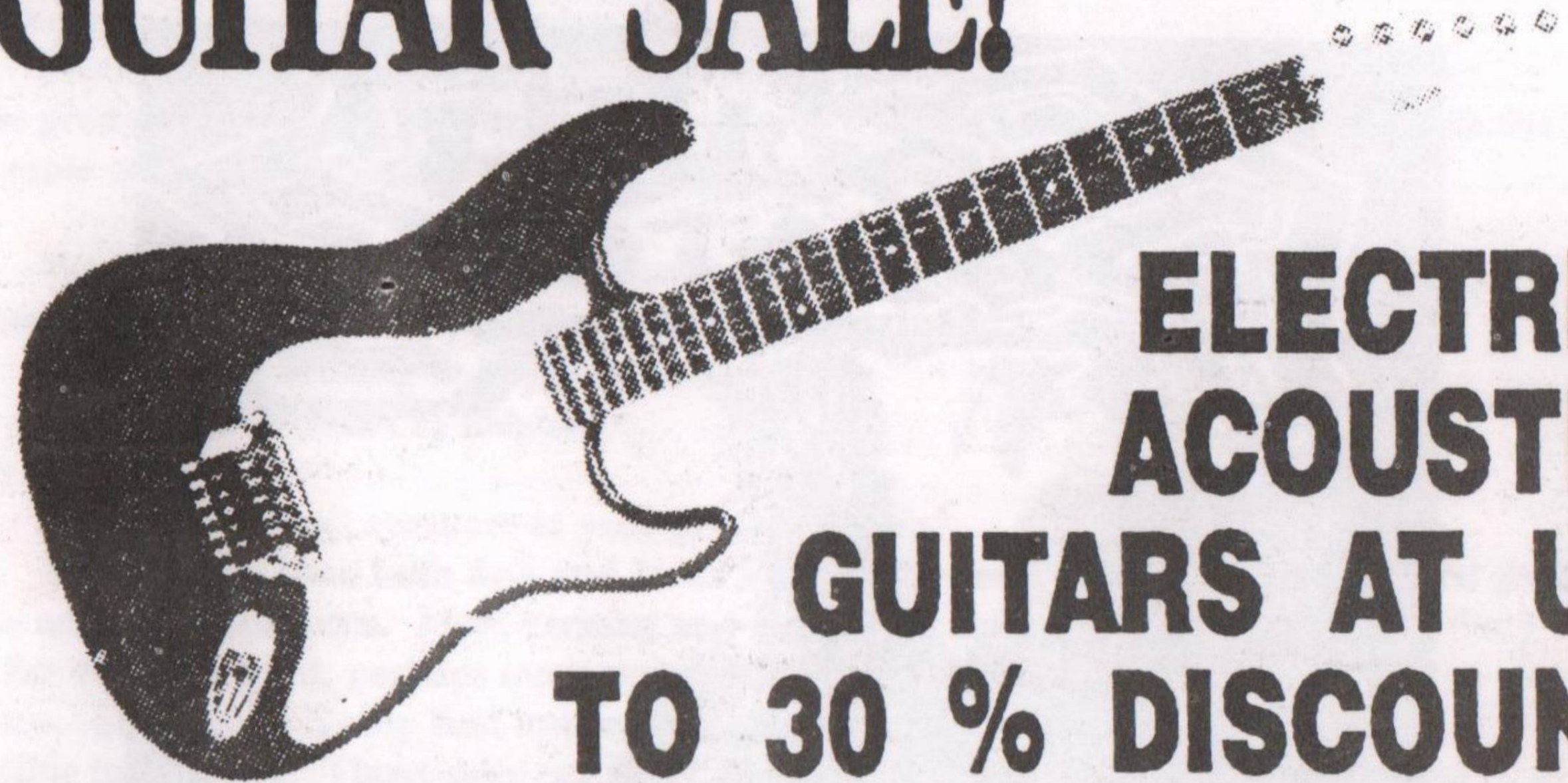


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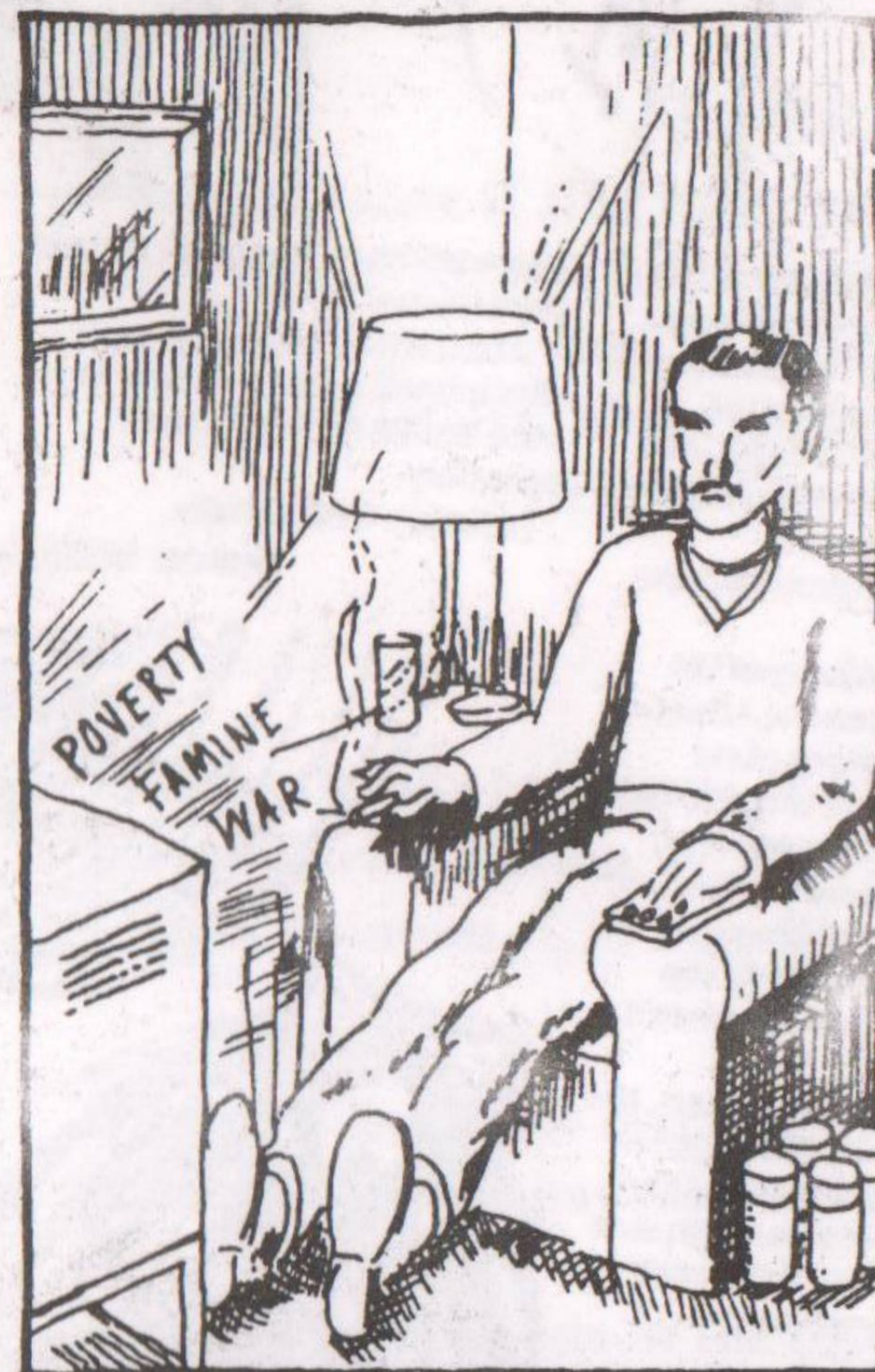


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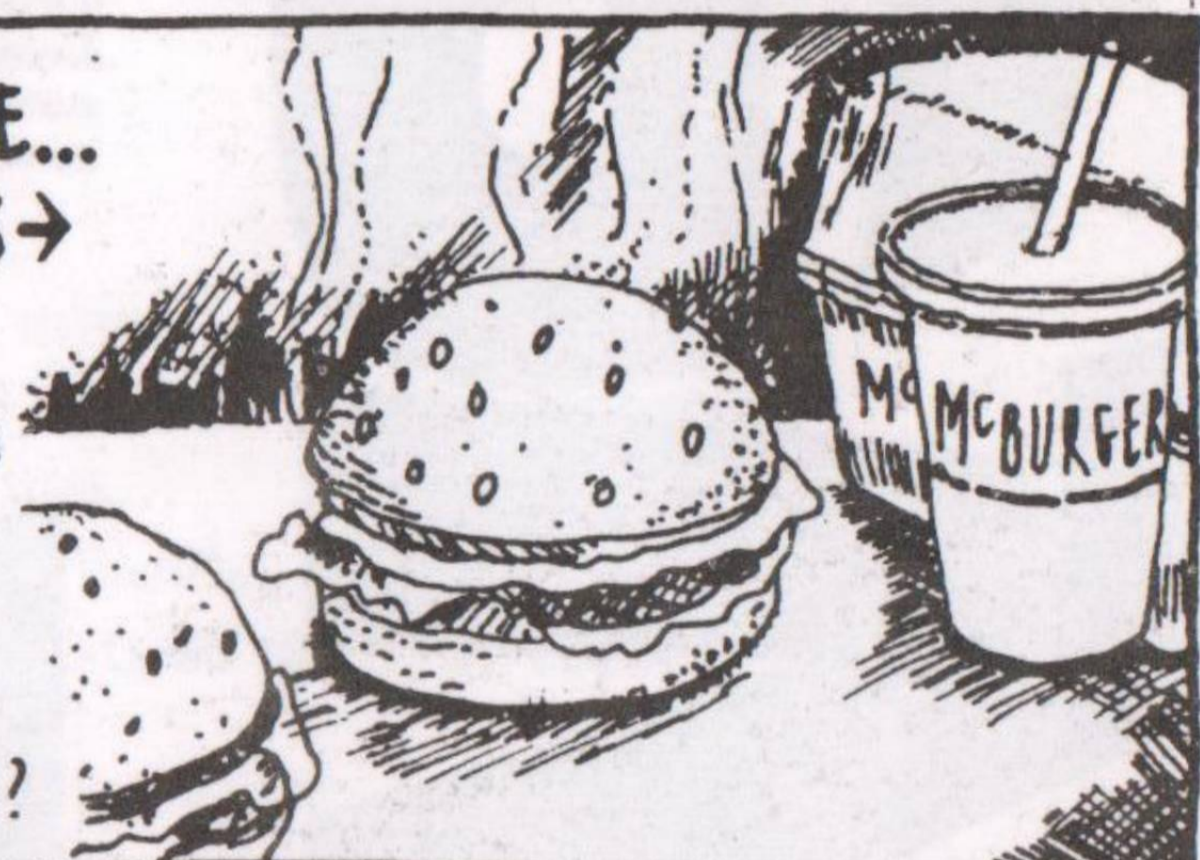
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BHP
ISSUE 4



16653

JOEYFAT

JOEYFAT LONDON FINSBURY PARK GEORGE ROBEY

"JOEYFAT - IT'S all one word, it's all one word..." So says singer Matt, strolling around the stage as if he blinkin' well owned it. And so he should - after all, the man is (seemingly) nine feet tall, with mercilessly cropped hair and hence just a suggestion of pathological violence.

Without wishing to labour the point, this man is... positively elongated. He could challenge tower blocks to a fight. And win. But if this suggests a discomforting Goliath, more awkward than a three legged donkey who's just been caught

shoplifting, the vocalist turns the prejudice with consummate ease. Persistently stroking his stomach helps; constantly grinning to himself is also an advantage; and gracefully leading the Joeyfat pack into Hardcoreland is most certainly the cake underneath the icing.

While the vast majority of UK bands peering across the Atlantic have opted for the slack plaid passion of the grunge brigade (see Bivouac, Edsel Auctioneer et al), Joeyfat have burrowed deeper into the American turf and emerged with a sound that demands the term 'lethal', and then punches it in the face.

Taking their cue from Fugazi, the Tunbridge Wells five-piece go for the jugular with a jagged edge of sound that confronts as much as it comforts; a tense guitar assault that leaves the senses all wondering and wobbly.

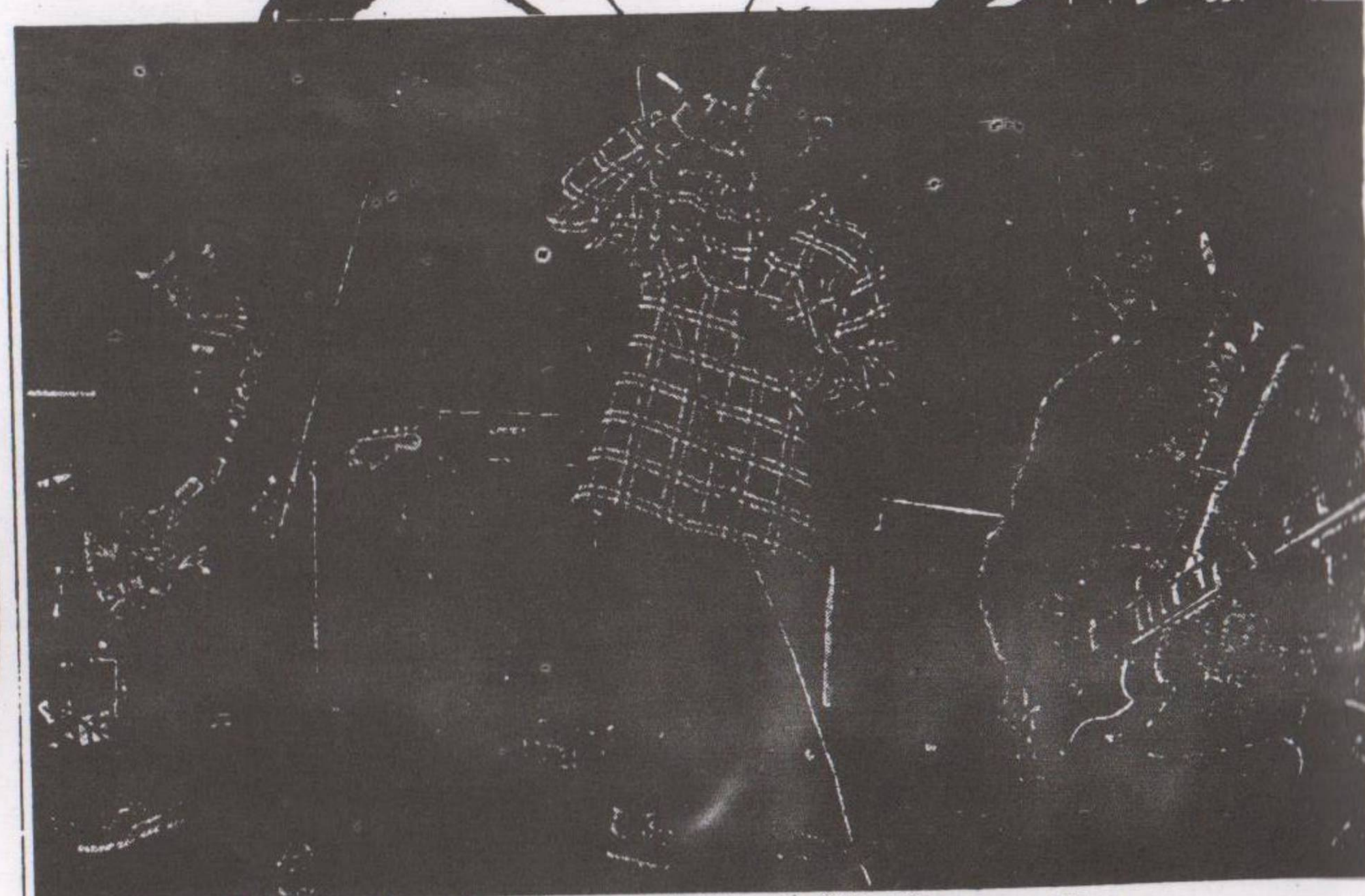
'People' and 'Windscreen' set the scene perfectly, abrupt titles backed up by equally economic hardcore touches. Where so many in their position are thrashing around in search of some kind of Nirvana, Joeyfat aren't afraid to strip down to freak out; to leave

holes which compatriots fill with pure bluster.

Jeez, if they were any more disciplined we'd be calling in the Vice Squad for fear of their propriety.

Joeyfat: lard as nails.

Simon Williams



Local band Joeyfat playing to a packed audience at The Chalybeate Forum

And the band played on

ABOUT 150 people had to be turned away as crowds packed into the The Chalybeate Forum, the new music and arts centre on Tunbridge Wells common, on its opening night last month.

Headlining on the night were London band Four Heads in a Fish Tank, supported by Joeyfat. The following evening saw local band Code performing.

Mark Davyd, one of the four founders of the centre, said: "It couldn't have been any better. It was a superb opening evening."

"It was packed on both nights and there were no problems at all."

"We had to close the doors just before 9pm Friday and at about 9.30pm on Saturday because the amount of people."

The Forum, off London Road, has a film club Tuesday nights, jazz on Wednesdays and rhyt and blues is on Thursdays. Fridays and Saturd are rock and pop nights. Mark said he wanted hear from classical and folk musicians to play Monday nights, and someone to run come evenings on Sundays.

Anyone seeking further information can cont The Chalybeate Forum on 0892 530411.

HELLO AND WELCOME To BRITISH HARDCORE PRESS? Issue 4!

I wasn't sure if this issue would ever see the light of day - so a big thanks to you for buying it, and all the wonderful 'I got off my arse' people who've helped in it's production. I get a pretty good response here at BHP HQ, and it's very encouraging, but it'd be cool to receive a few more letters. Feel free to send me articles, opinions, interviews or whatever. Write to :

BHP, 1 Chandos Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2NY, UK.

Thanks and take care,

Dave

Special thanks to : Steve, Ben, Martyn, Kris, Austin, Ian, Andy, Dave & John, Vic & Pat, David Barbe, Simon, Matt, Sugar, Decadence Within, Alloy, Strookas, Joeyfat, Sonar Nation, Couch Potatoes, Chi Pig, Pseudo Hippies, Shreds & Austin, Dragnet, and LOBO!

Here is a list of the merchandise being distributed by BHP, available from the address above. Cheques / P.O's payable to D. Gamage. All prices post paid.

BHP - The best zine in the country - Back issues, 50p each.

#1 featuring Green Day, Hard-Ons, Jailcell Recipes, Factory Farming...

#2 featuring Ramones, Joeyfat, Unpolluted Air, Sleeping...

#3 featuring All, MTX, SNFU, Funbug, Planet Earth...

#4 featuring Sugar, Alloy, Decadence Within, Comics...

BHP #5 - Out and about real soon!

GOTHAM TAPES - The Alternative Tape Label - £1.50 each.

GOT 001 : TEE-HEE Compilation; 40 mins, 12 bands, 12 trax.

GOT 002 : COUCH POTATOES - LIVE IN TUN/WELLS; 40 mins, 16 trax.

GOT 003 : LIVE AT THE SHELLEY Compilation; 60 mins, 5 bands, 25 trax - featuring

BBMF's, Strength Alone, Angus Baggpipe, Couch Potatoes...

GOT 004 : 'Hello, Bollox & Welcome' Compilation; 60 mins, 25 bands, 25 trax.

GOT 005 : MORAL CRUX, Tout a fait punk, live radio broadcast; 60 mins, 20 trax.

GOT 006 : ANOTHER Compilation; 40 mins, 13 bands, 13 trax

GOT 007 : Eyes Down For God Compilation; 60 mins, 20 bands, 20 trax.

GOT 008 : JAWBREAKER - LIVE AT GILMAN STREET; 60 mins, 15 trax.

GOT 009 : COUCH POTATOES - EXCESS ALL AREAS; 60 mins, 24 trax - Brilliant Melodic Hardcore in a Descendents vein.

GOT 010 : JOEYFAT - SOUP; 60 mins, 15 trax (8 studio & 7 live) - UK's finest - reminiscent of Shudder To Think, Alice Donut & Rollins.

GOT 011 : Low Brow Head Tread Compilation; 60 mins, 20 bands.

GOT 012 : All the Smiley Faces Compilation; 60 mins, 21 trax, 15 bands - superb melodic HC.

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featuring Vendabait, Couch Potatoes, Cheese Doodles & Pseudo Hippies.

JOEYFAT 7" GOD/WINDSCREEN £2.00

"Band of the month" - Lookout, "Punches lethal in the face" - NME.

COUCH POTATOES - IN BED WITH 7" EP, £2.00

4 Trax of Punk, melodic hardcore from the fat lads.

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14 classic trax, in the vein of Descendents, BDC, Samiam, Green Day...

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JOEYFAT - ONE WORD GRRRL, £6.00.

Double sided XL, large logo and angry girl - "It's all one word", Black & White.

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WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A BAND IN KENT?

What's it like being in a 'Kent Band?' is the question BHP put to the STROOKAS, SONAR NATION and JOEYFAT, probably the best three bands in the country, (in our opinion,) and these are the answers we received...

Being in a Band in Kent can be a painfully frustrating experience, especially if you're in a band that plays music similar to us.

Venues are the major problem - they are few and far between. I can only think of "Bottoms" in Folkestone and "The Forum" in Tunbridge Wells.

There are some good bands in Kent such as "Joeyfat" and "Somersault" who deserve some recognition. London's nearby, but if you can't prove you've got a following, you're unlikely to get a decent London gig. If there's not enough decent indie venues in Kent than you can't really build a decent following to take to a gig in London. I suppose that's what you call a vicious circle. JOHN - STROOKAS

I've answered with a list of pros and cons.

Pros

1. Lack of competition from other Bands, although this could also be a con due to lack of incentive to better yourself.
2. Being a Kent Band keeps you far enough removed from immediate scenes which don't seem to last to long.

Cons

1. Lack of decent venues to play.
2. General apathy of people wanting to see live music.
3. Hardly any music industry i.e. Record companies, reviewers, management etc. Although this could be used as a plus point.
4. Hard to get decent London gigs.
5. Sometimes snubbed by London before they even listen to you.
6. Too many sad metal bands. SIMON- SONAR NATION

As the sun beats through my kitchen window, bathing the lower half of my body and carbonating my hormones, I ponder your question.

I like my home town (Tunbridge Wells) in the same way I like the shirt I'm wearing. It doesn't present me in my best light, at my most attractive, but I'm used to the way it presents itself to me. Perhaps I like it as a reaction to the obvious, that I should hate it as if in some way it holds me back, but I'm very much of the opinion that that sort of negativity just reflects a discontent with oneself.

Lets examine the facts (oh no - court room drama!) We have the best small venue in the South, probably the country (The Forum) a meeting place for the rich and poor in spirit. Where did this mythical place come from? From the efforts of the participants, from years of enthusiasm. Sounds idyllic doesn't it? That's the way it happened. We have the brightest band in the country, probably the world (Joeyfat) How did that happen. From effort, creativity and a refusal to be compromised. These things haven't arisen from a bed of privilege, the paths have not been smooth, we're all used to the boot in the teeth. What we do have is a solid belief in this you get what you settle for!

So that's why things are much fizzing in this town for me, so what about fringe benefits? We have two of the best cake shops in the world here ("Piece of Cake" and "Truly Scrumptious,") open fields within two minutes walk (for those who do,) I could go on at miserable length. Apparently we don't have good clothes shops or record shops. So how far are London and Brighton away?

So that's about enough, struggle hard, keep your wits about you, beware of platitudes and thank God you don't live in America. MATT - JOEYFAT

So that just about answers that, it can be dismal - but where can't. On the whole we agree with Matt. Make the best of it and being a band from Kent can be great!

THE MYTH OF MILK

Milk is one of the most controversial and misunderstood foods. We are told to drink milk every day throughout our lives as part of our Western diet, but Orientals and Africans have traditionally avoided milk, except as a purgative.

In nature, the young feed exclusively on milk until weaned away from it on other foods. The natural disappearance of the milk-digesting enzyme, lactase, from the human system upon reaching maturity proves that adult humans have no nutritional need for milk. Though milk is a complete protein food when consumed raw, it also contains fat which, according to the rules of trophology, means that it combines poorly with any other food except itself. When you 'wash down' other foods with cold milk it curdles immediately on entering the stomach, coagulating around other food particles, insulating them from exposure to gastric juices, delaying digestion and permitting putrefaction. Therefore the main rule of milk consumption is 'Drink it alone or leave it alone.'

Today, milk is made even more indigestible by pasteurisation, which destroys its natural enzymes and alters its delicate proteins. Raw milk contains the active enzymes lactase and lipase, which is devitalised of active enzymes, cannot be properly digested. Pasteurization also renders the calcium and others minerals in milk unassimilable.

During the 1930's, Dr Francis M Pottenger conducted a study on the relative effects of pasteurised and raw milk diet on cats. The group fed on raw milk thrived, remaining healthy throughout their lives, but the group fed on pasteurised milk soon became listless, confused and vulnerable to a host of chronic degenerative ailments such as heart disease, kidney failure, loss of teeth and brittle bones. The first offspring of the pasteurised milk group were all born with poor teeth and small, weak bones - a sign of calcium deficiency from pasteurised milk. The offspring of the raw milk group remained as healthy as their parents. Many of the kittens in the third generation of the pasteurised group were stillborn, while those that survived were all sterile and unable to reproduce, so the experiment had to end there, although the raw milk group continued to breed and thrive. Furthermore, new born calves fed on pasteurised milk usually die within six months, a fact that the commercial dairy industry is loathe to admit.

Despite such scientific evidence in favour of raw milk and against pasteurised milk and despite the fact that until the early 20th century the human species thrived on raw milk, it is actually illegal to sell raw milk to consumers. It is far more profitable to the dairy industry to pasteurise milk to extend its shelf-life, though such denatured milk doesn't kill all of the dangerous germs.

Three generations of Westerners have been fed on pasteurised milk and today infertility has become a major problem for young mothers, while calcium deficiency affects 90% of children in the form of tooth decay and many women in the form of osteoporosis.

To make things worse, milk is now routinely 'homogenised' to prevent the cream from separating from the milk. This involves the pulverisation of the fat molecules to the point that they will not separate from the rest of the milk. But it also permits those tiny fragments of fat to pass through the villae of the small intestine, greatly increasing the amount of denatured fat and cholesterol absorbed to the body. In fact, you absorb more milk-fat from homogenised milk than you do from pure cream!

Adults should seriously reconsider milk as a constituent of their diets, unless they are able to obtain raw certified milk, which is an excellent food by itself. To stuff children with pasteurised milk in order to make them grow 'strong and healthy' is sheer folly, because they cannot assimilate the nutrients. All humans should eliminate all pasteurised dairy products from their diets, for they only gum up intestines with a layer upon layer of slimy sludge that interferes with the absorption of organic nutrients.

DECADENCE

DECADENCE WITHIN

Decadence Within formed in 1984 and spent the next 9 years forging their own unique musical and lyrical style.

Combining hard-core, punk, metal and rock, they play music which is complex but melodic, aggressive but controlled.

Lyricaly they write about both personal and political concerns, the tensions and dilemmas found in the inner and outer worlds.

To date they have done about 200 live shows, honing their enthusiastic and energetic performance to a razor edge.

They've released 2 albums and 2 7" E.P.'s and appeared on many compilation albums, always receiving excellent critical response.

Their 3rd L.P. is about to be released called "Reality Wake-Up Call" through Prophecy Records (distributed world-wide by Plastic Head) in May. Without doubt their finest work to date.

Obviously an interview was called for.....

BHP: What is Decadence Within about as a band, what do you want people to get from it?

DW: Decadence Within try to be challenging both musically and lyrically. We don't want to play & say what people expect. This is one of the reasons why we deny labels like "Straight Edge" - when you've been labelled, you're conveniently tagged and pigeon-holed and severely restricted. I mean, two of the band are what you could term "straightedge" if you're one of these folk who feel a need to categorise everything, but we don't want to be lumped in with all that.

I'm the way I am because I'm health conscious and because I need to keep my wits about me, not because I'm so insecure I need to be accepted by some peer group. All the individuals in this band do what they want when they want - and this is reflected in our band. We don't want your approval or acceptance, we play like this for ourselves and if others can get off on it, well that's OK too. If we wanted to be big, we'd play some generic thrash and grow our hair, but we don't, we want to provoke questioning and ultimately understanding.

BHP: Where did you get your name?

DW: My Mum and Dad gave it to me!!!!

No, seriously, I picked the name from a novel called "Portrait Of A Lady" by Henry James, which is about an American girl who comes to Europe and soon discovers the hidden corruption in society there. We thought it could also apply to the decadence in Government, Church and other such institutions.....and also to the decadence in us all. We've all got it, a darker side to our personalities, many people try to deny it, but why? They should learn to look inside themselves and embrace their own blackness, like a coin, we are made up of two sides. They compliment and support each other, one cannot exist on it's own.

BHP: What is the "Hard-core Scene" like in Herefordshire?

DW: Crap. It is non-existent. There is Decadence Within and there is Shutdown and that's it. It's basically a very rural area which is very nice, but this tends to will people asleep and in their dale they sit and idly watch life drift by. Fortunately it's this soothing sense of security we hate, which inspires us to kick back and get the hell out of here as often as we can. Believe me, without the band, I would've gone the way most of my friends have, kiss ass all week saving for the weekend when they turn into violent drunks and knock shit out of each other every Friday and Saturday. There a few bands in neighbouring counties, like Prophecy of Doom who've achieved a medium of success, but they're more "death metal" than "hc".

BHP: Are there to be any more releases on First Strike and what do you have currently available?

DW: There's unlikely to be anything else on First Strike, the 7" "Pay off Time" was a one off. The next album will be on Prophecy Records, through Plastic Head, another one off. I think we'll take each record as it comes, rather than embroil ourselves again in the legal and contractual wrangles a multi-record deal entails. Currently available is the "Pay off Time" 7" and the CD and cassette versions of "Soulwound" which also include the "This Lunally" L.P.

Come May, the new L.P. will be available on vinyl and CD. Write for details, try to enclose an SAE if you can.

BHP: Tours or future plans?

DW: As soon as the new L.P. is out in May, we're off to tour Europe, mainly Germany. Then in June we're doing a mini-tour of Ireland. In the summer we'll do sporadic shows in the UK, wherever and whenever we can, then in the Autumn we'll record another L.P. and start it all over again!! The new L.P. is called "Reality Wake-Up Call" and believe me, when I say, it kicks ass! Please watch out for it.

BHP: Anything to add?

DW: Live life to the full because before you know it it's time to go.

Contact:
Decadent H.Q.,
"Eastlea"
Homend Crescent
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 1AQ



the Professor Tring reports...

"With words and pictures you can do anything!"

- Robert Crumb.

The status of comics has been frequently and hotly debated: do comic books constitute an art form? or are they just mass produced, shallow, entertainment for the masses? Are they innovative and progressive, or do they propogate dangerous and antisocial values?

IN DEFENCE OF

COMICS

In what follows, I want to try and put a little perspective into some of these arguments. If you can't be bothered to read the rest (or if you just like knowing what I'm going to say) I'll give you the basic conclusions now. (1) Comics have a history which goes back at least to the 18th century (cartoonists like Hogarth - who is considered to be a Great Artist). They might even go back to Ancient Egypt. (2) Essentially the comic medium is a combination of words and pictures. There is no way that comics may be attacked as an inherently evil medium. (3) Accusations that comics are sexist and over-violent are often difficult to sustain. It is nearly impossible to prove that they affect behaviour. The problem is that in the current climate, people can get away with this type of charge without really proving their case - because, as we all know, if its sexist and violent it must be BADD!... It is perhaps more important to ask why comics should be singled out for such treatment.

HISTORY

The ancestor of the contemporary comic is the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyph. The use of pictures which included words or phrases continued through classical greece and rome, and into the middle ages. Many religious paintings were either surrounded by words (prayers or excerpts of scriptures) while some even have a phrase 'coming out of the mouth' of a saint. Medical textbooks from the (15th/16th century) renaissance often included written text within an illustration, the labelling of a muscle or artery for example. By the 18th and 19th centuries, a tradition of political cartooning had developed. A single panel would be drawn to illustrate a political event, often satirically - not to say insultingly.

"I AM LORL STRE OF T. COW."

---ALEISTER CROWLEY, "LIBER LEGIS"

The newspapers of the 1890's realised that an excellent 'hook' with which to catch new readers would be the inclusion of comedy sketches - comic drawings - in their pages. So it was at the start of this century, that the comic strip was established in its modern format. The strip would be a series of panels (probably 3 or 4), either captioned, or including the famous 'speech bubbles'. These strips appeared daily, often with a specially long strip for the Sunday edition. Newspaper proprietors quickly realised that collected editions of comic strips could sell well in their own right - the comic book was born.

You're probably familiar with the rest. The 30s and 40s saw the rise of the superheroes (superman was the first, in 1938). Its important to realise that they were nothing startlingly 'new' - the tradition of telling stories about the fantastic deeds of heroes goes right back to the myths of greece and rome, and even before that. Its a phenomenon we share with many other cultures. Native americans have their Hero Twins, and Indian legends are littered with heroic kings and princes, to give just two examples. (What is interesting is that the emergence of the superhero comics coincides with the new role which america was taking in the world - the US was confirmed as #1 nation after WWII). The 50s saw the attack on horror comics in England and the US - depraved and wicked publications like 'Tales from the Crypt' were 'proven' by various 'experts' to affect the behaviour of otherwise 'normal' children. In the 60s, the superhero returned - a notable newcomer was spiderman (note: the Spiderman, like the Batman may be found in the myths of the central america cultures - aztec, toltec and so on). Partly in response to the censorship of comics in the 50s, in the 60s we also see the development of underground comics within the beatnik subculture (e.g. Robert Crumb, part of the San Francisco hippie set).

THE MEDIUM

The combination of words and pictures is extremely potent. Like the great Calvin (of Calvin and Hobbes), I can spend days lost in the imaginative world of comics; they are really absorbing. Comics are similar to film/ tv in this way. They present us with two different modes of thought - imagery (associated with dreams), and words (which we use to communicate and to think analytically). That last sentence might seem a bit dodgy - the precise difference between words and pictures is often unclear. Within comics, however, we may agree that the 'words' of the text are distinct from the 'images' of the text (here, the text is the whole comic - colours, words, pictures, panels, the lot).

The categories of 'images' and 'words' are incredibly open. They may be filled in many different ways. We'd be foolish to expect anything else. This means that there are many ways of expression

KAREN

within the medium of comics. A quick glance at the diversity of work within the genre confirms this. It may come as a surprise that 2000 AD and Marshall Law are part of the same medium as Bunty and Fungus the Bogeyman. In the world of comics we find such diverse stories as Watchmen; Aliens; Earth Wars; the Beano; The Sandman; Viz; Tank Girl; Maus I and II; Deadline magazine; Terminator versus Robocop; Battle Action; Sin City; Misty; Roy of the Rovers; Calvin and Hobbes; Love and Rockets; Peanuts; Batman; Hardboiled.

Further afield, there is the mass of comic material in France, Belgium and Spain, where the medium is frequently considered as an art equal to painting and the novel. The work of Hergé, Moebius and Jacques Tardi all demonstrates a high level of accomplishment. The Anglo-American tradition has its own great names - Neil Gaiman, Frank Miller, and Alan Moore, for example. The rising sun of the Japanese Manga comics should not be forgotten, particularly since it conceals the vast comics culture of SE Asia in general.

Associated forms include Disney animations, the cartoons of Hanna Barbera (the Flintstones, the Jetsons, Scooby Doo), Raymond Briggs and Art Spiegelman's more 'serious' work, and the use of animated cartoons in music videos. The connection between music and comics is seen in the publicity work that Jamie "Tank Girl" Hewlett did for the Senseless Things. The audience for indie-pop noise, off-beat comics and political issues like feminism, environmentalism and racism is often linked together - as seen in the Love and Rockets series by the Hernandez brothers.

I suppose what I'm getting at is that 'comics' are just one aspect of a medium which is linked to many other forms around in society. To say that 'comics' are useless/ boring/ crap etc is really narrow minded. Its like trying to say that all work on video is evil. As if Bill and Ted, action movies, rock video, educational videos for primary schools, corporate videos shown to executives in suits, pornography, horror movies can all be lumped together... as if. So don't try and talk about 'comics' like its only Batman, Spiderman, and the Marvel(lous) superheroes.

CRITICISM

Comics are often criticised for being obscene, sexist, violent, racist, corrupting and so on. The best way to tackle this type of allegation is to change the rules. Who is making the charge? Is the charge made fairly? Can it be justified? Is there another, equally reasonable explanation?

1) Who is making the charge?

When Spike Lee was asked to comment on the Ice T 'copkiller' controversy, Lee replied that Terminators 1 & 2 saw Schwarzenegger shoot up a whole load of

cops, and no-one said anything - so why the problem with Ice T? (The answer lies in the fact that Ice T is black, and therefore a threat (?), but Schwarzenegger is friends with that Nice Man, George Bush...)

What this brings out is the way in which an act may be seen as good or bad according to who performs the act, and not according to the act itself. So when comics are criticised for being sexist or violent, is it because they are sexist and violent, or is it because of what (who) comics are - if you will, part of the ethnic minority, the working class of the publishing world. It is noticeable that the (self-)righteous critics who attack comics/ videos/ rock music as a corrupting influence somehow exempt other work - noticeably 'fine' art, 'great' literature, and 'classical' music.

2) Is the charge made fairly?

The play by Shakespeare 'Titus Andronicus' is surprisingly violent, including two rapes, the forcible removal of a girls tongue, and the cutting off of a man's hands. Finally, a man's head is baked, whole, in a pie. No-one attempts to censor the violence in Shakespeare. Or in the bible, which has several 'blood and guts' passages. Neither does anyone condemn the bible as sexist either, despite the way in which women are consistently portrayed as inherently evil (Eve seduces Adam and brings about the fall from grace), or lustful (the whore of babilon), and women are seldom given prominent roles - except Mary, who is better than normal women because she can give birth without all that sordid 'sex' business.

The point is that, all too often, only some art is attacked as obscene/ sexist/ violent. All too often, the work which is ignored is ignored because its audience 'will know how to react to such scenes' (in other words, audiences of Shakespeare are not perverts, and know when to be shocked, and know the boundary between what is artistically expressive, and what is socially intolerable).

Equally, when 'art' is attacked as obscene, there is often an underlying sense of duty: "We must protect comics readers from comics, because they are incapable of protecting themselves"....

3) Can it be justified?

Having said that, yeah, sure, comics are often violent and sexist. Its a male dominated industry, in a male dominated society. But is it terrible and despicable that comics are sexist, or is it worse that society as a whole is that way? More importantly, is it enough to say that comics are sexist/ violent? It seems to me like a pretty arrogant attitude that is able to write off the whole comic reading public simply because the majority of comics are sexist and violent.

Such outright condemnation ignores the many moves within the industry to counter the sexist/ violent preoccupations.

For instance TankGirl - an undeniably strong female role; the (brilliant) work of the Hernandez Brothers; and a few (sadly unpublicised) female/ feminist artists all show that moves are afoot to provide an alternative to sexist attitudes. Surely it is more important to ask why sexist and violent images are so popular. Until we can account for this we will not be able to change it.

In fact, on a more abstract level, it had been shown that fantasy (which is what most comics really are) is difficult to describe as simply sexist or violent. In fact it is often difficult to describe altogether. The reader may identify with the powerful or the powerless in a comic - and probably both. The reader may identify with both male and female characters, or even animal characters, regardless of the reader's own gender/ species. At its most obscure, a reader may identify (at a level of fantasy and desire) with a particular place, or even the atmosphere of a place!

Another important consideration is that much pacifist/ anti-sexist criticism of comics works in a rather strange way. Instead of saying 'what is the world like, what is going on?', it instead states that 'this is how the world should be' before going out to attack everything which fails to make the grade. In this sense, anti-sexism is not necessarily a progressive idea. It shows how the arguments against sexism - that it discriminates against women - can turn through 180 degrees, and end up repeating the old inequalities in reverse - discriminating against men.

4) Is there another, equally reasonable explanation?

It is also important to understand how violence in comics may work in unexpected ways. Marshall Law is a good example. Like the comedian Denis Leary, Marshall Law over-does the macho hero image to such an extent that it is no longer possible to take such a character seriously outside of the story (or even within it). Rather than promote a particular way of life, both Leary and Marshall Law are so excessive that they end up becoming unbelievable, revolting and extreme (the fact that on a level of fantasy we may enjoy subjecting ourselves to such revulsion only complicates things further!). These comics (to which we might add Hardboiled, Raw, Battle Action, or even Rambo/ Stallone, van Damme, and Seagal) present us with the impossible Ultra Male/ hyper-macho. If to act 'tough' is now to 'do a "Rambo"', then it is no longer the same as it once was - to be a 'real' man. Both real men and Rambo have become objects of derision rather than objects of aspiration. As the slogan on his huge chest suggests, Marshall Law, becomes an image of fear and loathing rather than one of love and desire for the "Real(ly) Man(ly)"

So how do I end this ?

Well, first of all, comics are not

just superheroes. There is a world out there. Different types of comic books, of comic strips, of cartoons and graphic novels, and so on. They've got a long history. These days, its a very varied field. Like everything, you have to look hard for the really good bits (remember, 90% of everything is shit). But comics are not just sexist, or just violent. There are many different stories, and they work in many different ways. So get out there and read some. If you don't like them, find some others, or take up knitting.

And remember - stay hungry.

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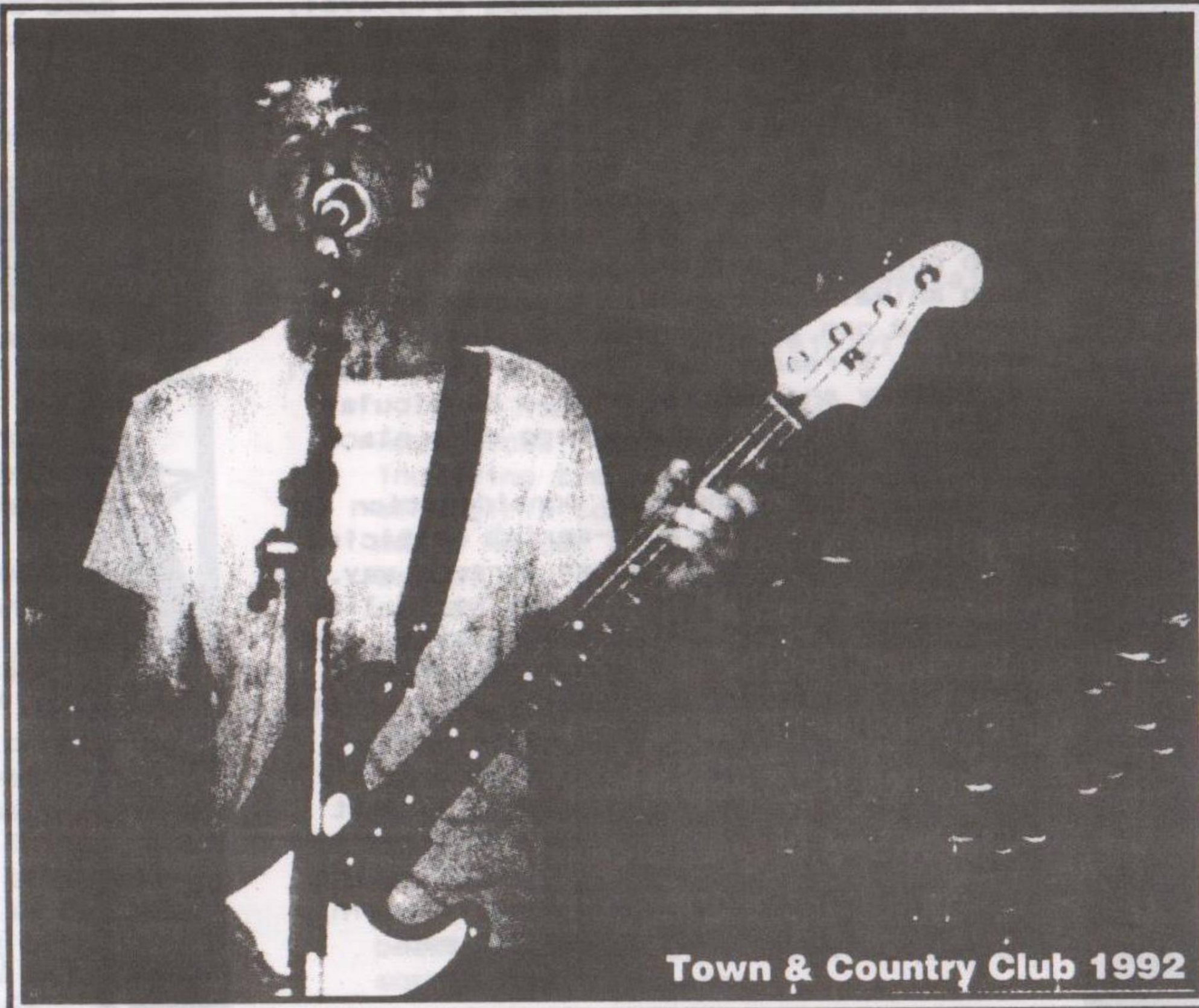
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A transatlantic interview through the post with David Barbe of

SUGAR

As we all know, Bob Moulds' new band have received a lot of coverage in the music press over the last year. His past and present activities and thoughts have been the subject of many a double-page spread. But what about the other two, eh? What do they do, other than tread the boards with Bob? What do they think? This short interview is my humble attempt to redress the balance. (How about someone doing an interview with Malcolm Travis?)



Town & Country Club 1992

● With the success of Sugar, has your own band Buzz Hungry been put on the back-burner for the foreseeable future?

Buzz Hungry is still active. We play locally in Athens, and record periodically as well. However, we all have other projects that receive priority. Drummer Brooks Carter plays guitar with Jack-O-Nuts who have just released their first album via Radical Records, a Matador subsidiary. Bassist Eric Sales also plays with Little Debbie. Sugar keeps me pretty busy. We all still very much enjoy Buzz Hungry.

● For the benefit of people already in bands, please give us the lowdown on the John Keane Studios and your work there. Which local bands are particularly worthy of attention?

When I'm not on the road with Sugar, I engineer and produce records. I do the bulk of my recording at the John Keane Studios. It's a very comfortable, warm-sounding, 24-track work environment.

There are several Athens bands that need to be heard. I've already mentioned Jack-O-Nuts. Little Debbie also have a record, a six-song 7" EP that is blistering. Six String

Fever is a new band to watch for. Seersucker, from Atlanta, too. I just finished recording their album.

● With bands from the independent/underground scene finally breaking big, how do you see this affecting the attitude of the major labels in America?

It seems like more and more new major label acts are being marketed as alternative in order to establish some credibility, although it is manufactured credibility. There are some positives. I never thought I'd see a band like The Melvins on a major.

● Are there any plans to re-release the Mercyland Records and/or release tracks that haven't yet made it onto vinyl or CD?

Yes. Planned Obsolescence is going to release a full-length CD compilation late fall of this year. I'm currently working on editing it. Squashing five years into 70 minutes is not easy, but I must say I've been enjoying myself putting it together. I hadn't heard a lot of that stuff in ages.

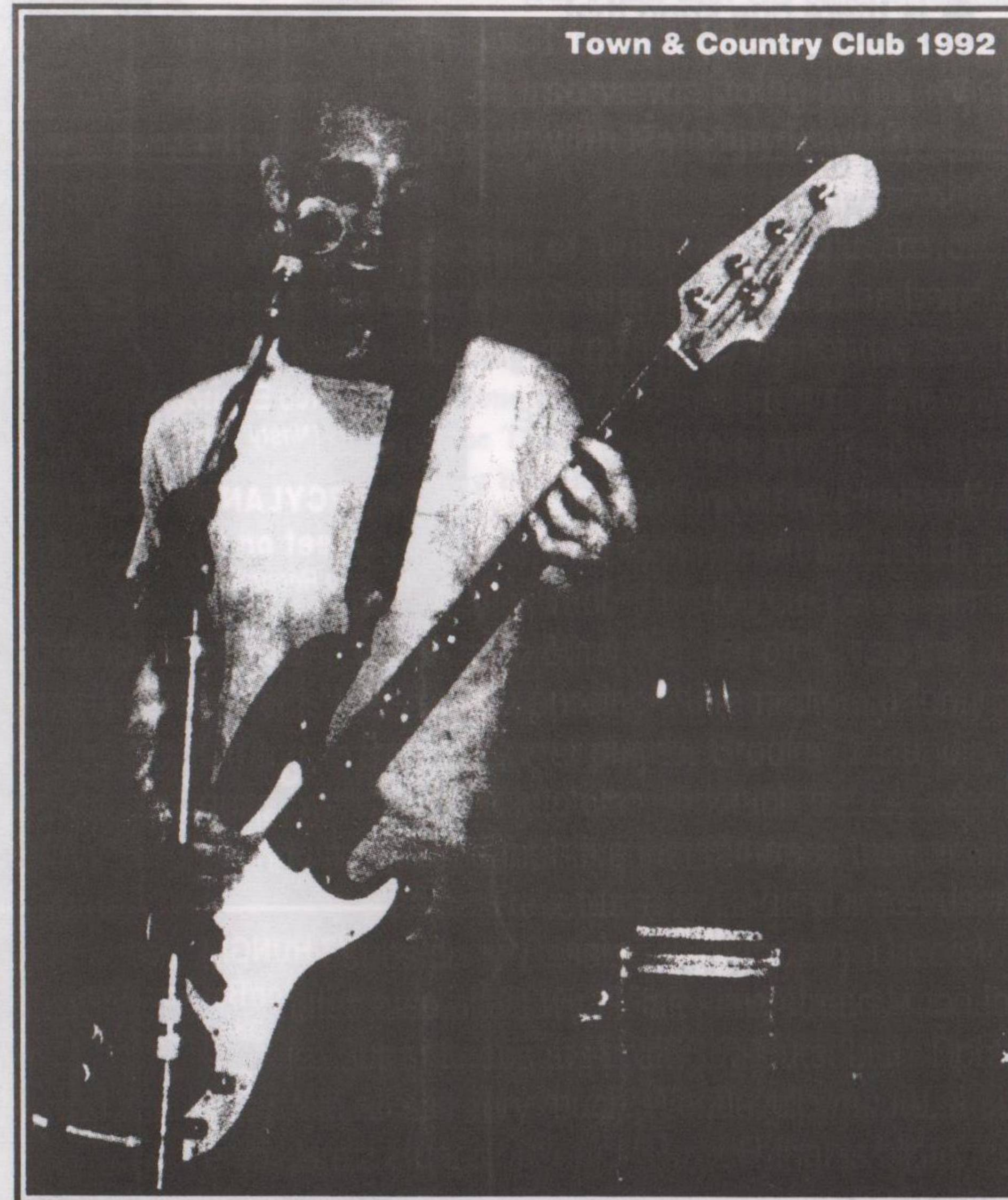
● Do you see the election of Bill Clinton as a positive step for America?

Certainly Clinton over Bush is a step in the right direction. At

least he admits that problems exist. Nonetheless he is still a politician. It will be interesting to see if, or how much, he is able to deliver on his promises.

● What is your view on the suggestion that the music industry is in heated competition with the computer software industry?

I wouldn't say that the computer software industry in competition with the music industry, but that they are in league with one another, what



Town & Country Club 1992

with the advent of mini-disc.

Right now, current technology doesn't allow for mini-disc to do what the manufacturers say it can without compromising audio quality. It will be interesting to see what happens in the future.

● In the wake of the LA riots last year, do you think progress has been made to ease racial tension, particularly in Georgia?

Perhaps awareness has been heightened, but real change probably won't occur until today's children are adults.

I should point out that the tensions in Georgia are nothing close to what you saw in LA last year. Most of the racism is subtle. That doesn't make it any better, just less explosive.

● Are songs by you, and come to think of it Malcolm, going to be recorded by Sugar in the future?

Sugar will probably record a



few of my songs when we make the next record. Whether or not they wind up on the album will depend on how they fit in with the context of the whole.

● Can you tell us what inspired Bob to start up the Singles-Only Label? You'd have to ask Bob about that one.

● What was the first record you bought? And the most recent?

The first with my own money was the 'Barrel Full Of Monkeys' anthology at age seven. My most recent purchase was a vinyl copy of Slint 'Spiderland'. I already owned the CD, but it's such a great record I wanted to hear it on vinyl as well.

● Is there one song that means more to you than any other, be it one you've written or one written by someone else?

I wrote a song called 'When Annabelle Cries' for my daughter when she was about six months old. Mercyland played it once or twice before breaking up. Very few people have heard it. It is a very personal, honest song. I still think about it.

As for a song by another, it would have to be The Minutemen's 'History Lesson Part II'. Now that's honest. ■



MERCYLAND/BUZZ HUNGRY DISCOGRAPHY

MERCYLAND SINGLES;
Black on black on black/Ciderhead
(Mustang Records 1987)

Enter the crafty bear e.p.
(Planned Obselecence 1991)

Service Economy/Uncle
(Nasty Vinyl 1993)

MERCYLAND ALBUMS;
No feet on the cowling
(Tupelo Recording/Revolver 1988)

COMPILATION APPEARANCES;
"Amerigod" - Some Compilation
(DRG)

"Western Guns" - Make the city grovel in it's dust
(Twilight)

BUZZ HUNGRY SINGLES;
The Envictor/Beer commercial
(Singles Only Label 1992)

BUZZHUNGRY ALBUMS;
Fried like a man
(cassette only mini album)
(OIC International 1992)



Town & Country Club 1992

DIARY OF A STROOKA AGED 29

We Played 11 gigs in 11 days all over France. That's more gigs in two weeks than we play in a whole year in England.

10 February: First gig in Lille was a corker. Lots of people turned up and they really enjoyed our frantic set. Stayed in French Fella's Apartment and were awoken by somebody dressed head to foot in bacofiol with a toast rach stuck on his back - rock'n'roll.

11 February: Next gig was in Amiens. It was a fine venue jam packed with lots of lovely people and again we played rather wonderfully. People were even dancing to our music. Tony managed to sit down on a seat and promptly break it - highly impressive. That night we stayed in a lovely hotel.

12 February: First of two nights at the same venue. First taste of mediocrity that night. We had to play with a rather hideous r&b band. Despite a rather ridiculous radio interview to promote the gig, nobody turned up. Hopefully it was because of the really bad fog rather than the pathetic performance on the airwaves.

13 February: The day started well when John managed to break a toilet seat in a rather dreadful hotel that had hanging carpet for walls.

That night we played first so that we could get out fast. We played much better and sounded good but again there were not many people there. The audience woke up when the interval disco played "Back in Black" by "AC/DC" Enough said.

14 February: Valentines Day but no romance in the air for "The Strookas." Not that it really mattered that night because we were too engrossed in a fabulous gig in a dead rough punk squat cafe. It was absolutely brilliant. The support band "Budz" were pretty cool. We played everything at break neck speed and the crowd lapped it up. The organisers even bootlegged the gig.

15 February: Next stop Montergis and a support gig with the legendary american Jeff Dahl, who was in the middle of a 55 date tour of his ego. His band were dead pathetic. The Bass player introduced a song saying "Me and my Fender Jazz Precision Bass are gonna fuck you." Later on Jeff "Hairy Bastard" Dahl drooled "This song's really good to fuck to - trust me." Sad lads. We played OK but not many people were there.

16 February: Met up with those Twickenham rockers "The Revs" who we co-headlined with for the final 5 dates of the tour. This night we played in Perigeux. Great gig by both bands. We were videoed for some French TV thing. Fantastic meal afterwards with our ever so friendly french hosts.

17 February: Clermont Ferrand was the place for our next gig - the home town of the cuddly Tour Organiser Patrick Foulhoux. Good gig in a good club type setting. By this time our driver and Rody Frank Bass was learning how to get pissed and stay awake at the wheel. Tony was well bladdered too and danced alone to the sound of "Buffallo Tom" belting out of the PA.

18 February: Best gig of the Tour. Another small cafe. It was dead hot and the crowd went loopy to both bands. No stage diving but plenty of ceiling tiles went flying. The Cafe Owner tried to rip Dave's "Strookas" T Shirt off him and she tried to pilfer John's holy "Strookas" Baseball Cap. Stayed in a rather plush "Formula 1" Hotel. The showers were a blast and a half.

19 February: Penultimate gig was near Switzerland in a place called Annecey. Dead picturesque. The gig was pretty bad mainly 'cos John made zillions of cock ups and Tony forgot where the strings were on his bass.

20 February: Last gig of the Tour was in Besancon. Played a fine set but nobody was there to see it except for some dubious French Nazis. Said "Good Bye" to "The Revs." They are indeed a fine band to catch the ferry taking a detour to see the Eiffel Tower. Dreadful ferry crossing but were glad to reach English soil.

A GREAT TOUR. 2500 MILES TRAVELLED. THE FRENCH WERE INCREDIBLY HOSPITABLE. THE FOOD WAS GREAT AS WAS THE BEER (AND IT WAS ALL FREE.) GOT PAID AT LEAST £100 FOR EVERY GIG EXCEPT ONE. SOLD SOME ALBUMS AND MANAGED TO PLUG "JOEYFAT" AND "SOMERSAULT" WHENEVER WE WERE INTERVIEWED BY FANZINES, CAN'T WAIT TO DO IT AGAIN.
JOHNNY STROOKA

the professor tring reports

DEAD!

*-poet to the grunge generation
(SEATTLE, OCTOBER 1991)*

Think of a mad-ass grunge sleazegrinder getting to remix the theme tune to the Tampax advert - 'Its My Life'. Better than imagine it, listen to STEVEN JESSE BERNSTEIN. Its his life. Its not cheerful, its not sanitary, there are no smiley happy people. Bernstein explores deranged moments of isolation and bloody introspection, he pulls words together in bizarre associations, testament to an 'unusual' view of the world...

Bernstein recorded an album with Sub Pop, 'Poison', released in the middle of last year. I know little about Bernstein other than the details presented in an Independent On Sunday article ('Godfather of Grunge', 20th Feb 93). But many of these seem to have been taken from a poem/ track on the album, called 'Face'. The narrator tells the story of his life, using the image of his face reflected as a mirror as a point to start. It is, if you will, the story of the face. But the track begins 'the following is pure fiction'. The article remarks that his life has been 'so mythologised', and I'm left wondering whether it falls into the trap of perpetuating the myths. If you're interested, I paraphrase the story below.

But do we want, or even need to know his story? Why not start by considering his work? I've managed to get hold of a copy of the album (which I hope to make available through Dave Gamage) - definitely not everyone's taste. But appearing as it does on the sub-pop label (the Seattle grunge label) it may be of interest to anyone into grunge - Seattle or otherwise.

The tracks on 'Poison' are backed with Bernstein's own music. The first, 'No No Man', is set against what feels like a discarded soundtrack from Mission Impossible. My current favorite, 'The Sport (Pt.1)', has a more funky/ hiphop backing, introducing progressively more aggressive ('sonic-youth-ish') guitar riffs. It brings out a pounding city night life, and Bernstein's unrepentant rant describes an arcade video game; but his words rapidly career into related ideas, peeling off into an interzone lost between William Burroughs and cyberpunk. This is not the kind of poetry they taught you at school. On 'Face' the 'heart-beat' beat (?) gathers volume with the increasing emotional intensity of the words (he relates how he proposed to a girl at school when he was about 9 years old, bringing out all that cringing, primary school embarrassment).

The crazed rantings of Bernstein tell something about a life full of paranoia, misunderstanding and anger. The voice, the words, the images, are strikingly clear. They communicate - they've certainly got under my skin. There is too much of this clarity to suggest that he is re-telling anything other than his own experience -

*'... Are there humming birds?, it thinks/
and I press a dead humming-bird to its face
/ this is a formula for happiness/.../You
who gave your life for me, what was the
point?/ yes, I am satisfied here with my
iron teeth and my roof made of stained hats/
my many roofs and so many layers of windows/
the world looks like a grey mouse with its
squeaking head pinned under a black shoe'
['The Morning in the Subbasement of
Hell']*

-*.*-

*'I live on a street/ where there are many,
many cars and trucks and factories that pump
and bang and grind all night and day/ it is
a miracle that I can write poetry or sleep
or talk on the telephone or that my lover
will come visit me, here/ there's so much
noise'
['More Noise Please']*

-*.*-

*'The arrangement of things/ the argument
against the body/ warring bodies corroding
wires of habit/ in the cold brain/ I imagine
the tentacles of the game reaching backward
into the fingers/ up the nerves to a trapped
organ of conquest/ we believe that the
cybernetic approach to consciousness/
whipped up frothy/ would carry us to a
plateau overlooking a pleasant mirror/ but
instead left us blathering in a dressed up
solitude of mannequin planets...'*

*'cannibalised to death, we realise the
tantric bazooka, in the folds of our naked
brassieres, too late as the odds shift,
lights in the sky'*

*'and our death-tattoos breathing ignorant of
strategy/ world watching/ sulphurous and
lewd acidic/ with pants dripping tantalus
dangling down to his knees/ unable to
stretch even the feeble edges of our hunger
to the witches teeth with forks of need-to-
survive/ the pounding now on the table of
THE SPORT THE SPORT/ a question of
consequence squirting out late in blasphemy
of having tried to/ film our belt loops
through a mask of nakedness in the wretched
museum where only our memories decay and the
rest waits to give off light mesmerised by
the hopelessness of logic/ the big boom
tweets and the shovel dribbling the planet
earth into the rain/ and science wretching*

sure, it's been re-crafted, re-set, edited, changed and so on. That's how it manages to communicate so clearly. To the clarity, add the honesty with which it is presented. This honesty outweighs all the rancid verbal overkill. In the end, its the consistency with which Bernstein keeps up this lucid honesty which gives these tracks their impact.

Bernstein's cruel and biting tone is classically confrontational. It makes you think. It doesn't make you like him. This is great stuff. Listen in if you get the chance.

at last with its greedy claw and tentacle lost/ reinventing god and animals reinvent science/ philosophy/ hate pantheon where victory and destruction are deified, adored'
[The Sport, pt.1]

-*.*-

*'the following is pure fiction... actually I
have been handsome and popular all my
life... There has always been something
wrong with my face... "Look in the mirror
Stevie", my mother said, holding my up so I
could see my face... "See? There's
Stevie!"... The little ears stuck out, that
was the first thing I noticed, the two
ears...'*

['Face']

-*.*-

The story of a life:

Born 1950, Bernstein had a crippling bout of polio when he was four, but recovered from the paralysis it caused him. It would seem that he was very intelligent, perhaps too intelligent, too sensitive. He slowly dropped out of school and became a recluse. After failing to reach Canada, he lived in Seattle, making a living by playing in jazz bands in various bars and clubs. By his early twenties, he was on heroin. He learnt Kung Fu, and slipped between jobs, religions, romances and hospitals (physical and mental), perhaps prison. Three marriages, constant physical pain, two published novels. Campaigning for the rights of the most despised criminals (often sex-offenders), saying of them that "for every crime that is represented by a prisoner, there is another that I know nothing of that was committed against the prisoner". His son remembers his delight in beautiful things, things which littered his apartment, perhaps an old watch, or "weird beans, a stetson hat". His last wife recalls his amazing ability as a story teller, his tremendous sensitivity. In October 1991, he killed himself. In an act which suggests both extreme despair and disturbing self-control, and which leaves a very strange taste in the mouth, he opened up both jugular veins, apparently remaining kneeling for five minutes to allow the blood to fall through a hole in the floor. Then he keeled over and died.

THE BIGGER THE BETTER

Ever since Elvis first wriggled his skinny butt the stereotypical rocker has been svelte to the point of anorexia. Thin was in. However, not everyone is a cover girl or Chippendale. Some need more aggression, more volume, more imagination, in fact just plain more.

Fat is now where it's at, in the past Mr Domino climbed Blueberry Hill with the ladies and the likes of Heavy D and Barry White seem to do OK. Now grunge has its hefty heroes, led by the like of POISON IDEA, TAD, SCREAMING TREES, and SUGAR's Bob Mould. Pig Champion of Poison Idea maintains that fat people are more creative and "The few good people out there - I only consider about 2% of the human race worth a shit - they are fat, they've got that little bit more oomph!"

There is even now a fat-rights movement in America. The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is lobbying for bigger airplane seats and protesting about fat jokes on TV. "What we're trying to do is change the stereotypes about fat people" says Laura Eljaiek, NAAFA's program director, "our basic message is that any body is a good body. We can all dance, sing and have fun, those things have nothing to do with size."

Built for comfort, not speed. Fat and Proud!

REVIEWS

SNFU - Camden Underworld - 12/11/92.

Canada's finest (well perhaps amongst the finest if you consider Nomeansno, Guilt Parade, DOA, Superconductor...) have reformed after a few years apart. Their style of punk hardcore is very fast and loud, but certainly not just noise. On stage, Chi Pig has immense energy, continually jumping about stage or frantically rolling around and still singing. SNFU haven't lost any of the power and energy they are renowned for. Old favourites are brought out tonight as well as the newer stuff: sometimes it's serious political and thought provoking, sometimes tongue-in-cheek fun songs, lyrically. They play a long set tonight and even the mosh-pit flags at times. The highlight for me is 'Where's my legs?', including a knock on the bonce with one of the bands renowned props - a plastic leg, but this gig will be remembered for its intensity and energy as a show - an event - not just a series of songs all strung together. Punk rock never died!

ALLOY & JOEYFAT - 7/1/93 - Sir George Robey, London.

JOEYFAT: I've seen Joeyfat before, but this time they've definately improved. Whereas so many UK bands feel that they have to play loud and fast in that typical Husker Du / Nirvana kind of way, Joeyfat take their inspiration from Washington DC stuff it seems, especially Fugazi or perhaps Soulside. So it's not a collection of three minute noise routines (which has it's place, of course) but songs, well constructed with atmosphere which stop and start with nifty tempo changes. Singer Matt is very tall and thin - he stands and writhes twisting his T-shirt, talking and singing what seem deeply personal and intelligent lyrics. Joeyfat are doing something different, but importantly doing it well. No news of a 7" but apparently there should be a tape of their stuff available soon.

ALLOY: For those of you who don't know: Vic Bondi, once singer with seminal '80's hardcore group Articles of Faith, is now fronting Alloy. He also sings with Jones Very, but Alloy were formed after Vic grew more radical and became thoroughly pissed off with the Gulf War. Whereas AoF were out and out speedy brash punk, and Jones Very are poppier but still with intelligent lyrics, Alloy (check out their LP 'Eliminate' on Bitzcore) are passionate and powerful - a cross between the two. Roger and Pat of Dagnasty play with Alloy as well... a bit of a supergroup in hardcore circles. Live, Alloy are intense, powerful and surprisingly noisy compared to the LP. God knows what AoF must've been like live because this is angry. But Alloy have good tunes too, and their new single 'United' sounds just as impressive as anything from 'Eliminate'. The music tonight is fast, tight and deafening, and only one wanker tries to spoil it all by getting up on stage and pushing the band around. This just seems to make Vic sound angrier, louder and more intense! Unfortunately, by the encore the sound is cracking up a bit, but it's still awesome and they are well received by us all. Drummer Colin kicks over his drumkit and Vic attempts to pull down that weird netting hanging from the Robey's ceiling with his guitar. He is angry and pissed off, what could be called a true punk spirit. What an excellent nights entertainment!

COME - 23/1/93 - Camden Underworld.

Come are present MM and NME favourites, well what do you expect? Their debut single 'Car' was on Sub-Pop, so it's got to be cool (irony). However, Come are a bit different to the current stock of US guitar gods - like Codeine, they are prepared to play slow but with equal passion and intensity as those equally wonderful speed pop-punk merchants (Rocket from the Crypt, Seaweed, Supersuckers...). 'Eleven- Eleven' was indeed one of the great understated debuts of 1992. Live, the songs from this LP sound better than ever: Thalla Zedek has a voice that even Frankie Stubbs would be proud of - it's coarse and powerful, sort of Janis Joplin at times. In their slower moments, they resemble Codeine (Drummer Chris Brocaw used to play with them) but are never that slow. The music is very bluesy really, and sometimes it reverts to typical grunge style noise. But Come have great tunes, lovely structured music and the songs do sound different. To be perfectly honest, they don't put a foot wrong. Some would accuse them of being a tad too serious perhaps, but you can't expect the Hanson brothers or the Frank and fuckin' Walters every night, can you?

SKYSCRAPER - 25/1/93 - London Borderline.

Skyscraper are a trio with Vic on vocals/guitar from the sadly defunct but truly awesome Milk and Adi, ex-Swervedriver on bass. I never saw a naff Milk gig once and Skyscraper's performance at the Underworld supporting Sebadoh last October was a pretty fine one too. It's a club night for TLF tonight and a mere £2 to get in. In my humble opinion, Vic and Milk could never put a foot wrong. Apart from the occasional over log song, they were a noisy grating and very powerful outfit and very slick. Skyscraper's basslines have a familiar Swervedriver feel, but lyrics, vocals and guitar are typical Milk - intense. Those amazingly varied sounds and noises from Vic's guitar, the changes in tempo, the softly sung bits, the angry shouted bits-it all sounds as good as ever, except that it's a bit of a rough P.A. at the Borderline, but that's not the bands fault (or was it just where I was standing?) Skyscraper are tipped for big things apparently. One thing that pissed me off, the last couple of years, was that Milk never got the attention that they deserved, so Skyscraper with a slightly subtler more accessible, dare I say more commercial sound certainly deserve your attention. Vic's a nice bloke too!

DWARVES / SUPERSUCKERS / REVEREND HORTON HEAT.

The SUB-POP Gig - The Venue, New Cross. - 29/1/93.

Supersuckers are first tonight. It's their first ever gig in the UK too. They kick ass - fast, brat punk, great poppy tunes sped up to 100 mph - it's a traditional sounding sort of music, but not many do it as well as the Supersuckers. Live it's very effective - they sound good and are well received by an appreciative audience. They may be young but already they're slick, stylish and good fun.

The Reverend Horton Heat is probably Sub-Pop's most unusual export: a warped Texan preacher with his band playing a very different kind of noise - 'psychobilly' I think it's called, it's roots firmly in Rock 'n' Roll, Country & Rockabilly. It's a far better experience than listening on vinyl. After a shaky start it becomes really good fun, especially when the reverend talks to us, telling his witty stories. The man is genuinely funny and this was a very entertaining show: Great fun and very different.

The Dwarves on the other hand are total wankers - they last 15 minutes tonight, so it's nothing unusual. To be perfectly honest, their music is shit-hot, fast rock - very powerful, good tunes. Unfortunately, their attitude fucking stinks. They've always had this outrageous attitude. They're supposed to shock but that doesn't justify their behaviour this evening; continually bombed with cups they respond by spitting at the audience (Ho, Ho, How funny) pushing one girl in the face, hard (tongue in cheek? Mmm... very funny) and generally being obnoxious. It ends when it all starts getting a bit out of hand and the band start hitting people and end up being pushed too - forced to leave the stage, bombarded by missiles to cries of 'Wankers!'. I suppose this was all expected, but the Dwarves obviously have the talent. It's just the sexist, obnoxious attitude they have is not even funny - it's shit! Jeez, all they have to do is moderate a bit. A strong attitude can enhance a band in many ways, but the Dwarves go a bit too far.

HENRY ROLLINS (Spoken Word) - Astoria - 15/2/93.

This was the fucking biz! One of the most entertaining evenings I can remember. Henry Rollins captivated a 1000+ audience for a massive two and a half hours with his tales about being an American in England, us Brits, Pigs in the States, Gigs, Iggy Pop and more. Unlike Biaffra, with his deeply political, often shockingly truthful stories about US society, Rollins is more a kind of 'Philosopher of the People'. He's a wonderful story teller and very funny - one of the best stand up comedians. Although generally light hearted, there's usually some moral behind it all. Rollins saddening tale of his best friend Joe Cole, who was shot dead next to him, is told in a serious captivating tone. Rollins genuinely loves us! He hopes he's inspired us to go out and do what we want to do, because Joe is dead and can do fuck all now, so we've really got to try. It may sound blindingly obvious, but I suppose the 'you had to be there' cliché holds true in this case - the man has to be seen and then you'd understand. Well, I'm inspired! A real privilege and a pleasure to have seen the great man. Shame I was too young to have seen Black Flag.

CIRCUS LUPUS / LUNGFISH - Camden Underworld - 20/2/93.

Lungfish: Lungfish play a fine set this evening to a handful of people at the underworld. Their's is a blend of slowish hardcore with Fugaziesque walking basslines, but it's their bearded, tattooed singer who really shapes the band's sound. Their longer songs (such as Non-Dual Bliss' from 'Talking songs for walking' LP) sound far better live; full of energy and passion which doesn't come across as well on vinyl. It's the intensity and feeling behind it all that impressed tonight.

Circus Lupus: Singer Chris Thomson pisses me off during the first song by stage diving onto me and me alone - I don't really need this, it has to be said - he's full of manic energy and seems thoroughly pissed off, or at least mighty serious. However, because Circus Lupus are one of the best fucking bands around I can forgive his attempted flattening of me, and a few songs in and they really started to pick up. Circus Lupus have an original sound - very angry, seemingly inspired by bands like NOU and Trenchmouth, but for some reason I seem to detect hints of Scratch acid / Jesus lizard too - that stop start chugging kind of sound, weird, distinctive vocals... Live they don't sound as good as I thought they would, but it's still pretty impressive. On vinyl, it's a masterful sound; check out the 'SuperGenius' LP. Circus Lupus are a tad too serious perhaps and so fucking intense - I'm not expecting witty one liners and silly quips, it's just the crowd don't really warm to them and there's a feeling of resentment in the air. Perhaps that's what Circus Lupus want. I guess they are an angry band, pissing off our generation of pissed off people even more, maybe.

Bikini Kill & Huggy Bear - ULU - 14/3/93.

Huggy Bear : Anyone who says Huggy Bear can't plai an ignorant fucker. Thr 'Riot Grrrr!' thing has been so twisted by our Great British music press it's unreal - really, it's a push for more girl and girl/boy bands, more communication, getting out and doing things - what's so bad about that? Huggy Bear are an excellent punk rock band - fast, noisy with something to say and they do it well, in fact they're fucking slick! Onwards!

Bikini Kill : It's debatable whether sexism should be fought through alienation of men - this seems a bit crass because much of the RG movement was inspired by male dischord bands, especially 'The Nation of Ulysses'. Bikini Kill have a guy in the band... Tokenism? This seems to be what singer Kathy is proposing, but the 'men are wankers' attitude is useless - all men are potential rapists? Are all women potential mothers? Why not look on most men as potential good guys and friends? Musically, Bikini Kill are shit hot - a grungey punk rock sound, intelligent lyrics and they seem to be enjoying themselves. Everyone's entitled to their own opinion; Bikini Kill have theirs and they play great punk rock music, it's as simple as that... So do Huggy Bear, whether you agree with what they're saying or not.

Christ on a Crutch - White Horse - 18/3/93.

I seem to give good reviews to everything. but this was something special. Christ on a Crutch are one of the fastest, loudest, most powerful bands I've ever seen. It works so well on vinyl - 'Crime pays when pigs die' LP or 'New Red Archives' - and live it's even faster. The version of 'Shit Edge' was so quick it was unreal, or were they taking the piss? Considering their singer quit, the guitarist does a great job on vocals and is no mean guitarist too. It's sometimes simple, sometimes intricate all out punk with intelligent, anti-establishment words. Very slick, very tight, it all holds together so well considering the drummer is so fast he's going to explode. No mistaking Christ on a Crutch are Punk! A blinder!

The Hanson Brothers - Gross Misconduct LP.

This group contains two members of Nomeansno, you have been warned! A full length LP, it's a perfect parody of the Ramones, complete with '1-2-3-4's' and simplistic lyrics. They do actually kick ass, something the Ramones could be accused of not really achieving. Nomeansno couldn't be weak if they tried - they're so tight! 'Gross Misconduct' is not so much a piss take, but rather an appreciation, except 'Blitzkreig Hops' on the free 7" about the joys of home brew! This album is fiendishly catchy and great fun. Highly recommended!

Rocket from the Crypt - Circa Now! - (Headhunter).

Rocket from the crypt are a great band. This is their second LP after 'Paint as a fragrance' and numerous 7"s (even one for Sub-Pop... Wowee!). Some say 'Circa Now!' is better - I'm not so

sure. As a whole LP I don't think that it matches the pure wonderfulness of the first side of 'Paint as a fragrance' which contains some of the best tunes ever and those kind of songs that just stay in your head for weeks! Sure 'Circa Now!' is still one of the best exponents of this melodic rough-vocal, avant garde, grungey style thingies (how many labels there?!), but it seems to contain too many filler tracks, which was a problem with side 2 of 'Paint...'. Rocket still have a monster sound, first song 'Short lip fuser' is a classic and they still use trumpet and piano really effectively. Don't get me wrong, Rocket from the crypt are a big favourite of mine, but 'Circa Now!' lacks a certain something, or maybe I expect too much. Buy it and see!

Triggerman - Dead like me - (Workshed).

Same label as the truly awesome 411, Triggerman contain members of No for an answer and Carrynation, apparently "Emo-core?" - I don't like this phrase and it doesn't strictly apply. Some tunes are like a rougher Samiam, the 411 influence shines through too. Great music, good changes of pace, rough/smooth vocals mix - this LP certainly has variety, but is not as awesome as I was lead to believe on the first few encounters, but I feel it's a grower. Definately worth checking out if you're a fan of medium paced, post-hardcore (crap expression - why post?) and I could imagine them fucking corking live!

Alloy - Untied / Hard Rain 7".

Two great tunes, brand new and fresh sounding hardcore from alloy. If anything a harsher direction seems apparent than on the 'Eliminate' LP. This band is shit hot - miss them at your peril!

AntiSchism - End of time plus one - 2 x 7"s - (Selfless).

This is a double 7" pack with a remixed version of the 'End of time' EP and 4 unreleased songs on the second 7". This is the first stuff i've heard by AntiSchism, just hear them name dropped as classic hard core a lot in MRR. Both EP's are fucking fast and noisy, especially the second one - not exactly pleasant memorable tunes to hum in the bath but raging, loud screamed vocals, very powerful, very intense and this is what makes it memorable. 8 very angry tunes, weird noises, killer percussion - worth getting hold of and probably limited.

Capitol Punishment 7" - (Selfless, 1000 only, white!).

A 7" with 8 unreleased tracks from 1982 and with Ralph on Vocals - probably one for the collector. Rough, harsh vocals sort of Brit sounding, pretty classic really, like a sped up Toxic Reasons - fast and powerful and still pretty tuneful. A lyric sheet would have been nice - I never heard them first time around, but 10 years on it sounds pretty fucking exciting!

Rage Against The Machine LP - Epic.

Before even playing a single show, Rage against the machine recorded their own independent 12 song tape and sold about 5,000 copies! In the short time this group's been around they've opened for such well known acts as Pearl Jam and Public Enemy. Their self-titled release features 10 tracks, combining churning metal riffs, in the vein of Suicidal Tendencies, with hardcore rap beats reminiscent of House of Pain and Public Enemy. I saw them play live at the ULU a while back and they were totally awesome. Raw Rage!

Cyber Core - 'Grate'.

Driving through a misbegotten industrial wasteland, all jagged black silhouettes and smokestacks, polluted rain shone green on the windscreen. I had 50 miles of 5 lane highway to myself. Sweat collected in my palms, across my back. I searched the airwaves for something to listen to...

For years the factory ship had lain dead on the sand. It's huge metal hull once rang with the noise of machinery. Whales had been hoisted in and cut up. Now the hull rang again. A monstrous baby was riveting a last few pieces of flesh onto it's shins. A mix of its own viscera and putrified ends of whalemeat had been clumsily stuck, skewered and stitched onto its metal skeleton. It giggled happily whilst firing a rusted meathook through its thigh. What a good game. It found a new toy. With an old rusty chainsaw it began beating out a pounding rhythm on the disintegrating carcasses of the dead whales. Their ghosts released long moans, ancient whalesongs of despair. This mechanical abortion had returned to hunt for it's whore mother.

Born again from the metal womb of a sea born slaughter house. It ran back to Sin City, crying 'Ma maaa!' As it ran, the occasional piece of dribbling meat would fall away, rasping along the length of the corroded metal pins holding it in place. But mama wasn't at home. Nobody had told baby that the bitch was dead. Mama was in a morgue. Baby broke in and set off the alarms. Baby found mama in a drawer. 'Found you!' the infant squealed. 'What big teeth you have, baby' - 'All the better to eat you with, Mama!' It curled up with Mama in the drawer, stroking her hair, and peeling off strips of flesh to suck. 'Mmmm Mama Mmm!'...

It's funny what a tune will make you think of. The DJ said I had been listening to Cyber Core - Grate. I thanked him for the information, but it had felt as if I had tuned in to every available frequency simultaneously. Cyber Core had evidently tried to create an aesthetic of interference. I don't think I'll be wanting my own copy, but it got me through the night. I gurgled and licked my lips.

ALLOY INTERVIEW

Alloy features Professor Vic Bondi, ex AoF, Jones Very etc and ex-members of Agnostic Front and Dagnasty. Alloy were over here a few months ago promoting their excellent new Eliminate album and touring with Joeyfat. They play powerful melodic hard-core. We caught up with them in Leeds for this interview:

BHP: Since arriving in the UK, you've been labelled with this "Prof Rock" tag, do you think this makes people take Alloy more or less seriously?

VIC: Probably less. One group of people simply won't believe it and assume it's hype, another group will believe it and despise us for it. In truth, it's not that much an asset for the band, other than honesty. A Phd doesn't make you a good musician.

BHP: We know the drummer was less than impressed by the Egg Parmesan in Belgium, what have been the highs and lows of the European food experience?

VIC: High: John's cooking in Newport, Wales.
Low: Egg Parmesan in Belgium.

BHP: How does "Alloy" compare to your previous bands?

VIC: Better by far than both AoF and Jones Very, in the sense that we enjoy continued good fortune and good audiences. More exciting and more frightening. In some ways, Jones Very was a far different band, perhaps more experimental which was both a strength and a weakness. Since AoF was my first important band, during very exciting times in music, it is impossible to compare. Those days can never be revisited or exceeded. But since the Aof reunion (which was completely misconceived) and the first Alloy tour were only months apart, I can state categorically that Alloy is a far better band to play in.

BHP: What would you like your audience to get out of Alloy as a band?

PAT: I think it's best to say that we "give the people what they want", but we want to send them away thinking about what they've heard, get them inspired to do something or educate themselves on certain issues.

BHP: What is Boston like at this time of year?

PAT: Boston tends to be clear and cold or hovering around freezing with rain or snow.

BHP: Anything to add?

PAT: Thanks to all our support bands this tour, especially Joeyfat and NRA. Also thanks to Aziz, Coliath and Aiden.

This interview was conducted on the 8th January 1993 at the Duchess of Leeds.

You can write to Alloy, C/O Bloom Records, PO Box 361, Boston, MA 02101, USA.

EXCESS - A Brief History of a Fat Band.

The end of April 1993 will, at last, see the release of the first vinyl album by the UK's most 'CULT' fat band. COUCH POTATOES formed back in 1990, and have since been playing the sort of energetic, sweaty, fun gigs that they have become known for, with songs about food, girls, and bed! They have appeared on two Jailcell Recipes tours, and supported bands such as GreenDay, Alice Donut, NOFX, and Chemical People, to name but a few. The 'Couchies' have sold well in excess of a thousand copies of their demo's, but have not, until now, appeared on much vinyl, with one song on a 'Retch' compilation LP (featuring Dr & The Crippens, Parasites, Verukers...) and one song on a 'Boss Tuneage' compilation LP (featuring Samiam, Mr T Experience, Rise...). COUCH POTATOES now have a full length album, called 'EXCESS ALL AREAS', being released on 'BACK IN CONTROL RECORDS'. It has already received rave reviews as a 'Classic Hardcore' album, featuring 'Genuine Kentifornian Couchcore'.

Put a smile on a fat blokes face and send for it now, from : Back in Control Records, 95 Hexham Avenue, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 2DL.

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