnish of the long running indie pop band Bunnygrunt. He has a label called Bert Dax, which is the BD and I'm the R. The label has a similar plan as Rerun, except we only release music by '70s-'80s from the St. Louis area. The first release was by a band called Raymilland. We will have our sixth and seventh releases out later this year.

Medical Tourists' lp: Talk about the first lp...some songs appear on a tape, where did you recorded it? Talk about the collaboration with Import export Records, a new french label.

Ann: We recorded a demo before working on this recording. Originally it was going to be something to send out to get shows. Jason recorded the demo in our basement and we were all so happy with the results, we decided to do the LP the same way. I'm really excited

that Rerun was able to team up with Import Export for this release. I was also really thrilled to learn of Lulu's involvement with Making Waves. I think it's great that zines like this continue to highlight women in punk.



Jason: When we first started recording the demo, I didn't know we would end up releasing it. I bought this oddball, Yamaha 8 track mini-disc recorder from a guy I know. I set up some mics in our basement practice room of our house. I just used some really cheap mics I had. I mean cheap...some were a special buy at 3 for \$20 and the most expensive one was about \$15. They were just crappy, noisy vocal mics, not designed for recording at all. We did use a higher end mic for the vocals, though. Needless to say, I was thrilled with the results. When we recorded the LP, I was much more careful and improved my recording methods since the demo sessions. I still used the same cheap mics, and this time we used one of the 3 for \$10 ones to record the vocals. We're happy with it anyway. The demo was released as a limited run of CDRs. We went somewhat overboard on the packaging. The covers were hand screened, rubber stamped differently and hand numbered. There was an insert and Ann made screened, canvas patches for every copy. Then we sealed them in plastic sleeves.

It's so great to have the LP finally done after many delays. We put a lot of time and effort into it, and it really is a relief to have it out. With Rerun, I'm only straying outside the reissue plan with three records. All three are bands with Ann and me in them. They are the Medical Tourists LP and 7"eps by our previous, low budget synth punk band SYNTAX ERROR and one by Prefecture, which is growling punk, some say mid tempo hardcore. I was really happy when Import Export offered to release a Medical Tourists 7". Since we didn't have any extra tracks ready to send them, we decided to co-release the LP. I think it works out great, and I'm really glad to work with Jeremy and Lulu.



photo: Greg Black.

Do you have some next projects, new ideas (tour/records) in the future ? Concluding remarks ?

Jason: We've been forced to take a break for awhile due to regular life getting in the way. It takes us quite awhile to write and develop a song, since we're all involved in demanding jobs and/or several other time consuming projects. Whatever happens next, I hope to get back to playing music very soon.

Ann: I'd like to get back to writing new songs, but our main goal for the last several months has been getting the LP released. After that, who knows? First, St. Louis, then the World!



Artwork by Ron Keas.

GIVE MEN- A- PAUSE

Interview with Sylvie Leber from the early 80's all female band Toxic Shock. Helen Smart (Toxic Shock drummer) also has her own take on a few questions !

First of all, I am curious so I have to ask; you told me earlier that you were born in France, so how did you end up in Melbourne, Australia?

I came to Australia with my parents when I was 2 years old. My father had a cousin here who said Australia was a good country. My parents wanted to get away from war-torn Europe and the bad memories and also because of a sense of adventure. It was between Canada and Australia but the Australian better weather won the competition.

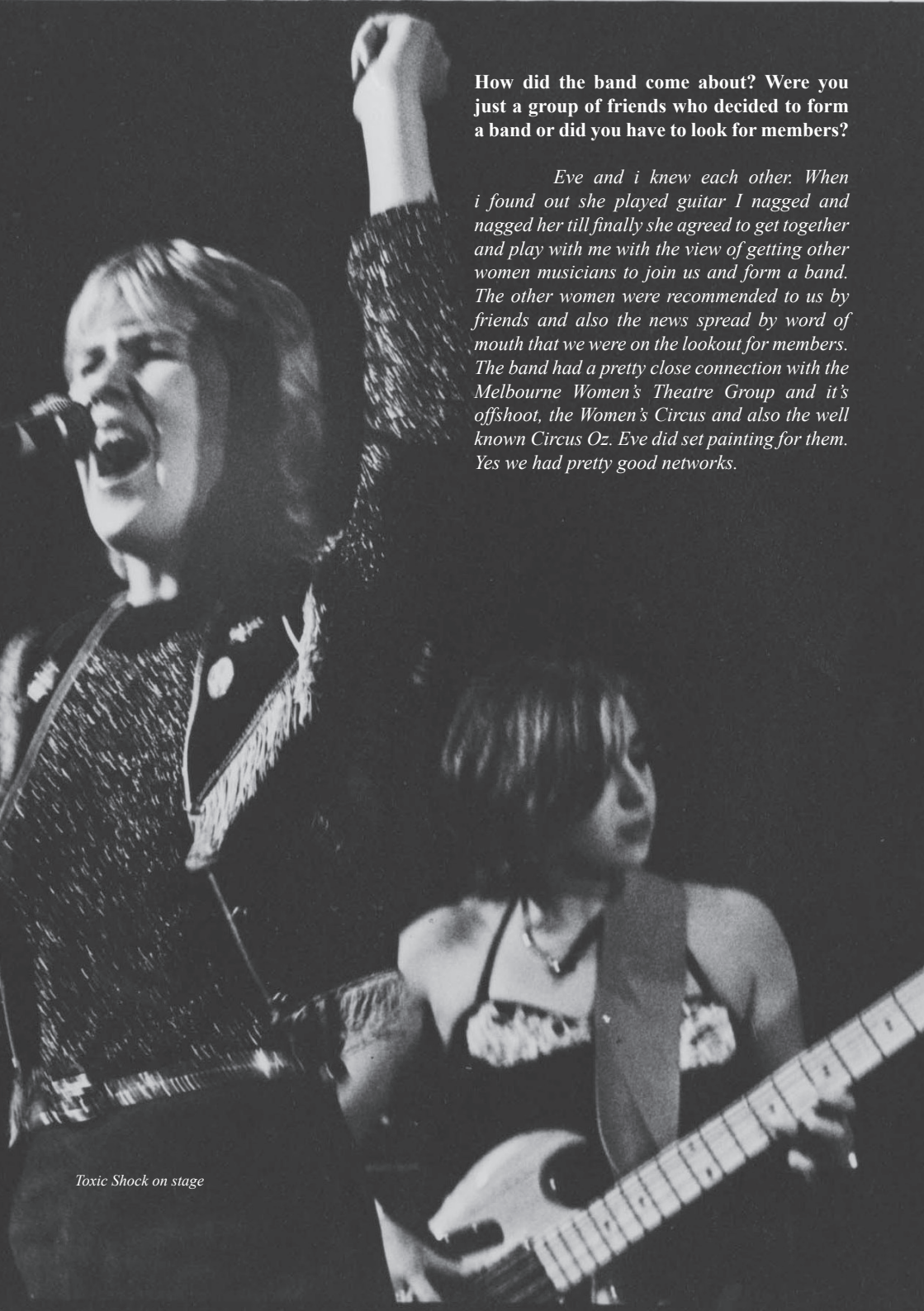
What kinds of bands were you in before joining Toxic Shock? When did you start playing music?

I started playing music as a young child while in primary school doing traditional piano lessons for a couple of years. Later I was given an acoustic guitar by my boyfriend and went to jam sessions in friends' lounge rooms. My boyfriend in my late 20's was a bass player. I admired Tina Weymouth and Suzie Quatro and with the advent of punk I felt anyone can play in a band. I joined my first band at age 27. We called ourselves The Cakes. The guys in the band (I was the only female) were from another part of Australia (the city of Adelaide) that had great musicians but not the right musical culture to nurture them. In Melbourne we were lucky to get lots of musicians from there. We played soul and R&B (Aretha, James Brown, Ike and Tina etc.) Other bands I played in were Nasty Habit (Heavy Metal), Failure, also known as Fail 2 (Post Punk).

I read that you had initiated the band together with the guitarist Eve Glenn ; what made you want to form your own band and did you intentionally want it to consist of only women? Was Toxic Shock more of a feminist project or simply a means for you to perform music?

I think it was a bit of both. I just had this great urge and motivation to play music as I had been jamming with friends on an acoustic guitar and my boyfriend was a quite well known and established bass player and songwriter who inspired me. As a teenage girl I used to hang out in the boy next door's garage listening to his band practice. Girls just hung around admiring the boys. It was similar with surfing then too.

*In my twenties I was involved in women's art, theatre and music via the radio show **Give-Men-A-Pause**. I had worked in women's refuges and involved in setting up one of Australia's first sexual assault centres. So yes I was an active feminist that believed women's culture was necessary and that women had important stories to tell. It was a logical step to want to form an all women's band. Hey and of course I knew it was going to be a lot of fun!*



How did the band come about? Were you just a group of friends who decided to form a band or did you have to look for members?

Eve and i knew each other. When i found out she played guitar I nagged and nagged her till finally she agreed to get together and play with me with the view of getting other women musicians to join us and form a band. The other women were recommended to us by friends and also the news spread by word of mouth that we were on the lookout for members. The band had a pretty close connection with the Melbourne Women's Theatre Group and it's offshoot, the Women's Circus and also the well known Circus Oz. Eve did set painting for them. Yes we had pretty good networks.

Toxic Shock on stage



Sylvie Leber & Eve Glen rehearse in a garage (Photograph by the late Sue Ford)

What were your influences at the time? Did you listen to a lot of female punk / post-punk bands of the era like The Slits, The Raincoats, Ut, etc? Was it these groups that inspired you to form your own band?

I think my main influence was everything that was happening in the independent music scene including female punk and post punk but also other genres such as funk, reggae, blues and roots, singer/songwriter

music, soul music and good old R&R. I was particularly encouraged by bass players Tina Weymouth, Suzi Quatro, Sid Vicious, Stanley Clark and Jaco Pastorius. In reality we were 7 people with 7 different musical tastes and backgrounds so we created an interesting sound. We were also considered to be a quiet band and so many people would come to hear us for that reason who would not usually go to see loud bands in pubs.

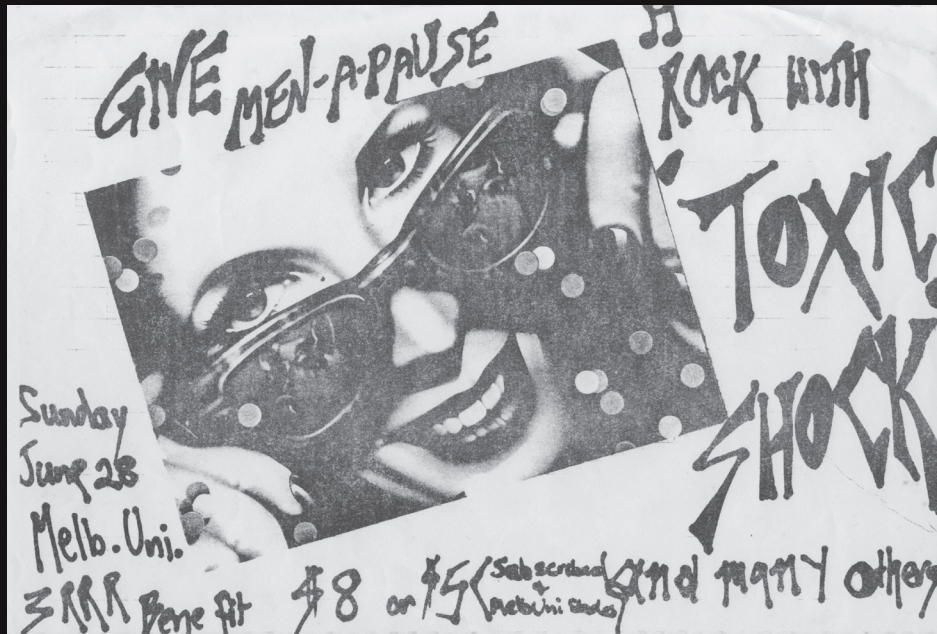


Toxic Shock on stage

What was the music scene in Melbourne like at the time and did you consider yourself to belong to a particular scene? There are a quite a few great Australian post-punk band that I love like The Particles, Voigt 465, Essendon Airport, Tame O'Mearas, The Slugfuckers and The Limp who were included in the essential "Can't Stop It : Australian Post-Punk 1978-1982" compilation that was released in 2001. Were you friends with any of these bands and could you recommend

any other similar bands for that period who you feel deserve more recognition?

I used to go and see Essendon Airport a lot but not any of the other groups you mention. We sort of were part of a scene. Women's bands like Clitoris, Flying Tackle, Foreign Body, Riff Raff and Shameless Hussies but also Stiletto that had a few women . Other local bands we were connected with were The Kevins and Nighthawks. Most of the bands in the 'scene' were in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne around Carlton and Fitzroy. We played the same gig as The Go Betweens and their drummer Lindy Morrison was so thrilled to see an all-girl band. Debra Conway of Do Re Mi supported us when she was with the Merinos before her great fame. We also played with red Gum and AfriJah. You need to know that Sydney music and Melbourne music scene were quite different. Melbourne had a healthier scene as music was in general more independent here.



Toxic Shock gig poster

Your initial name for the band was «The Girl's Garage Bands», why did you change it and how / why did you choose the name Toxic Shock?

We changed the name for a couple of reasons; the first being that we changed drummers. Nina Bondarenko left the band as she was involved in playing in the «little bands» (Constance I suggest you check this out) scene and we got Helen Smart as our new drummer . Secondly we were getting known and starting to play big gigs. Just before one of our big gigs at a university we were saying to each other 'what shall we call ourselves?' I half joking half serious said 'What about Toxic Shock' and from then on it stuck. Also we played one night at a «Women and Patriarchy» conference and we called ourselves 'One Night Stand' I don't remember if we had split up or if it was before we changed to Toxic Shock. That was in 1980. I wore a badge saying 'I love my dad' as a bit of a provocation and joke.

I am aware of your lone 7" single release but since you were playing shows, I presume that you included other songs in your set as well? Did the band have several compositions which ended being unreleased? Did you play covers as well?

SL : Yes we had a full set list which included a few originals and covers incl Easybeats' I'll Make You Hap-py, Patrick Fitzgerald's Safety Pin Stuck in My Heart. To tell you the honest truth I can't remember our set list. Too long ago. I've Cc'd Helen Smart TS's drummer in this email who may have a better memory than me.

HS : Vicky Bell was a songwriter as well as a great singer. We played two of her songs, «Concrete Evidence» which was a bluesy, heavier number and «Prisoner» (not the TV series theme!)» which was a great uptempo piece of power pop. «Prisoner» is the B side of the single.

Most of our set list was covers and most of those were just feelgood, party numbers - things like Love Potion no. 9, Eight Days a week, songs like that. I kind of inwardly rebelled at this because I wanted to be all radical like the Slits and the Raincoats and ride on the postpunk wave, but my personal policy was to shut up about that because it was my very first playing opportunity given to me by people with a lot more experience, so it wasn't my place to lecture them about direction. We also played some reggae songs as the reggae influence was strong at the time. Of course when I say «reggae» I mean our slightly untutored interpretation.



Toxic Shock in recording studio

Whose idea was it to put out the record? Did anyone approach the band or was it your own decision?

We were all pretty keen to record and a couple of us knew David «Daffy» Williams of York St Studios who had a good reputation. It was a wonderful experience. I was on a natural high for days after-wards. I've attached photos which I took during the 3 days of recording at York St Studios : Daffy and Kelvin producing, Helen Smart drummer, Hellen Sky - electric mandolin and vocals

*Daffy & Kelvin
during the recording session*



Helen Smart recording the drums





Poster for The Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary Benefit Party

The record sleeve states several things including the fact that the money for releasing the record was obtained through a fundraiser event organized by «Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary». Can you tell us about this event? Who were the “Toxic Shock Ladies Auxiliary”?

The Toxic Shock Ladies Auxilliary was a bit of a cultural & feminist joke. Ladies auxilliarys traditionally do very feminine things like make scones and tea and have a support role helping run events or raise money. They all dressed up in old fashioned 50's style ladies dresses and wore a corsage. They were all women who rarely wore dresses. basically they were our good friends who helped organise the fundraiser held at a town hall (mairie). The event was packed we had other women's bands supporting us playing for nothing. A great night and we made enough money to record.

HS: DJ Peter Grace said these things on EON-

FM (as was) b/c according to him the idea of naming a band after a fatal disease was completely out of order.

How long was the band together for and what led to the breakup?

We were together for between two & three years and eventually broke up because Vicki Bell was moving to Canberra (our capital city). We felt she was too integral to the band to find a replacement.

You seem to be particularly sensitive to women in music and you also hosted a radio pro-gram called «Give-Men-a-Pause». How did you start this show and why was it important for you to promote music made by women? What kind of music did you play on the show?

The show was called Give-Men-A-Pause (a play on the word menopause) on the radio station 3RRR which still exists today. I started this show because I felt strongly about the lack of women in rock music including on radio and was keen to redress this imbalance. I started the show by doing a half hour audition tape for the management. The audition tape was a show with tracks by people who sang out of tune (male and female). The show was mostly of contemporary music happening at the time. Eventually I invited others to join me to do the show. The show was often controversial. We were even removed from the station because in reality we were ahead of our time. When they surveyed the audience they learnt that our show was the most popular show they had on the station so they asked us back.



Toxic Shock on stage

Are you still in touch with the other band members and do you still play music? What projects are you currently involved in?

I'm currently still in contact with Helen Smart and Eve Glenn. I have been playing in recent times with a North African Rai band La Kasbah and a community orchestra The Footscray Gypsies. I also spent a lot of time a year ago playing and composing with a friend of mine in the lounge room. I don't play nearly as much as I used to and I would like to play more. Helen Smart still plays and is drumming with Tess McKenna. Lead singer, Fran Kelly, is one of Australia's best known and respected radio journalists and presenters. Previously she was the ABC chief political correspondent in the UK. Hellen Sky is very well known in Australia's modern dance world.

We are a bunch of record monomaniacs so I also have to ask you, do you still have copies of the record for sale? (Because we would love to buy it!) And if one day someone approached you regarding a reissue, would you accept?

I only have two copies of the vinyl record so I'm unable to sell it to you. I could burn you a digital copy of the 3 songs if you want. Would love to reissue!!

Interview by Constance Legeay
conducted by email (2012)

NUCLEAR CRAYONS: OUTSIDERS FROM DC

Interview with
Lara Connally



MW How did you get into the underground DC music scene in the early 80s and what attracted you from that burgeoning scene?

LC I was in high school at the time, I never really fit in with the “normal” kids and I spent a lot of time being depressed about how I just wasn’t socially successful. I saw so much that was a farce in how I was expected to behave. I was a lovely blonde hair girl that no one really took very seriously. I was a member of the Unitarian Church in Arlington, Virginia. We had a youth group which I became active in and we had regular “sleepover” events at

one of the other youth’s homes. At one of these events, several of us snuck out to see a movie in Georgetown, WDC. This was a midnight showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. I had not ever seen anything like this, there was the pre-show with punks dancing around in front of the movie screen to some of the “new wave” music like The Cars and The Police. I’d not ever been exposed to this and found it all very exciting. When we were outside the theater we visited with some of the now famous “Georgetown Punks”. That was it for me, I was sold! We returned back to the “host” home for the sleepover but got caught. Yes the preacher’s sons were involved too so it was a bit of a scandal for the church youth group. After that I continued to sneak out of my home on Friday and Saturday nights and go to Georgetown to see *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. That was my doorway to the punk scene in DC.

MW What was the first punk/harDCore show you attended?

LC I attended the show of SOA at a private home in Georgetown. It was the first time I’d ever seen Henry Rollins also and I was totally impressed then by his stage persona and presence. Actually the house was so packed I never got inside. I could hear the music and peek over some heads at the band but I was outside most of the time.

MW What was your favourite venue to hang out?

LC Most of my time was spent at the 9:30 club. They had a very liberal policy on letting minors into shows there, that's where the X on the back of the hand came in to let the bartenders know who the minors were. I was very grateful for this club to allow all ages shows. It was in a business district also so the shows did not have anyone to bother with the volume. That's where I met Darin "Flame" Drake also. I just went to about every show they had there for a couple of years. Second venue that I went to many times was the Wilson Center. That was a great place also and I have many memories of not just some of the best shows in DC but hanging out and being part of the scene. The Wilson Center lent itself to being more of a socializing venue than the 9:30 club I think. There were many spaces to hang out and chat with people inside and outside while waiting for the bands to play.



MW What were your favourite DC bands?

LC There were so many bands, as many times as young people can create a new band I tried to see the show. In those days you were never sure if that was the only time you'd ever see the same group of people together. So we had to go to just every show we learned about. From the Dischord crowd my favourites were Minor Threat, The Faith, Scream, Marginal Man, Government Issue, Beefeater, Egg Hunt, Iron Cross and The Void. I have lost count how many bands I saw. Of course the famed Slickee Boys, Tiny Desk Unit, Bad Brains... So many really. I can't say who my favorites were. I would find a band, and if I liked the show I saw, I'd buy the record and play it repeatedly until I knew every word of every song.

MW Was there any DC band that influenced you to play music?

LC Well my involvement with music largely came after I met Darin. He was the musician guru that always put something creative in my hands and told me to just play. I would see a band and listen to the lyrics closely. I realized that writing down lyrics or poems helped me with my emotional issues and really I saw the punk genre as a way to just be heard. So when I saw these bands on stage I wanted to do the same thing, to vent my feelings out

and share them with the rest of the world, or anyone who might care what I was expressing. Was there one band that influenced me? Not really. I very quickly got into a Birthday Party fad that lasted several years. I wanted to be the female Nick Cave really, bird nest hair and everything! I saw that there were a lot of guys up on stage but not so many women. I wondered how it would be if I could be up there too expressing myself in a similar fashion to the men. I bet no one expected a woman to be aggressive or have anger issues also.

MW How do you remember the harDCore scene and the Georgetown Punks?

LC I remember those people with much fondness, for all the oddities and personalities they had, they were really innovative people, they saw something they wanted to do and just did it. That's what always inspired me the most.

MW How did you meet Darin?

LC I met Darin at the 9:30 club one night. I believe this was probably my second show I had ever attended. Well in the crowd I was alone, I didn't know anyone so I just kept to myself. Then out of the blue Darin walked up, took my hand, turned it over and told me how my father died. I was floored. I didn't know how he knew but I found it very intriguing. We

went outside to talk, we talked all night about mysticism, music & art. We stood in the doorway of the 9:30 club after it closed smoking weed and just talking. By the time we said goodbye we'd already talked about jamming at some point. I am not even sure at that point in time I'd thought I'd ever be on stage or making records. I just had found an interesting person who would end up being a muse and a guide for many years to come.

MW How about the other members – Justin, Kendall and Bernie?

LC Honestly I do not remember how we found Justin. I think it was a newspaper ad or poster I had put up seeking bass players. In both cases Justin and later Bernie were discovered this way. Kendall... I believe we connected through Malcolm Riviera (Grand Mal/Wurm baby)... Well he was my roommate at the 9th Street space I rented out. I don't remember the particulars but I believe that is how I met Kendall, through Gary [Malcolm Riviera].

MW How many gigs did you play? Any show outside the DC area?

LC We never played outside the DC area except for Baltimore. Most of our gigs were inside the City, 9:30 club, Oscar's Eye, outdoors venues like the Gay Pride Day, or Rock Against Regan, Noise-A-Thon and our 18th Street Studio gig were

in temporary rentals of retail spaces. Oh but our first gig was a talent contest at the Lost & Found gay bar! That is the gig we had Justin with us and we played “No Car”.

MW Which gig do you consider being the best – Edith Massey’s birthday in Baltimore, maybe?

LC Well I personally think that the *Mixed Nuts Don’t Crack* release party at the 9:30 club was my favorite event. We were at the top of our game that show, and the entire event was such a success it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy remembering it. The Edith Massey birthday party in Baltimore was a strange gig but memorable. I never really knew if she liked it but she had always laughed with us after our performance so I think she had fun with our performance.

MW What kind of audience did you have – were Georgetown Punks at your gigs?

LC We had a good mix of people I think. Yes punks showed up from all over. Yes, the Georgetown Punks came to a few shows, other area punks were our most reliable. When you are on stage, it doesn’t really matter who is in the audience it just matters that you have an audience. Frankly we were so noisy and I never really thought any one would like us at all, so having any one show up period was just so damned spiffy.



MW How was the show at the 18th Street Studio – the one that Jello Biafra attended?

LC I was so nervous that Jello would be watching us that I really didn’t pay much attention to anything else going on. I was just spending my time trying to make sure I didn’t forget the lyrics to any of the songs. I was very nervous when we were performing also. And hearing Jello yelling out from the crowd really stuck with me. I believe it was him anyway, yelling “stick your head in the toilet and sing” or something to that effect. The bathroom was right there on the “stage” area so it was not a problem for me to just take the microphone and walk in there I sung a few lines while in the bathroom for shits and giggles then came back out. Mitch Parker had invited Jello out to the event so we were glad to have him there. After we finished playing Jello picked up our single EP, and for the next few years he’d find me in the crowd to buy anything else I may have released on Outside

Records. Jello came through Flagstaff a few years ago and he remembered me enough to get me past all the security and into the back room with him. We did chat a few minutes to catch up on our lives. The coolest part of that was my children were old enough to attend his show with me.

MW Any anecdote of the Noise-A-Thon '83 Festival?

LC Not really. I remember a lot of bands and I was excited to see that this "noise" genre was becoming more popular. I never quite understood why this was any different than "punk", why it all wasn't just another form of "punk" but had to have its own name.

MW Was there any band outside DC that you became friends with? And in DC?

LC I'm not exactly sure what this question means. Like if there were "alliances" of bands? I'm not so sure about that. I think I was friends with a lot of different people. I guess the guys from Social Suicide I had a lot of involvement with on various levels socially. Tesco Vee came to mind here, but mostly we had a regular meetup whenever The Meatmen played at the 9:30 club, and that was business talk usually. Well yes so I guess the answer is, outside of DC... this could be defined as outside the city

borders? In that case, Social Suicide, the ladies from Chalk Circle... Later in the time period I was hanging out a lot with the people that formed Grand Mal/Wurmbaby, Joey Aronstamm, Malcolm Riviera, Don Diego, and Linda LeSabre. Joey was from The Social Suicide band, Malcom (aka Gary Indiana) was a former housemate, Don & Linda I'd met through Malcolm at the 9th Street space when I was living there. They were usually associated with the "Flipper House" events, this was basically an after shows party at their place dubbed the "Flipper House" and listen to Flipper all night getting drunk and smashing into each other until everyone passed out.

MW Who wrote the lyrics? I am really curious to know if "Anarchy Poseur" and "Political Punk" were aimed at anybody in particular in the DC scene.

LC Darin Drake and I wrote most of the lyrics. His were the more poetic ones. Mine had emotional components or described a story. I don't think these lyrics were aimed at anyone in particular. I guess "Anarchy Poseur" was aimed at the trendy punks that came in with their newly purchased ripped shirts from Commander Salamander (a store much like today's Hot Topic). These were the guys that looked punk but did a fair amount of crying about people being rude and slamming into

them. "Political Punk" just asks a simple question really, "Who are you?".

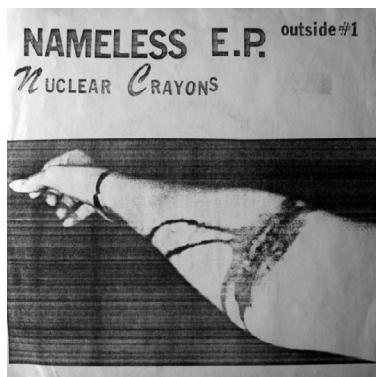
MW How did you meet Don Zientara? How was to record at the now famous Inner Ear Studios? Any anecdote you remember from Don?

LC Well when I was looking for a recording studio I asked Ian MacKaye where everyone was recording at. He gave me Don's number and that's who we went to record everything on the Outside Records releases. Once The Nuclear Crayons had disbanded, several years later, Darin and Don got to talking and we ended up at his studio to record the first Earth Hell Band LP songs. It just sort of evolved that way. Don would sit in the booth doing stuff with his guitar to the point it did not sound like a guitar anymore, it was just ethereal, spooky and very cool.

MW How did you start Outside Records and how was to run a DIY record label?

LC I started Outside Records after having the idea of a Nuclear Crayons release on Dischord Records turned down. Our first EP was comprised of the songs we had recorded at Inner Ear Studios as demos to send to record labels trying to get the usual recording contract. After being frustrated by rejection because ours sound did not quite fit

into any defined genre I just decided to do what the other punks did, do it myself. The concept of making a DIY recording label was inspired by the same people that had rejected us in the first place! Outside Records never made any profit and I never took any paycheck from it. Basically the money that was made just went right into re-pressing previously released records and profits went to making a new record. Technically it was a non-profit business concept but it was not tax exempt.



MW What about the Outside Matinee at the 9:30 club?

LC Oh yes we are back at my most memorable gig. Well I can remember that the place was jammed packed. Sold out. The club owners were very happy, I guess they had not expected so many people to show up but the Matinee was a release party that helped to recover the costs of producing the *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* LP.

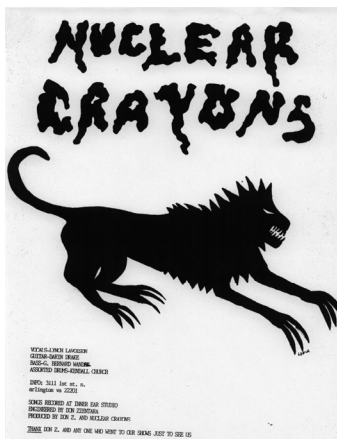
Every one of the bands that were on the release performed, it was a long day, everyone had great performances. We sold all of the records we brought to the gig that day.

MW Could you please tell me a little bit about the story behind the now legendary *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* compilation?

LC *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* was a compilation record that spotlighted bands in the DC area that were not on any other label at the time. I had seen each of these bands performing and thought they were all worth preserving in some fashion. As you know indie bands die almost as fast as they are born, with a couple of shows that are worth remembering. Some of these bands went on to continue to perform and became quite popular, found other labels to produce more records on. I like to think that the compilation gave them exposure to the rest of the world and helped them in some ways to continue to make awesome music.

MW What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the following bands: Social Suicide, United Mutation, Media Disease, Hate From Ignorance, Chalk Circle?

LC Social Suicide: Hot. United Mutation: Raw. Media Disease: Energy. Hate From Ignorance: Power. Chalk Circle: Intelligence.



MW Why did Nuclear Crayons break up?

LC Darin and I had started The Nuclear Crayons together and we worked well through it all. However at some point Darin announced he was quitting and his reasons were not really very clear. I wasn't quite clear on this. I think he really was leaning in another direction musically, and my focus was still trying to bring the sound closer to hard punk or rock sounds. Darin was leaning more towards the techno area, synthesizers and so forth. Darin had been with me the entire time, we tried to replace Darin with two more guitarists Greg and Phil, added a keyboardist, Pamela. The jam sessions were cool, the new members talented, but for me this was not the same band. I did not want to continue the band without Darin so I officially called it quits several months after he did.

MW Besides The Earth Hell Band, where you involved in other bands during the 80s?

LC Not really. I tried to revive a bit of The Nuclear Crayons through a band called Bad Pieces with just Bernie and Kendall. We had practices, came up with some songs and did one gig, but by then I just was more focused on stage of life issues, so were the others, we never really got off the ground, we had families and jobs etc. So not much time to focus on having a band again.

MW May I ask you why and when did you move away from DC?

LC Well as most stories have to have an ending I suppose my ending came when I met a guy, had children and then had to find a way to feed, cloth and house those children. I moved away from DC and the music scene to raise the children. I had an offer for a free house from my grandfather and he did not want to buy any house outside of Arizona, so that was the only choice I had at the time. As an artist I can not focus enough on regular life responsibilities. I can't do both. So when it came to survival, paying bills, and finally dealing with the fact that both of my children have autism spectrum related issues I had to give up everything and just focus on my family.

MW What are you currently listening to?

LC I've been listening to

a lot of Muse, Combichrist and classic rock like AC/DC, Aerosmith and The Doors.

NUCLEAR CRAYONS

“The Nuclear Crayons were formed in 1981 by Lynch LaVoison [Lara Connally] and Darin Drake, quickly adding in Bernie Wandel and Kendall Church by 1982. They played the Washington DC Metropolitan area underground music venues from approximately 1982 through 1984. Places such as the 9:30 club, Marble Bar (MD), Gay Pride Day, Lost & Found, and various sundry joints. The Nuclear Crayons released recorded music on Outside Records, a record company started and run by Lynch. The first release was a 7 inch EP called *Nameless*, followed by three songs on the music compilation named *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack*, and then finally a full album of their songs was released called *Bad Pieces Seen Delivering The Fortold Conclusion...* known now as just *Bad Pieces...*” *Lara Connally*

Interview by
Eduard Barcelón

Pics by
Leslie Clague
Lara Connally
Jim Saah
Jim Witlaw

London UK—Flagstaff US
April 2012





Interview

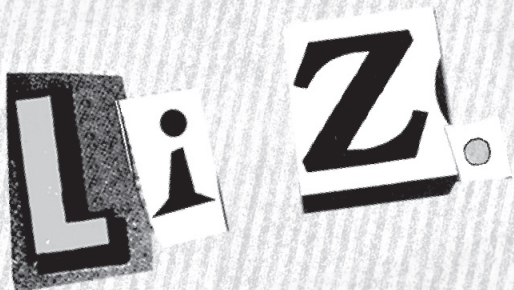
by Mariette Auvray

The interview was conducted in July 2012

Layout by Lili

**Where do you come from exactly?
Were there bands, a scene that influenced you, where you grew up?**

I grew up on the countryside of Basle, the German speaking part of Switzerland. As a teenager I became seriously passionate and obsessed with music when I discovered some of the darker, obnoxious and very punky bands from the sixties. That was a real shock and revelation! The fact that this music



had been made in the past and was very underground and difficult to find made it even more exciting and mysterious. These records were very rare but made accessible by fans on compilations like «Off the Wall», «Ear piercing Punk», «Chocolate Soup for Diabetics», «Pebbles», «Texas Flashback» plus many more and the best, the «Back from the Grave» series on Crypt Records. In the mid and late eighties I was part of a little, international community of fans who either wrote fanzines, put out compilations, ran mailorders or just wrote each other letters and exchanged mixtapes. Which meant spending most of the time alone, locked up in my room listening to records and waiting for the postman. There was no scene in

my town I liked at all. I thought all bands sucked and I was a real outsider, musically speaking.

I was lucky to meet and hang out with another outsider guy in my town who had an incredible record collection of obscure sixties punk. We spent many afternoons together in his dark room listening to singles, drinking beer and usually ended up in a fight. He also collected Swiss punk records by the Dynamites, the Sevens, the Countdowns, the Slaves, the Mods, les Sauterelles etc. and did some colossal research and interviews by most of those sixties bands. My godfather's brother was in the Red Devils from Basle!

There is a whole musical myth around Swiss bands, the French dig them a lot: Stefan Eicher with Grauzone, Kleenex, did you grow up with all that around you?

At that time I was not yet interested in Swiss punk bands from the late seventies. I remember having heard Liliput's «When the cat's away», «Nice» by Kleenex and the disco version by Stefan Eicher on the Swiss radio. I thought it was slick and lame compared to the Kinks or Sonics' dirty, fuzz loaded savagery or the deliciously twisted Keggs. I caught up by about 1988 with more «new wavy, modern» sound and ever since have loved and collected Swiss bands like Kleenex/Liliput, Nasal Boys, Bastards, Bellevue, Technicolor, ThT, Glueams, Grauzone...

When and how did you start the guitar? And did you have a shameful instrument before playing guitar? Like I don't know, trumpet or triangle? (no offense to trumpet players:)

Ha ha ha, no instrument is shameful (only ways of playing is)!! Well, I played classic piano as a little girl until my early teens. I quit when I became interested in horses and boys. Unfortunately I can't remember any Bach or Mozart. Only Béla Bartók who was my favorite composer. Recently only I understood why. By the way, I payed homage to him with a cover of the one and only hungarian traditional piano piece I still remember from my childhood. It's on my last solo album «The Two of Us».

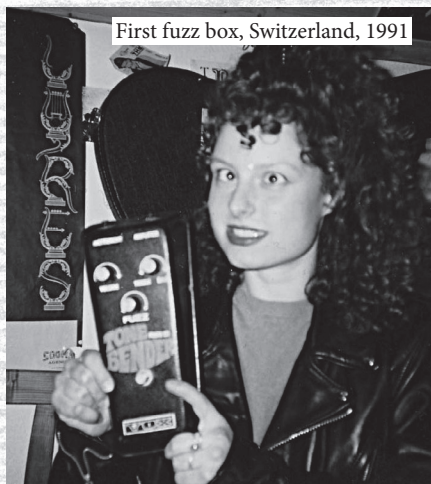
When I picked up the guitar it was a whole different thing on a totally exciting level: I learned on my own from scratch, far from music theory, just by trying to reproduce the sounds I dug. By the way I'm still unable to play by a score or to name a chord. I have my own system with numbers corresponding to the frets.



What did you like about this instrument?

It was very obvious to me to choose the guitar since it is the most emblematic instrument of Rock'n'Roll. And it could make the most spectacular noises with the least musical skills! I bought a little Fender amp and my first guitar (a sixties Hofner Galaxy) in London where I lived from '88 to '89. I immediately started recording. First by ping-ponging, which was recording the first track on a simple cassette recorder over the air, then recording a second track while playing back the first track real loud over

the stereo and so on. The other track was drumming with wooden spoons on a big washing powder bin with a mic under it. Before I had a reverb pedal and echo chamber I recorded in the family bathroom without towels for maximum reverb. I was totally into surf bands and reverb laden sounds, still am. Some months later I bought my first 4 track recorder, a Yamaha MT3X and that felt like growing wings! So actually I started my solo home recordings long before forming bands.



First fuzz box, Switzerland, 1991

When did you start playing in bands?

Before moving to Paris I played in 3 bands. I honestly almost forgot about them until you asked me this question. The first band was in London just after I got my guitar and only lasted a few rehearsals. Home again in Switzerland I went back to school for a 4 year long sign painter apprenticeship. I shortly was in 2 other bands. But I just joined in, they were not MY bands and stylewise I didn't really feel at home with them...

By then my far away living French boyfriend and now husband Jacques and I were avidly fantasizing about our future band. We'd just had to find a drummer, a bass player and me move to Paris. Which I did as soon as I'd finished school in 1994, aged 25.



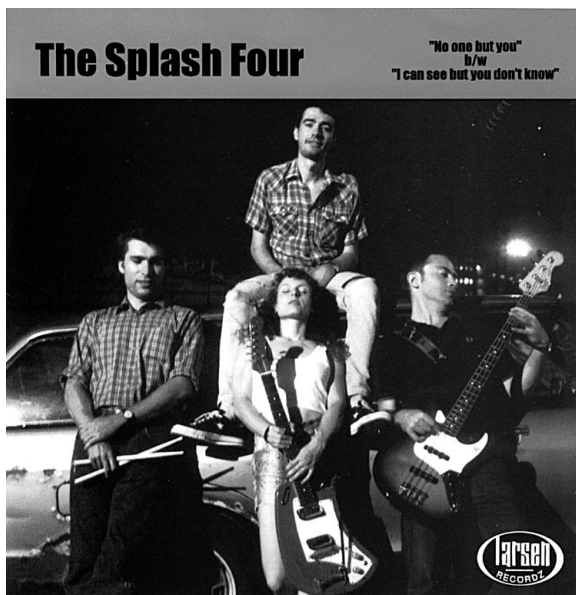
Bathroom studio, Switzerland, 1989



The Splash Four at home in Paris, 1995

Let's talk about your bands before Volt: the Splash Four and the No-Talents, can you tell me how you met the band members, and why it ended?

Jacques had been living in Paris since '92 and hooked up with a couple of like-minded garage punk fans, all of them also record collectors. There was Gipé who made the wonderful «Ils sont fous ces Gaulois» and «Infernal World» comps who became the drummer for the Splash Four. He brought in bassplayer Jipé whom he knew from a previous band.



4th Splash Four 7" on Larsen Recordz, 1996



By that time we were totally crazy about raw and weird DIY Punk Rock. The type you can find on the early «Killed by Death» comps etc. That style and feeling, combined with our fascination with sixties punk clearly was the Splash Four's leitmotiv.

The No-Talents were the same gang of friends and we started in '95, half a year after the Splash Four. Cécilia (who was a music tour manager for mostly Crypt Records bands) and Iwan (who worked in the back then coolest Parisian record store «Le Silence de la Rue» and

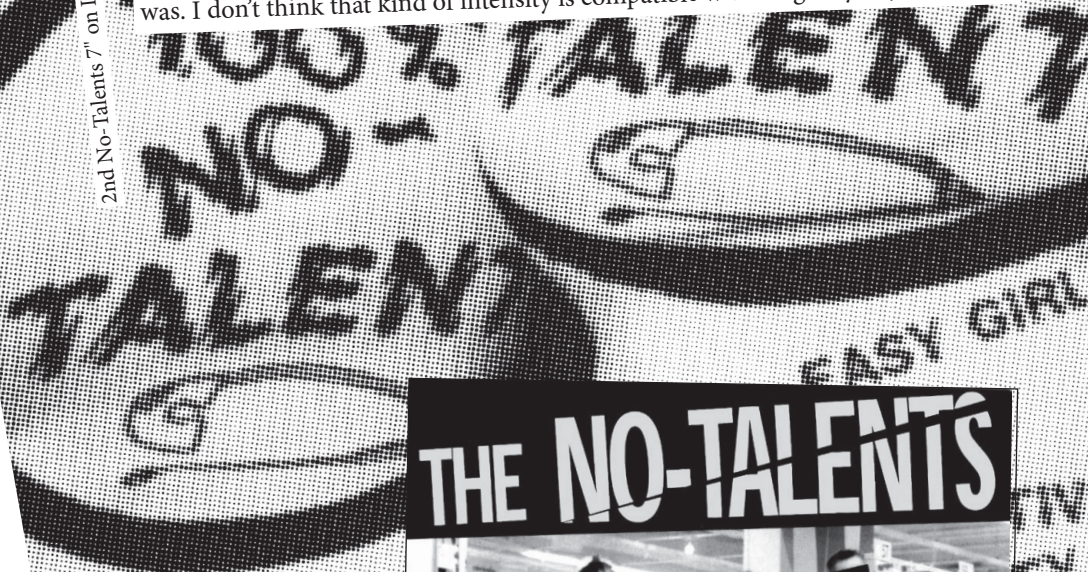
left: propaganda flyer for Karl Marx party, 1996
bottom: The Splash Four live in Los Angeles, 1998



later founded «Born Bad», the store, not the label!) asked me and Laurent to form a band so that we could play the French independence day party they organised in their big garage two weeks later. We learnt just 2 songs (both by the Sick Things) and played them several times at the party. That's how the No-Talents were born. Laurent already played drums and sang in the fab Steve And The Jerks who eventually changed their name to the Anteenagers.

2nd No-Talents 7" on Incognito, 1997

Both of my bands lasted about 4 years, released 15 vinyl records and played shows in Europe and in the USA. I cherish the memories of these bands more than anything! We had so much fun! It was very intense, nothing could stop us, we did everything ourselves and mostly for the first time. Our records were even critically acclaimed, especially abroad. Hailing from France and playing that style was quite pioneering back then. We broke up because it was the end, at least to me it clearly was. I don't think that kind of intensity is compatible with longevity anyway.



THE NO-TALENTS



4th No-Talents 7" on Broken Rekids, 1998

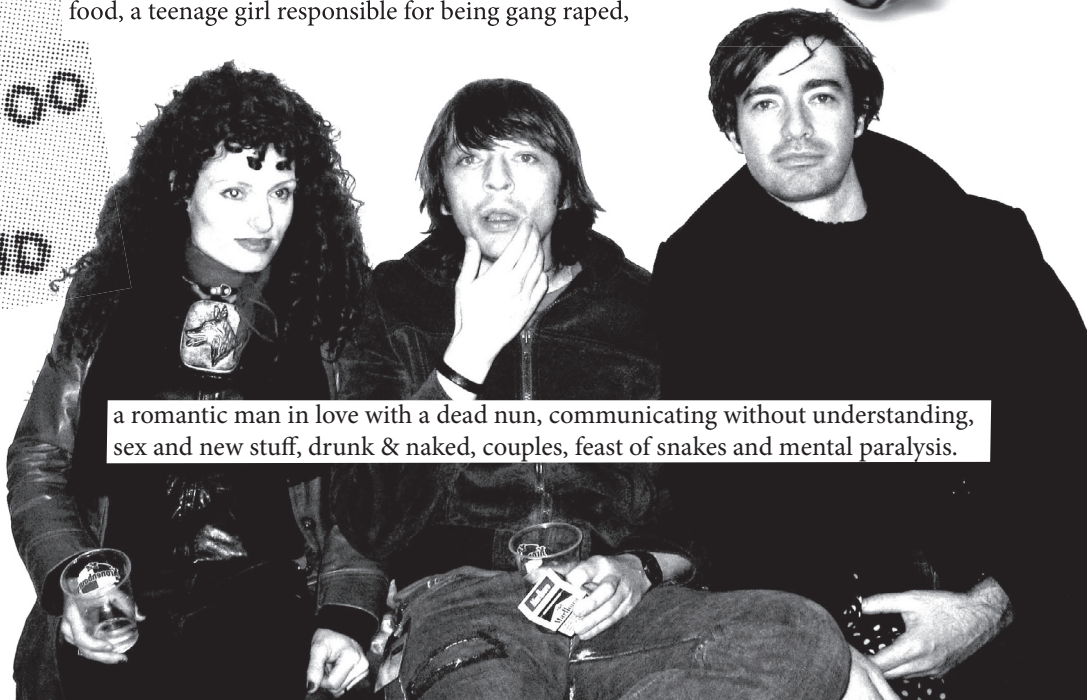
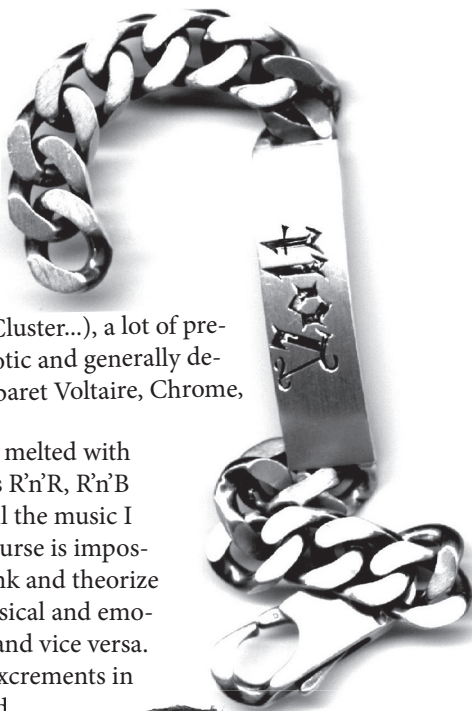
I love Volt's records, and your last solo one, "The Two of Us". I find them super inventive, with lots of new ideas, disturbing and sexy atmospheres, the visuals of the 33t are also memorable – How was born Volt?

After the Splash Four split up Jacques and I kept hanging out with our friend FX who played bass on the last two records and the '98 tour in the US. We used to deejay or just go drink and party in the pizzeria's basement where he was bartending, Le

Menestrel. Each one of us urgently wanted to form a new band but we still didn't know who with and what it was going to sound like. We just knew we wanted to try something different and experiment with sounds and song structure. During the last 10 years Jacques and I had expanded our record collection to various horizons like dub (King Tubby,

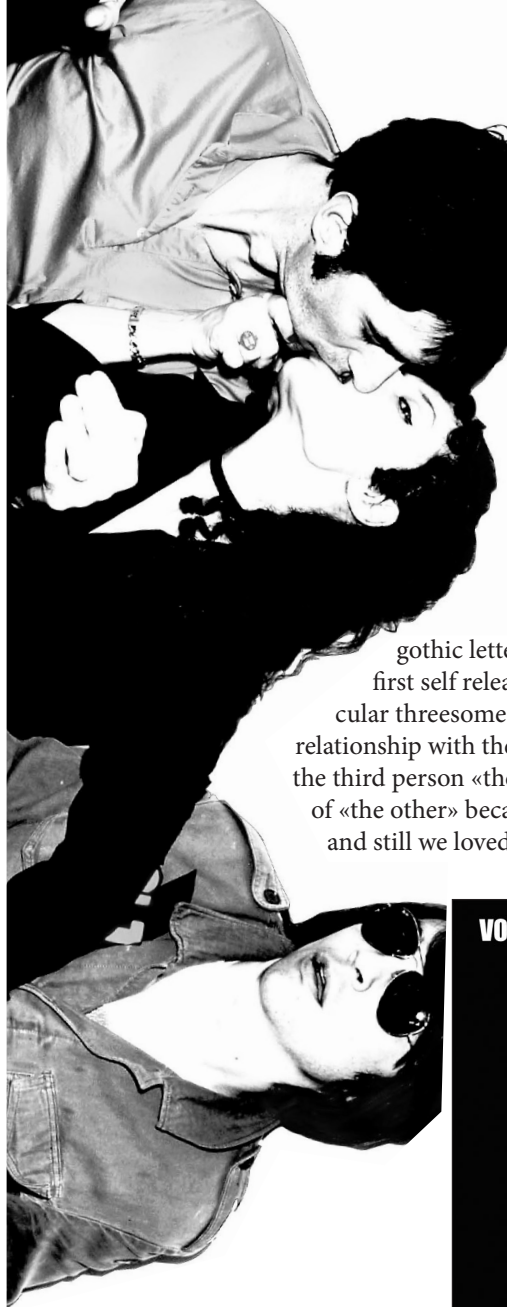
Prince Far I, Scientist...), kraut rock (Neu, Can, Cluster...), a lot of pre-war world music, and minimal, industrial, hypnotic and generally deconstructed and experimental stuff like early Cabaret Voltaire, Chrome,

Daphne Oram and so many more. These influences melted with our obviously still intact love for 50's rockabilly, 60's R'n'R, R'n'B and punk. My ideal was to find out the essence of all the music I like, distill it and put it into my music... which of course is impossible! But trying is fun enough already. I love to think and theorize about music, to me it is at least as brainy as it is physical and emotional. And the lyrics absolutely must fit the music and vice versa. Volt songs are about: a pack of wolf dogs barking, excrements in food, a teenage girl responsible for being gang raped,



a romantic man in love with a dead nun, communicating without understanding, sex and new stuff, drunk & naked, couples, feast of snakes and mental paralysis.

Lili, FX, Jacques:Volt in Lyon, 2006



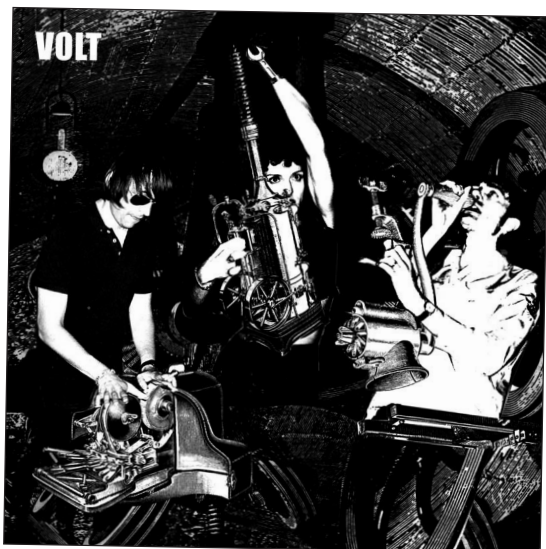
Did you have clear aesthetic demands from the outset?

We were always kidding about the spirit of the band. We considered it a club, our sect, our secret army. Something with almost religious discipline, which we really had! I kept making logos and visuals for countless stickers, badges, postcards, lighters, stamps, membership cards... Everything hand-made and just for the pleasure of us 3 and maybe a couple of friends. The «Volt Schallplatten Klub» logo with the

gothic lettering and the german shepherds on our first self released EP came from that. We had a particular threesome thing going on: each one had a special relationship with the two others. By the way, we always called the third person «the other». Two could talk shit or make fun of «the other» because they knew «the others» do the same and still we loved each other (sigh, how beautiful).

First Volt 12" EP on Pollymaggoo Records, 2002





Volt 7" EP on Hozac Records, 2006

I think this created good dynamics and tensions. That is what I tried to visually translate on our record sleeves. I always showed a drawing of the idea to the others before we shot the photo.

With Volt, there is a significant change in relation to the sound of the previous bands: keyboards, drum machines, etc... Tracks with pretty distinct times, can you talk about this turn? Were you growing tired of a certain punk or garage format at the time?

People who knew us were quite shocked about the change to say the least. We didn't fit into the electro scene either because our musical background still was the same. I think we just gave it a new dress. It wasn't that much growing tired of the punk rock format. Playing faster and louder still was kicks to us. We wanted even more aggressi-

veness and exaggeration, pushing the contrasts to the max and make the whole mess danceable. So we started creating holes and air in the songs to emphasize the «full» parts, which we found very preposterous and funny. We also tried to play slower and heavier. Before I used to chainsaw through the songs as for now I only played a few axe chops.

I've always been attracted to minor keys and dark moods in songwriting. With Volt I wanted to take it further to a colder, almost unbearable glacial atmosphere. I used the same drum machine as for my solo recordings at



Volt album on In The Red Records, 2007

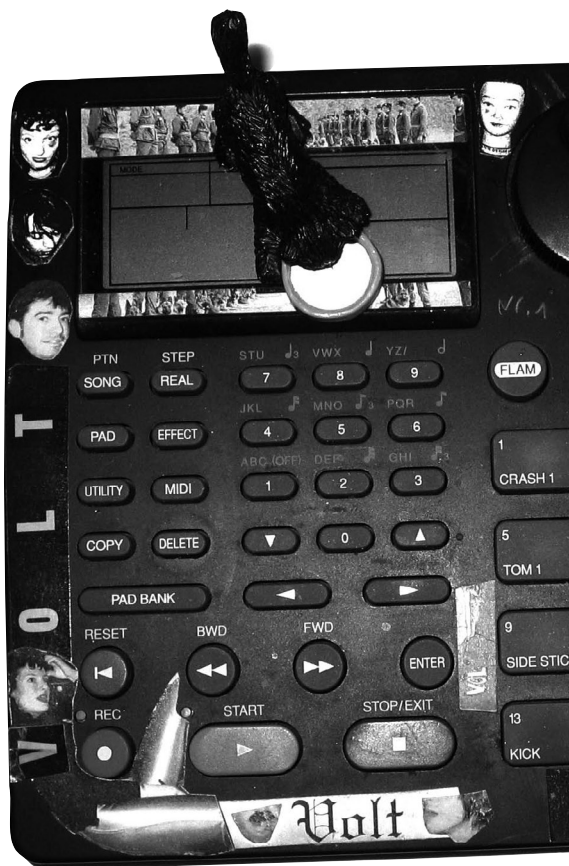
home. We were fascinated by the power and accuracy of that thing! It never grew tired, never moaned and didn't need a smoke or a couch to sleep on. On the other hand I spent an awful lot of time programing it at home. For each song I put a new array of drum sounds together, winding the «skins» up or down and adding different effects on each. I used an old style drum machine (Boss DR660) and at the end we had 4 of the

same, I filled them all up! I know this is stupid, heavy to carry around and risky as they could bust at all times. But I didn't want to use a recording or a back up so that I could still change things. For example the pace of a song or the sound of a particular percussion or just reuse a part or a drum kit. All this was both, exciting and tedious. It forced me to a math-like approach of songwriting, me who is lousy at maths and use my fingers to count! And since we hated losing time at rehearsals I usually prepared some patterns for a new song and imagined it in advance. Sometimes I even came with a complete demo.

I must say that by the end of the band I grew tired of the programing and the lack of spontaneity, or in short, of being a control freak.

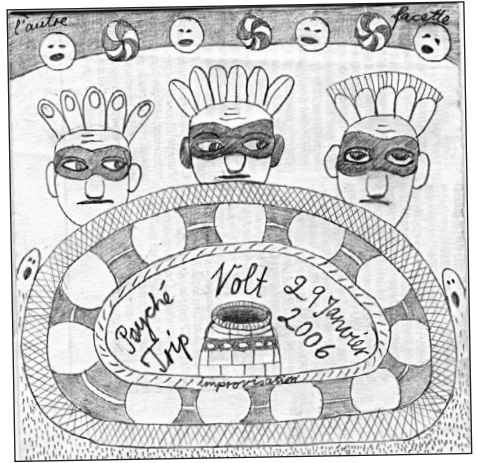
I remember that with Volt, you were pretty selective with gigs, was it because you were busy? Or by choice?

Both! Before even starting we wanted to avoid the «natural course» of a band. Like putting out records, playing concerts and having set roles behind the same instrument for each member. Well... eventually we did most of the same again, ha ha ha! But we also experienced some new and stirring things. For example being invited to play our second live show at the mythical Olympia. That was so hilarious and totally unproportional! FX still used his cheap toy synth before getting the Juno. At one point the soundcheck engineer gave up and declared: «Your sound is ridiculous!!!»



Some other daring experience to us was the first recording session. With the previous bands we'd always gone to London to record at the now famous Toerag studios with top notch vintage material from the sixties and an engineer who knew about compression. All purely analog. This time I almost felt like walking into the lion's den recording with two house music honchos. I guess we were thrilled by being out of place, the challenge and the new possibilities. Oh, and using a drum machine and synthesizer in

drawing for a rehearsal tape sleeve
 ... who is Adolf Wölfli?



the first place was pretty much wacky and amusing to us. Talking about shameful instruments... We also played at the Cannes Palais des Festivals because of a funny incident. So, yes, we only played 16 shows because we picked out the ones that were bizarre or special to us and because we were very busy with our jobs.

Besides, I personally have always preferred the creativity going on in a rehearsal room to stage lights...

You have a particular guitar style: precise riffs, well thrown out, abrasive, with a result « in your face ». Were there bands, or guitar players who left a mark on you? Or who influenced your guitar style?

Bo Diddley, Link Wray, Johnny Ramone... and a hundred more.

I like it minimal with a raw sound, the brutal and radical type of guitar.



flyer for 2nd album, 2007

When you're alone, how do you compose? How does it start? A beat from the drum machine? A guitar riff?

It starts like this: I plug in the guitar, bass or synth and try to play a part I heard and liked or just fool around with sounds. If it's getting a little interesting I switch on the 4 or 8 track and program a little pattern on the drum machine.

The magic thing about solo recording is getting into an irrational, improvising frenzy without having to explain or agree with others. It's like a game, forgetting everything around. The best part of it being all the little accidents and surprises. I figure out, write and record a song in the same breath if I can.

So things have to go very fast. The machine and the thin and narrow (recycled!) cassette tapes I'm recording on are very fragile, so I must keep the rewinding down to a minimum. No practicing before, and I never play it again after. I somehow enjoy these self-restrictions and the urgency. Lots of soliloquizing and laughing involved, and a little alcohol, too.

And in bands, how does your participation unfold? Do you bring structures, or you find them in the heat of the moment?

We sometimes happened to make a song on the spot. But I never went to a rehearsal without preparation... we all hated jamming for hours, we thought it's boring and a waste of time. So especially the singers (Jacques and Cécilia) and me always had a few song ideas up our

sleeve. I often recorded the guitar riffs and structures at home so that I didn't forget them. We communicated a lot through our fax machines for everything band and label related. Cécilia used to send me complete song lyrics. Then in rehearsals everybody added their parts and ideas.

You make the covers of your records, or the ones of your bands, and you're a graphic designer - Did your music influence your graphic design and vice-versa?

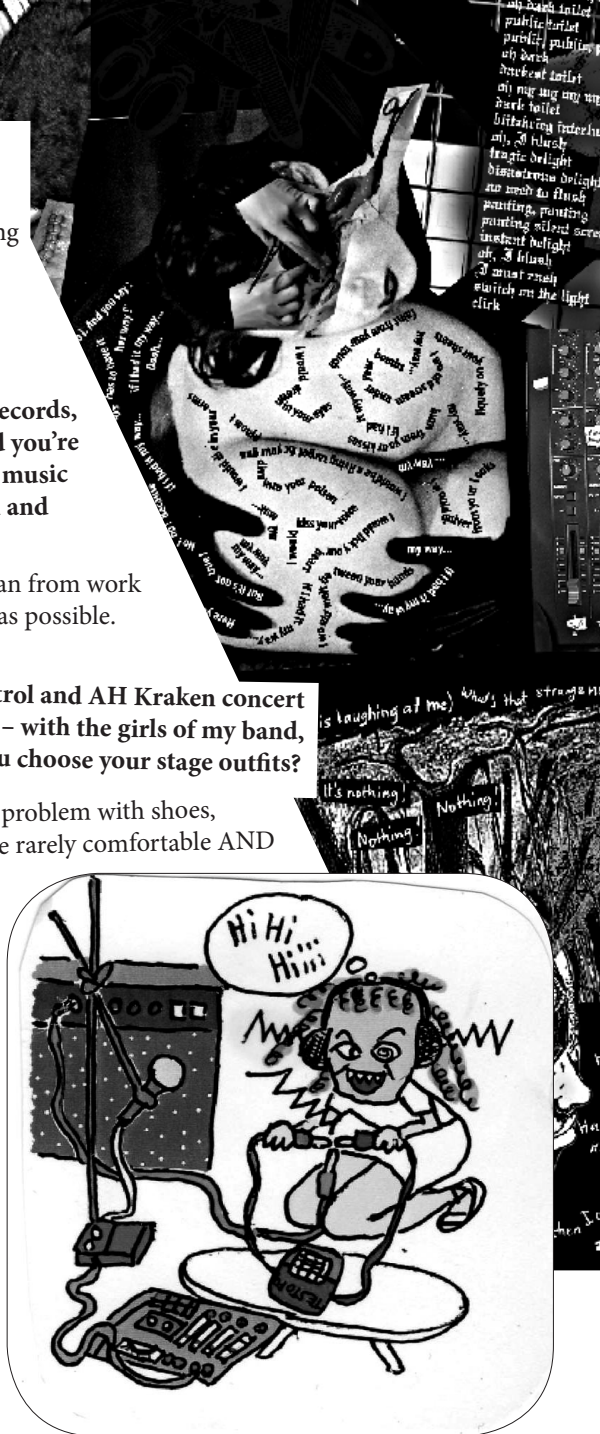
I want to keep the music «pure» and clean from work related things. I separate them as much as possible.

I remember you came to the Pussy Patrol and AH Kraken concert with high heels with musical notes on – with the girls of my band, we thought it was so classy, how do you choose your stage outfits?

I already made 10 pairs like these. The problem with shoes, clothes and things in general is they are rarely comfortable AND nice looking. So you gotta make your own. I'm wearing the same on and off stage. I like colorful and kinky clothes, lots of old stuff. But I'm not a vintage purist, just as for music. I can't help changing and customising everything... from lamps over underwear to cooking recipes. I'm a handywoman, repairing and transforming things around the house.

It's (almost) a mania.

top right: inside of gatefold LP cover of "The Two of us" on In The Red Records, 2007
right: drawing for first Lili Z. 10" album on Pollymagoo Records, 2001



2nd Lili Z. 7" on SS Records, 2004

Is leather the sine qua non condition? :D

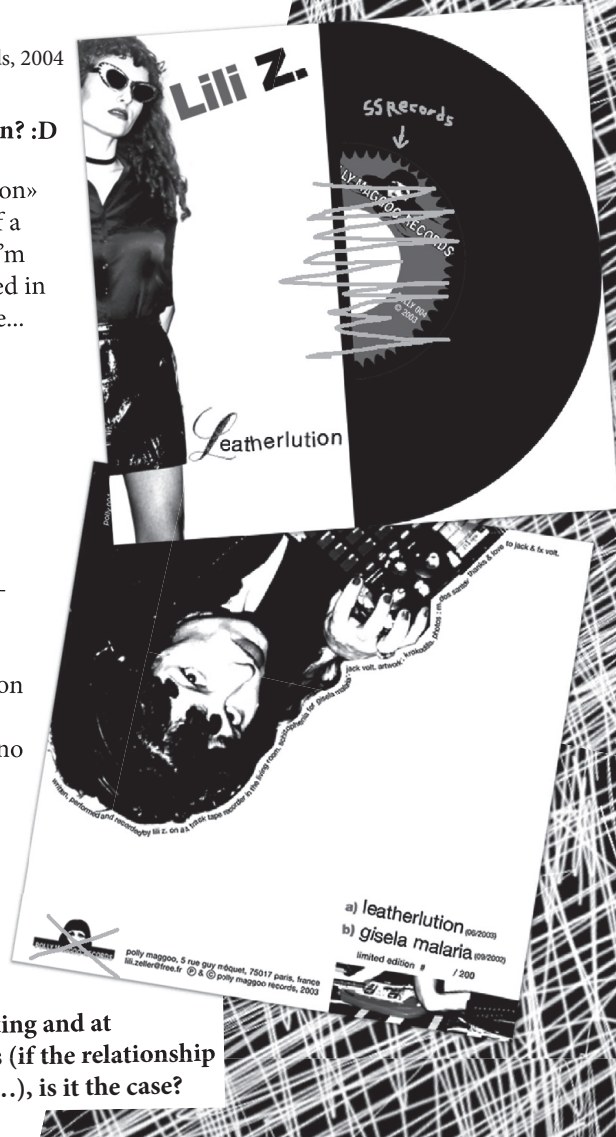
Ha ha ha! I made «Leatherlution» after I read a surprising line of a Volt show review which said I'm fully leather clad. It was printed in «Le Monde» so it must be true...

**Who was writing Volt's lyrics?
I think about the song «Couples»:
«Rebecca and Frankie, but Frankie
wants Robert, Robert and Jimmy,
but Jimmy loves nobody!»**

Jacques and me, about 50-50. Couples was me. By the way, Robert's, Jimmy's and Frankie's band, the Tyrades, covered this song.«Erection and boredom... submission and flowers... please and swallow... porno and hoover» and so on, all things going well together.

**As for the couple, with the
Splash Four and Volt, how
does it feel to play with your
boyfriend? It seems super exciting and
at the same time super dangerous (if the relationship
ends, the band ends and so on...), is it the case?**

It's great, very stimulating! We're both passionate about music and it's only natural for us to share all this and spend the most time together. I think it made us fall even more in love... We admire each other a lot, probably because we have very opposite skills. So, fortunately we don't encroach too much on each others territory. He's a very imaginative and inquiring mind, always researching and supplying our home with most wondrous things, sounds and stories. He's also a smart manager for the bands, labels and distro. I am the manual, creative kind, I can play and make songs.



With Jacques, you have labels, Pollymagoo Records and Royal Records, but you stopped a bit these last years, why? The desire to rest a little bit?

Our last release was an LP of Nixe, the fabulous dutch all-girl punk band. We don't have anything like a schedule or a regular rhythm. It always happens from a crush on a band, an opportunity, wanting to spread the word on music we like. It also has always been the best way to promote our own projects. We started in 93 and I think we're at our 27th release or so (2 CD and the rest vinyl).



Let's get to the genre territory: I sometimes tell myself it's different, not the same energy, to play with girls or boys. You mostly played with boys, was it by preference or by coincidence? How was it genre-wise? Do you feel a difference between playing with guys or girls, or not really?

By coincident, really. If there had been more girls around into what I wanted to do I gladly would have played with them. I consider the attitude and aspirations of someone, his or her character and if they're fun, not their sex. So gender never was an issue in my bands.

Was it somehow different with Cécilia in the No-Talents? How was it?

Cécilia and me formed a bulldozer together. But I think it has more to do with being best friends and chemistry, like with Jacques. People often pointed out the No-Talents being 50% female. Two girls who didn't hide their femininity probably made us more exotic... We were two leading chicks, not just the following, executing girlfriends. With 2 balls and a dick we would have done exactly the same. Cécilia is one of a kind with a very strong personality. Probably not a typical girl... but what does that mean anyway? And that's actually the point. The guys I played with were probably not typical boys either. They laughed at macho-rock attitudes just like us.

With Pussy Patrol or Eyes Behind, who were predominantly feminine, we sometimes encountered misogynist situations. Was it something you felt at times while being a female in bands?

Don't worry, that was only jealousy! Do you know that song «Für 'ne Frau» by the great band Hans-a-plast from Germany? They have lots of witty lyrics, like in «Man of stone», «Lederhosen typ» and «Hau ab du stinkst». Reversed machismo fun at it's best, without the bitterness! In the sixties, a fellow musician told the legendary Carol Kaye «You're not bad for a girl», and she replied «Well you're not bad for a guy either».



More generally, did you meet more difficulties to be a girl in the punk? And did the audience react differently?

Oh no, on the contrary! I think people were rather positively surprised to get skirts and shrieks... (just kidding about the clichés, of course!!). I've been lucky to deal with respectful males only. I dare to hope that people in our music scene are more advanced concerning sexual equality...? When I cross paths with wankers and misogynists I ignore them. I just can't take them seriously, they're immediately out for me, exit.

I know I've inspired a couple of girls to start playing, which is awesome and greatly unexpected. To me that's feminism put into practice. Women who inspired me are the ultra cool Poison Ivy, Wanda Jackson, Olga de Volga, Stef Petticoat, Peggy Jones «Lady Bo» and Norma-Jean Wofford «The Duchess»

(both guitarists for Bo Diddley), Delia Derbyshire, Pleasure Seekers/Suzi Quatro, Trashwomen, Lu'v'd Ones, Kleenex, Miriam Linna and tons of more impressive chicks in DIY punk bands (Avengers, Suicide Squad, Din A Testbild and Liaisons Dangereuses, Bags, VKTMS, Noh Mercy, ESG, Neo Boys, Dishrags,

Animals and Men, Manisch Depressiv, XeX, Crash Course in Science, Slits, Delta 5, Young Marble Giants, Sick Things, Redd Kross, L7, Mary Monday and the Bitches, Accident, Vulpess, Legal Weapon, Kas Product, Ultimo Resorte, etc.) There would be enough to fill the whole fanzine with.

You always worked while having bands?


Yes. Otherwise it becomes a job....

During studies, or day jobs, I was starting to not tell to my classmates or colleagues that I was doing punk or was part of bands. I never wanted to mix both, and be the crazy one. It became the private thing; but it always comes out somehow, and the revelation is sometimes surprising. Did you ever feel that « catwoman effect », at work or elsewhere?

I experienced the same as you and ended up telling people. Because it became tiring to avoid talking about your holidays, trips and week ends since everything is music related. I also happened to go to rehearsals directly after work and the shape of a guitar case is quite treacherous. But in fact people don't care so much once they put a tag on you. And of course they ignore everything about your secret world. All they wanna know is how much it costs to press a record and if you make some money. I always managed to forget to tell them when I played a show in Paris...

Laurent, Cécilia, Lili, Iwan: the No-Talents, 1996





I tend to think that with time, what one does ends up belonging to the pores of one's skin: in what extent did being part of bands, doing punk, change you?

To me the most significant impact of all this surely is the DIY attitude and way of life. Because it's great fun and a challenge to try and learn new things, complete independence and autonomy... and meeting lots of interesting, REAL people.

Last but not least, what do you listen to at the moment?

My soundtrack of this week is a total immersion in Australia: «More suicides please» (Thought Criminals), «Undecided» (Master's Apprentices), «I hate school» (Suicide Squad), «I only panic when there's nothing to do» (Leftovers), «Self destruct» (Razar), «One way street» (Saints), «Standing by the window» (Tactics), «Kick me» (Ray Columbus & the Art Collection) and so on... don't read between the lines!

Your project of the moment? -
Any record releases, etc...?

Make a drawing for Olaf's ¡QUE SUERTE Madrid based fanzine, the «Naked» issue and a website for Cécilia. Otherwise nothing planned, we'll see.

Thank you Lili.

We went on talking about guitar collage, Lili sent me some really good Ethiopian music - Girma Bèyèné and Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou - and made me discover the bewitching songs of the Luv'd Ones...

Still looking the wrong way, Lyme Regis, 2012



*The Influence of Punk and Feminism on Look Blue Go Purple**
By Diane Smith

Look Blue Go Purple formed in February 1983 in a practise room underneath a record store on George Street (Francisca Griffin). They were the first all-women band in Dunedin. (Dun, 1993, p.30) They shared with other Dunedin bands the trademarks of the so-called Dunedin Sound, which were simple pop song structures, keyboards and jangly guitars that bring to mind the music of 1960s bands such as The Velvet Underground and The Byrds. Look Blue Go Purple stood apart from other “Dunedin Sound” bands in that they utilized flutes and had many layers of vocals in harmony. The gender of Look Blue Go Purple’s members helped make them distinctive because their songs expressed female emotions and experiences, unlike the other male-dominated bands of the time.

The band was Kathy Bull on bass (who has since changed her name to Francisca Griffin), Denise Roughan on guitar and vocals, Norma O’Malley on flute, keyboards and vocals, Kath Webster on guitar and vocals, and drummer Lesley Paris. Look Blue Go Purple released three E.P.s: *Bewitched* of 1985 which included the tracks “Safety in Crosswords”, “Circumspect Penelope”, “Vain Hopes” and “As Does the Sun”; *LBGPEP2* of 1986 featuring “Cactus Cat”, “Grace”, “100 Times”, “Winged Rumour” and “Hiawatha”; and *This Is This* of 1988,

* [Excerpt] Smith, Diane. (October 2003). *Feminism, Punk Rock and Look Blue Go Purple*. (Postgraduate dissertation). University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Pgs 38-49

featuring “I Don’t Want You Anyway”, “In Your Favour”, “Year of the Tiger”, “Conscious Unconscious”, and “Days of Old”. The band played one final gig in Christmas of 1987 and disbanded. (Dun, 1993, p.30) All of the E.Ps were released on the (no longer) independent record label Flying Nun, a label that nurtured and released music by several Dunedin bands in the 1980s. Flying Nun also released Look Blue Go Purple’s 1991 self-titled CD, which comprised all of the material on their three E.Ps.

Feminism and punk were crucial motivating factors behind Look Blue Go Purple. I devised a questionnaire for the band, from which I received responses from four of the five former members. Their answers affirm the trend that women musicians felt enabled by punk’s do-it-yourself spirit. They also give details of their complex relationship to feminism, revealing their thoughtful negotiations with many of the issues feminism raises.

When asked which bands were influential and inspirational for Look Blue Go Purple, punk and postpunk bands were heavily cited.

“While playing with LBGP - listened to and liked bands with female elements - the Raincoats, the Slits, Siouxsie & the Banshees, Nina Hagen (!), B52s - also Velvet Underground, New Order, Wire - all sorts.” (Kath Webster)

“...lots of punk-type bands like the Buzzcocks, Wire, the Fall, Toy Love and the Swingers. Musically, they were much angrier and messed-up than anything that came through our music but it was as much their ethics and energy that influenced me. The Slits and the Raincoats were extremely important probably mostly for their approach, their lyrics and their dress style.” (Lesley Paris)

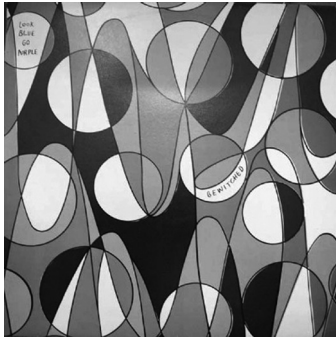
Of the many bands Francisca Griffin considers influential in her days as a musician in Look Blue Go Purple, many were punk or postpunk, such as The Ramones, The Buzzcocks, The Sex Pistols, Joy Division, Gang of Four, The Slits, The Raincoats, The Dead Kennedys and Public Image Limited. Other influential genres were mentioned, including their fellow Dunedin Sound bands many of which were indebted to punk (Robertson, 1999, p.143); drone rock and a plethora of others. Punk and post punk bands were, however, dominant.

Before inquiring how punk influenced the musicians, I asked them if they used a do-it-yourself approach to making music. This was because I wanted to know what the do-it-yourself ethic and the term “punk” meant to the musicians, and whether they viewed them as being connected. If I had explicitly connected the two concepts, I

was concerned that their definitions would become obfuscated. Craig Robertson has described the importance of punk's impact on many of Dunedin's 1980s bands in similar terms: "Punk, in Dunedin, more importantly, gave birth to an attitude rather than a musical form – the idea of making music yourself." (Robertson, 1999, p.19)

When asked if they used a do-it-yourself approach to music, the band answered affirmatively.

"When we started playing live we didn't really know how to play and we were learning in public. I think we felt a certain amount of freedom to do that too after the punk era when it didn't matter how technically proficient you were as there was so many other aspects going on in music. We all used to swap instruments during a set – sometimes I'd get to play synthesiser or keyboards – but after a year or so I wisely just stuck to drumming." (Lesley Paris)



"Yes, in that we did it ourselves, Bewitched was recorded with the aid of a QE II Arts Council grant of \$1000, we always made our own posters, organised our own gigs, did the door ourselves, all promotion, such as it was we did ourselves." (Francisca Griffin)

"Yes. Philosophically, in that we came up with the ideas ourselves, found our way around problems, worked together within the group to create end results. Practically, in that we found what we needed to make music and looked after the technical side of things ourselves. Because some of the band worked in the music industry (Lesley managed an EMI store, Kathy worked there) we negotiated our own recording arrangements and sorted gigs etc. There was business nous amongst us (Norma and Lesley), so difficulties with authorities were sorted by us." (Kath Webster)



Thus for the band, the do-it-yourself approach permeated every aspect of their work: learning to play instruments, create songs and play together

as a band; but also gig organisation and promotion, recording and business arrangements.



Further questioning established that Look Blue Go Purple adopted this do-it-yourself approach from their punk influences. When asked if punk and postpunk influenced them musically, the response was unanimous.

“I guess so, in that the Anyone Can Do This attitude to punk had a positive impact on people around me. I was encouraged to be creative because everyone was. If you wanted to have a go, that was enough.

Playing music wasn’t ever an intimidating experience because it was, and is, being done with friends.” (Kath Webster)

“Oh yeah. The simplicity of a lot of punk meant it was ok to try being a band and play musical ideas without being ‘songwriters’ or ‘musicians’. And there was the beautiful realisation that it sounded so great for being so simple and straightforward.” (Lesley Paris)

Francisca gave a simple “Yes!” in response to the question, but earlier in the questionnaire she describes her positive attitude to punk:

“Yahoo! Anyone could/can do anything...although some of the postpunk punk is Industry constructs....you know ...in aid of money and fame, nothing to do with the real punk ethic.” (Francisca Griffin)

So for Griffin, a do-it-yourself approach is the authentic punk approach.

The do-it-yourself approach to learning to play instruments was not entirely common to the band. Francisca Griffin is a self-taught lefthanded guitarist, and Lesley Paris had a handful of piano and drumming lessons but the skills she has acquired from drumming have largely come from experience in bands. Denise Roughan learnt classical piano for four years and taught herself to play guitar, bass guitar and drums.

“The possibility of being in a band was directly linked to learning the drums because it’s not the kind of instrument I’d want to play on solo. I’ve never enjoyed even practising drumming on my own so it’s

been a social thing right from the beginning.” (Lesley Paris)

Kath Webster had classical training on piano and then taught herself guitar. On piano she acquired Grade 7 and picked up guitar in her mid-to-late teens, so she had a few years of experience in playing before she joined Look Blue Go Purple.

Was Look Blue Go Purple a feminist band? This is a difficult question to answer, as feminism cannot be reduced to a single political doctrine. Furthermore, personal responses to feminism are recognised as being valid, that is, the personal is political. With regards to feminism, Look Blue Go Purple are adamant that they were not attempting to be overtly political.

“We deliberately set out to be an all-women band...It was deliberate but not from any radical feminist standpoint. It’s still feminist though in that we all wanted to play with other women.” (Kathy Bull, quoted in *Rip It Up*, February 1987).

If not a band with an explicit feminist agenda expressed through their songs, they definitely set out to be an all-women band. They were all aware of the way male bands dominated the music scene and believed they could contribute towards rectifying this gendered gap.

“It probably was a conscious decision, though not for any political reason; that’s the case on my part, at least. If my memory serves me right (and believe me, my memory of that entire era is pretty holey!), no guy was ever asked to join, or ever played along with us – but any one of the others might dispute this claim. There weren’t that many other groups of women out there doing that at the time, though there had been plenty of women singers and whatnot around in NZ for the past 2-3 decades, probably for longer than that. Certainly from the early 80’s onwards, the number of all-women bands in New Zealand was on the increase.” (Denise Roughan)

Paris’ answer suggests that the band were a challenge to the all-male or male-dominated Dunedin trend, but at the same time their genders should not have been an issue.

“We didn’t have any actively political agendas as to why we wanted it to be all female as most of us had been (and continued to be) in other bands with guys. It was more that we wanted to be different from

the predominantly male bands in our local scene although I was inspired by English bands like the Slits and the Raincoats. I think we just wanted to down-play the gender thing – we thought we were five females in a band just like there were plenty of bands with five males and that wasn't a big deal so why should we be. At the same time we were definitely aware that it was a point of difference.” (Lesley Paris)

Webster contends this was to affirm themselves as women but also avoid masculine judgements.

“Yes it was a conscious decision, because we were aware that most bands were all-male and thought that was odd and there was an element of ‘we can do that’. It wasn't so much ‘boys not allowed’, more ‘girls can do this’. It seemed like a fun thing to attempt - there was a camaraderie because we were all female. It wasn't a political statement though, more a social response. Perhaps because we were all women, it was easier to relax in the early days when none of was very confident. If there was a man and men present at those first attempts to play, we would be less willing to risk appearing foolish or incompetent.” (Kath Webster)

Webster's answer suggests that despite the punk “Anyone Can Do it” attitude to music, Look Blue Go Purple wanted to be taken seriously as musicians. This suggests the band continued to perceive masculine norms of musicianship. Mavis Bayton finds similar attitudes among women's bands in England, and states that the exclusion of men from such bands is important because male musicians are often perceived as “threatening” and “judgemental”. (Bayton, 1990, p.247) Women musicians prefer an all-female environment when building confidence in their musical abilities. (Bayton, 1990, p.247)

Gender gaps were only one of many priorities for the band.

“I think having fun was probably at the top of the priority list. We were all fairly competent boozers too; needless to say, these two ‘aims’ made for some pretty interesting concerts along our rocky road to fame and glory. We aimed, and succeeded, at being able to play our instruments and songs better by the time we called it a day. We aimed to make friends and influence people. We should all be successful businesswomen by now. What happened?! But really, I don't think the concept of ‘aiming’ at anything in particular came into it.” (Denise Roughan)

“We aimed to create authentically original songs, to be taken seriously, to have fun in the process. It was a lot about having a good time together, with a purpose.” (Kath Webster)

“I think we aimed to write songs and have a good time.” (Francisca Griffin)



Thus their aims as a band were to have fun, be creative, and become better musicians in the process.

Most of Look Blue Go Purple accept that feminism is a taken-for-granted aspect of their personal lives, and see no personal need for broader political agendas.

“Feminism is something that all women have to ‘fight for’ in whatever form, to survive these days; that’s been the case forever. Now women are freer - and they are (I’m talking about the western world of course) - they can do whatever they want - it’s only down

to the individual as to how they want to manifest that 'freedom'. Playing in bands with all men since LBGP, apart from one of the bands I play in at the moment, which consists of 4 women and one man (but we consider him a girlfriend!) has emphasised my stand as a woman more, though I've always been lucky enough to play music with men who treat me with as much respect as they would any other man: as a person, or as a musician. So I manage to stand my ground on that front at least." (Denise Roughan)

"Attitude, hmmm, more a way of life, I know I can do anything I put my mind to, and also that I am not invisible or a second class citizen" (Francisca Griffin)

"I was lucky to have a Mum and older sister who discussed 'women's liberation' and read Thursday magazine in the early 70s. It was a fairly socialist household and I was taught that everyone deserved to be treated equally so I think my own version of feminism stems from there. This background probably did influence me in music – it was unusual for females to play the drums when our band started in 1983 but I didn't really question that I shouldn't or wouldn't be able to do that... I have feminist beliefs but don't really go for labelling myself." (Lesley Paris)

"I take feminism for granted. I have never felt inhibited or disadvantaged by my gender so I suppose I approached music making with a degree of youthful confidence, unimpaired by the fact I was female. Perhaps some girls would have hesitated - but its difficult to know whether feminism influenced me as it is similar to asking if having blood type A has had affected me, or being one of five children in a New Zealand family... I think every woman taking advantage of a modern world is a feminist, we have inherited it, via our expectations, our assumptions. It's only in comparison with women from other eras or from other societies that I would even consider the label relevant now. It is such a given." (Kath Webster)

Their personal attitudes toward feminism can be interpreted in three ways. Out of respect for Paris' reluctance to be labelled, my discussion of some approaches to feminism should be read as a comparison rather than an attempt to essentialise their beliefs and lives.

Liberal feminism explains women's subordination as an effect of their unequal rights under patriarchy. (Beasley, 1999, p.51) The liberal

feminist insistence of freedom and equal rights for all human beings emphasizes gender relations in the public sphere, especially law and politics. (Beasley, 1999, p.51) Look Blue Go Purple may be read as espousing a liberalist attitude to feminism. Their stances imply that all the feminist struggles are over due to legislative and political equality, and the onus is now on women, as individuals, to use their equality to live their lives as they see fit.

Their approaches to feminism may also be compared with aspects of postmodern feminism. Postmodernists recognise a recent crisis in cultural authority, especially that of Western cultures. (Beasley, 1999, p.84) For postmodern feminists, this crisis entails a self-reflexive critique of feminist authority, especially the universalising tendencies which plague identity politics. (Beasley, 1999, p.86) Thus feminist insistence on identity categories such as “woman”, “feminist”, “lesbian” etc is problematic, and postmodern feminists emphasize multiple, individual responses to gendered power relations. (Beasley, 1999, p.86) Look Blue Go Purple’s attitudes to feminism stress particularity. Furthermore, Paris’ personal insistence on the redundancy of identity categories could be read as a postmodern attitude to feminism.

However the band display a keen awareness for how being female affected their band dynamics and songwriting.

“All of us have played in bands with guys at one stage or another, and it’s just so completely different with women, just basically the level of communication is really different. And it’s hard to explain because it is just something between women. There’s a lot more wanting to know what the other people are feeling, y’know to do with the music, so it’s just different. I’m not saying if it’s better or worse or what, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.” (Lesley Paris, quoted in Dun, June/July, 1993: 30)

Kath Webster discusses the positive and negative aspects of such an approach:

“I suspect ‘female music’ is a more collaborative experience than male music or perhaps mixed-gender music. Maybe a group of male friends works the same way. We were all careful with each other’s egos so that creating a song was a polite and democratic and generous exercise. It meant that some poor quality things got through! Because no-one was willing to be unkind about someone else contribution - but it made the experience a mostly positive one too. Perhaps the end result demonstrates this with rounded sounds,

with softness, with less edge than a male band? I think we were not hard enough on ourselves too, though. Discipline in terms of practise and slogging it out were not enforced.” (Kath Webster)

Mavis Bayton, in her study of British women’s bands, has found that intra-band sensitivity and communication is significant, though some of the bands in her study believed, like Webster, that more constructive criticism was needed. (Bayton, 1990, pp.245-246)



Look Blue Go Purple’s songwriting was specifically female according to the band, though not feminist in a sloganeering manner.

“We did sing about women’s issues to an extent, I suppose, women’s feelings and that through our songs a little bit, but it was never ‘get this message’.” (Denise Roughan, quoted in Dun, June/July 1993:30)

“I can’t imagine that we would have had a song about a kitchen whiz if there had been men in the band”. (Lesley Paris)

On whether there is such a thing as female music, Francisca Griffin replies: “If it is writing from a woman’s perspective, then yes there is,

and of course we did”. (Francisca Griffin) Many of their lyrics expressed a woman’s perspective, or featured a female protagonist. One clever example of this is the song “Circumspect Penelope”.

Circumspect Penelope

From Troy to Ithaca
Benefactress Athene
Reminds you where you should be
Back with your Penelope

Fall in love with Nausicaa
But remember who you are
And where you want to be
Back with your Penelope

She’s been waiting twenty years
And you just walk in
Telling stories of the sea
She should hate you, your Penelope

(“Circumspect Penelope”, from Bewitched by Look Blue Go Purple)

The song draws on similar strategies to those used by feminists. For example, author Sara Maitland in *A Book of Spells* (London: Joseph, p.1987) rewrites well-known Bible stories from a woman’s perspective, for example, retelling the story of the Fall of Man from Eve’s perspective, revalorising women’s perspectives and underscoring the masculinist nature of the original texts. Here, Look Blue Go Purple make reference to Homer’s *Odyssey*, but concentrate on Odysseus’ wife Penelope’s perspective.

Some of the band members were conscious of how being female impacted upon public reception.

“If anything we consciously didn’t present ourselves. We might have considered what we might wear ...can I borrow your dress/shirt etc ...because we liked certain things, as you would going out for a night. But we didn’t plan it or make a decision to have a certain look. I think once or twice we might have played with the idea - let’s all wear one colour - but it didn’t stick, because we were all highly individual and were conscious that being female, we might have been expected to dress up or present a female look on stage. (We

were adamantly not sexy.) Some of us were quite self conscious too, struggling over the being watched, being on stage thing.” (Kath Webster)

So the band, it could be said, wanted to be viewed as “being themselves”. Wanting to “dress up” was not about looking sexy but about affirming their everyday identities.

“Only in that we liked the way we dressed, and liked to dress up, but I think we did that anyway, in our day to day lives.” (Francisca Griffin).

“I don’t think we considered our presentation as a whole ‘look’ but it was more just an opportunity to dress up or wear our latest op shop scores – a great perk of touring!” (Lesley Paris)

This affirmation of the everyday, mundane nature of female life is a similar strategy to that used by British all-female postpunk band The Raincoats. This approach to image, emphasized the commonplace.

“I am critical of those that exploit female imagery, I guess - who use cleavage to get an audience’s attention. Female performers dressing to impress men - usually in most obvious way, sexily, with tiny skirts, lots of flesh etc - a la Kylie Minogue in her early incarnation, are negating the request that they be taken seriously for their art, asking instead that they be admired for their sexual appeal. It’s basic and it’s a cheap trick that, I reckon, makes it harder for those women performers who chose not to play that card. It is as if the visual impression being made on an audience is as important as the musical - if not more so. Then you’re into another realm, no longer interested in music, wanting eye-candy and the weirdly pornographic tone of Girls Performing, fantasy fulfilment for complete strangers. Some female performers manage to impress on both musical and visual levels without denigrating themselves in the process - I’m thinking Siouxsie Sioux, Annie Lennox - their images are of strong, in control, confident women with great musical talent. Mmmm.. Maybe it’s about manufactured music. People like Kylie, Spice Girls, lots of current really young looking top-of-tops names I don’t know - appear to me to be victims of music industry men in control of their images. The women musicians who are obviously not at the mercy of such men are the likes of PJ Harvey, Tania Donnelly - who have genuine images - they are who impress me. It’s another

brand of female imagery....a brand I relate to.” (Kath Webster)

Webster is critical of the tradition of representing women as spectacles, as sexy images to be consumed by the male gaze. She is more interested in female musicians who she sees as having self-determination, in their images and their music. Her particular stance on what she calls “female imagery” is congruent with Laura Mulvey’s (1989) feminist stance against the objectification of women in Hollywood narrative cinema.

However other members of Look Blue Go Purple did not voice such opinions in the interviews. Look Blue Go Purple may not have expressly aimed to challenge dominant representations of women. Indeed, their choice to dress in their everyday styles may have been an attempt to downplay the role of image in the consumption of music: lack of spectacle as a strategy to force the listener to concentrate more on their music. Since Webster notes that some members of the band felt self-conscious, they may have been trying not to draw attention to themselves. Nonetheless, whether intentional or not, Look Blue Go Purple provide a refreshing contrast to representations of women emphasizing their “to-be-looked-at-ness” by means of spectacle.

It stands to reason that The Raincoats’ strategy of embodying an alternative to the feminine spectacle tradition was an influence on Look Blue Go Purple. Most of the band listened to feminist punk bands such as The Slits and The Raincoats. Kath Webster and Lesley Paris is particular stressed the importance of female rock and feminist punk.

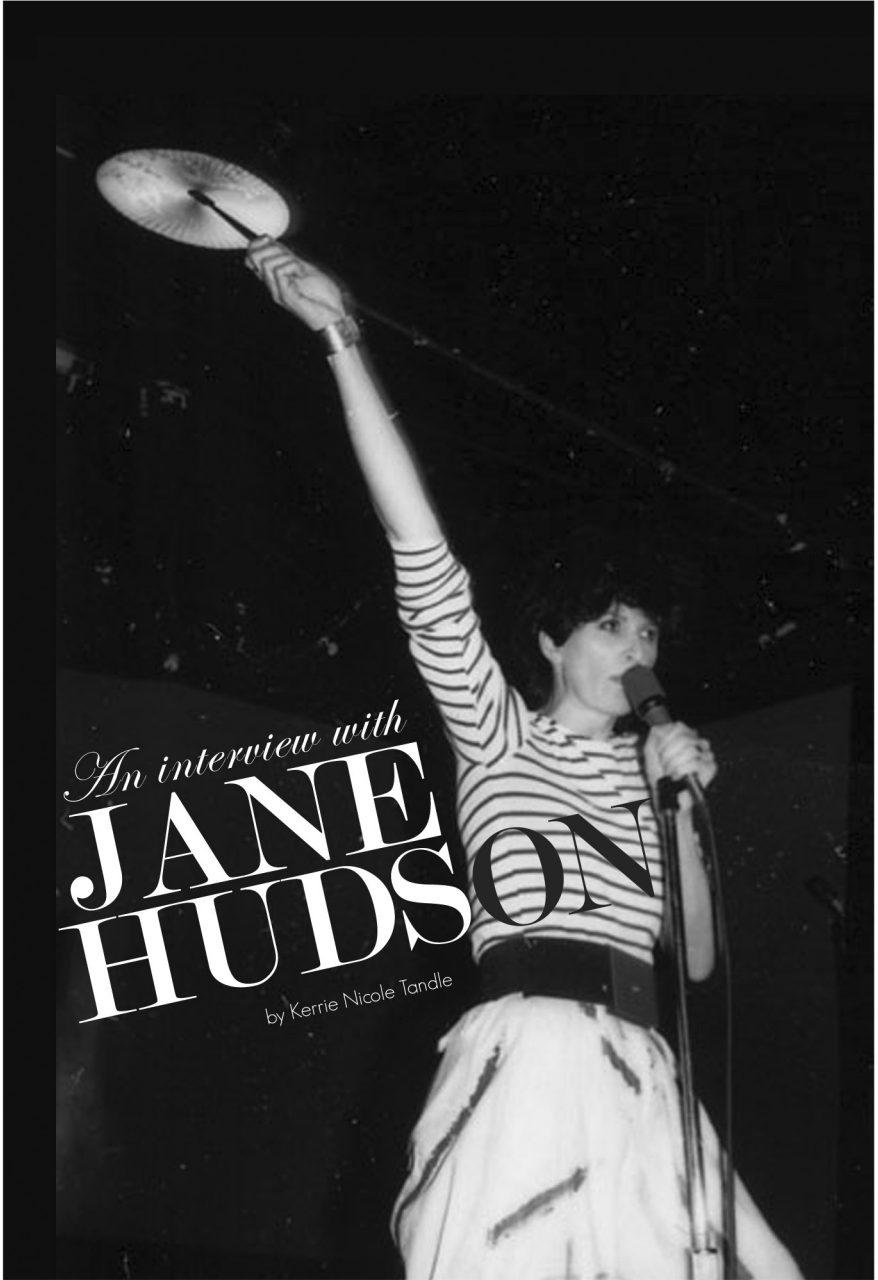
“While playing with LBGP - listened to and liked bands with female elements - the Raincoats, the Slits, Siouxsie & the Banshees, Nina Hagen (!), B52s...” (Kath Webster)

“The Slits and the Raincoats were extremely important probably mostly for their approach, their lyrics and their dress style.” (Lesley Paris)

Look Blue Go Purple was undoubtedly influenced by punk. All members of the band cite punk and postpunk bands as influences on their music. For most of them, it was a primary influence. I have identified the do-it-yourself approach to music-making as being a feature of punk rock music, as did the band members, who have used this do-it-yourself approach to a large degree. The impact of feminism on Look Blue Go Purple has been complex and multi-faceted. They were not an overtly feminist band, steering clear of sloganeering feminist lyrics. However they recognise the need for personal feminist beliefs, and acknowledge that the formation of the band

was a challenge to the all-male rock band norm. Thus their music was a personal response to social gender inequality. They provided with their image an alternative to the tradition of women being presented as spectacles inviting objectification. It is debatable whether this was intentional, nonetheless such an alternative resonates with feminist strategies for female representation. The band were also influenced by feminist punk bands such as The Raincoats and The Slits, and in that respect I further argue they were indebted to feminism.





An interview with
JANE HUDSON
by Kerrie Nicole Tandle



MAKING WAVES: First off, congratulations on the recent reissue of your 1983 self-released Jeff and Jane Hudson album *Flesh!* The reissue comes complete with bonus singles, as well as tracks from your 1980 *World Trade* EP (Lust/Unlust Records). It was released last year on both Captured Tracks and Dark Entries, two of -in my opinion- the best labels out right now.

In the autumn of 1977, Jeff and you formed the Boston-based art punk band the Rentals. You performed with Pseudo Carol on drums and put out *Gertrude Stein* b/w *Low Rent* and *I Got A Crush On You* b/w *New York*. Can you tell us a bit about Pseudo Carol?

JANE HUDSON: Pseudo Carol was a student at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She made paintings, prints, sculpture and took one of our video classes. In particular she made 'air guitars', actual physical sculptures, and loved to perform with them. She was a real character, an authentic personality who looked very much the part of an art punk. We were friends with many of the young bands coming out of the school, and invited Carol to form the Rentals with us. She would play drums most of the time, and then she and Jeff would change places with Carol on guitar, and sing her tough and sweet songs. Everyone loved her rough edges.

MW: Jeff and you both attended art school, is that where you first met? What were you studying in school?

JH: Actually Jeff was at the Museum School in a post graduate year, and I was teaching in public high school when we met. I went to the U. of Penn and studied English, Art History and Theater. We met in a loft building in Boston where we both had studios.



MW: This past January you performed at Mass MoCA celebrating the soon-to-be 30 year anniversary of *Flesh*. As the Rentals, you performed with The Clash, the B-52's, James Chance & the Contortions, and The Mutants; and as Jeff and Jane Hudson you performed with Suicide, Fad Gadget, Siouxsie and the Banshees, PIL, Ministry, and Sonic Youth. Is there any band you wish you could have shared a stage with, given the chance?

JH: Kraftwerk, Blondie.



MW: How did the music scene in Boston (Human Sexual Response, Real Kids, Nervous Eaters, Mission of Burma, Unnatural Axe, La Peste) differ from that in New York (Dark Day, Bush Tetras, Ut, James Chance and the Contortions, Lydia Lunch, Lounge Lizards, etc...)?

JH: Boston's scene was definitely more guitar oriented, although there were some bands with arty leanings like the Girls. New York was giving birth to the Noise and No Wave movements as well as being heavily affected by disco. So the strains of art punk, synth wave and disco were all happening at the same time.

MW: What was NYC like in the early '80s and where were some of your favorite places in the city?

JH: New York was close to bankruptcy at that time, and life downtown was pretty funky. SoHo was still a semi-industrial area with a few galleries, and some of the great clubs, Mudd, Tier 3, CBGB. Further uptown, Danceteria, Hurrah, Palladium. There were also lots of after hours venues that shall remain nameless! Of course then the underground scene, such as it was, is in Brooklyn. Not then!

MW: What was the Manhattan Project?

JH: Manhattan Project was formed after *World Trade* was released (1980). We wanted to have more musical options, so added a bass player (Nic Naylor Leland), Moog master (Rob Key), and Synair and trumpet player (Winston Robinson). Jeff played guitar and I played keyboard. We came close to a record deal with Z Records, but it didn't happen. So no recordings of that group.

MW: Your father was a musician and you grew up playing classical piano. How much of an influence did classical piano have on your later synth years and what bands were you listening to when you started the Rentals?



JH: I started playing the piano at 3, and studied classical literature until 12. Due to some family crises, I stopped studying, moved to playing standard sheet music pop songs, and began listening to jazz. I'd say though that my knowledge of musical structure as well as having a trained ear for melody

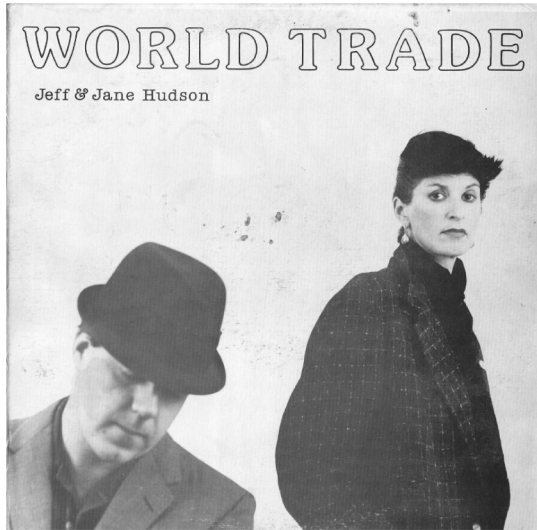
gave me an advantage writing songs. We were lucky to have great college radio in Boston in the '70s so we heard local bands as well as a lot of European imports. Loved the Sex Pistols, The Damned, Psychedelic Furs, Siouxsie and the Banshees.

MW: What early synth-based records were you playing the most when you started incorporating synthesizers into your own music?

JH: Kraftwerk, Ultra Vox, Human League, Gary Numan, Soft Cell, Plastics --to name a few.

MW: Jeff and you currently run an art and antiques shop in North Adams, Massachusetts, while also involved in

the video art scene there. What brought you to the Berkshires and what kinds of antiques do you collect for your shop?



JH: We were both finishing at the Museum School after 32 wonderful years of teaching, had sold our house in Boston, and we're ready to make a move. An old friend had bought a loft in a reclaimed mill in North Adams (Eclipse Mill), and insisted that we come out to see it and Mass MoCA. I made the journey, and fell in love with the Museum, the land, and the Mill. A beautiful space was available and we jumped. After about a year, and many auctions to buy things for the loft, we decided to supplement our income and open the shop. We've

had a few locations, but being on the campus of Mass MoCA (the largest museum complex in the country) going on 5 years now has been great. People visit from across the globe! Actually, we don't make videos any more. That was our life's work. Check out the work on our site, officialjeffandjane.com, to see my video art and Jeff's music videos.



MW: Could you list some of your favorite visual artists, videographers, and films?

JH: Favorite visual artists: Matisse, Duchamp, Vito Acconci, Neo Rauch, Joseph Beuys, Jenny Holzer, Warhol, Carolee Schneeman.

Video: Joan Braderman, Nam Jun Paik, Bill Viola, Yoko Ono, Tony Oursler.

Films: *Melancholia*, *Nosferatu*, *Metropolis*, *Rain*, *Double Indemnity*, *American in Paris*.

MW: Do you have any favorite authors and books?

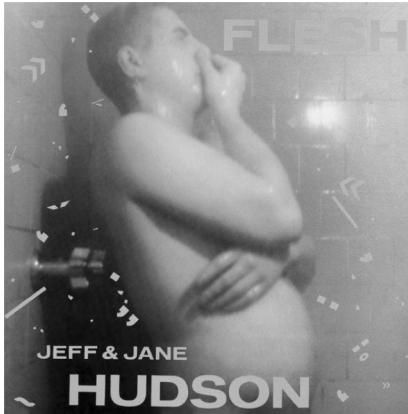


JH: While I was teaching, I used to read a lot of critical theory and fell in love with Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard, and Heidegger. However, now I read mystery fiction for the most part, although I love Haruki Murakami, Neal Stephenson. Favorite mysteries: James Lee Burke, Elizabeth George, Stieg Larsson, Jo Nesbo.

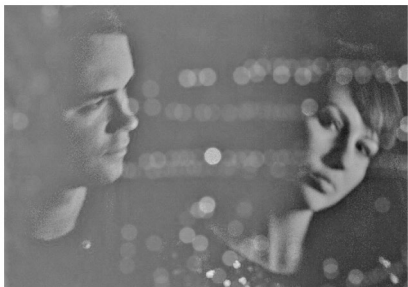


MW: The bubblegum pink and sky blue cover art of *Flesh* is a photograph of Malcolm Travis of Human Sexual Response taken by downtown NYC punk photographer Mark Morrisroe. How did that photo end up as *Flesh*'s cover art?

JH: Mark Morrisroe was a student of ours as well as occasional performer with the Rentals. We asked him for an image, and that's the one that fit the title!



MW: Patricia and Ian from Soft Metals are a recent 'couple' band who have a Jeff and Jane energy to them. What new bands have you listened to lately?



JH: Muse, Killers, Skrillex, Adelle, Gaga...

MW: Being in love with someone and working together musically must be an entirely different experience compared to just being bandmates. How has this affected your music?

JH: It's kept us going and viable. There's a special musical chemistry that is Jeff and Jane that doesn't happen with anyone else.



MW: What is your favorite thing about Jeff and what are some of your hobbies when you aren't working together artistically?

JH: Jeff's got an incredible drive, and desire to invent. So new things come along all the time. Very exciting! I'm more of the follow-through type, in for the long haul. So it's a good match. As for extracurricular activities, photography has become a major interest of mine. Some pics on our site.

MW: Lastly, are you still using the early Roland Juno 60, Sequential Circuits Pro 1, and the TR808 drum machine?!



JH: Nope. That equipment is long gone. We're using a Yamaha MM6 synth, and a Roland GAIA synth. As we're playing with backing tracks from the old material, the performance still sounds like the original. Jeff writes new tracks on Reason and we add synth lines and vocals.

IMAGES:

1. Jane / 1980 (photo: Charles Giuliano)
2. Jeff and Jane at Mass MoCA / 2012 (photo: Aurora Halal)
3. The Rentals show flyer / 1979
4. The Rentals & Unnatural Axe show flyer / 1979
5. Jane and Jeff in NYC with their dog, Jelly / 1980 (photo: Charles Giuliano)
6. World Trade EP / 1980 (photo: Curtis Knapp)
7. Jane and Jeff / 1982
8. Nosferatu / 1922
9. Jane and Jeff / 1982
10. Flesh LP / 1983 (photo: Mark Morrisroe)
11. Soft Metals / 2010
12. Jeff and Jane / 1981 (photo: Merrill Aligheri)
13. The Manhattan Project / 1980 (photo: Charles Giuliano)

Jane Hudson / Kerrie Tandle / February 2012

Tony Coulter is a radio host on the renowned freeform radio station WFMU. An active DJ since 1990, Coulter's eccentric and original programming has been a source of inspiration and discovery for me for many years. For this recurring topic in *Making Waves*, I asked him to create a list of some of his favorite «girl bands» or female fronted acts.

Tony's list

« As flattered as I am to be asked to list my favorite women musicians in *Making Waves*, my guess is that there's nothing particularly interesting in knowing that I loved Teenage Jesus and Lydia Lunch's *Queen of Siam* when I was in college, along with *Essential Logic* and, a couple of years later, *Liliput*. Artists like that have already been (re) discovered and justly celebrated (subculturally speaking, of course!). Readers of *Making Waves* don't need my seal of approval at this late date – I'm just a schlub with a whole buncha records and a radio show, after all. More interesting, I figure, would be for me to focus on some great artists who are still pretty much unknown, but just as deserving of your attention.

Still, it would help to know where I'm coming from taste-wise, so that my endorsements below have some kind of context. My tastes are all over the genre map, from '60s psych pop to flat-out experimental music – post-punk is just one of my favorite flavors. I prefer records with a homemade feel, but am not at all hostile to musical sophistication.

To name names quickly, I love Brigitte Fontaine, Catherine Ribeiro, and Gal Costa. The Raincoats, The Slits, Vivien Goldman, Lora Logic/Essential Logic, Delta 5, The Marine Girls and Tracey Thorn. The Lemon Kittens (with Danielle Dax), Diane Rogerson/Chrystal Belle Scrodd (“Mrs. Nurse with Wound”), Sally Timms, of the Mekons, in her guise as Sally Smmit, Sara of Amos & Sara and “Sara Goes Pop.” Early Lydia Lunch/Teenage Jesus & the Jerks, Ikue Mori (of DNA), Y Pants, Rebbly Sharp, Charlotte Pressler, Pink Section, Inflatable Boy Clams, Teddy & the Frat Girls. Hermine, Kleenex/Liliput, Malaria, and Käthe Kruse (of Die Tödliche Doris). Frank Chickens, Aunt Sally/Phew, Mishio Ogawa (of Wha Ha Ha and Kiyohiko Senba and His Haniwa All Stars), Chica Sato (of The Plastics), and Saboten.

While it would be ridiculous to call any of the above famous, I’m guessing a good percent will be familiar to readers of this magazine. Simply put, if you like that stuff, consider seeking out some of what I’ve listed below – it’s just as good. The bands I’ve included are either all-female, predominantly female, led by a woman, or male-female duos. Here goes:

Beth A. Bacon. First up is the most obscure entry on the list; in fact, if you see this, Beth, please get in touch! I can tell you nothing except that then-Princeton, NJ–based Bacon released an LP with Thomas P. (Florek) in 1990, titled *Subliminal Farms*, and then a self-titled solo cassette in 1994. Both recordings are sparsely but strikingly arranged, and full of quirky off-kilter DIY charms. Bacon’s light, playful and somewhat zany vocals (she’s also a keyboardist) are extremely charming, without being cloying at all. There’s a lot of depth, intelligence, and insight here, lyrically and musically, mixed seamlessly with humor and faux naiveté. Wonderful stuff that shouldn’t simply disappear into the ether.

Nadine Bal. A Belgian vocalist primarily known as one half of the great Bene Gesserit, the other member being Alain Neffe (also of Pseudo Code, Human Flesh, Subject, and many others). While Bene Gesserit – formed in 1981 but still very much active – tends to get tagged as minimal synth these days, it’s really intensely personal music outside of any genre. Much of its flavor and emotional force comes from Bal’s vocals, which switch from playful twittering to restrained intensity. Bal, who’s one of my very favorite singers these days, has

only gotten better over the years – something that rarely happens! Listen, for example, to her stunning vocals on 2008's *Les vleurs du bal*, and on the brand new compilation 4 in 1, Volume 3 (2012). There's an element of the extended-technique/improv/theatrical tradition that extends from Cathy Berberian to, say, Diamanda Galás in *Bal's* singing, so it was exciting to see her team up with one the very best of those kinds of singers, Anna Homler, in the trio *The Chopstick Sisters* in 2004.

Care of the Cow/Christine Baczewska. *Care of the Cow*, a Chicago trio once described to me as looking like “two lesbians and a biker,” began life in the '70s as a hippyish folk group, and then morphed into an absolutely unique psych/folk/new music/post-punk blend. 1981's *I Still Don't Know Your Style* (an LP) and 1983's *Dog's Ears Are Stupid* (a cassette) are strongly recommended to all open-minded listeners. (See their informative Web site: <http://careofthecow.wordpress.com/>.) As for the solo music of Baczewska, seemingly the only member to remain somewhat active post-breakup, it has a tad more of a “new music composer” flavor than *Care of the Cow*, but is just as intimate and full of personality. A little like a less-arch Laurie Anderson, perhaps, with a streak of folk and harmonies a bit reminiscent of *The Roches* – but much better than that glib description suggests. As far as I know, Baczewska has only two releases, 1993's *Tribe of One* and 2001's *The X Factor*.

Danny & the Parkins Sisters. The lone release from this San Francisco trio, a self-titled 12” EP from 1982, was thankfully reissued on CD in 2010, and should absolutely be sought out by anyone who finds appeal in the idea of a mix of provocative feminist/girl power lyrics and artful instrumental primitivism verging on West Coast no wave. This one is so good – and so likely to appeal to people who dig no wave – I can't understand why it has remained hidden so long.

Double-X Project. A German all-female trio (playing synths, piano, sax, and clarinet), *Double-X Project* released three albums that fit into the avant rock/sort of jazz/Rock in Opposition mold of groups like *Cassiber*, and like *Cassiber* they make a lot of creative use of samples. Unlike *Cassiber*, they never get bombastic, and instead focus on moody, emotionally charged soundscapes. Their first release, *This Is the Day the Sky Falls Through the Glass Wall* (1985),

might even appeal to minimal synth fans. Their other two albums, equally good, are *Fallobst* (1987) and «X»-Cerpts (1991).

Manon Anne Gillis. Gillis, from France, began making noise/industrial/experimental music in the early '80s, using all sorts of “non-musical” objects, the sounds of which are processed, layered, and harshly treated in various ways. Far from being tedious and painful to listen to, as so much noise music is, Gillis’s recordings are haunting, compelling, and emotional – even weirdly beautiful. Much better than, say, Merzbow. Her principal recordings are *Lxgrin* (1984), *Aha* (1984), *Monetachek* (1985), *Bishérigori* (1986), *Rementact* (1989), and *Euragine* (1994). She also released a more electro wave/minimal-synth cassette in 1983 under the name *Devil’s Picnic*, titled *Pomme ou pas pomme*.

Judas & Natasha Experiments. Led by sisters Judas and Natasha Hanna, this group creates their own weird and bracing amalgam of psych folk and noise/improv music, complete with banshee-wail vocals. Sort of like a cross between *These Trails* and *Cromagnon*, maybe? Relentless and jarring, but always intelligent and never gratuitous. As far as I know, they have only one release, 1991’s (*Not Everyone’s*) *Cup of Tea*. Probably only for lovers of the extreme.

Colette Magny. Well-known in France, but not really anywhere else, Magny is the source of a whole tradition of intense and combative French female singer/songwriters like Catherine Ribeiro or Mama Bea – the polar opposite of cutesy yé-yé girls à la France Gall. She began her career in the early '60s specializing – rather inadvisably to these ears – in English-language versions of blues and jazz standards, but then began both writing her own politically charged songs and collaborating with a slew of gifted French free jazz musicians. Her vocal style developed in a totally original direction, and she became one of the most powerful and hair-raising singers I’ve ever heard. Colette Magny wasn’t kidding around. My favorite records of hers are the ones from the first half of the '70s, including *Feu et rythme* (1970), *Répression* (1972), and *Transit* (1975). Her vocals on the collaborative release *Chili – Un peuple crève ...* (1975) are particularly stunning.

Sis Q Lint. *This band, essentially the duo of N. Suzanne Murry and Steven Valencia, released “The Pre-Need EP” as a 12” in 1984, along with a single from the same year that I haven’t heard. While the songs on “Pre-Need” were written and largely played by Valencia – making this band a debatable inclusion in a list of female musicians – lead singer Murry’s personality is front and center. More to the point, the sound and feel of “Pre-Need” very much bring to mind bands like Y Pants, Pink Section, and the Inflatable Boy Clams – Sis Q Lint exhibits the same quirky girlish goofiness and deliberately rinky-dinky tomfoolery. Perhaps not essential, but a lot of fun.*

Wondeur Brass/Justine/Les Poules. *The members of these closely related groups – Justine is a slimmed-down version of Wondeur Brass, while Les Poules is Justine minus one member – are mainstays of the Montreal equivalent of New York City’s Downtown improviser’s scene of the ’80s and ’90s (i.e., in NYC, people like John Zorn and Fred Frith). Their approach is more structured, though, and through their lyrics they add in a very prominent and assertive feminist perspective. Wondeur Brass put out two albums, Ravir (1985) and Simoneda, Reine des Esclaves (1987), as did Justine, the somewhat more mature and refined quartet that grew out of Wondeur Brass: (Suite) in 1990 and Langages fantastiques in 1994. Les Poules – more song-oriented than Justine and minus the bass player – has released four albums, starting with 1986’s Les contes de l’amère loi. There are also numerous collaborations and side projects, such as one from 1992 including Zeena Parkins and Tenko.*

MAKING WAVES #2

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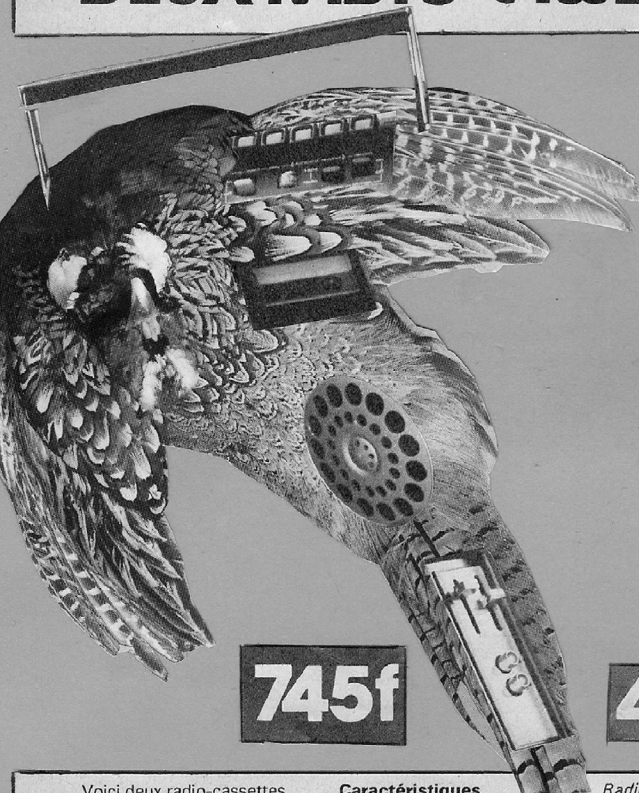
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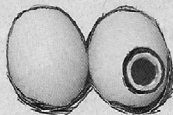
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