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# DISCORDER

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*Happy  
New Year*

*..in this issue..*

**SHINDIG**

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The  
year  
in  
local  
music



# Of the Night

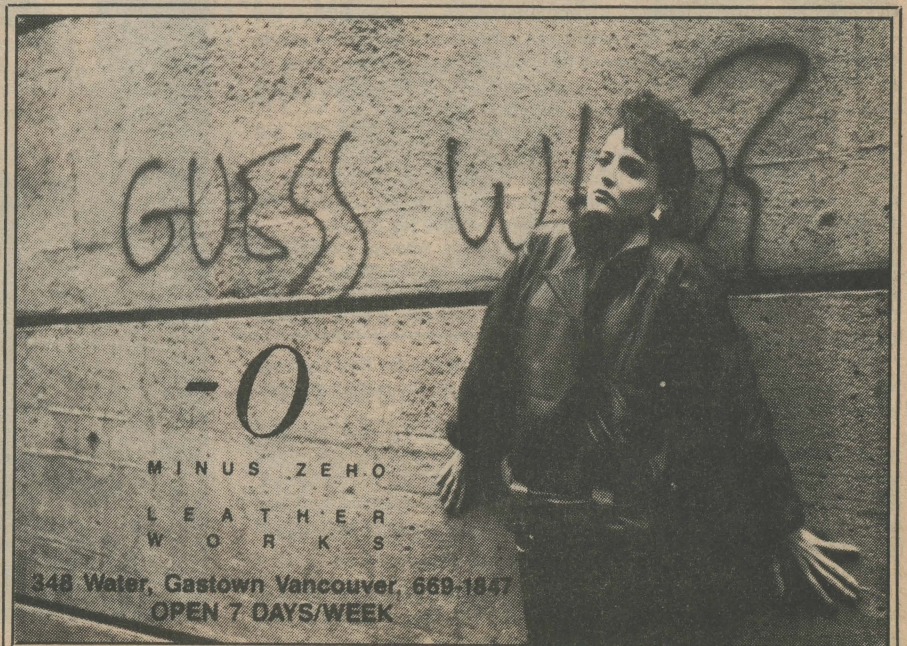


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...when my wife says, "see you in a bit" I always reply, "I'm not a horse," but she's usually hung up the phone by then...and all my friends have been trying to tell me "nothing weird is really happening. Ammo, it's all in your imagination," and for once I'm going to agree with them, that the truth is too horrible to tell, for the Night is young and we don't want to scare off the innocents... oh, the joys of being an aging rocker—of having this absolute *need* to really get out there, at the same time as knowing you mustn't make too much of an ass of yourself, so you tiptoe on this precipice over the Abyss of Loneliness (don't laugh, I got it out of my Grade One Piano book) aiming to Get Down and Do What's Right and some yahoo with his head in the shit starts yelling "faggot!" between songs, or "we wanna rock!" or, better yet, "get off the stage!" as if his peculiar tastes and prejudices should be accommodated at all times...no, there wasn't much head-banging going on at the 3-night **INDEPENDENT MUSIC FESTIVAL** presented by **COLLECTORS RPM** down at the New York Theatre. Lots of scapegoats for that; the snow, high ticket prices, Christmas, the snow...must we go over this old argument again? Van. is *not* a "small scene"; it's just highly incestuous, always in need of "fresh blood" and deathly afraid of getting AIDS from the transfusion...the track marks I saw on one young girl's wrist looked amazingly like some wild moviemaker's impression of suppurating sores left by Dracula's canine incisors—later that night I woke up in a sweat, to note down the scary dream I had in which my friends were turning into the Living Dead. Extremely cinematic times, these...like, I was watching the black bits between the frames as a bottle hurtled end over end above the dancing fools at the **BLOWOUT** Nov. 30 at the Grandview Legion, right for the cranium of **Jim Cummins**, the "I" in **I, BRAINEATER**: if I was on the light board I would've thrown in the strobes—and the old trouper didn't miss a beat. How could he, with powerhouse drummer **ANDY GRAFFITI** bashing away beside him? What an animal! Quick as a wink up pops Jim's goon squad from backstage, all astrut with storm trooper boots and wrist bands atwinkle, scanning the hushed masses for signs of struggle. Then down the stairs they go, after the oh-so-polite Western Front bouncers, to settle a demon back into the dust; there's *one* droog who won't be chucking empties for awhile...my press pass holds no water with the Video Inn doorstaff, but Western Front personnel are much more understanding to poverty-stricken intellectuals like my other self...still, I missed the **JAZZMANIAN DEVILS** again! From all reports, this cross between **Bolero Lava** and **Rhythm Mission** plays

postpunk '50's bopjazz, if you can stand it, and I think it would appeal to me, but there's no accounting for tastes. Does **Vanessa** really sing Billie's hit "Easy Livin'?" Wow, what a crossover...Though the sheer volume of the **BEVERLY SISTERS'** set at the Legion knocked me off my seat and tumbled me passed-out into a corner, I had a tolerable drunk with the fellas Dec. 14 at the annual Emily Carr College Christmas bash in the Concourse of that fine institution...this time the Bevs were downright funky, and I had a plaster grin plastered across my plastered face...quite a change from the scene at the **WAREHOUSE BIG BASH** December 11th at the Heritage Hall, Main & 14th. I'm talking respectable here...these two performance nights were held to raise money for the hydro bill at the **WAREHOUSE SHOW**, and if you don't know which warehouse I mean, go back to the beach, you ostrich. The performers were prevented from doing shows at the Warehouse by the Fire Marshall so organizer **Eric Wyness** rescheduled it; the evening I attended opened up quite innocently with some modern piano pieces and a solo flute spot by **Janet Brown**, followed by four very amusing songs sung by alto **Charlotte Kennedy**, sort of music hall stuff, including "I'm In Love (With a Gay Man)" which comes off like "A Bicy-

cle Built For Two." A 45-minute one-woman one-act play ensued, called **DIGRESSIONS**, done by **Sharon Broccoli**. She is a very funny woman, entirely self-possessed, totally captivating. It was the monologue of a "star" before her mirror, reveling in her fantasies of all the other stars she hangs out with and complaining about the harshness of the real world. She drinks, smokes, dresses and makes up till you believe she could handle the life of a star despite her evident neuroses. At last she changes into (gasp!) a grocery store cashier's outfit. A tour de farce... **PAUL PLIMLEY's** **OCTET** finished off the evening, leaving me to wonder why I bother going to hard core gigs. I mean, these guys can really play! **Graham Ord** on alto sax is the man to watch, and Plimley himself displays virtuoso technique on the vibes through some incredibly complicated charts written by himself and tenor saxophonist **Coat Cook**. With this calibre of musicianship available, discriminating audiophiles in Vancouver need not feel they're stuck in some hick town nor anarchist ghetto; sure, some places have a dress code, but what's your wardrobe for...the handbill for **PSYCHOSCHIZOID's** performance last night at King Studio said to wear black and I did, but mainly because my car died. They were terrible. I guess they meant to be. For this I missed four decent bands at the York?...admitting you have a problem is the first step towards solving it. The next is wanting to cure it. **Scott & Josie** of **HUMAN BEING SONGS** say "wake up, it's time to go to sleep." My shrink would approve. They're celebrating a year of togetherness, but as Josie was heard to sing, "I want more." To which poetess **Diane Wood** extemporized, "she wants more/more of what/more of this/U cant Xtend/momentary bliss" ...so a lot of **MINK's** real friends got upset when I sniped on his false friends last **THNCK**. Well, all I can say is, you know who you are, and you know who they are, and may the twain never meet again...unless it's in the thick of The Night, with no-one to watch and no-one to keep the score...Good-bye to 1984; may it remain my leanest year! Happy New Year..... yours ever, the irrepressible  
—Ammo Fuzztone



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2  
Rhythm Mission



Dennis Mills

Rhythm is their method, Mission is what they're on. Up until now they were Vancouver's best kept musical secret. A dance band. A band of contradictions. A band with a big beat. A beat with a big band. A band apart. Six members with diverse backgrounds and tastes. Take four parts AKA, two parts Exxotone, one part Payola\$. Stir occasionally. The resulting mix yields six servings of Jazzmanian Devils, Rockin' Fools, and until recently, Naked Edge. It's actually much more involved than that, but you're probably confused enough already. So we now move on to the matter at hand.

Rhythm Mission are, in no particular order: Dennis Mills, ex of AKA and now also leading the Jazzmanian Devils, who sings, writes, and plays a brutal alto sax. He is also a pastry chef at a "politically correct" restaurant. The amazing beat brothers are Warren and Warren—Ash on drums, Hunter on bass. Both are also ex of AKA and Exxotone and of Trevor Jones' recent outfit, Naked Edge. Scott Harding and Lee Kelsey (ex Payola\$) are the real live musicians of the group. Scott on guitar, Lee on the dancing keys. Not to end it there, we have the amazing Andy Graffiti, also ex of AKA and currently with the Rockin' Fools. Andy sprays the icing on the cake with some of the tastiest percussion heard this side of Deep Cove. The North Van pop mafia strikes again!

Formed in late 1981, Rhythm Mission played some forty gigs before disappearing in late 1982. They resurfaced this past summer with renewed enthusiasm and a new member, Andy Graffiti. Gigs are somewhat sporadic due to the number of ongoing band commitments on the side. Things look good however...

While Lee and Scott have had the "formal" training, Dennis proudly proclaims himself and the "Beat Brothers" as "authentic punk musicians!" As well as being extremely dynamic live, Rhythm Mission are tight and well orchestrated. One is hard pressed to separate the "punks" from the virtuosos. A dance band they definitely are. Delight and dilirium ensue at each and every gig, the musical integrity and thoughtful, clever lyrics raising this band far above the norm.

3 My Three Sons



My Three Sons

A little while after the New York Dolls split up, their guitarist, Johnny Thunders did a version of the Shangri-La's hit "Give Him a Great Big Kiss." This is perhaps the best example ever of a song that is so bad that it is very good indeed. Thunders, in general, is a good example of a guitarist who was usually great live or, on occasion, out of control and sloppy, but still great because of the energy and the attitude. This brings us to a new Vancouver Group, **My Three Sons**, who took third place in the recent SHiNdig finals. They're one of a number of great new bands, like **Out of Proportion**, or the **Reptiles**, whose energy and live performances more than make up for the fact that their songs could, at any time, crash headlong into chaos.

My Three Sons is Jay O'Keefe on bass, Scruff on guitar, Eric Smith on drums, Steve Richards on lead vocals, Jody MacDonald and Angela Horsfall on backing vocals, and Fabrice Rauhue on rhythm guitar. The band started in the late summer of 1983, when Jay and Scruff started jamming together with Fab and Steve. After auditioning countless drummers, Jay bumped into an old friend, Eric.

"I walked into the Comic Shop," says Eric, "where Jay worked, hocking all my cymbals and figuring I'll never play drums again and Jay saw me and said 'Wow, a cymbal. Do you play drums? Why don't you join our band, we're gonna play Iggy Pop and Lou Reed songs.' So I joined."

By February of '84 the band decided to add backing vocals, in order to augment Steve's singing and fill out the overall sound. Both Jay and Steve were big fans of the '60's girl-group sound, and wanted to add that element to the band, both musically and for onstage excitement.

The band has been playing live and working on original material ever since, drawing on a lot of influences, from early Elvis to '60's American pop to the New York Dolls. The group is, of course, often compared to the Dolls, as well as the Velvet Underground, early Blondie and "a bad high-school band," but when asked to describe themselves, Jay says, "If Motown had a Heavy Metal band, we'd probably be it."

Heavy Metal?

"Yes," says Scruff, "Jay and I started off doing AC/DC covers." Jay adds, "Judas Priest are great...everyone should see them live. It's hilarious watching all those heavy metal greaseballs punching air to 'Hellbent on Leather.' Especially when you consider that they'd freak out if they knew half the band was homosexual."

For the third place in the SHiNdig finals My Three Sons won 24 hours of recording time at Profile Sound Studios, which fits perfectly with the band's future plans. The band get along really well with Bill Barker (owner of Profile and, incidentally, former singer for **The Scissors**) and were going to record at Profile anyway. Time and money permitting, the band will release an EP.

"Being realistic about it all," says Jay, "I just consider this a hobby. I'd like to be successful enough to pay our expenses, tour and make records, but we don't expect to be super-duper rich and famous."

"I," says Steve, "just want to be on the cover of *Teen Beat* magazine."

—Gord Badanic

## *rhythm mission cont'd*

*Imagine yourself:  
you're in a swamp  
the water is bubbling and boiling all around you  
your blood is boiling inside you*

Because of the constantly changing nature of the song structures, you can never come away from a Rhythm Mission show humming the tunes you just sweated to. Beware though!! Once inside, YOU'RE HOOKED!! YOU'RE HOOKED!! Dennis goes on to explain: "Entertainment. To me it's the bottom line. People are there to be entertained and you can entertain them in a way that is thoughtful, a way that makes them look at things just a little bit differently, to make some sort of connections in an honest way."

"Stick it Out," "Life's Level," "Blood Beach," "Hip Alone," "Meduloblongadda Davida," and a song that strikes fear into the hearts of those living in B.C.'s perverted little beehive—"The wild, wild, wild, wild WEST END!" Many of the songs have a peculiarly local feel to them and are often laden with Dennis' sardonic sense of humour. "I think I'm one of the few writers in Vancouver that tries to write satire. The lyrics are quite satirical. It's not sloganeering or going for the quick laugh. Sometimes there's some intricate word play and sometimes it's for word play alone." And what of social commentary? "I consider myself to be a humanist. Some of the songs may be sexual, but they're not sexist. There are certain power relationships between and within the sexes and I explore them in some of the songs I've written. I've written some songs that I think were sexist, in retrospect, and I've written songs that I feel were racist, in retrospect. I don't sing those songs anymore. That's just part of your ongoing personal and political education."

As well as the interesting lyrical concerns, there is the question of the blending of accessibility and experimentation. The danceability of their music almost belies their diverse musical interests. Mind you, this isn't standard dance music by any stretch of the imagination. Speaking of

imagination, it's something you need a lot of when dancing to Rhythm Mission (besides an unfathomable amount of energy). Where does the groove stop and conscious limb-climbing come into play? "My favorite thing is creating melody from dissonance as much as possible!" states Warren Hunter gleefully. Ash adds a counterpoint: "Not having any training, we don't know, really, what is standard. We know when we're right on the mark and sometimes not. I'm not that big on doing wild, experimental things. I have very mainstream tastes." Dennis adds, "It can be really fun to be self-indulgent. We all have our pre-arranged parts but sometimes we set out certain sections of a song where some of us can go totally wild. Some people think we've sold out! Rhythm Mission SOLD OUT! I mean..." laughter abounds "...if they think Rhythm Mission sold out, they must think that the Jazzmanian Devils are the Devil's music..." more laughter "...and they're right, it is the Devil's music." Dead silence...

The Jazzmanian Devils are comprised of two-thirds of Rhythm Mission. Scott, Lee, Andy, and Dennis. Scott's brother Brian adds trombone and Finn Manniche plays cello. Basically, the JDs are representative of Dennis' pop explorations of jazz and he emphasizes the independent nature of the project. "They're two really separate bands and there are two totally different focuses of where they're both going. The JDs started, basically to fill a void because Rhythm Mission had broken up, though I had been doing a few different things, sort of pseudo-poetry readings and performances, just trying to do something, because I always like to perform."

Why did Rhythm Mission break up in the first place? Warren Hunter offers one of several reasons: "It seemed that we were in a rut. Because we hadn't recorded, because we hadn't taken the time to get serious about recording, because we hadn't travelled. We were playing to the same audiences constantly." Dennis elaborates. "It wasn't that we were bored with the music necessarily, it's just that everybody grows, musically, at different rates and as you start to progress and come up with individual ideas that you want to work into a group context, you see things going one way and somebody else sees them going in another. It's really hard to find a group consensus." Warren Ash adds his perspective: "It's good that we're all playing in different bands. I wanted to play more mainstream rock and roll, which I started to do in Naked Edge, whereas some of the others wanted to pursue a more jazzy sound and they're able to do that with the JDs. You get it out of your system to a certain extent." So with all of that presumably out of their collective systems, I offer that it should therefore be easier for a group sound to gel when Rhythm Mission get together. Ash continues: "No. Actually it was Warren and I that used to argue the most over arrangements and we were the ones that went to play together in Naked Edge. I think the biggest problem Rhythm Mission have had is that we are in Vancouver and the audience is just really small. It doesn't take much to lose your head of steam."

Of course, this gets back to the question of having a record out that would enable the group to get out on tour in its support. Dennis feels he's simplifying matters but..."It seems to me that those bands that have records out do one of two things. Either somebody in the band, or a parent, has money, or they all don't work and are on welfare or whatever, and that (the band) is all their life is. We've never had that sort of dedication." The last statement obviously rules out choice number one in Rhythm Mission's circumstance. "If we had started recording a couple of years ago..." states Ash, "...we would either have realized the hopelessness of playing live, original music or else we would have realized the brilliant success of it and have moved on to bigger and better things. I think not doing it a while ago was a mistake."

Without a record, the only way a band can grow in Vancouver is to gig constantly and garner support from the "alternative" media. Constant gigging is difficult for Rhythm Mission because of the obvious diversions. The media aspect still needs resolving. Dennis comments on the group's problem in this area. "Self-promotion has never been our strong point. Our strong point is performance. It limits our audience and it's a limiting attitude but it's a matter of being able to connect with people you can bring in to help yourself out. I think that's starting to help us now." So what is it that Rhythm Mission are trying to accomplish? Ash: "We want it to be a dance band!" Dennis: "We want to make people move, we want to move people. That's the idea behind Rhythm and Mission. It's the RHYTHM that makes ya move and it's the MISSION that moves ya!" All chime in: "AMEN!! HALLELUJAH!!" Ash takes to the floor: "Let's all bow now and pray...to the BIG BEAT!"

MARK MUSHET

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