

EQUALIZING X DISTORT

Issue 3, Number 9

September/October 2003

black eyes club

The BLACK EYES CLUB are a 4-piece from Hamilton that have been around for just over two years now. They have a 10-song demo out and they played Equalizing-X-Distort on Sunday September 7th, 2003. We spoke with them afterwards and here is how it started.

Who is in the band and what instruments do you play ?

Jon (J): I'm Jon and I sort of sing.

Keith (K): I'm Keith and I play bass.

Grant (G): I'm Grant and I play lead mouth harp and sometimes guitar.

Robbie (R): I'm Robbie and I play drums and also do temper.

Were any of you in bands prior to the BLACK EYES CLUB ?

J: I was in a bunch of bands but really not worth mentioning. We try and stand on this band's product, but I know some of these guys have been in other bands so they may want to say yeah or nay.

R: I lived in Toronto for about 7 years and I played in a bunch of bands that will remain nameless. They would not apply to the kind of music that we are doing.

G: I got kicked out of HAYMAKER.

How did you meet and how did the band start ? Tell us that story.

J: Way way way back in the stone age.... Um around the middle of 2001 I was talking with a fairly notable fellow in the Hamilton scene called Phil Fader and Phil wanted to play bass in the new band. He used to play bass for LEFT FOR DEAD and he wanted to be in a new band and I wanted to sing so we sort of started that, but I had just moved back to Hamilton from Texas and I didn't really know anybody so Phil talked to Grant and from there Grant tell the story how Keith got in and how Robbie got in even though he doesn't seem to want to.

G: I don't know. We just knew all these guys. It took us a while to get a drummer, but we managed to get Rob in the end and Keith hopped on there a little while before we got the drummer and then Phil didn't work out so we switched Keith over to playing bass and we had Chris Ainsley playing second guitar for us for a little while but that didn't really work out in the end either, so it has just been the four of us aside from all that. Two and a half years.

J: Yeah about that.

So you do a cover of HUSKER DU. Do you guys consider them an influence ?

J: Yeah I think we all like HUSKER DU a lot. Maybe Grant moreso than everybody, butGrant is nodding "Yeah". HUSKER DU, a lot of early 80's hardcore. Personally, BORN AGAINST, BLACK FLAG, MAN-O-WAR. We have a MAN-O-WAR bit to the intro of "System, System". Hail to the glory of THOR. If you know how MAN-O-WAR are they are just bad metal.



Hated Jon, singer for BLACK EYES CLUB.

From the hardcore angle I guess lyrically BORN AGAINST, musically I don't think we try to be influenced but obviously great bands they get played a lot and will influence how you play. I know Grant loves 70's L.A. glam stuff and modern hardcore.

G: It doesn't matter where it comes from. Like MINUTEMEN to DYSTOPIA or whatever. Anything.

R: I am more into the things of questionable taste. I like all the hobbit-core, all the black metal, and cheesy industrial and goth and all that other garbage. I shouldn't really be admitting to that I guess, but so be it.

It doesn't matter. You are a great drummer. Okay this is a slightly different question I am asking. Describe your sound. What do you sound like ? What have people told you that the BLACK EYES CLUB sound like ? Or what have you been compared to ?

J: In reviews ?

Yeah or what

J: What do we think and what do other people think ?

Yeah, really that is what I am trying to get at more opinion about your sound.

J: Well other people have thought.

Well other people are hearing it through their own filters. But ultimately it is the sound that you guys are trying to project that we are trying to hear so tell us what you think you sound like ?

J: Okay. This is a really hard question because there is a bunch of...we go through a phase where we write a lot of songs and those songs have common traits and then our early songs are really fast and really short and

We can talk about periods. If you want to talk about who first influenced you...

R: For me it was kind of like the GANG GREEN thing. When they came out the whole idea was just to play fast, fast, faster. Sometimes it's at the sacrifice of us sounding tight. It seems to be trying to push the envelop a little bit. We always just kick our songs up a little bit faster each time we play them and just see what happens.

J: Sometimes they fall apart. I guess comparatively. Personally, just from my point



Robbie, drummer of BLACK EYES CLUB and fan of "Hobbit-core."



Grant, the guitarist that got kicked out of HAYMAKER.

of view, I would compare us to a faster early period BORN AGAINST, possibly covering LIFESBLOOD. So if you've heard

K: They were LIFESBLOOD.

J: Well no because BORN AGAINST did the LIFESBLOOD song way better than LIFESBLOOD ever did it, but...

Wasn't Adam in the band ?

J: Yeah Adam was also in LIFESBLOOD, as far as I know. When they covered "Resist Control" that to me is one of the best BORN AGAINST songs, which is ironic, but so that's how I would personally chronify us as, but I know other people have different ears so they might have different ways of putting it together. Other people have compared us to DROP DEAD, which I don't really get. 9 SHOCKS TERROR, but we figured out why that sounds like that because the beginning of one of our older songs "Shove your Fencepost Up Your Ass" sounds like a song on the 9 SHOCKS TERROR LP, which we didn't figure out until three months ago. The *HeartAttack* review compared us to BORN AGAINST.

G: They think we watch a lot of television.

J: *Suburban Voice* gave us a great review. I don't necessarily think that our lyrics are entirely cryptic, but I try and write them so that they are not immediately obviously "This Sucks". I try to cover "This sucks with..." other things but he seemed to think that a lot of our songs off the demo were very TV themed, specifically "Pain and Suffering while watching Solid Gold", which is actually about macho scene politic dancing, which was in fact slightly influenced by an old ONE BLOOD tune.

Oh really ? Which one ?

J: "Can You Feel It ?" so "these dancing rituals you needn't follow." And I remembered. That really sort of hit me. For those who don't know Stephe Perry was the singer of ONE BLOOD so that's my tip of the hat to that....

And "One Day at a Time" is a reference to that 70's sitcom, which isn't about TV but

....

J: Yeah and there was another song that we used to do called "Keeping Up Appearances. My Life as a Bad British sitcom" so like I tried to have a

whole series of those that culturally referenced something that really sort of kind of ties into the song.

Does anyone else want to answer this ?

J: Yeah because I am a talkative bastard.

I am going to ask you about the name. Where did the name BLACK EYES CLUB come from ? Is it athis is why I brought this record. (I am holding up the 7 SECONDS "Walk Together, Rock Together" which has Kevin sporting the black eye makeup.) **Is it because you love 7 SECONDS so much or is it more the idea of giving a black eye....**

K: We all got punched out when we were kids in school and that's where it came from.

J: Yeah pretty much. That's in a nutshell, I was a loud mouth kid that would flip off nazi skins and promptly get pounded.

G: When I first met Jon he was called "Hated Jon" so if that gives you any kind of indication of where its coming from.

J: Yeah, those were the days. But no there is no 7 SECONDS reference there. Sorry Kevin.

What does it actually mean ? Is it because you guys were all kind of picked on ? Is that the meaning of it ? Or what was the idea when you first brainstorming for names ?

K: We had a big list and we kind of went through them and said we all agree on this one. Lets go with this one. We are not going to waste time trying to make up a name.

Mark: How about you were going to start a fist fight between yourselves and the Dischord BLACK EYES to see who gets the black eye.

J: We actually tried to get on that show. I wanted to come to Toronto and play with BLACK EYES, the BLACK EYES who are apparently a local band, and us and I almost had it booked.

G: And the BLACK REBEL MOTOR CYCLE CLUB...and then we were going to try and play the BLACK FLAG reunion but they couldn't float us the plane tickets so....but no I honestly tried to get us on that show and it didn't go.

Who writes the lyrics ?

J: I do.

What do you write about ?

J: Some of those songs, a lot of the earlier songs were culled from stuff that I was writing between '96 and '98 when I was living in Texas and not in the peachy-ist frame of mind. Basically, I went crazy and some say I didn't really come back. I am a little more well adjusted now so in a nutshell if there is something out there that strikes me as incredibly wrong or unfair those are pretty good



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EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT MONTHLY is an extension of the weekly radio show heard on CIUT 89.5 FM every Sunday nights from 10:00pm 'til midnight (Participants: Ben Edgar, Jonah Falco, Martin Farkas, Simon Harvey, Lisa McLean, Stephe Perry, and Mark Rodenhizer).

The show dedicates itself to the underground hardcore punk scene. There is a particular emphasis on international releases in the developing thrash, straight edge, grind, garage, Killed By Death, and crust scenes, which means we play material like Amde Petersens Arme, A-Team, Rot, the Rezillos, Shock, and Final Blood Bath.

There is a weekly demo feature (paying homage to the cassette format), weekly event listings, and a monthly top 10 retrospective look at new releases.

Equalizing-X-Distort

CIUT 89.5 FM

Sundays 10:00 pm - midnight

91 St. George Street,

Toronto, ON

M5S 2E8

Canada

Request Line: (416) 946-7000

e-mail: equalizingXdistort@ciut.fm

Website: www.ciut.fm



CIUT 89.5 FM - "Equalizing Distort"

**Top 10 Hardcore Releases
for August 2003**

Band	Title	Format	Label
1. REALITY CRISIS	Open the Door and into the New ...	CD	Answer
2. POIKKEUS	Jarjeton Maailma	ep	Crust War
3. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ?	No Cash...No Thrash!	ep	Found & Lost
4. DEFECTOR	Punk System Destroy	ep	Crust War
5. THETHREATS	12 Punk Moves	CD	Dr. Strange
6. EL CAMINO 53	The Octopus Diary	ep	Answer
7. FACE UP TO IT / MELEE	split	ep	Ratbone
8. DAMAGE DEPOSIT	That's Not Core Dude	ep	Havoc
9. DIOS HASTIO	Morfologna del Desastre	ep	Bakteria
10. CONFUSIONE	Angolature Deliranti	ep	Confusione

Equalizing Distort can be heard every Sunday night on CIUT 89.5 FM at 10:00 pm. The top 10 countdown can be heard in its entirety, complete with previews of the picks and analysis on the previous month in hardcore, on the last Sunday of the month.

targets to talk about. Some of the songs talk about different situations. They are more situational. "Corporate branding" is a new song. Of course they are all kind of new to everybody, except us. "Corporate branding" is about gangs and how they are identified. Like how bloods and crips are identified by red and blue colours. But perhaps in the future there has been such a shift from corporations to get hip hop stars and celebrities to endorse their products. Like I think Nike just got FIFTY CENT or somebody to be endorsed by Nike. Well the next logical step is that there will be gangs that are sponsored or based around a corporate identity so Nike vs. FUBU or Addidas fighting it out with Puma. Whoever's out there. You'll hear it on the news and it will be some seditious way of getting corporate branding through to the people because they have got us all to buy the t-shirt so what's the next step. The next step is to get it on the news, get it everywhere and that is just sort of marketing strategy.

I wanted to ask you specifically about one song. What is the song "One Day at a Time" about ?

J: I knew you were going to ask. "One Day at a Time" is about me having diabetes. I have to take four needles a day, everyday for the rest of my life and basically since I was about 8 I have had diabetes. So I am now 29, so that is 21 years. That's a fairly long time to have a disease like that and especially when you are in a city like Hamilton that is run on doughnuts and coffee you kind of get a real negative outlook on some things. And it sort of ties into the idea that when you go to the doctor you are always feed the line that "Well there is a cure coming". And you see these ads on the bus and ads on the highway. It says "One Million people have diabetes but there is a cure coming and you can help and donate" and I read one year that there is \$10 million dollars donated to diabetes research and when I started thinking about it there is a lot of money going into diabetes research but all they ever come up with is new insulin. And insulin is the drug that keeps the diabetes in control so it's not really in the people who make insulin – it is not in their interest as a business to come up with a cure unless the cure is way more money than whatever the maintenance drug is. And this is the same with AIDS or any other disease that has a maintenance phase where they have no cure. There is no business interest in creating a cure and so sometimes it plays on your mind that this disease is going to kill me. Period. End of statement. So knowing that being very cynical you can look at it and go there is no out for me. I'm kind of fucked. But on the other hand you can't think like that everyday because if you do you'll just eat a gun and that's it. There's no point. You might as well get out now while you're still ahead. So yeah, you just got to go one day at a time and some days my life is a bad sitcom and some days is not "Friends", but a better sitcom. More intelligent. Is there a more intelligent sitcom?

R: Oxymoron.

Yeah really.

J: So yeah. I think my speech is done.

I am going to ask each of you know to tell me what your favourite BLACK EYES CLUB song is from a lyrical standpoint is and why? Do you want to start Jon?

J: Yeah I might as well because I ramble. Personally, "Hoyerswerda" because it's one of



Keith, on bass for BLACK EYES CLUB.

the songs I wrote about somewhere in '97 after I heard about a fire bombing of a refugee household in a recently non-communized East Germany or was it West Germany. I always forget. East Germany was communist. So after the wall fell there was all these migrant workers who had been moved there from places like Mozambique and Angola and they were basically ghettoized and essentially made victim when the Berlin Wall fell and the currency collapsed. All these really angry poor out of work people were ...I don't know if they were duped or they were just swayed in a right wing manner. They were moved to violence anyways and they basically surrounded a housing complex where immigrant workers were kept and I say kept intentionally because it wasn't like they were that free. They were housed. There was no real intention for them to immigrate into the country because they were intended to work there and at some point in the future they were to be shipped home. So they kept everybody together. Anyways the people who lived around Hoyerswerda, which is where just one of these fire bombings happened, essentially putting this housing complex under siege. It took fire crews one or two hours to respond to the incineration of this housing complex and it took the government five days before they sent in any sort of controlling martial law. When I read that, I was really sort of "Holy Fuck" this sounds like 1933 nazi Germany – a beer hall putsch, but it was way slicker way more ...the whole thing got support from the mayor. The chief of police was actually one of the actual people participating in the fire bombing. And eventually they got minor sentences and went off to jail, but it doesn't seem right to me that people can turn off that switch and go "Yeah these people are the cause of all my problems." It just seems odd to me that somebody wouldn't take the next logical step and go "Well wait a minute. These guys are here just to do jobs that we couldn't do....

...or didn't want to do.

J: Yeah....it just really infuriated me and made me go what the fuck is this world coming to ? Is this how things are run everywhere ? And I guess, the last two lines of the song are "And I look into the daily paper for evidence that Hoyerswerda is where I live and there is mounting evidence.

And you see little clues and things that make you go "Wow this could actually happen here at some point if scapegoating continues".

A lot of the same policies are in place for our immigration practices. Anyone else want to take a stab at this ?

J: I will shut up.

G: My favourite song from a lyrical standpoint would be "Solid Gold" because that was basically written about...that was one of the first songs we ever did about the whole macho man floor punching, windmill, kick anybody who comes near ya. It seemed retarded to me. At that point, there has been all these songs about violence at shows, but when we wrote that there wasn't really many people writing about this specific new trend of just going out there and swinging as hard as you can. I just thought it was stupid, but if you want to go up front and check out the bands you should be able to do that. I am not against anyone dancing or anything like that or bouncing around. That's just the way it goes. Generally, if it is a band that inspires people to floor punch, I probably don't want to be up near the front. I guess it takes care of it self kind of.

K: I would have to say "\$6.85 is the real number of the Beast". So many people are stuck working minimum wage jobs just to barely get by. They are working like crazy hours, no sleep just to make enough money to get by and pay our bills and buy food and stuff. That shouldn't be and the government keeps it at that level. \$6.85. Who can make a living off of that and afford to do anything ? It's just a shitty way to live. So that makes sense.

R: I guess for me it would have to be "The Fine Art of Fucking Up". It is a subjective thing. It's kind of the story for my life, in the past and present. So it more or less sums it up in a nutshell.

Tell us about the demo. Where did you record it ? And can people still get copies of it ?

J: Yes. It's in perpetual press.

Where did you record it ?

J: In our basement, where we practice.

Is this the two microphone thing that you guys did ?

J: No that actually.

K: This is kind of how the "Fine Art of Fucking Up" came to be.

J: Yeah, we were. There is this Hamilton skate competition that happens annually and Rob and Grant live with one of the organizers and a couple of years ago we were going to try and set up some live bands. I think it fell through basically, but as part of that we had rented some gear and we thought we will just keep it an extra month and record our demo. Take our time. Do it. And I think we spent two weeks not doing anything and then we spent another week.

K: Within our first week not one song and...

R: We did "Lifeline: the first week and it actually turned out better then the rest of the songs but then we procrastinated for god knows how long and the last minute before we had to bring all the stuff back and after accruing half a grand in rental fees.

K: We had all the gear for almost two months and the very last day we did the demo.

J: And we would have recorded on September 11th had not the tape deck fucked up.

Did you have anything else planned to be released ?

J: We are on a *Deep Six* "Unreality – Negative One" comp, which is covers of hardcore bands by



Left to Right: Grant, Robbie, Keith, and Jon - the BLACK EYES CLUB.

hardcore bands. Last time I talked to Bob at *Deep Six* he said there was 12 bands in the can and 8 more to go. We recorded that last year. Tentatively, we're on a comp - an under 20 second song comp that "Father, Son, and the Holy Shit" is going on and that is coming out of somebody's DIY type press coming out of Nova Scotia. Halifax. I thought it was Newfoundland originally. We've talked to a bunch of other people about doing 7's but I don't really feel comfortable saying "yeah we are doing this on this label" because ...

K: Nothing is for sure.

J: Yeah nothing is ironed out. But we are going in to record by next month. Keith is leaving the country. He has had enough of our stuff.

How come you are leaving ?

K: I am moving. I am going to be with my girlfriend.

And where is that ?

K: Minneapolis, Minneapolis.

That's why you guys were talking about thrashfest earlier.

K: We basically have until December or January and if we don't get anything recorded then it ain't going to happen.

Or else they are going to have to come out to thrashfest to record.

G: It will be a long drive for a recording session.

J: If Amy is listening it is actually the end of October, right ?

What is the idea behind the BLACK EYES CLUB ? As a band, what do you hope to do ?

J: Have fun. There was a point where we weren't playing for a while and it just wasn't fun so we just didn't do it and when we sort of got back together we decided that if it's not going to be fun we should just quit so it actually has been really fun since we sort of made that grandiose statement.

...or the goal of your band.

J: To be like MAN-O-WAR.

R: I would like to open up for MAN-O-WAR one of these days. That would be a highlight.

How can people get in touch with the band?

J: Well mainly people have been getting in touch through me. If you guys want to blurt out your e-mails you are more than welcome, but basically it's dietsociety@yahoo.com and it's all one word

and our website is <http://blackeyesclub.tripod.com>. There is no www in there or you can just search on google for Black Eyes Club in quotes and it will turn up. I guess you can contact us by mail too through Black Eyes Club / 363 East 18th Street / Hamilton, ON / L9A 4P7. Anyone else want to be contacted ?

Are there any last comments ?

G: Live long and prosper.

J: Oh the trekkie comes out. I just wanted to make a brief mention that in Hamilton there has been a distinct lack of clubs, especially all ages clubs because the by-law structuring in Hamilton is different than pretty much any other municipality. So there has been a concerted effort over the past month to try and find a store front to open up with the distinct intention to put on shows that are all ages punk friendly without the hassle of renting out halls or talking to fucking asshole promoters who say "Yes" and then "No", who shall remain nameless - Sonic Unyon.



EQUALIZING X DISTORT T's



Tired of your mom dressing you ? Wanna wear the coolest threads in town ? For one night only you'll have a chance to get your very own EXD t-shirt. This limited Edition, white on black tee can be yours with a donation to our fall 2003 fundraising campaign.

Tune into CIUT 89.5 FM on Sunday, November 9th at 10:00pm for details.

HOSTAGE LIFE

HOSTAGE LIFE are a 5-piece, melodic hardcore band from Toronto that have quickly made an impact on the local scene with their solid, and ever improving, live show. We asked them to come by and talk with us about the band and most of them showed up half-in-the-bag. Also present and adding their two cents were Simon and Martin, while Sandy filmed the interview for a cable access show. Interview by Mark Rodenhizer.

Can you tell us your name, what you play in the band, and what your girlfriend's pet name for you is or if you don't have one now what your last girlfriend's pet name for you was?

Adam (A): I'm Adam, I play guitar in the band and my pet's names are Bitey and Jasper.

No No No.

Paul (P): I'm Paul, I play drums. My girlfriend's pet name is, er, Swirlo. She discovered that the part of my hair is in the back and it makes this little swirl and she makes fun of me for that.

That's sexy.

John (J): I'm John and I play guitar and my girlfriend's pet name for me is Sweetie.

All: Aaahhhhh...

Simon: Maybe we can get another opinion. Girlfriend (he calls to Sandy).

Sandy: Bianca.

J: Bianca?

P: Do you guys play crossdressing games?

A: Wanker?

Colin you go...

Colin (C): I'm Colin. I play voice. I don't have any standard pet name but any time I hear one I go mushy. I work at this bookstore and everyone in the café calls me "Love" and I always go "Awww".

It warms the cockles of your heart.

C: Yes the cockles.

Eric (E): My name is Eric and I play bass and my girlfriend's pet name for me is "You Asshole".

Sounds good. So how did you guys get started as a band? How long have you been together? What is the story on that, gentlemen?

C: Last summer me and John started hanging out a lot and doing some fun extra-curricular activities....

J: Cocaine.

C: What's that?

J: Cocaine.

C: Yes...cocaine. And during all this cocaine we started writing songs cause ...

J: We gained some band members and we lost some and now we have the band members we have now.

E: I haven't seen or spoken to Colin in about two years and I got a random phone call from Colin. My bass amp was actually waiting to be sold in a pawn shop and he called me up and said "Hey do you want to play in a band again" and I said "Alright" and that was that.

Alright, so you said band again. Yet another standard questions around these parts...I know you're going to love this. What other bands have you guys been in? What's your history in the punk scene? Where did you guys grow up and what bands have you been



Colin, the singer of HOSTAGE LIFE.

in before? I am going to like your answer too, Paul.

P: I was in a band called EWWW... YOU'RE A GIRL AND GIRLS SUCK

With...

A: With Mike Long (*loads of cheering*).

A round of applause for Mike Long! (which turns into a Mike Long cheer)

P: That was years and years ago. Other than that I am in a band called MATH with Mr. Sam Allemang and some others.

Provider of equipment.

P: Yeah our provider. Our benefactor. And then these cats.

There is an internet rumour. Are you going to be playing with CLOSET MONSTER?

P: Ha ha. No, Eric started that rumour. Entirely false.

E: Yeah that was great. I just wanted to see kids talking shit on the message board and see what rumours I could start and it flew perfectly.

Yeah that's a good one.

E: It was good. I used to play in a hardcore band called ENGAGE. None of you ever heard of us.

I remember ENGAGE.

E: You and Steve and that's about it. And then I played in a latter day version of the TIREKICKERS and everyone had thought we had broken up two years before that so that was pretty fun. And then Brian started the DOWNBELOWS and Keith went off to do MAXIMUM RNR. And I stayed unemployed for a couple of years so that was pretty cool and now I am in HOSTAGE LIFE.

What about you, sir, Adam?

A: I used to play with myself a lot. In no bands as such.

Is this your first band?

A: This is my first band that has played in front of people besides high school, which is pretty cool.

How long have you been playing then?

A: Well since Colin asked me to play I hadn't picked it up for years. Literally like five years. I played here and there. So I have been playing since November and it's a lot of fun.

Well you are a very accomplished musician.

A: Well thank you. I try.

J: I have never been in any bands before. I was in a band in high school briefly called KAI AND THE BOISENBERRIES, but that lasted all of about a day and now I am in this band.

And Colin for the print interview...

C: In grade 8, I was in a rap crew called R.I.P. posse, which stood for Rapping in the Place and then I was in MARILYN'S VITAMINS.

But I guess before we move onto other things about your songs and what's going on with the band where did you get the name from? HOSTAGE LIFE, what's the meaning on that? Who came up with it?

J: Colin came up with it but it was the last of about 50 names that we had in a so-called hat and it was the one that stuck. The one that we could all sort of agree on and then stuck with.

C: Yeah it was going to be that or CHUNNEL.

E: I agreed with HOSTAGE LIFE whole-heartedly. I was working two jobs. Finished a 12 hour shift. Colin calls "Yeah I think we have a band name called HOSTAGE LIFE. It's about how you are a slave to your job." And I was just like "Yeah. Okay. Yeah." And that was that.

J: But it's more than that. It's a slave to everything like television and the mainstream media and politics and everything.

Alright, that sounds good. I didn't have to bug you with what's the meaning behind it. I am glad you answered my next question. So who writes all the songs? Musically and then lyrically.

E: Colin takes care of all the lyrics pretty much because he is pretty much the dictator and he is like "I am the best. You guys suck. I was in MARILYN'S VITAMINS dammit. I'm Colin Vitamin."



Eric, the bassist for HOSTAGE LIFE.



John, the guitarist for HOSTAGE LIFE. Sweetie or Bianca, we still haven't figured it out.



Adam, the other guitarist for HOSTAGE LIFE.

But he got a lot of help in MARILYN'S VITAMINS with the song writing and I am wondering how much you guys chip in and then similarly with the music how does that go?

J: I guess so far, I write most of the music to either something that Colin is singing or I will play something and Colin will sing on top of it. But like everyone else has helped out at practice.

P: They always mutate whenever we actually bring forth the basic structure and people have this and that idea and then the song ends up taking on another kind of form so we kind of work it all together.

I heard Colin does a lot of "Naa naa na na" and is there a lot of that?

C: Yeah Paul the drum beat should be "Dud de duh duh, duh. No that's not it Paul".

Okay expanding on that... Stephe Perry is going to love me for this... we always like to go around what are your songs about...

Simon: At least ask it in a Cartman voice.

I can't do a Cartman voice. You do it in the "I have to Wee Wee' voice. Simon (talking in a high, nerdy voice): Could each of you tell us ...

No, no. What are your songs about? Because MARILYN'S VITAMINS were always known as a political band. Obviously your songs are of a political nature, like when we see you live and with the name of the band being about work conditions and what goes on in this society so tell us what do you sing about, what do you write about?

C: Pretty much the same shit as in MARILYN'S VITAMINS. I am pretty much a one trick pony in that respect. E: And we keep trotting him out.

Okay, see I tried to go the nice way about it. I'm going to be mean about it. What's your favourite song? Tell me about it.

C: Probably "Robot A-Go-Go".

And what's that about?

C: Work conditions, specifically.

Where do you work?

C: I'm not at liberty to say because my supervisor is listening.

Really? That's awesome.

C: Totally.

"You better not talk shit on this company or you're getting fired, you fucker."

C: Exactly.

I'm surprised your boss swore that much.

C: Yeah (loads of laughter)

Simon: Actually after what he was talking about. You know he never shuts up about his supervisor and some of the stuff I've heard, nothing would surprise me. That thing about abducting children and uh... the smack habit...

Okay what are some of your other songs about? John, do you want to talk at all?

E: I'll talk a little bit.

Alright, Eric's gonna take over...

E: Basically, I want to expand on underage girls, our fetish for ball gags, cocaine, strippers, and anal sex. We like anal sex. Pretty much... yeah what's up Mrs. Smith. I'll see you later. Pretty much it's about that. Same things that MARILYN'S VITAMINS were. Everyone thought they were political. Wrong. Very wrong.

It's all about the kinks.

J: Yeah and golden showers, pearl necklaces, the usual.

Dirty, dirty, dirty. Okay what about "Take off what you're wearing". What's that song about?

C: That's called "Nickel Sneakers". That's about how right now I am wearing at least one or two items of clothing stitched by children as I am sure everybody sitting here is at some point. It's about just the compromises you make while you shop and my own personal apathy and my disgust with myself.

I spoke to members of your legions, your fan base, and I heard that song brings forth some interesting practice situations. Can you expand on this at all?

C: Sometimes... Eric takes his clothes off.

E: Oh right.

I heard it wasn't just Eric.

J: No it's pretty much just Eric, all the time.

E: Yeah pretty much just me.

C: You've got to check your sources dude.

It's Andy. He's drunk at home right now. (laughter all around) Granted my sources are drunk at home right now, but nevertheless. How many shows have you guys played because obviously you guys have only been around for a year now.

E: Not even.

Have you been playing around?

E: We played quite a bit this summer.

C: Yeah 10 or 15 shows maybe, that's about it. Like not a lot.

Who have you played with?

J: We played on the radio.

C: We played on the radio.

That was today!

P: The K-OS show has been my favourite so far playing with bands like CAREER SUICIDE

C: ...and all those *Underground Operations* bands. We play with DEAD LETTER DEPT a lot, we play with BOMBS, and CLOSET MONSTER, and PROTEST THE HERO.

E: And we played with a new band called SHARON'S FATE. It's Arnell and Ivan who used to be in the TIREKICKERS. That's there new band. They are starting out. They have been playing in and around town. Mostly 19+ shows, but they rock out. They are really good.

You guys play with all the *Underground Operations* bands and... nobody is listening. Hi Paul, how are you?

P: Good, good. I'm with you. How are you?

I'm excellent. It's quiet on my side, here. I got the quiet guys.

P: I'm tired man. I'm spent.

A: I am the quiet one.

It's nice that you've given yourself a boy band persona for HOSTAGE LIFE. (laughter). What I was saying was you've mentioned that you play a lot with the *Underground Operation* bands and the MARILYN'S VITAMINS collection CD was put out on that



LEFT TO RIGHT: John on guitar, Adam on guitar, and Eric transfixed on bass.

label. Is it fair to assume that you guys are part of that family of bands?

J: Not really.

C: I personally am friends with all those guys and stuff, but we're not on the label. We may never be. I don't really know how it would happen.

J: They let us play shows with them which is really nice of them...

C: ... and we might be on their next comp, but ...

E: Yeah everyone used to play in bands with each other constantly for years so it is really nice seeing all your old friends in new bands so that's a lot of fun.

Seems like there is a really vibrant scene happening around all those bands going on. Do you guys feel that you fit in exactly with what's going on with all those bands at all?

C: How do you mean?

There are different ways I could mean it.

E: Musically?

Anyway. You could say musically. Obviously socially you do.

C: Yeah, yeah.

E: We're better dressers, but... (laughter)

Those bands are really ass popular.

E: Yeah. "Ass popular". Well it seems that every band that was around when MARILYN'S VITAMINS, TIREKICKERS that whole old scene a couple of years ago was going on....

Simon: Could you say the *Raw Energy* scene?

E: Yeah the *Raw Energy* scene, yeah. Mr. Black, what's he doing these days? Apparently he's working at the Petro Canada.

Simon: No, he is doing very well. I am going to put a word in for him because he is a solid guy.

E: Actually when I was in high school I did a co-op at *Raw Energy* and that was a lot of fun. Drew from RANDOM KILLING would come by everyday with "presents" for us and that made working a whole lot more fun. It's cool seeing everyone in new bands again. It's a lot of fun. It seems like everyone is getting famous and signed now, like JERSEY got signed, good for them. It seems like everybody is getting record deals and doing very well, which is good and hopefully....

C: ...which is why we formed this band.

Yeah are you going to get a record deal Colin?

C: Yes.

E: Musically, I don't think we fit in with what's going on right now. It's a lot more complex things. They are really doing well and... like musically complex, more than us anyway.

P: There's the smart guys and then there's us.

This coming from the guy that is in a band called MATH.

Simon: Do you think that you exist in between scenes?

E: In between scenes?

Simon: Yeah. You maybe have a little more crossover between the scenes. I mean everyone is friends and everything but it seems like in this city there are kind of your more hardcore hardcore scene and then there is the *Underground Operations* thing is more like... I mean it is not like your shitty commercial pop punk, but it is a little more melodic indie rockish sort of thing and you guys play... it seems like musically you are maybe closer to the hardcore scene, but socially you tend to interact more with the sort of DIY pop punk crowd. Do you feel like it's an advantage or disadvantage?

J: We'll pretty much play anyone who lets us.

P: I think it's been an advantage because so far we get to play shows like those *Underground Operations* shows at

the Rockit Club and you know a couple of hundred people will show up and then those K-OS shows are awesome.

J: Those are fun.

P: Like hardcore shows with a floor stage kind of vibe is good. I just think it's really cool how so far we're able to do both of those things and it's not just one or the other. I guess it's an advantage.

And a lot more people hear your music that way, too.

P: Yeah true.

So what are the plans for the band now? I mean you came in here unrecorded.

C: In early October we are going to do our demo and it should hopefully be ready and we'll have CD-Rs by the end of October.

P: We are recording with Chris Hegge.

Ahhh Hegge rules.

Martin: Hegge, plug Audio Lab. He has recorded CAREER SUICIDE, FUCKED UP, and

NOTIME LEFT.

C: And everything we have heard come out of there sounds really good and he has a very reasonable rate because we are financially challenged.

And that's going to be a demo?

C: Yeah. Probably 5 or 6 songs.

P: I want him to break out that saxophone. We'll have to work on that.

I think that's pretty much it. Any closing comments, gentlemen?

C: Thank you.

E: Thanks for having us play.

A: I love you all.

P Tanx.

Tanx? There's an "H" in there, pal.

You can write HOSTAGE LIFE c/o John Elksnitis / 90 Church Street / Weston, ON / M9N 1N3.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Adam, Eric, Colin, John, and Paul (up front).



END OF THE CENTURY

"End of the Century: The Story of the RAMONES" is a new documentary film about the bruthas from Forest Hills, Queens. From CBGBs to the Rock 'N' Roll Hall of Fame, directors Jim Fields and Michael Gramaglia tell the untold tale of Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee, Tommy, and all the Ramones. The movie screened as part of Colin Geddes' Midnight Madness program at this year's Toronto International Film Festival. Gramaglia came by CIUT on Sunday September 7th, 2003, and spoke with Mark about the film.

So how did you get started on the film? You know the Ramones?

Yeah I knew all of them.

In the music financial end of it?

Yeah, somehow in the finances ... like we collected the royalties and things like that from the tour. So I knew all the stuff that was going on in the band. All the stuff that, basically, they never talked about. Whenever they did interviews they would always talk about their standard story, which included "All music sucked and then we came along and everything was great."

Yeah well they've had their party line and they've always stuck to it.

Right.

Even in the film a little bit Johnny Ramone is towing that party line.

Yeah, he is. In fact, if we interviewed him out of context, out of the chronological order of things it would have screwed him entirely. "Hey Mike your jumping around," you know what I mean. He would want to be very specific. It came about actually specifically that the RAMONES were going to retire and I was always a huge fan, but nothing was ever done on them and they were going... Johnny was proposing to Hilly Crystal – the owner of CBGBs – 5 nights at CBGBs. They would play five nights and the last night would be the last show for them. So I thought that would be great to basically film that and interview them and somehow create that documentary. That was back in '95.

Sort of a Last Waltz for the RAMONES.

Yeah, Last Bop or whatever. So we were going to

do something like that but then things happened like we didn't have any experience this is Jim and I, who Jim Fields is the co-director ... we had no experience really and we tried to bring it off. The R A M O N E S actually liked the idea that we had no experience and it was true to their credo so they were happy. They didn't care. But of course management gets involved and they wanted big names. Lawyers. So basically they asked me to write the proposal. I wrote it. And then the management took it and went somewhere else and tried to get name directors and they made something that eventually became "We're Outta

Here", which was, you know, terrible. So we were okay that it was terrible because we knew that the story still had to come out, so a few years later after the band had broken up and I would still talk to all the guys and I proposed it again to Johnny and he accepted it so I also proposed it to Joey and they were both like "Sure, see what you can do as long as it doesn't cost us anything." So that's basically how it started and that was about '98.

Alright, I was going to say you mentioned Jim Fields. Was it your concept to do the film and you brought Jim into it.



Michael Gramaglia, Co-Director of End of the Century.

Yeah, it was my idea.

I was watching the film and at one point, very early on in the beginning. All the RAMONES are talking about how they sort of came together and everyone says in the exact same way "Yeah, he was the only other guy that liked the STOOGES". I was thinking about how great it was that you two ... I heard a quote where it was "He was the only guy I knew from high school that knew anything about film and loved the RAMONES as much as I do". I really like how that came together. I could see how the band would appreciate that where you said it was true to their credo. I thought the parallel there was so strong. I thought it was amazing.

Right. And also they...

And your brother edited the film, as well?

Yeah my brother edited it along with Jim. They both edited the film. And in fact there are a lot of people from our high school that are in the credits. They helped us clear stuff. They all came in and were just crew members and that kind of stuff. So that was kind of like passing the torch in a way.

And being friends with the RAMONES that allowed you to get a lot of really good interviews and a lot of information that hadn't come to the surface before. I don't want to reveal too much of it, but how...was there problems interviewing them at all? Because a lot of the stuff hadn't been talked about. How did they co-operate with you?

Well they actually you know that was one of the things. Like some of the stuff that was revealed in the film was the condition that I would do the film. I wouldn't do the film if they were in the end not going to talk about this stuff that they never talked about. So it was very sensitive and it was very upsetting for a lot of members. It actually, what was proposed by Joey to Johnny to talk about this stuff. He said if he wants ... because he said I don't want to do this same white washed crap, you know I want to do the real story. He said "You tell Johnny if he is going to talk about this then I will do the film." And I think he felt that Johnny would never talk about it so I did call up Johnny and say he wants you to talk about this and Johnny paused for a minute and said "Okay". You know I think he thought that then Joey would never actually talk about it, you know what I mean because they were always

so obsessed with each other.

Did you even manage to interview Joey for the film?

No we didn't interview him.

He is obviously in the film a lot. We should point that out.

Yeah he is in the film.

You just didn't get to interview him.

No we didn't. That was a struggle in and of itself. He was the first one slated for the interviews and he was just so nervous about talking about this stuff that he would cancel and cancel and then he said interview everybody else





and then I'll talk. So we did that. Then he wanted to see everybody's interview. So we gave it to him, like idiots. So he saw some of the stuff that Marky said about him...

It's a RAMONES movie if you are going to say something about Joey you are going to have to play to him a little bit. So he saw some of the stuff that Marky said?

Yeah and Johnny, I guess he expected Johnny to say stuff, but Marky and he were battling at this point so Marky had said some bad things and so Joey was just like "Forget it. I don't want to be interviewed" and then essentially we re-interviewed Mark, but we really used the original interview. We just didn't use any of the garbage that Mark said.

Just because it was petty?

Yeah, you know it was a lot of hearsay and nonsense. And then he would just recant it all anyway when Joey asked him to drum on his solo album. All of a sudden they are friends again. So essentially Joey started to warm up to the project again and we cut some stuff together and showed it to him and he got real excited. Like he saw some of the Tommy in Forest Hills stuff...

Oh that stuff is amazing.

Yeah he loved that stuff. He really was excited and he saw the STOOGES. They loved the music brought into it. He was real excited about it. But then his health was declining and he was just waiting to feel better because he was very bloated and just weak from the chemo so he was sort of always wanting to do the interview and then he was coming back. Around December before he died, he was back. He sang at the Continental in New York with Marky drumming. Every year around Christmas he would do a show. And he sang and sounded the best I heard him in 16 years – since the early 80s. Because towards the end he sounded like an auctioneer, do you know what I mean? But he sounded like the early Joey. He was in full voice. It was amazing. We were very excited. He looked good and then two weeks later he broke his hip and from there ...

No interview and unfortunately he passed away.

Right.

And the film, you were worried that it might take a negative tone because you've got Dee Dee hooked on heroine, Joey is almost like a ghostly presence, just the way that you decided to show him not talking, but I don't think it was ... I mean did you try ... I guess

do you think the film is a downer at all?

I don't know. It is hard to say whether it is a downer or not. A lot of people who have seen it really love it and love it exactly the way it is. Even people like Wes Anderson. He has seen it and he loves it. He thinks it's perfect. It has got to be left the way it is. I don't think it is a downer really. Being one of the original RAMONES fans, the RAMONES were sort of dark characters. They talked about the dark side of American life. From "We're a Happy Family"

and all these kinds of lyrics and crazy dysfunctional family stuff. That's the way it was. It was only incredible because we thought it was an act and as I got to know more about them you saw that it was actually true and it was like "Wow". They wrote songs from actual experience, which we found out that they did. So it was kind of like, to me if it's a dark ending it's fitting with the RAMONES.

Did you ever consider trying to do a glossed over version? Tack a happily-ever-after on the end?

Well actually, less that. More it's concern that they still are a band that I love and they are still friends, but also I won't exploit them or make them look a certain way that maybe their fans aren't prepared to see because they come across as being that tight knit organization that "Us against the World" type of thing, which it really was anyway even though they hated each other. It was like a mafia kind of family where they will kill each other when they need to, but they also won't talk to the cops.

What I really like about the film is that it starts off great with the early part of the band where it is just struggling against... but the music is so terrific and everything that happened around them was pretty great despite the occasional pitfalls and then you have the stretch in the 80s where there is a lot of animosity, but in the end you really get the idea that these people did care about each other and were very close. I think the film is true to the band.

The band ... like Johnny Ramone's quote, on the back of our T-shirts (Michael's wife Pia stands up to show us the shirt) "It is a very dark movie. It's accurate. It left me disturbed." That's true and the band members said

that's the way it was.

It's like the first RAMONES album.

Yeah right.

Do you have anything special going on for your screening? Because I know that with Colin's Midnight Madness there is always a spectacle going on. Last year he had one of the guys from MC5 present for that film. Well we actually have Arturo Vega who was one of the original... I mean he wasn't a member, but he designed the logo and all the original t-shirts. It is his belt buckle on the back of the first album. He is thanked there. He has been the artistic advisor and lighting all along.

He is going to be there?

He is going to be there.

Is he selling t-shirts?

He would like to sell t-shirts. Apparently you can't sell them in the theatre, but we will work something out.

Maybe through a van outside.

Or through the studio here.

How has the film been received so far?

It's been crazy.

Aside from Johnny and Wes Anderson.

And Nicholas Cage. Crazy people like that. We showed it at *Slamdance* and it sold out and they added a third screening sold that out and then they bumped us up to the big room and sold that out and we sold out *Tribecca* and we sold out L.A. and ...

Will you be getting a distribution deal? Do you know anything yet?

Yeah we're getting there...but they should see it here because it is the director's cut.

And anyone who reads our zine could pick it up through a DVD release...

Yeah definitely. With extra material. And there is a great soundtrack that will come out of it... The DOLLS, the STOOGES, you know....

1910 FRUITGUM COMPANY

Important.

And "Psychotic Reaction" by The COUNT FIVE.

That's right.

A smile crossed my face when I heard that.

Good. Somebody got it.

Thanks again for coming into the studio, Michael.

Thank you.



Cave Stomp: In a reversal of evolution, Stooge brothers Asheton and the MC5's "Sonic" pass the punk rock torch on to the even more troglodyte Ramones—who never seemed to be bright enough not to burn themselves with it.

afro-punk

the rock n roll nigger experience

James Spooner, director of "Afropunk: The Rock 'N' Roll Nigger Experience" was in Toronto to present his film as part of the Planet Africa program at the Toronto International Film Festival. This interview was conducted by Mark Rodenhizer on Sunday September 7th, 2003.

James how are you?

Oh great. Thanks for having me.

How are you enjoying Toronto, sir?

Oh great. I mean I have only been here for a few hours and there is a lot of running around, but it's good.

So tell us a little about the film, just to start off so that people know what we are talking about here.

Well basically the film in a nutshell is about black identity and it's role in the punk scene.

Almost a little bit in the hardcore scene, specifically.

Oh yeah, it's punk hardcore, just the underground. Mostly dealing with punk and hardcore.

You grew up within the punk and hardcore scene.

Oh yeah, totally. It was my whole life.

So how did growing up in that scene... Basically, what made you decide to make this film?

At some point I dropped out and a few years after that I started coming to terms with a lot of realities about my life and dealing with my identity, my blackness, all this stuff and realizing how for all the politics the punk scene helped me with, between feminism and veganism and anarchism and every ism you could think of, issues of race really weren't dealt with and it pushed it aside and made it so that it didn't help me any and I think it actually hurt. So I wanted to make something that was a critique on the punk scene, but more specifically a critique on race relations in general and something that would help kids of colour who were trying to do something different within their community, both the black community and/or the punk community.

Yeah because you've sort of taken this film and you're trying to do a lot more with it. You're trying to do some kind of ...I don't know I guess you could call it outreach to the black punk community. What are you trying to accomplish through the film?

The first thing I want is discussion. I want the black community at large to realize that we are capable of everything and anything. We've been there and done that in just about every artform and that is my first and foremost goal is to make it more acceptable within the black community for us to be whatever it is that we want to be and not be pigeonholed into the white stereotype of what we are. Secondly, I am reaching out specifically to the punk kids through my website... there is a community board...

That's afropunk.com....

That's right. There is a great community board on there. There is some really hot discussions going on. Heated battles between different kids of colour. There is some white kids that are



James Spooner, Director of "Afro-punk".

definitely not on some ill racist stuff. They are just asking questions and this is the first time that a lot of people are able to speak freely, have open conversations on race. It just doesn't happen enough so this is the place where people can do that and hopefully just take the movie to the next level.

Yeah, the website, you have to include the white kids, too, "the honkeys"

as they are called on the site because it is important to the discussion.

Yeah well. Are you speaking specifically through any one?

Oh no. I'm not making any specific comment. I like that it was inclusive.

"there is no shortage of funky, flash, freaky black folks"

Okay, there was one particular hot topic where the white kid on it is continually called a honkey because that is what he put his name down as. His user name. I don't think anyone's actually trying to be derogatory.

I just found it a little funny, that's all.

Yeah, I see.

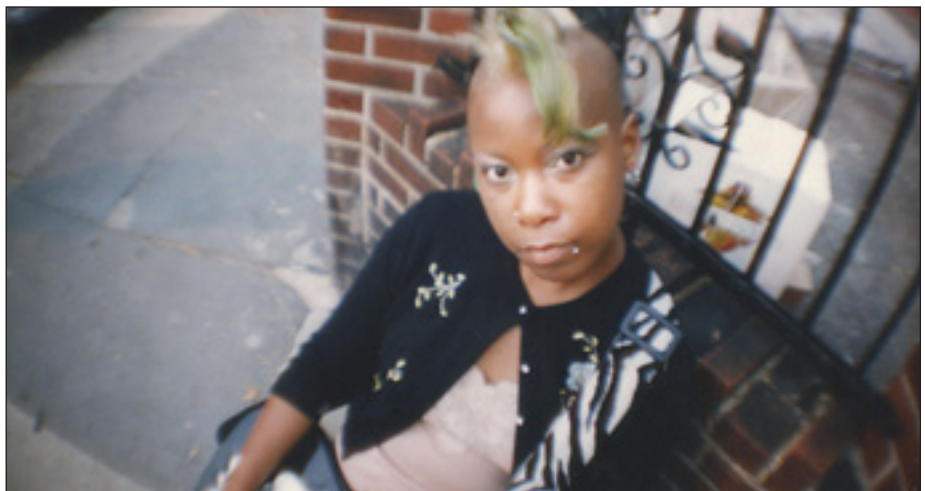
Part of what you are saying, I guess in some ways the film can be seen as an attack or a criticism on the punk scene, but one of the messages I find that you are trying to get across is that punk as a divide of rock n roll stems from...it's roots are in black music and black culture. And we have a problem here at our radio show where we have a week every year where... it's called "Black Out". It's all black music and African American centric and we are pre-empted for that. And I was wondering, as somebody who has made a film about black involvement in punk and hardcore what the reaction is towards punk as being "not black music"? Because I find the decision to not include punk and hardcore during this week is basically saying ...it's almost like that stereotype where black week is for urban music.

Oh I get what you're saying. I think that's completely ill. I would have some harsh words to say to your program director. Because the reality is that if you did some digging and it wouldn't really be a lot of digging if you talk to the right sources you could definitely fill up a few shows with black punk music. No problem.

The people who put us in touch with you they are telling us there is ORANGE 9mm in the film and there is this band and there is a hundred other bands and you'll probably know a lot more. And surely enough, I wait

until the end of the film where you tell everybody what bands and how everybody is involved and that's all stuff that we are very well aware of. We just finished a complete

set of music, just bands based on your film. Right on. I find out about more everyday. The list continues to go on. So there is no shortage of funky, flash, freaky black folks. There is no shortage, you know. That is really short sighted on your programmer's part for taking that



Tamar Kali whom use the punk aesthetic as a way of connecting with her roots. As a person with mohawk blood she feels closer with the fin.

decision.

I also just thought that of it more as a symptom of what people think about "What is Black Music", as well.

Yeah. I could get a coalition of people to write some letters if you want.

Yeah, well we'll discuss that later. There is one thing I wanted to mention and I didn't want to dwell on it but I know there has been a little bit of controversy about the full title of the film which is "Afropunk: The Rock n Roll Nigger Experience". There is a little bit of a backlash against your use of the term 'nigger' in the title and I was wondering what you were trying to accomplish. I don't find it entirely offensive, but I was wondering why you decided to use the term and maybe give the story for people who don't know as well.

It originally was a play on a PATTI SMITH song entitled "Rock 'n' Roll Nigger" where she basically says that because she is a feminist and a radical in the rock 'n' roll scene at the time she felt that she was a nigger. She was a nigger of the rock scene or something. And when I heard that it was completely ridiculous and offensive to me. I would never go around saying that I knew what it was like to be a woman or to be gay or to be any other marginalized group. I only know what it is like to be from my experience so that was one thing. But it went way farther than that. The point of the film is that all these kids are talking about how they really are feeling like the punk scene, like their families, everyone is treated them as



Mariko Jonez shows us how she made her mark in a primarily white scene.

quote/unquote "niggers".

Yeah well they really are the rock 'n' roll niggers.

Yeah, if you want to break it down like that and I have heard complaints because someone said "At no point in the film does anyone say: I was called a nigger" and that's the point. You don't have to be called a nigger to be treated as such. The film uses the word "nigger" as an adjective for the experience. I never use the word outside of the context of this film, but if I were to it

would be in an adjective form describing an experience, a mentality, etc. As a noun, I don't want to get all English major on you, but as a noun it *is* offensive because you are calling somebody something that has years and years of depth behind it. So I don't get mad or mind when people are upset by the initial reaction to the title. It is upsetting and race relations in general are upsetting so lets get upset and do something about it.

How has the reaction been to the film so far especially from kids? Are black kids in hardcore seeing this film and how are they reacting to it?

The kids who see it are really moved. In general everything has been really...like I have gotten everything that I wanted to get out of it. I could quit right now and just feel completely fulfilled. All the kids that I have touched... I get e-mails everyday from kids telling me their personal stories. It's wonderful.

Did you ever expect that kind of feedback?

I thought so because I was just telling my story and I knew that a lot of kids could relate to it. On the flipside, I have had people... black folks in the hardcore scene who it hits a little too close to home and they are not necessarily ready for it, so they are like I am attacking the white kids and this that and the other. And really I don't think anyone is spared. I think that it gives a harsh realistic discussion on race.

Oh yeah and you don't take it easy on the kids of colour either. Why don't you...when you see another black person at a show when there aren't many why don't you talk to them?

Exactly.

It's definitely an interesting discussion on race. People are going to want to see this film twice.

That has actually been the case. I sold out Chicago three shows. I was only scheduled for two but they put on another one because it sold out 5 hours before it even screened and I saw a lot of faces two or three times so it is a wonderful thing. I am completely overwhelmed.

Thank you very much for calling.

Thank you and for everyone out there check out afropunk.com. Register, put up your profile, put up your picture, show us what you look like.

Participate.

Yeah, let's keep this thing going.



HR of the BAD BRAINS at Hard Art Gallery in January 1980. This is the photo from the back of *Banned in DC* and I believe it was taken by Lucian Perkins.

Reviews

Reviewers are: Andy Stick, Motherfucker (ASM)
Mark Rodenhizer (MR) , Simon Harvey (SH),
and Stephe Perry (SP)

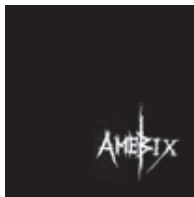
Addiction "Fuhai-Ningen No Gomi" ep

ADDITION are from Osaka. They are not part of the legendary crust sound. Instead they opt for a sound that is inspired more by the early Japanese art-punk scene. The ep opens up with a song that plods along like early GANG OF FOUR in that it is very percussion based. It even goes further to have a singer speaking the same words that the main singer is screaming. It reminds me of GANG OF FOUR's "Ether" or "At Home he's a Tourist" or much of that legendary first LP just in terms of vocal play. But ADDICTION do have more of a punk beat as opposed to the art groove rock sound that GANG OF FOUR emulated and was associated with bands like the TALKING HEADS. ADDICTION draw more on the pounding punk beat of ABURADAKO and the quirky nature that made up STALIN's sound. Drawing on old school sounds that haven't been revitalized into the latest hardcore trend – "A" for ingenuity. (MCR / 157 Kamiagu Maizuru / Kyoto 624-0913 / Japan) - SP



Amebix "Make Some Fucking Noise" CD

AMEBIX, if you didn't know, were a seminal English hardcore band pretty much responsible for the genre now known as crust. This is a live recording from 1986 (in Slovenia) and is of remarkably good quality, the mix is surprisingly even and the performance is tight. If you're a die hard AMEBIX fan, you'll want to pick this up. Personally speaking I've detested this band and any band even vaguely influenced by them for many a year now. Maybe it's because when I grew up in England, all the punks I knew used to ridicule my tastes and tell me I should listen to a 'real' band like AMEBIX (or worse, CRASS). Sure, I was into DISCHARGE, RUDIMENTARY PENI and ANTISECT, (which was tolerated), but out of the other British bands I liked my tastes were more in tune with DOCTOR AND THE CRIPPENS, HERESY, INTENSE DEGREE, RIPCORN and NAPALM DEATH. "Andy, why are you listening to that talentless fast crap? They just want to be Americans. America is evil, listen to AMEBIX instead." And I would be forced to listen to the gloomy, dire and dirgey sounds of AMEBIX moaning lifelessly about Largactyl (it's only paranoia) or one of their many songs that used pre-Christian imagery as some kind of metaphor for living in trees and eating apples, safe from the evils of capitalism (and American hardcore). I hate this band's tedious slop. I hate this band's music. I hate this band's lyrics. I especially hate this band's artwork and imagery and I could really live without another Japanese bands reinterpretation of their sound and aesthetic. Seriously, listening to this shit is like aversion therapy for me, it almost makes me want to curl up into a ball and whimper as scenes of depressing punk parties of years gone by parade through my mind. This band for me is forever linked with misery (not the equally bad Minneapolis band) and depression. Instant fun ruiner: AMEBIX. (P.O. Box 2087 / Main P.O. / Kingston, ON / K7L 5J8 / Canada / www.arsonrecords.com) - ASM



Civil Defense CD

The stats on this band are that they feature members of INTENT TO INJURE and a few nu metal type bands. The reality is some rough around the edges sounding early New York hardcore. The stuff that pre-dates AF or the fucking CRO MAGS. The singers sounds like the guy from URBAN WASTE. So much so that "Police Brutality" is stuck in my head after hearing the CD. Their music is the no bullshit attack practised by OUT COLD or LAST IN LINE. Borrowing their name from the F.U.'s, I get that the idea is to start up a no gimmicks style hardcore band. I don't think they can get away from the youth crew sound that pervades Boston area bands and helps to explain the ample use of back up vocals, which enhance the energy of this release. 6 fuckin tracks of youth crew inspired raw sounding hardcore. (Striving for Togetherness Records / SFT REC., Schlossparkstr. 5 / 95145 Oberkotzau / Germany) - SP



Clampdown "We Sure Won't Keep Quiet" CD

Have you ever wondered what Feargal Sharkey would sound like if he tried shouting ? Well wonder no more because the singer from CLAMPDOWN

sounds exactly like the crooner from the UNDERTONES. It's taking the guess work out of what the UNDERTONES would have sounded like as a punk band. But the music is more oi inspired. The songs sound a lot like the 4-SKINS, but played a little more tempered. The tempered approach suggests that the band might be straddling the oi-mod line. The guitars are slightly acoustic sounding and the bass lines are prominent. Do you remember how the bass lines in "One Law for Them" rolled out and moved the whole song along creating a feeling that trouble was brewing ? That's how CLAMPDOWN's material sounds. What should you expect though, there name comes from that classic CLASH song. As for background material, CLAMPDOWN are from Shiga City in Japan and this is their first release to my knowledge. (MCR / 157 Kamiagu Maizuru / Kyoto 624 / Japan) - SP



Final Blood Bath "Nothing of Reality" ep

This is the second ep from the DISCHARGE inspired 4-piece. The sound quality hints that this may be a live sound board tape, but the momentum of the record doesn't suffer from awkward in between song silences that live performances do. So this could be an intentional production quality. But FINAL BLOOD BATH have a muddy sound quality that their contemporaries DISCLOSE do not suffer from. The last song on side A "We Have Freedom" sounds like it is recorded from a different session and is the real standout. It picks up the pace where most of the other material plods along at a mid-tempo d-beat. Otherwise I would not have been able to figure out what speed this was to be played at. I have to admit that this ep is not as impressive as their debut "Dead or Alive", but fans of Japanese d-beat will be forgiving I'm sure. The dates on the recording sessions look close together, but there is something about the production that is off on their latest. (Paanklevyt / 1-4-9 TAS201 / Hatanaka / Niiza, Saitama, 352-0012 / Japan) - SP



Goat Shanty "Clearly Presp In" ep

All the song titles are numbers, similar to COMBATWOUNDEVETERAN. The disc is on clear vinyl – a DJs worst nightmare. But this puppy squeezes in 10 songs of GUYANA PUNCH LINE inspired mayhem. And it's the music that counts (pun intended). GOAT SHANTY play a twisted, chaotic style of hardcore that plays up on the complicated nature of their song structures. They kind of remind of PALATKA with their sense of short twisted songs. But they are played fast and chaotic the way EXCLAIM does. And the artwork is comprised of goat lore imagery reminiscent of SANGRAAL or CATTLE DECAPITATION. Sometimes GOAT SHANTY pull out some metal wanking parts in fleeting moments, for which the production can't sustain it. That is part of what makes this a hardcore record. (Out of Limits / P.O. Box 526 / Springvale, ME / 04083 / USA) - SP



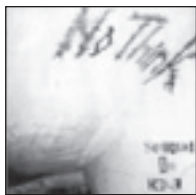
Molotov Cocktail "Once Upon a Time in America" CD

Holy Fuck. Where did this band come from ? I know very little about them and that is a mistake because their ability to write a great hardcore song is evidenced throughout the disc. Great speedy sounding hardcore with good amounts of snottiness directed at all the right targets. MOLOTOV COCKTAIL have been around since the 90's and have toured Europe six times. They have an ep on *Alternative Tentacles* and a full length out on *CBGB Records*. Where have I been ? But to try and get at their sound the band has been known to play with bands like TOXIC NARCOTIC, TWO MAN ADVANTAGE, the BOILS, and DEFIANCE. An unapologetic fury is how they have been described and and if I were to compare them to anybody it would be the snottiness of the CIRCLE JERKS coupled by the speed of BGK and the catchiness of MDC. Not a dud on here. If you like your hardcore fast and pissed off with a good sense of humour, MOLOTOV COCKTAIL are for you. And they have a four way split coming out with the GOONS, the PROFITS, and CAUSTIC CHRIST at the end of the year. Watch out. (Eastern Threat Records / 150 E 2nd Street #1A / NY, NY / 10009 / USA) - SP



No Think "Straight to Hell" ep

Whoa. *HG Fact* deliver a fresh dose of fastcore inspired power violence; A change from their Burning Spirits material they've specialized in lately. NO THINK take the sonic sheering sound of feedback familiar in the Osaka crust sound and adopt it to some cataclysmic sounding fastcore. If you took EXCLAIM and forced them to hang out with the DEFECTORS, new NO THINK is what you'd get. Sonically ear shredding with loads of back and forths both from the crust barkers up front and the speedy interchanges in song structure. I can't get over how good this is. At first it sounds like a disposable grind record until they kick into some tripping skate-core....and this is all layered with a leveling white noise. (HG Fact / 105 Nakano Shinbashi-M / 2-7-15 Yayoi-cho, Nakano, Tokyo / 164-0013 / Japan) - SP



Robot Has Werewolf Hand "The Endless" CD

This is the latest from ROBOT HAS WEREWOLF HAND who were on a temporary hiatus while Kristen went to Vietnam. She must be back and it doesn't sound like the band lied dormant. This full length is the ep taken to the next level - just as fast, just as furious, and all with slightly better production. You can really hear everything. So who are ROBOT HAS WEREWOLF HAND (RHWH) ? Justin is the guitarist for THEY LIVE. Steve is the drummer for THE CONTROL. They bring elements of power violence and fastcore to their sound in how fast they play. Kirsten and Dave are a vocal tag team that play off against each other in an ANTI-SCHISM like relay race. All elements of this band work in tandem to create speed and consequently you get a 15 song release that clocks in at 13 minutes. But RHWH don't fall into the trappings of the bands associated with speed. The drums have jazz syncopation against youth crew mosh breaks. And the guitar experiments with quirky stops and starts, emo strumming, and a style associated with bands like TH'NBRED or early VICTIM'S FAMILY. RHWH have really dragged this sound into the new millenium and have flown it through Buffalo filters. (Art of the Underground / 59 Custer Street / Buffalo, NY / 14214 / USA) - SP



the Shemps/To Hell and Back split 7"

Here's a doozy for ya! The SHEMAPS come out blazing with three humdingers that will slap you stooge-silly. *MRR* scribe Bill Florio does bass duties while (correct me if I'm wrong on this one), *Vice Magazine* henchman Artie Philie yelps along (would explain the good review in the otherwise scathing NYC-frog mag). Two writers might make you think these guys are a bunch of eggheads, but that sure ain't the case. These guys can write/play a rock 'n' roll song. Sample lyric "Girls they hate me/think I'm a cree/at least now I get plenty of sleep". I'll also award bonus points for correct spelling and usage of "laaffs". It would be totally unfair to mention anything comparable because the SHEMAPS just plain kick ass. After such inspired brilliance, it's a little hard to flip this record over and fairly rate TO HELL AND BACK (I recommend you check out Stephe's review of their demo a few issues back) who's heavy riff-rock functions as *rock* to the flipside's *roll*; competently played, but lacking energy. Nevertheless, a totally solid outing on both sides. (Gloom Records / P.O. Box 14253 / Albany, NY / 12212 / USA) - MR

rumourmill

Nate, the singer from DUDMAN, has moved back to the States. I am not sure what these means for DUDMAN but Daragh did an interview with him that we hope to run in an upcoming issue of the zine * CHARM has gotten back together. Remember that one sided ep that *Coalition* put out. Well it seems like the band's future is in jeopardy. Their drummer Ken is moving to New Zealand at the end of the year. Shitty * *Underground Operations* is working on a comp CD that will have bands from all over Canada, playing all kinds of punk rock, and a little metal * *Busted Heads* are about to re-locate from Umea to Stockholm * S.B.V., a band we featured in a demo feature two months back, have an ep and split ep and some songs coming out on "Histeria, #3" * *Town of Hardcore* zine has a comp. out with the new issue of the zine that features KNIFE FIGHT, THINK I CARE, MENTAL, SO BE IT, and HAYMAKER among others * Jim Munroe and the Perpetual Motion Roadshow will be speaking out west this December and Jim is working on a Time Management for Anarchists seminar * the new WARSQUAD 7" is out on *Punks Before Profit\$* * the BLACK EYES CLUB's version of "Lifeline" will be

appearing on a comp by *Deep Six* entitled "Unreality, Volume 1" and will also features tracks by STACK, SHANK, RAW POWER, SEEIN' RED, HELLNATION, OUR WAR, and HAWG JAW. The BLACK EYES CLUB will also have a split out with KENT BROCKMAN from Germany *

show listings

FRIDAY OCTOBER 24th @ Innis College - Film: The Exterminating Angel

Description: This is Luis Bunuel's strange and humorous attack on the upper classes in Mexico. After a dinner party the guests find a strange force will not let them leave. The party is so nice that they cannot bring themselves to leave. Soon it is clear something out of the ordinary is going on. People now want to leave, but cannot bring themselves to cross the threshold. Hours turn into days and food and water are running out. Still the guests are compelled by force or forces unknown to stay and continue the party. Soon sickness and death will follow if they cannot leave
- Punktoberfest 6! -

FRIDAY OCTOBER 24th @ Newmarket Youth Centre - DIRTY BIRD, THE NO NO's, ENDANGERED FECES, THE THROWAWAYS, SUBURBAN UNDERDOG, HANDS DOWN

SATURDAY OCTOBER 25th @ Newmarket Youth Centre - BRUISER BROADIE, MURDER SQUAD, EXCRETION, THE HEATSKORES, THE METAL EDDIES, THE LIVES OF MANY, AURORA SF
Toronto Anarchist Bookfair 2003

FRIDAY OCTOBER 24th

Guerilla Communications, curated by Marie-Eve Lamy

- * at Cinecycle, 129 Spadina Ave (down the lane)
- * doors open at 7 pm
- * BookfairVideoNight starts at 8 pm, \$3

Hissy Fitness, at 56 Kensington

- * after the videos on Friday night
- * with DJs Mi-nuh Care, Didi7, The Robotic Kid and Minus Smile
- * performance by K.O.T.V.
- * Jump and Thump and Pump it, \$2

SATURDAY OCTOBER 25th

- * Bookfair from 10 am to 4:30 pm, free admission
 - * 519 Church Street Community Centre, in downtown Toronto
 - * All-day giant puppet workshop by Paperfire Arts Collective
- Workshops during the bookfair on Saturday (Room 23)
- * 11 am Direct Action in the 21st Century (Ann Hansen)
 - * 1 pm Anarchy for Beginners (Terra, Green Anarchy)
 - * 3 pm What is the Anarchist Black Cross? (Montreal ABCF)

SUNDAY OCTOBER 26th

Workshops at 519 Church Street (no bookfair today)

demo features

So Be It demo - featured on September 21st program

SO BE IT are a 4-piece from the Massachusettes area. They look to be a straight edge band influenced by the some groove mosh style that MENTAL seem to be under. Al Quint described SO BE IT as very similar to THINK I CARE in terms of the singer's confrontational approach to live shows, but this doesn't really reflect in their sound. They are more like a cross between UNDERDOG meets AGNOSTIC FRONT meets the CRO MAGS. (25 Hyde Street / Winchendon, MA / 01475 / USA / e-mail: joemachete@hotmail.com) - SP

Wreckage "This is America" demo - featured on October 5th program

Wreckage tear through six songs of blitzspeed hardcore punk seemingly influenced by early POISON IDEA. Hard galloping drums and distorted guitars laced with constant wild guitar leads that remind me of Holland's AGENT ORANGE. Occasionally wreckage slow it down to break up this speedy noise, but this demo mostly obeys the 'loud fast rules' creed. Growled vocals that sometimes implode with inaudible barking but stand the test of the minute and a half blasts of WRECKAGE. (24-75 38th Street, #4b / Astoria, N.Y. / 11103 / USA) - SP



- * noon Bringing Down the Prison Industrial Complex (Womyn4Justice)
- * 2 pm Stop Huntington Animal Cruelty (USA)
- * 2 pm Palestine Update
- * 3:30 pm Anarchist Yoga (Lindsay)
- * 3:30 pm Against Civilization (Terra, Green Anarchy)
- * 3:30 pm Report-back from Detroit Anarchist People of Color

Conference and APOC caucus (Marika)

If you would like to billet someone from out of town at your house or volunteer during the bookfair please get in touch

contact: tab2003@zipclip.com

website: <http://ontario.indymedia.org>

SATURDAY OCTOBER 25th @ Club Rockit, 120 Church Street, \$5, all-ages - GFK (from Quebec City), Fly's Band, ZERO CONTENT (from New York City), FUCKED UP

SUNDAY OCTOBER 26th @ The Dungeon (Oshawa), \$6 at door, all ages, 8PM - BLOOD OF CHRIST, GOVERNMENTS FURY KILLS, LAPIDATE, SOUL LESS DIVINE

TUESDAY OCTOBER 28th @ Fun Haus (Shooting a video, admission \$26.66) - MISFITS, MALHAVOC

THURSDAY OCTOBER 30th @ Club Rockit - AGAINST ME

FRIDAY OCTOBER 31st @ Innis College - Film: Twin Peaks - Fire Walk With Me

FRIDAY OCTOBER 31st @ the Royal, 9:45pm - Film: Mr. Vampire 3
Description: Where do Chinese vampires come from? Fanghai! Weren't among the 300 folks who saw last year's screening of the original Mr. Vampire? Fear Not! Part 3 is a new spooky tale not linked to the first, but has more action, comedy and horror than the original. A charlatan Taoist priest is using two good spirits to fake exorcisms, but he runs into trouble when he takes refuge in a village suffering from raids by a group of evil bandits using black magic. The late Lam Ching Ying plays the titular one-eyebrow priest, who is organizing the village resistance, in the role he will always be remembered for as one of the classic characters of Hong Kong cinema. Superbly choreographed action scenes with lots of wires, magic and kung fu. Meet the fantastic inhabitants of the Chinese spirit world: ghosts, vampires, a nasty witch, imps, preists, a good couple of possessed morticians, a giant chicken and a variety of other phantoms. Free magical maggots to the first 50 people.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 31st @ Ania's Café (627 Queen Street W) - FUCKNUCKLES, BUNCHOFUCKINGOOFS, THE TERRORISTS, KROTCH WROTT, PSYCHOACTIVATE

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1st @ Clinton's - LA FRACTION (from France), BORN DEAD ICONS (from Mtl), IMPULSE ITEMS (from San Francisco), CURSED, CAREER SUICIDE

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5th @ Zen Lounge - STRIKE ANYWHERE

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 7th @ Innis College - Film: Casanova (Fellini's Casanova)

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 7th @ Clinton's - RIOT99, FUCKED UP, CAREER SUICIDE, ACTION, HOSTAGE LIFE
"Vans off the Wall" tour

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8th @ Xtreme Wheels Indoor Skate Park (Buffalo) - THE SUICIDE MACHINES, AVENGED SEVENFOLD, THE UNSEEN, WESTERN WASTE

MONDAY NOVEMBER 10th @ Kool Haus - DROPKICK MURPHYS

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14th @ Lee's Palace - DIRT BOMBS, the SIGHTS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15th @ Club Rockit - BELVEDERE, CLOSET MONSTER, NITROMINDS

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 16th @ The Tranzac (Bloor and Brunswick) - INEPSY (from Mtl), HELLBOUND (from Mtl), MURDERSQUAD T.O.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17th @ The Funhaus - DEICIDE, HATE ETERNAL, KRISIUN, CATTLE DECAPITATION

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17th @ Phoenix - LE TIGRE, LESBIANS ON ECSTASY, LES GEORGES LENINGRAD

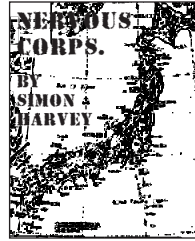
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 21st @ The Funhaus - RANCID, ROGER MERIT AND THE DISASTERS, TIGER ARMY

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 27th @ Arrow Hall (Mississauga) - DEFTONES, THURSDAY, THRICE

THURSDAY DECEMBER 4th @ the Royal, 9:00pm - Film: Second Chance - A film from 1950 with Hugh Beaumont ("Ward" from Leave it to Beaver), and includes a "bouncing ball hymn sing" at the beginning and end of the film. Plus there will be a reel of vintage Ronald Regan commercials and bloopers from his B-Movies. Sound interesting?

columns

Konnichiwa punks, and welcome to the first instalment of Nervous Corps, a new column dedicated to providing the discriminating hardcore fan with a monthly overview of the latest hardcore, punk and garage releases from Japan, home of the consistently finest punk rock in the world. While we in the west often speak of "Japanese hardcore" as a single genre, it's crucial to keep in mind that this is a country of 130 million people boasting the second largest economy in the world and probably the greatest single concentration of diehard punks and killer bands on earth. Subsequently, the Japanese have been churning out countless quality releases in every punk subgenre imaginable, and we aim to cover as many of these as is possible. With that in mind, we'll kick off the column with an overview of several quite different Japcore releases this month.



First across my desk is the latest CD from Tokyo's DUDOOS. "Kogidaso! Shura-shu-shun!" is brought to us by veteran American label *Sound Pollution*, but it verges sharply away from the high-powered thrash and Swedish-style hardcore usually associated with that label, delivering instead an incredibly goofy but entirely infectious brand of frantic, hyper-melodic pop-punk that strongly recalls the TOY DOLLS, early DICKIES and Finland's KLAMYDIA. I know it's tough in this the age of BLINK 182, fratpunk and the Warped Tour, but don't let that discredited "pop-punk" tag scare you off for a second—this is a great release, packed with energy and hooks you'll be humming for weeks, and the overall sound is sometimes so completely absurd that it literally had me laughing out loud as I listened. (Sound Pollution / P.O. Box 17742 / Covington, KY / 41017 / USA)

In direct contrast to the DUDOOS keyboard-laden insanity, Japanese label *FAR* comes out swinging with a split CD of vicious thrash from DUDMAN and TERRIBLE HEADACHE, each of whom complete eschew any melody whatsoever in favour of a relentless hardcore onslaught. DUDMAN's eight tracks display a serious early *Slap-a-ham*/power violence influence, their blinding speed fortified by sick, distorted bass and barked vocals, while TERRIBLE HEADACHE's four tracks are slightly more traditional; the speed is not quite so extreme, there are some nice atonal leads and one can clearly detect nods to DISCHARGE and earlier hardcore in general, which definitely makes them my favourite here. As with most Japanese releases, great raw but full, powerful production really helps bring out the ferocity that often doesn't come across in records by bands playing this style. Recommended for fans of hardcore's most tuneless incarnations. (FAR c/o Yusuke Adachi / 1-9-39 Shimizugaoka / Fuchu Tokyo / 183-0015 Japan)

Taking the concept of influence to a ridiculous extent, DISCLOSE never fail to impress with their seemingly endless stream of releases all paying homage to the greatest hardcore band of all time, Discharge, and "The sound of disaster", their recent cassette-only release on *Game of the Arseholes*, is no let-down at all. Only four songs this time, and the slightly more metallic songs betray a continuation of the band's gradual move into BROKEN BONES territory, but this is nonetheless one of the best things I've ever heard them do. The usual howling, merciless wall of sound, relentless d-beat and chainsaw guitars fuelling a sound that is, to my mind, about as pure a distillation of what raw hardcore punk should be as I've ever heard. This might end up surfacing as a Brazilian EP at some point, but in the meantime, avoid disappointment by writing Stuart and getting yourself a copy of this appropriately-titled pro-printed cassette post haste. (GOTA c/o Stuart / P.O. Box 511 / Whippany, NJ / 07981-0511 / USA)



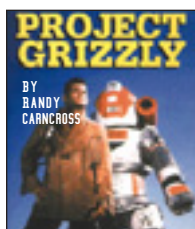
DISCLOSE, taken from *Inferno Punk*.

One particularly impressive aspect of the Japanese punk scene is the sheer tenacity and endurance of the bands, many of whom continue to record and play out for years past the usual lifespan of comparable western outfits, who virtually never manage to survive past a couple of records without resorting to indie rock or cheap heavy metal. The result of this

tendency is reflected to great effect in the tightness and skill that defines top-notch Japcore, and "Squeeze state", the latest CD from Nippon powerhouse ZONE, serves to illustrate the point nicely. ZONE have been putting out records for a good decade now, and this new effort is consequently a killer slab of state of the art Japanese hardcore circa 2003. Clearly made without regard for hardcore's various fads and trends, "Squeeze state" is simply a very good, solid and straight-forward hardcore punk record, the punishing rhythm section maintaining a constant driving tempo that never slips into monotonous thrash while the guitar adds slight melodic inflections and sharp, skilful leads that flavour the buzzsaw attack without any gratuitous concessions to metal or wimpiness. The angry vocals are rough but coherent, and the production is burly and heavy but not remotely slick. Yet another superb release from what might well be the best hardcore label in the world. (HG Fact/105 Nakano Shinbashi-M, 2-7-15 Yayoi-Cho/Nakano, Tokyo/164-0013 Japan)

The final record we'll cover this month is another *HG Fact* release, a 7" EP from the curiously-named MIDNIGHT RESURRECTOR. "Solid solutions" is a six-song blast of furious heavy hardcore that exerts a distinct NYHC feel in the tough sound and awkward, rap-inspired slang of the lyrics, but the delivery is easily fast and raw enough to avoid any tepid new school comparisons — really hard vocals, violent breakdowns and a thick battering-ram production really highlight this band's power and rage. (HG Fact)

Randy Carncross of PROJECT GRIZZLY has just moved to Japan to teach English. He has also been able to see loads of shows. Here are some of his reports since moving there....



Report: Sunday August 31st

I went to the CORRUPTED/UNHOLY GRAVE/GO DIE/MAGGUT show last night. MAGGUT was decent. They were a bit sloppy and some parts sounded awkward. I think with time though, they will be a solid grind band. GO DIE played next...holy shit this band blew me away. Brutal Grind. The drummer was solid, totally kick ass blasts (fast and hard!). And the singer was intense. Next up was CORRUPTED. I am not a huge fan of this band

recorded, at least what I have heard of them so far. But live...Damn. They were sooo loud and so amazing. I was really impressed. I may have to pick up the latest CD they put out. Last was UNHOLY GRAVE. I know a lot of people bitch about this band because they put out so many records. Again, I was never a huge fan of them recorded, but live...they ripped! Energetic, fast and brutal! They definitely got me moving. Which in turn got me "noticed" of sorts. The singer of GO DIE talked to me afterwards (his english was amazing...I feel like such a jackass. I still can't hold at least a small conversation in Japanese other than introducing myself). But I gave him my e-mail address and he said he would be in contact so I could get a demo. I guess the guitarist from GO DIE lives near me, as well.

Report: Sunday September 7th

Anyway...Sunday was a total uplifter. I met up with Kevin (originally from New Zealand, now living in Kobe) and he is one solid dude. We walked around Umeda, hit up a few record shops (where I spent more money on records!), ate some sushi (he is vegan, so now I have someone to help me find veggie friendly foods) and headed off the to RAZORS EDGE / IDOL PUNCH show. The 1st two bands were...I can't say bad, but they weren't my style. Poppy and even a bit of ska sneaking into the second bands set. Ah well. RAZORS EDGE played third. They ripped through 15 or so songs and it was intense! I must say though, the kids in Japan do not understand the circle pit concept! That was a surprise to me, as bands like RAZORS EDGE seem to push that idea. It still felt great to be able to sing along and such. Last IDOL PUNCH played. They were quite good. Raging, brutal and chaotic fast HC. They were full of energy and full of laughs (none of which I understood of course) and the guitarist did rock



RAZORS EDGE from their website taken by Takakura

out in a woman's g-string. Revealing to say the least.

Report: September 15th, 2003

Saturday Kevin and I headed back to Osaka and met up with the guys in the band HURRICANE. Totally awesome dudes. The drummer is also in CHAINSAW. We sat around and talked for a bit, then went to the show at Shinkugura (HURRICANE, EXCLAIM, CHARM, HISATAKA, A PIECE OF SHIT, etc). The show raged! CHARM is by far one of the most intense bands I have ever seen live. EXCLAIM thrashed out pretty hard (rockin a JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS cover) and HISATAKA was a pleasant surprise (having never heard of this band before, I left the show with their 7"...they definitely had their shit together). After the show, we stayed for the after party (I guess this is a typical thing for Japanese HC bands). I talked to a bunch of rad people and Kevin and I found a 3rd member for the band we're working on getting started. Now all we need is a drummer. After the party, since the trains had stopped running already, we walked from Namba/Shinshibashi back to my place and crashed out. The next day, I decided to go to the show at Bears (FRAMTID, NATIONSTATE, COA, EYE). I wasn't too into COA



FRAMTID 2001, taken from Inferno Punx.

and EYE, though both bands rocked out pretty hard. FRAMTID and NATIONSTATE definitely stole the show. The drummer of FRAMTID was insane!! This dude hit as hard as Blake Ellman (old drummer of THEY LIVE/NO TIME LEFT) and was technically better than Joe Time Left!! Seriously, an amazing drummer. And NATIONSTATE was a brutal crust band with dual female vocals (these girls were total ragers! The one girl was half my size but belted out vocals more brutal than most grind singers I have seen). This band had so much energy. I look forward to hearing more from them! At the show I saw a few people I have already made friends with (Jun of Godie and Mike Foster, english teacher than has been in Japan for about 5 years). Mike brought his daughter and she was the hit of the show!. It was hilarious seeing the singer of WARHEAD playing with her. Words can't describe it. Seriously one of the funniest things I have ever seen. This old ass hard as nails, you put a camera in my face while my band is playing and I'll smash it and you, punk dude being all silly and playing with a 7 year old.

September 29th Report

I saw the FUTURES on the 18th. Man, let me tell you, their singer is the most energetic, entertaining front man I have ever seen. He was all over the place and just going off. They played second out of a four band show. I wasn't too into the other bands, but I got in for free, so I'm not complaining. The first band was FLASH LIGHT EXPERIENCE. They were a typical indie/mosh band. They did have some screamy parts. And even though they weren't my cup of tea...they were at least good at what they were doing. Third was ENVY. Now, most everyone at the show was all about this band. While I felt they were solid technically...they bored me to death. They played for about an hour. They are screamo with a bit of a doomy feel to it. I don't know. Again, just not my thing. Last was YAGE from Germany. They were solid technically speaking as well, and had a lot of energy, but I just cant get into screamo HC. And they were really nice dudes. **Saturday (the 27th)** I went to see CORRUPTED / ZOE / REVOLT and DISTURB. First was DISTURB. A typical crustcore band. Blazing D-beats, gruff vocals and solid songs. The only draw back of this band was the singer all played guitar. I find this takes away from the bands energy live. I was still into it. 2nd was CORRUPTED. Again, this band crushed me. They played four songs and just leveled the place. Loud as hell, slow grooving sludge (with a hint of stoner rock). I snagged some pictures. Hopefully they turn up in *SF&L* at some point(!) 3rd was ZOE...Man o man...I thought I was in a time warp. This band was a combo of WHIPLASH and old METALLICA with some punk rock thrown in the mix. Total metal vocals, thrashing fast parts, and awesome sing alongs. They have a few releases I may have to check out. Last was REVOLT. They were slower paced death metally/crust core (can that really be mixed?). And they had the best bassist ever!! He wasn't the most talented...but he was totally black metal (his face painted, all the crazy arm gear and HE HAD A SWORD!!!). They were decent. Nothing too ground breaking, but still a nice way to end the night.

label profile

Florian Helmchen of Heartfirst Records was interviewed on April 2nd, 2003 while visiting Japan. Florian has been active in the German hardcore scene in one capacity or another for quite some time and this interview attempts to trace some of that involvement. Many thanks to the kind people at Boy Records in Tokyo for letting us conduct the interview in their store! Interview by Daragh Hayes for Equalizing Distort Radio.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Daragh, the interviewer and Florian of Heart First (the interviewee).

This is coming to you from Boy Records in Tokyo. In case you were wondering why you heard that last set of music – CONCRETE SOX, CHAOS UK, HERESY, POISON GIRLS, and CHUMBABWAMBA, it's because it was as a result of seeing those bands gig in Berlin in '87 that I met this man, Florian from Heart First Records in Germany. Do you want to say hello?

Hello.

Basically Florian is someone I met back then. I met him again in '88, and again while on tour in '91, and as luck would have it ran into him again here recently in Japan. So Florian, I want to ask you about your involvement in punk and hardcore. At that time ('87) you were already playing in SQUANDERED MESSAGE and you were already doing the zine *Bonzen*. How did that involvement start up for you?

Well if you start listening to hardcore, and I have been listening to hardcore and I've been listening to hardcore since sometime since '79, first you try to find stuff that is interesting to you. You buy records but you are not necessarily ready to go to gigs. I really didn't go to gigs until '83 and then you start meeting people and then you want to do things with them. So from '85 I started to do *Bonzen* fanzine with some friends of mine, which turned out to be one of the biggest fanzines at that time in Germany for punk rock.

Now it was quite unique in terms of layout and also some of the coverage. What were your goals when you started? Was the plan to do something that different or . . . ?

Yeah the plan was to . . . There were two versions of *Bonzen* fanzine. One was from '81 and I was not involved with that. Then there was *Bonzen* fanzine, phase 2, that started in '85 with new people. There was only one guy who was the main guy behind the first version of it who started it again with new people. And I was one of those new people. So the idea behind it was to create an alternative to the then upcoming hardcore magazines which would have clean layout and be professional looking. So we wanted to do a fanzine that was a little, not so consumer friendly, but you had to make an effort to read it so that's why the layout was a little weird. It was like A3. I don't know how that translates to...it was big. No, no, it was big. Bigger than 11" x 17" easily and quite hefty as well. It must have been murder to mail.

Yeah it was stapled together at the top so it was kind of like a calendar and you had to turn it around while reading it because the layout was in all directions. So when you started reading it and you turned it once you didn't know which way you had to go on or you might have gone back a few pages, so people would have to take some time to read it and it shouldn't be so easy to digest. That was the idea for the layout and it was also the same for the content. Our idea was to really hype things that we liked or to totally put down things that we did not like or that were trendy at the time. We would just try to butcher things that we didn't like.

Well I remember SUICIDAL TENDENCIES got quite a thrashing in an issue or two of *Bonzen*. Was there ever any backlash for some of the criticism that you threw out at bands? How was the reaction in general?

No, not really because most bands were international bands so they couldn't

read the thing and those bands we wouldn't interview them but we absolutely didn't like them. In the case of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES we just had a friend of ours, I think it was '86 or '87 on their first tour when they were already two metal for us, go and see them in Hamburg and write a gig review and we didn't take pictures from that show so we just used an old SKREWDRIVER live picture and put bandanas on them. That's the picture we used and of course nobody knew that old SKREWDRIVER picture, but we did so that was cool enough and because they were kind of fat by that time. I guess they were always fat even in '82 or '83 we kind of made it look like we put in a weight watcher ad that would have SUICIDAL TENDENCIES in it. That kind of stupid humour was what we were after. But SUICIDAL TENDENCIES never saw it so they didn't really complain. There was some people like the guy who runs *Nuclear Blast Records*, which is now quite a big label, but he used to be a smaller hardcore label, if you want to call it that. He was complaining that he would always get bad reviews from us and call us up and moan, but now he doesn't care anymore. He is a millionaire. That's fine. He went onto other things. And we're still doing shitty little punk things. So it's fair enough.

Ultimately, what year did *Bonzen* stop? Did it stop around '88 or so? '89.

'89. Okay and what were the reasons you decided to stop the fanzine at that point?

It was a mix of reasons. I think we did five versions of the new fanzine after '85 so it was not a regular thing. That's another thing. Magazines would come out bi-monthly and we said we don't want to have a schedule like that. We just wanted to put it out when we feel like it's ready so there is a last issue that got quite far. We had RKL, FUGAZI interviews from the first tour, stuff like that, but we were just too lazy to type it all down from the tape and also at that time the old '80's DIY punk scene in Berlin pretty much collapsed. Like all the bands split up so we just thought it was not really worth it anymore. So we didn't put that out. We had a lot of work put in it already but we never finished it. A lot of artwork, there were articles written, there were those interviews that we kept saying we will do it and we just never did it.

At that time, as well, I guess to a certain extent magazines like *Trust* and *ZAP* were already real well established. So did you feel that there was no longer a void to fill in that regard?

These were the magazines that we wanted to be an alternative to so that was not the reason. They were established but we kind of liked them in a way, but we knew the people too and they were good if you wanted to read record reviews and have regular show listings because they came out on schedule every two months so that made sense to have them, but we didn't like some sickness to some parts that they had. Not really slick by today's standards, but we thought that was not punk enough so we tried to have an alternative to that. That was definitely not the reason. We should have kept it going but we didn't.

About SQUANDERED MESSAGE, the band you played bass with, and actually you know what is interesting is the first time I heard SQUANDERED MESSAGE it was on a tape comp put out by a friend Spencer Mak in Canada. Had you been in touch with him?

Probably. I don't remember the name though. I remember doing some tape comp layouts taping some stuff for people, but never getting the compilation...

Ahhhh, Spencer!

So I am not really sure if the stuff actually came out. It's great to hear if it did.

Where would you say SQUANDERED MESSAGE fit in with the overall Berlin punk scene at the time?

There were various phases of SQUANDERED MESSAGE. The most important phase I would say was the phase before I joined. (laughter) Like the first LP. If you ever see a SQUANDERED MESSAGE LP it either has a black and white cover – that's a good one. You should get it. It's good Euro hardcore from the 80's. And there is a coloured one which I play on and wrote a lot of the songs. That's crap, I think. The recording is not good and I don't like the vocals. So the band fits in with harsher '85-'86 Berlin bands like COMBAT NOT CONFORM, NO ALLEGIANCE, other bands that no normal person has heard of. Bands that are pretty much forgotten, even in Berlin these days, except for some people. So we kind of fit in there. We played with those bands and we toured a little more than most of the bands toured at that time. We even made it to England. We toured with GENERIC in England. That was the last thing we did before we split up in '89.

Now you mentioned at one point there was almost a chance that you were going to go to North America. Is that correct or....there



was some tour that you said that was cancelled. Something didn't happen or?

No. Not for SQUANDERED MESSAGE. NO ALLEGIANCE went to North America. They had their tour screwed up so they ended up playing some shows on the east coast, I think, maybe with AGNOSTIC FRONT, but that was the only Berlin band that ever made it to North America.

I think at that time the only German bands that I know of that went over were bands like KGB and that was as a result of their friendship with TOXIC REASONS so they went over once or twice, but at that time even bands that had a real sort of American hardcore sound like the SPERMBIRDS for example, they weren't even that well known in the States at all.

The SPERMBIRDS had records out in the U.S. so they might have toured but at that time very few European bands toured. Some bands like RAW POWER, RIISTETY, whatever they were called at the time, they did one tour maybe or two in the case of RAW POWER, but that was it. German bands were never that popular in the U.S. with very few exceptions.

I want to ask you a bit about the label *Heart First* next. So when you started the label the goal was to do a 7" only label. Again, what was some of the inspiration for taking that approach?

The idea behind the label was in 1990, or maybe a little before that because you get the idea before you actually start. As I said before the band – SQUANDERED MESSAGE – split up in '89 as did a lot of other good bands from Berlin around that time. The scene pretty much collapsed because people wanted to play more rock oriented stuff like JINGO DE LUNCH who were quite good, but there were other – at least in the beginning – there were other bands that tried to copy the JINGO DE LUNCH approach. It sucked. So people wanted to rock out basically and there were no good hardcore bands left anymore. The people that you could agree on for a style to play were not there anymore so I didn't have a band anymore. The fanzine had stopped so what can you do? So I decided why not do a label and for some reason I started putting out Japanese bands in the beginning because there was a friend of mine from England who moved to Tokyo and he was friends with all these people. People like Erica who happens to run this record store where we are now. And there were some bands and they were kind of new and they were different then the older Japanese bands and they were looking for a label so I thought well maybe we should give it a shot. And another reason was I was living together with a friend of mine who was also doing *Bonzen* fanzine and there was also *Bonzen Records* and I knew he would not be interested in those bands that asked us, originally asked him, if he wanted to put them out and he wouldn't so I said "Yeah why not do it?" And I wanted to do it 7" only because I think that the 7" format is the true hardcore punk format. It's 10 minutes of music and that's enough before it gets boring. So I think it is just the best format for hardcore punk. They were fairly cheap to manufacture. That has changed in the last 20 years but I still think it's the way to go – the 7" format.

In the intervening years you have made a switch over to doing some CD releases. So what were some of the factors in making that decision? And I think you had sort of, when you first made that switch, you also issued a statement with a lot of the releases talking about the economics of CD releases versus 7"s and how one was going to help fund the other.

All the CDs I have put out have only songs off the 7"s and they are on an easy to digest format for those people who don't have record players anymore, because some places like Japan there was a strong tendency that people wouldn't have record players anymore. Vinyl has made a comeback in the 90's in certain styles of music and also some of the Canadian bands. They were getting kind of popular in Germany so it made sense to put some of the songs on CDs at that time because the bands were also touring. Looking back I probably would not do it again because I am not a big fan of CDs, but they are fairly cheap to manufacture and they can help you break even.

With regards to the Canadian bands, how did you end up....what was the connection? How did that develop that relationship with



Florian at *Boy Records* in Tokyo, the location of this interview.

bands like STRAIN, SPARKMARKER, and BRAND NEW UNIT?

I got in touch with those people with Eric who used to be in FRATRICIDE, who is an old timer in Vancouver and it just went from there because he told me he had this new band. And I think at that time, in the early 90's, they knew Ron from *Overkill Records* because he was the label from Seattle where they used to play at that time so they were talking about releasing some stuff. So Ron would release a record on *Overkill Records* and they asked me if I wanted to put out something from Canada, and so that was the first STRAIN 7". And they kind of liked it I guess and so I kept releasing some stuff that they recorded and because they were

friends with bands like SPARKMARKER and BRAND NEW UNIT, this whole Vancouver scene at the time. So it made sense that I met those other people, get friends with them and kept on releasing stuff with them because to me it is important to have a personal level with the bands. So I went to Vancouver in the early 90's and met all those people so I knew who they were and I had seen them live before I put them out. Yeah, it went from there and even though those people don't have bands anymore or a lot of them don't have bands anymore I am still friends with them and I am glad I met all those people.

Yeah, see I used to write Dan from FRATRICIDE, but I have no idea what he's doing.

I met him in the mid 90's.

Speaking of Canadian bands you have a new release coming out from Montreal.

Yeah it's another Canadian band coming out on *Heart First* and this time it's BORN DEAD ICONS, who are big fans of my Norwegian releases so they asked me if I wanted to put out a record with them. It was one of the first things that we spoke about when I met them on their first European tour. I saw them five times and we hung out and we played kicka together or fussball as some people call it...

...table soccer...

They are getting there. They are not great with some training from me they will get better. So this is the trade off, they play lots of fussball on this tour and they can probably kick most other North American bands ass at fussball or kicka. I like to call it kicka. I think it's called kicka in Canada and fussball in the U.S. Is that true?

You know, I don't know!

It is an important thing to talk about. Anyways, so they were fans of some of the Norwegian bands that I had put out like KORT PROSESS so they asked me if I would be into doing a 7" with them and I said "Hell Yeah." Because they are really nice people and they are a great band and it's a great record as it turned out to be.

You have a lot of Norwegian hardcore on your label. Why that particular affinity for that scene or those bands? You mentioned for example that some of the key people from the Norwegian scene at a certain point, for example Gunnar from SO MUCH HATE, he's in Germany now as well as a few other people. How did that connection develop?

I think Norwegian hardcore is totally underrated compared to Swedish hardcore, which everybody knows, and Finnish hardcore to a certain extent. When you talk about Scandinavia most people are talking about Sweden. But Swedish bands in the 80's they never really toured much while Norwegian bands were touring their asses off. Bands like SO MUCH HATE and LIFE BUT HOW TO LIVE IT? Those were the main bands that toured a lot at that time. Also WITHIN RANGE, STENGTE DØRER. So you would see those band all the time and they were just such amazing people and I went to Oslo a couple of times in the mid late 80's to meet all these people. And I think Oslo in the mid 80's must have been the best hardcore punk scene you could imagine so I became friends with these people, but they had other labels so I tried to keep up this tradition by releasing bands that came in the early 90's that were influenced by those great old Norwegian bands that I liked and since I knew those other bands personally I just kept on putting out their releases. Bands like KORT PROSESS, ANGST, ALLTID JAGET,



TOP: Florain and Erica of Boy Records, INSET: Florain and Erica in a park. BELOW: Florain holds espouses his secret love for metal.

that are kind of influenced by those great old bands. Unfortunately, these days, after the late 90's things have gotten really quiet in Norway so there are not so many good bands going on now. I mean hardcore bands. I am not talking about rock-ish bands like GLUECIFER or TURBONEGRO. Of course these bands receive a lot of hype in North America. Some justified like TURBONEGRO I think, some not so justified like GLUECIFER. So people know about those bands and then there are all those ridiculous straight edge bands from Oslo like SPORTSWEAR but to me that is not really hardcore so I try to put out some old style Norwegian hardcore.

What's interesting is that a few times I've seen graphics from old Norwegian bands being used here in Tokyo from this band CRUCIAL SECTION because some of those guys are real fans of SO MUCH HATE and KORT PROSESS and things like that. Actually I gave the guitarist my SO MUCH HATE t-shirt and he sort of freaked out so some people remember.

That's funny all these people have old connections. I am really glad that people remember it. There is probably more people in Tokyo right now that still appreciate bands like SO MUCH HATE then in some parts of Germany because they were really touring a lot back in the day and I was fortunate enough to see GREEN DAY open up for SO MUCH HATE in Hamburg and not many people were so impressed by GREEN DAY. SO MUCH HATE had a great show. It was always a big party when they played because they played in Hamburg so many times and so we were just friends from their first tour in '86.

So what was actually interesting is this is another Canada connection, that SO MUCH HATE – IGNITION tour was originally supposed to be SONS OF ISHMAEL and SONS OF ISHMAEL couldn't do it. This is years before I was in SONS OF ISHMAEL, but basically SO MUCH HATE had contacted SONS OF ISHMAEL said would you be interested in doing a tour. SONS OF ISHMAEL said "Yeah, sure of course." They came back from their North American tour to find that it had been set up and they are waiting for them and they said "Wait a minute". The singer Tim was going to go to school, Ditch Dog was getting married and so in the lieu of that IGNITION from DC had their European tour.

Back to school and getting married – how punk rock is that ?

Well ? (laughter) Not very. It's debatable. Actually going back to school has happened to me.

I am sorry. I promote going back to school.

So more recently you put out some other 7"s, for example SUPERFAN, and it came out not exactly on Heart First. It's on a label formerly known as Heart First so I am wondering why was that decision made. To me it sounded like a PRINCE reference so I wasn't sure....

Yeah, it is quite a stupid story. At a certain time I decided that I wanted to slow *Heart First* down so I would only do one release each year from the year so that the catalogue number of the release was my age, so lets say I was 35 I could go to number 35 in releases and after that I could only put out one record per year. I think there are too many records coming out. I didn't want to contribute to that. On the other hand there was some friends of mine from Germany and all the bands that actually came out on a label formerly known as *Heart First* are German bands. They asked me if I wanted to do something with them and since they were my friends I went ahead so it was kind of a side label, partly for the silly reason I just gave with the age, but also because those are German bands and *Heart First* has only put out one German band which was a re-release and the other stuff for some reason is just international stuff because in Germany there are lot of labels. And I don't go band shopping so I think band's should put out records with their friends and in Berlin at that time there was not so much going on. Now there are some good bands and there are labels in Berlin that put out those bands so I just decided to keep on working with international bands that I was focusing on. But I knew those other German people because I had just went to gigs for so long and knew those people so that's how SUPERFAN happened – those two 7"s and they are an amazing band I think. It's like really great early 80's U.S. influenced hardcore and the singer used to be in another band called PULLERMAN so he is an old friend of mine. And he's a great singer and a great entertainer.

Yes.

As you probably have....

Well we played with them once actually and I'm not sure if we stayed at his house or something but the place was related somehow, but I liked them quite a bit. I thought they were doing something quite unique for the time. How would you describe the current state of the German hardcore scene? What do you have to say about that?

It's really different in different parts of Germany, like Berlin, where I am

from, the scene is really strong. But in general it's really segmented. There are people who listen to emo, there are people who listen to metal that would originally listen to what I would call real hardcore. So now it is really hard for the non-metal, non-melodic hardcore band that is influenced by 80's stuff, like early 80's North American sound or mid-80's European sound to get people to their shows and to put releases out that people buy. It's kind of sad but it's very different in different parts of Germany so luckily Berlin is still really good and so is most of the north and the western part of Germany. But in the south, which had traditionally fanzines like *Trust* and a lot of those bands that were a little better known, that is pretty much all dead.

But even when things like *Trust* started up and *Zap* started up

and even like a label like *X-Mist*, for example, it seemed like they were being presented as a real alternative to the northern German hardcore scene which was sort of stereotyped as a bit more violent, a bit more drunk, and some bands like the SKEEZIKS in particular were presenting themselves as a more positive American influenced alternative to the sort of more traditional German hardcore scene so it was interesting. At the time I was living in the south, but most of the gigs I went to were in Freiburg at a place called Crash, which was a bit of an anomaly because that place was quite violent. There were a lot of fights and bikers and things like that so that place sort of stuck out a bit and was not your typical south German hardcore venue.

I want to simplify it by what you just said which is kind of true. The Crash in Freiburg was a punk rock place that was more fitting with the northern German style and it's true that those bands were more American influenced like bands like SKEEZICKS or EVERYTHING FALLS APART or CHALLENGER CREW. They were quite outspoken against northern German punk-ness as they saw it, but it was kind of silly too because in Berlin for example there was no such friction at that time in the mid late 80's between different styles. People would go to basically all the shows and see different styles of bands and it would be no problem if someone wouldn't drink or things like that. That was a little over-hyped. From Berlin, since we were such an isolated place until the wall came down in '89, there was no big division. This only started afterwards. So it's now a lot like it is in the U.S. where someone who goes to see TRAGEDY probably doesn't go to see early American influenced bands. It's hard to name names now. So now it is more separated as it has been traditionally in North America, but in the 80's it was still together. It's not true that Berlin, for example, was really punk rock town with everybody being violent and drunk. Berlin bands were as positive as, some of them at least, with regards to drinking as some of the south German bands. This is kind of a stereotype.

But some of those squat gigs in Kreutzburg, for example were definitely something else. I remember going to that CHAOS UK show and showing up maybe at 10:00pm and people were already passed out and punks with homemade eye patches and leg splints, you know looking more or less dead in the hallway, and people dancing with full bottles of beer and whatnot so it was, being 16 years old at the time it was quite interesting and you know a "Will I get out of here alive?" sensation. But one thing that was interesting that you mentioned recently when talking about that area Kreutzburg, you said something to the effect that as a result of basically the punk activity there that area is still sort of, rather than being gentrified, it's still sort of maintained it's punk-ness, I guess, after all these years as opposed to becoming more of a trendy or sort of a hoity-toity artist area.

Yeah. I don't know how to explain this to someone who has not been there. Kreutzburg used to be the far eastern part of West Berlin so it was kind of stuck between the wall where East Berlin started and other parts...

...it was sort of the immigrant and punk rock are so you ...

where people could live. There was some old industrial buildings that you could rent for cheap or also squat. Yeah, so that's where people were able to



LEFT TO RIGHT: Satoru - the singer for ASSAULT on their first CD, Daragh, Florian of *Heart First* and Erica of *Boy Records* at the store.

do non-profit subcultural things and so that is a tradition in Berlin that there were those squats where the gigs would be and that was very different from, for example, south Germany where bands would traditionally play in youth centres which were kind of funded by the state, but were organized by the punks themselves. But in Berlin we did not have a nice youth centre that would get some money from the state and could be maintained in a better way. So that's why some shows happened as you just described, which was the DOLL HOUSE which was the most legendary place in Berlin for me at that time. And a lot of better known bands played there like IGNITION and SO MUCH HATE played there. The ACCUSED played there and TOXIC REASONS played there. All the bands that toured played there.

And what's interesting for people

reading this what they are missing out on is that at a certain point this youth centre system helped fund the German hardcore scene regardless of attendance at a show. A band could show up and they were guaranteed to be paid x-amount of deutschmarks because they had this money coming from the government to promote youth activities. And I guess what was funny was – the irony being you would pull up to these places on tour and the "Smash the State" graffiti and painting and big murals and whatnot but really all the money was coming from the government to sort of promote this youth culture. And a lot of them, for the most part, they were run by punk rockers from what I saw. And they would also have some dance nights and things like that but I think far away was a lot of punk rock activity that it was funding, so quite different from the situation in North America or anywhere else for that matter.

Typically we have some hippy-ish social workers or some older punk rockers that would have some education as a social worker so these people would be employed by the state to work at those youth centres and also help promote the gigs there and to take care of the money side, because it was not like they were allowed to loose a lot of money, but it was a little easier because not all the money from the door to pay the bands. If there was a bad turn out sometimes you could take some money from the place and pay it back later from another show. So it was a little smoother. It just depended on the money you would make at the door. It kind of helped having some sort of state funding for hardcore in Germany in the 80's. That's true.

Now does that still exist?

To a certain extent in some places it still exists. As I said in Berlin there was never this tradition but some parts of south Germany there are still those youth centres. But since the state in Germany doesn't have money anymore they don't have money to give to the punks in that kind of way anymore. So now it's not as easy.

To wrap up, as you know this is going to broadcast in Canada. If you could recommend any under-rated German hardcore punk bands that you think people should check out that might have been missed, what would you recommend?

For me it is never hard to say what bands are under-rated in the U.S. and Canada at the moment because some bands are actually touring now. It's now easier then it was before for European bands to tour. So bands like Y, which are quite a good band from Berlin, they have toured the U.S. They are really good. There is some other bands which have members from Y that are from Berlin like CRUDE BB, they are pretty good too. They go through a lot of member changes. It's like really fast SEPTIC DEATH - DROP DEAD influenced hardcore. They used to have a female singer too, but she left the band now, so there were some changes there. There was the Berlin EBOLA band, not to be confused with the English one, that was also quite good and I think they are still going. AUTORITAR are quite good. These are some people that also run *YellowDog* label, which is a good label. Well Y is the band – Thomas who runs *Thought Crime Records*. These are actually two very good DIY hardcore labels in Berlin. Yeah, those people have bands and those bands are pretty good. Those bands have releases that are available quite okay around the world. So these are good bands. Another good band from Germany that people might not have heard of is a band called the NOW DENIAL. They are from Western Germany. They are a



Daragh and Florian having a drink.

little influenced by newer Portland bands like FROM ASHES RISE, TRAGEDY, without being a total rip off and they are really nice people too so that's a band that is pretty good. They have a split 7" out with SEEIN' RED where the SEEIN' Red pretty much sucks and the NOW DENIAL are much better and NOW DENIAL have a 12" out too on *Flower Violence Records* in Germany which is much better than their side on the split. So that's a good band. And I also like HIGH SCORE. I think they are kind of well known because they have stuff out in the U.S. And they are very nice people too. There are all veterans of the German hardcore scene and they played in various other bands before but I think HIGH SCORE is their best band and they are always really entertaining live and that's another band which is not really under-rated because they have stuff out in the U.S., but

that is a band that I really like. Because a lot of bands in northern Germany that are more punk rock bands with a little melodic edge that have really good lyrics and those are maybe some of my favourite bands at the moment. But they are totally unknown outside of Germany because they have German lyrics and they don't play any trendy style.

And a lot of that stuff is coming out on *Weird System* right?

No. *Weird System* is re-releasing a lot of old stuff, but they are not doing a lot of new stuff. There is a label called *Schiffen* that's out of Hamburg that puts out some of that stuff. So *Weird System* is not really a label that does a lot of recent bands. They only put out one recent band out of Hamburg in the 90's, that was BUT ALIVE. That is another really good band, but they split up a while ago. There was no follow up band. BUT ALIVE, which are totally pop and tried to get on a major label but they didn't make it. They are kind of okay if you like BUT ALIVE because BUT ALIVE are not so unknown in Canada.

They also had a G7 connection out of Winnipeg so I'm sure people in Canada can identify them.

But I am quite sure that stuff sells really shitty in Canada because you really have to understand the lyrics to appreciate the music, which is great music, but the lyrics are even better. So there are a lot of bands who are influenced by this type of band in Germany. And I could name names but it wouldn't help much.

Okay, well thank you very much and maybe in another ten or fifteen years we will meet again.

Or maybe a little earlier than that.

Hopefully!

You can write to Florian care of Heart First Records at Landsberger Str. 146 / D-80339 München / Germany / e-mail: stuckinthe80s@heartfirst.net / Web Site: www.heartfirst.net.

Contact Boy Records at 3-59-9 Koenji Minami/ Suginami-ku, Tokyo/ 166-0003/ Japan / e-mail: recordboy@hotmail.com.

discography

BORN DEAD ICONS (Canada) - Unlearn 7"
JIN'RIK'SHA' (Norway) - End Present double 7" (ex **ANGST**)

ALLTID JAGET (Norway) - Du synker inn i Døden... double 7" and CDep

STRAIN (Canada) - Bomb Wedemark CD (has pretty much all pre-NEW AGE songs that were not on HeartFirst before, like Pushead's 7", the Overkill 7"/CD songs, two unreleased songs from the first demo and the radio). A tribute to our friends at Lost + Found Records.

KORT PROSESS (Norway) - Svart Natt double 7" EP and CDep, also known as the 1997 2 x 7"
STRAIN (Canada) - Our End CDep (four songs from the final session after their LP)

STRAIN (Canada) - These Years/Regret 7" (these two fast songs also appear on the **Our End** CDep)

CAPONE (Canada) - What We've Shared 7"

BRAND NEW UNIT (Canada) - No Heroes 6 Song CDep

BRAND NEW UNIT (Canada) - All For Nothing 7" EP (3 songs also on "No Heroes")

KORT PROSESS (Norway) - 18 Song CDep (combining the now sold out 1993 and 1994 7"s plus 3 unreleased songs)

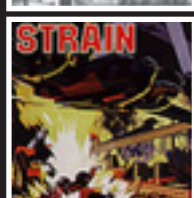
BRAND NEW UNIT (Canada) - Quickdraw Richy Rich 7"

STRAIN (Canada) - Repetition CDep (combines the Driven 7", the Cataract 7" and one more song "Ashes")

KORT PROSESS (Norway) - 1993 7" **SOLD OUT**

ROMANTIC GORILLA (Japan) - Fun 7"

CAPTAIN NOT RESPONSIBLE (Norway)-7"



STRAIN (Canada) - Cataract/Turn The Tide 7" (these two songs also appear on the Repetition CDep)

KORT PROSESS (Norway) - 1994 7" **SOLD OUT**

ULTRA BIDÉ (Japan/New York) - Africa 7"

SPARKMARKER (Canada) - Scallen 7"

STRAIN (Canada) - Driven/Second Coming 7" **SOLD OUT**

ALICE DONUT/ICE PRINCESS (New York)7"

DRESDEN 45 (Texas) - Blooddump 7"

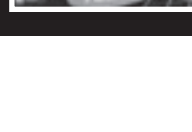
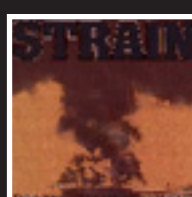
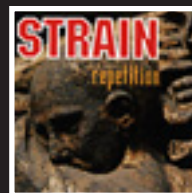
ANGST (Norway) - 4 Song 7"

FRATRICIDE (Canada) - Scream Bloody Vengeance 7"

NUKEY PIKES (Japan) - Three Men And The Monkey 7", 2nd edition

SUPERFAN (Germany) - Fuck You 7"

SUPERFAN (Germany) - Out Of Style 7"



Destroy All Music CIUT Fundraising Appeal Sunday November 9th 2003

On Sunday November 9th, Equalizing-X-Distort will be involved in CIUT's semi-annual fundraising drive. Starting at 10:00pm, we will be asking you to support the radio station by becoming or renewing your membership with CIUT as a "Friend of 89.5 FM". A \$25.00 donation will allow CIUT to continue bringing you the aggressive underground programming that we have become known for.

Equalizing-X-Distort is a two hour hardcore show that airs every Sunday night from 10:00 pm til midnight. We have been very lucky to be able to continue bringing you hardcore from emerging international scenes in Japan, Scandinavia, South America, Continental Europe, Australia, as well as the various North American mainstays. Part of the impetus is to provide a researched international forum that will allow us to compare our own local scenes and take stock against these emerging scenes in this international network of hardcore.

We are particularly committed to a local scene as is witnessed by our monthly live segments. The first Sunday of every month, we have a local band play live on the show. Since our last drive we have initiated live broadcasts of WARSQUAD (from Rochester), G-MEN, KNUCKLEBRAIN, LEGION666, WEDNESDAY NIGHT HEROES, HOT CARL (from Wisconsin), MODERN MACHINES (from Wisconsin), VIGILANT RESISTANCE, BLACK EYES CLUB, and most recently HOSTAGE LIFE. In the future we will be presenting recordings by the SICK FITS (from Ottawa), SELF DEFENSE (from NYC), RUNNING FOR COVER (from Buffalo), and the BANGERS. At a time when the number of all ages venues is diminishing, we feel it is important to offer the live show environment that nurtures hardcore. We are creating unique live performances, similar to the John Peel Sessions, that document and re-broadcast punk bands in their live formats with unrecorded material. There are quite a few folks who have dubbed these sessions and we encourage it.

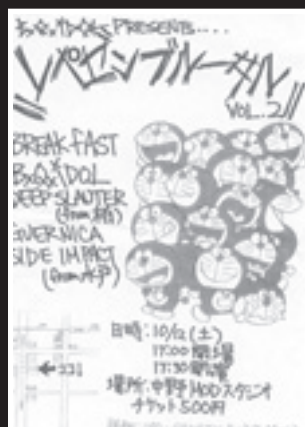
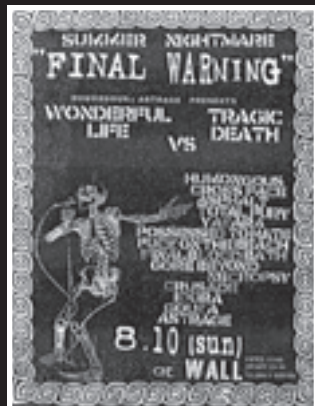
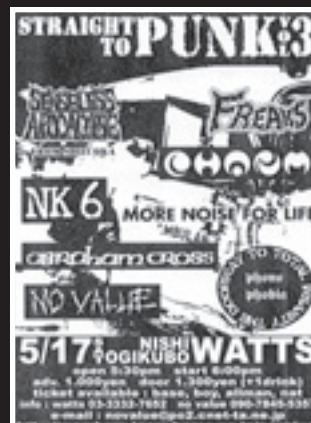
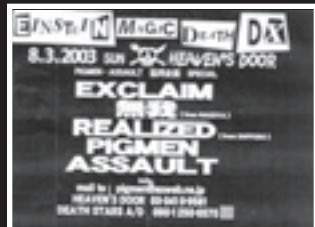
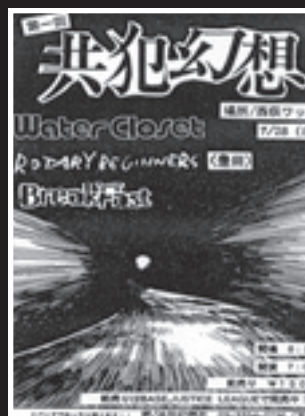
As further commitment to underground material, we continue with the demo feature. Playing bands in cassettes and CD-R formats we bring you bands at their most exciting and energetic periods of development. Over the last couple of months you have been exposed to bands like LEBENDENTOTEN (from Portland), END RESULT (from Ann Arbor), ABUSING THE WORD (from Buffalo), BRODY's MILITIA (from Cincinnati), THREATENER, GEORGE HARRISON (from Moscow), SHELL SHOCK, DIRECT CONTROL, SUBURBAN DEATH MACHINE, GET IT AWAY (from Chicago), RUNNING FOR COVER (from Buffalo), REACCION (from Chicago), OPERATION DEATHKILL (from Winnipeg), HANDS DOWN, CROSSEYED HATE (from Australia), S.B.V., SO BE IT (from Boston), and WRECKAGE.

In EXD monthly programming we bring you the most current hardcore that we can get our hands on. We compile monthly Top 10 programs on the last Sunday of every month to ensure that some of the best releases make it to radio. Some of the bands to make it on our list include: MUNICIPAL WASTE, RELIGIOUS WAR, CAUSTIC CHRIST, ANNHILATION TIME, D.S.B., DISIDENCIA, TRAGATELO, HISATAKA, VICTIMS, MILKMAN, EL CAMINO 53, POINTING FINGER, DIALLO, and BURY THE LIVING

All of these programming elements have been building Equalizing-X-Distort into a world class punk radio show. But we can't continue to do this without your support. We need to replace aging equipment for the broadcast studio, we need to get a production studio up and running, and we need to replace needles on the turntables so we can continue to keep vinyl alive as a format. All this costs money. Our day-to-day expenses of the transmitter rental space, station personnel, and broadcast equipment keep us on the brink of bankruptcy. Your generous donation will enable us to remain an independent voice that doesn't feel the pressure of advertising or government grants. For just a few pennies a day, a donation of \$25.00 will help keep CIUT afloat through the next fiscal year. And this will guarantee that you continue to receive our monthly mailer. Help us reach our goal and keep CIUT on the air or on-line at www.ciut.fm or by mail at 91 St. George Street / Toronto, ON / M5S 2E8 or call in on the donation line at November 9th and make a pledge to keep punk rock on the air.

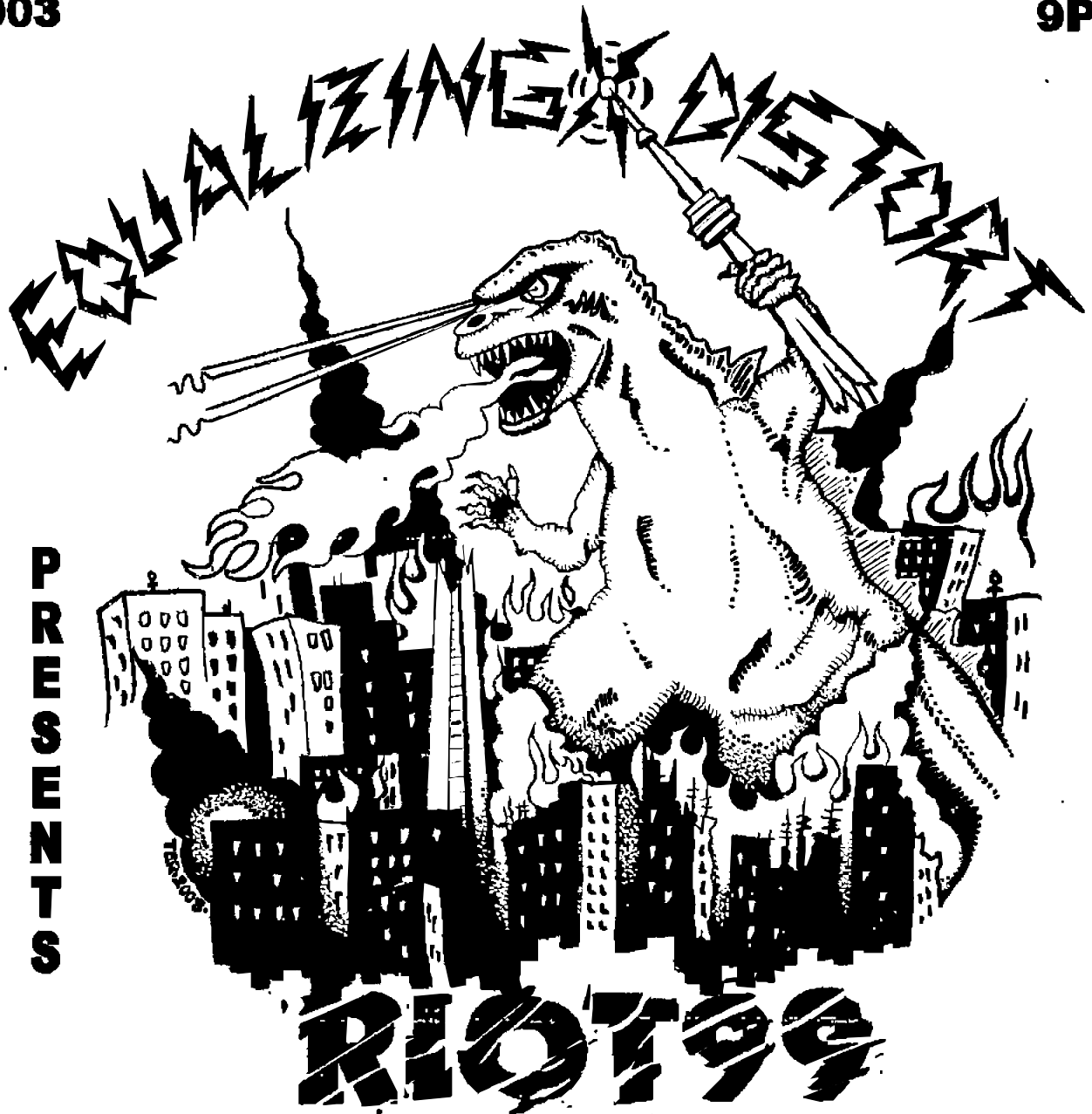
Jap-core Flyer Attack

Thanks to Nate Smith, singer of DUDMAN for sending these flyers.



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