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presents:

MENTAL FLUSS



NEW BRUNSWICK TODAY

"The Golden Triangle" Photo by E. Gaustone / WRSU Logo by Andy Reichart



ROLL THE CREDITS

Mental Floss, the album

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Joab Steiglitz
Dina Carpenter
Morey Weinstein
Cathy Wojcik

Undying gratitude to all the bands, their moms and
dads, our moms and dads, and moms and dads
everywhere.

New Brunswick Today, the fanzine

Entirely written, designed and produced by Eric
Gladstone (what an ego trip!)

—Except for Need State notes, by Bryan Bruden
—Catharsis page by Catharsis
—Wooden Soldiers graphic and French translation by
Wooden Soldiers

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credited.

Another Generic Production, c. 1987. Don't reprint
anything or I'll slap your behind!

Thanks to Gavin and Miriam at Targum Productions,
where this booklet was created.

* Don't Forget to Floss! *

WRSU 88.7 FM

126 College Ave., 4th floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(201) 932-7800

Write! Telephone! Visit!

New Brunswick Today

Let me take you on a tour of New Brunswick. Start from the WRSU studios, down College Avenue, past the dorms and frat houses, to downtown. We'll pass the lovely train station (undergoing a five-year renovation) and the corporate headquarters of Johnson & Johnson (a white tower of hygienic purity). Then cross the street to dig the Hyatt hotel and the chi-chi bars that surround it, fighting for space with a 19th century graveyard and other decaying remnants of New Brunswick's forgotten past.

A few blocks away we can score some home-fried chicken or hang out at the housing projects and score some Crack (or 'Sins'). Up to Commercial Avenue, and then we'll head west to travel down quiet, shaded streets, filled mostly with New Brunswick's strong Hungarian population. And then back to the center—the court house or the Court Tavern, standing tall in the shadows of three (or is it four?) new mall-type edifices. There's sure to be a good band playing here tonight. Maybe even two or three.

Better yet, let me take you on a musical tour of N.B. From the meaty speed-metal of TMA and Destroy All Bands to the straight-ahead punk of Need State and Vendettas. From the emotional Catharsis sound to the atmospheric grasp of Outdoor Minor and Third Party. From the quirky drive of Spiral Jetty to the solid power pop of Opium Vala, The Blasés and Wooden Soldiers. Then there's the pure Stones-rock of The Plague Dogs and the ranting, rapping P.E.D. gang. And let's not forget the powerful simplicity of Tom's Electric Tombstone.

All of these bands will undoubtedly lambast me for classifying them, because each of them really has a sound of their own. So in order to do them better justice, we've devoted a page to each in this here fanzine.

For almost ten years now, WRSU-FM has been an avid supporter of the local music scene. Being the radio station of Rutgers, the State University of NJ, it always seemed an obvious role to us, even though some college stations don't play local bands at all!

In the music biz, anyone who knows anything knows college radio is what's happening these days. We at RSU want to make sure they don't forget it.

—EG



TMA, as a band, are an enigma. On one hand, they're one of New Brunswick's most successful groups—they've had two songs on the Dirt Club compilation *Hardcore Takes Over* (1982), a debut album, *What's For Dinner* (1983) on Jimboco records, and a second LP, *Beach Party 2000*, which has just been released on ILA. On the other hand, anytime you see them they're complaining about everything under the sun, talking about joining other bands, or just shrugging their shoulders. I cornered guitarist Mike Wattage on one such occasion, and after an exchange of verbal abuse, he agreed to supply me with a photo and an interview.

I met up with him in the conference room of TMA headquarters. This is the photo he gave me (above). I'm not sure which ones are supposed to be Tom (bass & vocals) or Mike, but I know Al (cymbals & drums) is the one with the moustache. Anyway, Mike was wearing a gold lamé jumpsuit and puffing on a Cuban cigar. He told me I had fifteen minutes, so I started in with the obvious questions.

Q: What does TMA stand for?

A: Too Many Assholes.

Q: What are your influences?

A: I have none. I created music.

Q: Oh really? How old are you?

A: 1200 years.

Q: Gee, you don't look a day over 1000. Where were you born?

A: In Ponce De Leon's house.

Q: Seriously, though, how long has the band been together?

A: 17 years.

Q: Then why did your debut LP come out only three years ago?

A: Practice makes perfect.

Q: If the first album was perfect, why are you doing a second one?

A: Because my kidnapped parents would be killed if I didn't.

Q: How would you classify TMA?

A: Shit.

Q: What inspired "Miserable"?

A: Crack.

Q: What's your favorite club?

A: A billy club.

Q: No, I mean, where's your favorite place to play?

A: In my pants.

Q: Uh, how do you feel about your public image?

A: Oblong.

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: Yeah, tobogganing and crochet.

Q: What's your favorite food?

A: Glass and hair.

Q: What is your political viewpoint?

A: What?

Q: OK, who's your favorite president?

A: Taft.

Q: Who's your favorite actor?

A: William Demarest.

Q: Who's your favorite poet?

A: Nipsy Russell.

Q: Who's your idol?

A: Don Knotts.

Q: Who's on first?

A: Lou Costello's corpse. Ha ha.

Hey, that's pretty good. Ask me another one.

Q: Who does your hair?

A: The prison.

Q: What's your favorite saying?

A: No noose is good noose.

Speaking of which, you have half a minute left, Gladstone, so think fast.

Q: Uh, what's your philosophy of life?

A: Eat, Drink and be Scary.

Q: What's your philosophy of death?

A: See you in Hell.

One more question.

Q: Can I have your autograph?

A: No.

"Miserable" words by Tom.

"Miserable" music by Mike.

Catharsis

Jeff Woehr - Fender Guitar.
Ken Tarbous - Gibson Guitar, Vocals.
Michael Miksis - Fender Bass, Vocals.
Charles Applegate - Ludwig Drumkit.

I open my eyes, the nightmare begins...

CATHARSIS
53 Rockview Avenue
N. Plainfield N.J 07060

Ken - (201) 755-3470
Charles - (201) 297-7643
Answering Machine -
(201) 755-4932

NEED STATE



Excerpt from a conversation, December 1985:

A: BEEFSTEAK? Is that who's playing downstairs?

B: No, NEED STATE.

A: They any good?

heard of them?

B: They any good? They're great! Haven't you ever

A: No. What's so special?

That's what's so special.

and Mary Redfield on bass and killer backing vocals.

legend, Johnny "the kick ass drummer" Oreshnick

B: Man, Norman Roberts, New Brunswick guitar

A: What do they sound like?

B: Go down and check 'em out.

A: Well, maybe, but if they're so great, why aren't you down there?

B: Because you and your fat ass are in my way.

"Scene of the Crime" words and music by Norman Roberts.

Outdoor Minor



Photo by E. Gladstone

"Some people say that the Apocalypse is the worst thing that could happen to mankind. Some people say that the end of a relationship could be the worst thing in life. When you get to the point where the Apocalypse would be better than the end of a relationship — that's where we're at."

This is how drummer Ethan Asia explained Outdoor Minor at their first-ever interview in October of '86. At the time they were working at an unprecedented rate. Since forming that June they had recorded a five-song demo in eight hours that to many ears sounded ready for vinyl, and were preparing for their debut gig, appropriately, on Halloween.

Outdoor Minor started as a vendetta from roommates Asia and bassist/vocalist Seth Sokol to their landlady. "Richard the Landlady's Boyfriend," with the refrain "we like to call you Dick," was hastily recorded and sent to WRSU. It became such a heavily-requested hit that the pair decided to make the band a reality, drafting the classically-trained Sue Brunswick (keyboards) and John Alot (guitar and backing vocals) to finish the foursome.

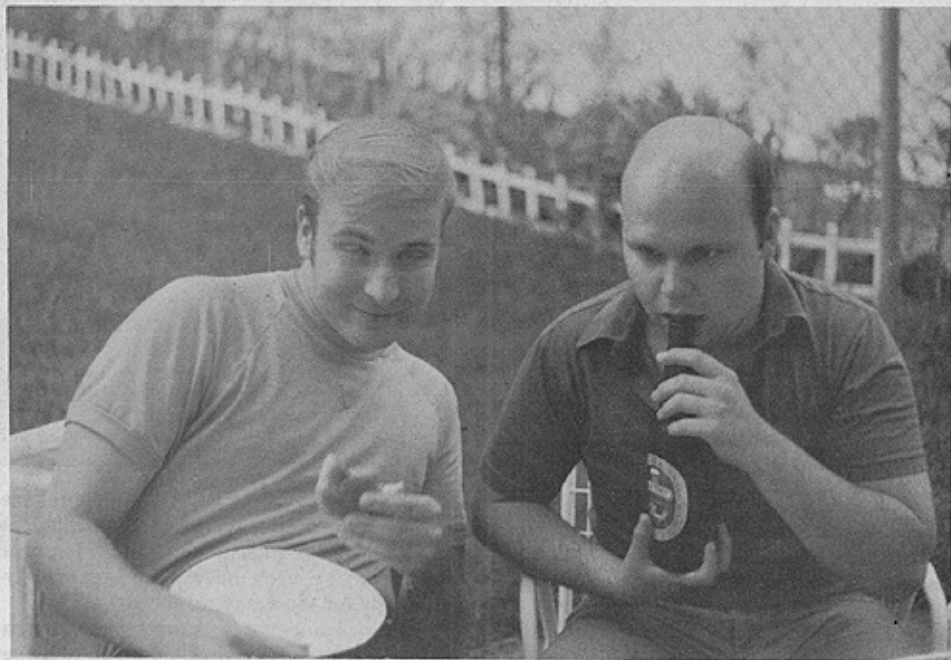
Outdoor Minor's collective influences obviously include Wire (from whose song their name originates), but also Killing Joke, The Fall, Julian Cope, and Brunswick and Alot chime in with Wagner and Miles Davis respectively.

The song "Martin Sheen" was inspired by Sokol and Asia's utter adulation for the actor. The lyrics "they care — we don't / they win — Martin Sheen" stem from seeing an afternoon celebrity basketball game on TV with Sheen and son Emilio Estevez. A heavy statement, indeed.

Since that October debut, Outdoor Minor continued to grow at a steady pace until the New Year, when Sokol, a major contributor to the band's sound, suddenly and mysteriously left the band and New Brunswick. Rather than be daunted by this, Outdoor Minor continued with new bassist Guillermo. However, they are currently on hiatus, presumably because of Wire's very unexpected resurgence in popularity. Perhaps when *12XU*, *Pink Flag*, *Play Pop* and other LPs return to the budget bins, Outdoor Minor will resurface.

"Martin Sheen" music and lyrics copyright Outdoor Minor.

Opium Vala



Dave Machos & Matt Pinfield doing their best imitation of the Chowchow Bros. / Photo by E. Gladstone

Opium Vala is the brainchild of Matt Pinfield, who, while studying Tai Chi in Kowloon, decided to team up with classmates Ignatz, Ersatz and Umlatt Chowchow in a "moneymaking venture." When they ended up on the short end of a shady deal with a musical instrument manufacturer, Pinfield and the Chowchows decided to recoup their losses by forming a band and toured their way back to Matt's home town, New Brunswick.

Actually, all of that is made up, but it sounds like the sort of explanation you'd hear from Pinfield. Matt's been Dee-Jaying since before he even knew how to walk, broadcasting from a pirate radio station in his basement. His shows were the sort that the PMRC loves to hate, abusing motel clerks over the phone or offering fake "win a trip to Tahiti" schemes to confused immigrants. His current shows on WRSU maintain the same absurdity — they're more like broadcast orgies than radio programs.

Opium Vala is one of New Brunswick's longest existing bands, with a revolving line up backing Matt's

vocals. The Chowchow brothers may not exist, but Dave and Joe Machos, who have their own band (The Null Set), have frequently contributed to Vala, and in fact play most of the instruments on "Last Night Dreaming." Original compositions are a rarity for Vala — cover versions are much more familiar territory, such as Simon & Garfunkel's "Hazy Shade Of Winter", their first vinyl, on last year's *East Coast 60s Rock & Roll Experiment* compilation.

Matt Pinfield currently resides in East Brunswick with his wife and one-year-old daughter. The Machos brothers are currently working on the next Null Set project. Both bands perform irregularly. The Chowchow brothers (rumor has it) now run a cosmetic surgery clinic in Jersey City.

"Last Night Dreaming", lyrics and music by Dave Machos.



Photo by E. Gladstone / Logo by Yuri

"We are your parents and not your friends."

This rather self-evident statement from lead guitarist Sam Schiffman's mom and pop forms the basis of motivation behind Post Ejaculation Depression. Their music is designed to widen the generation gap, not to mention keeping the adolescent, immature spirit alive in an era of "grown-up rock." Their average age is still in the teens (Sam, the oldest, just turned 21); their combined musical experience barely adds up to five years.

"BugMeOutShitDamnOiVeyMotherfucker" is the P.E.D. motto. As "Don Johnson" proves, they're not afraid to mix musical idioms (or even steal them shamelessly). But if you compared them to the Beastie Boys, you'd probably find yourself facing the wrong end of a broken bottle — their propensities for beer and womanizing are probably the only valid similarities.

P.E.D. released their first vinyl this year: a 7 track 7" EP entitled *Xerox For Yugoslavia* (according to the band, fanzines are sorely lacking in Eastern Bloc countries). The sleeve included quotes from Nietzsche, Pete Townshend and Murphy's Law — the disc included such gems as "Masturbation," of which the entire lyrics are "I wanna blow job and I want it now." Despite the fact that P.E.D. rarely rehearse (drummer Chris Ross has a tendency to stop songs in mid-swing if they're not going well), their gigs are consistently electric, and well attended. They have a guaranteed audi-

ence in the form of the P.E.D. Army. They opened for The Exploited last June and went on a U.S./Canadian tour of their own in August, but resist the Hardcore tag because they've been beaten up (separately and together) by far too many skinheads.

Sam's own opinion of his band varies between "the greatest thing New Brunswick has to offer," as several DJs and journalists have called them, and "the most ridiculous sham ever." Bassist John Terry likes to quit every once in a while, just to keep an even keel. Quentin Vox does it for the beer. Chris Ross couldn't care less.

P.E.D.'s hobbies include drinking, skateboards, writing fanzines, petty larceny, smoking, fighting with girlfriends, political causes, shaving their hair, chewing gum, blow jobs.

The words and music to "Don Johnson" by P.E.D. are registered with the copyright office as "funky music for record compilation."

They were produced by Eric Rachel and John Terry at Trax East studios, Spotswood.

Hate mail and love letters can be addressed to:
P.E.D. recovery center
320 Montgomery Street
Highland Park, NJ 08404

spiral jetty



Photo by Gil Margulis

Of the bands represented on *Mental Floss*, Spiral Jetty are one of the most successful. They are certainly contenders for the big time. Last year they released their debut vinyl, an over-extended play 12" called *Tour Of Homes*, on Connecticut's Incas Records. Produced by the Feelies, it received widespread acclaim and airplay — people discovered what Brunswick types had known for some time — the dangerously infectious tunes of Messrs. Potkay, Gesner and Reynolds.

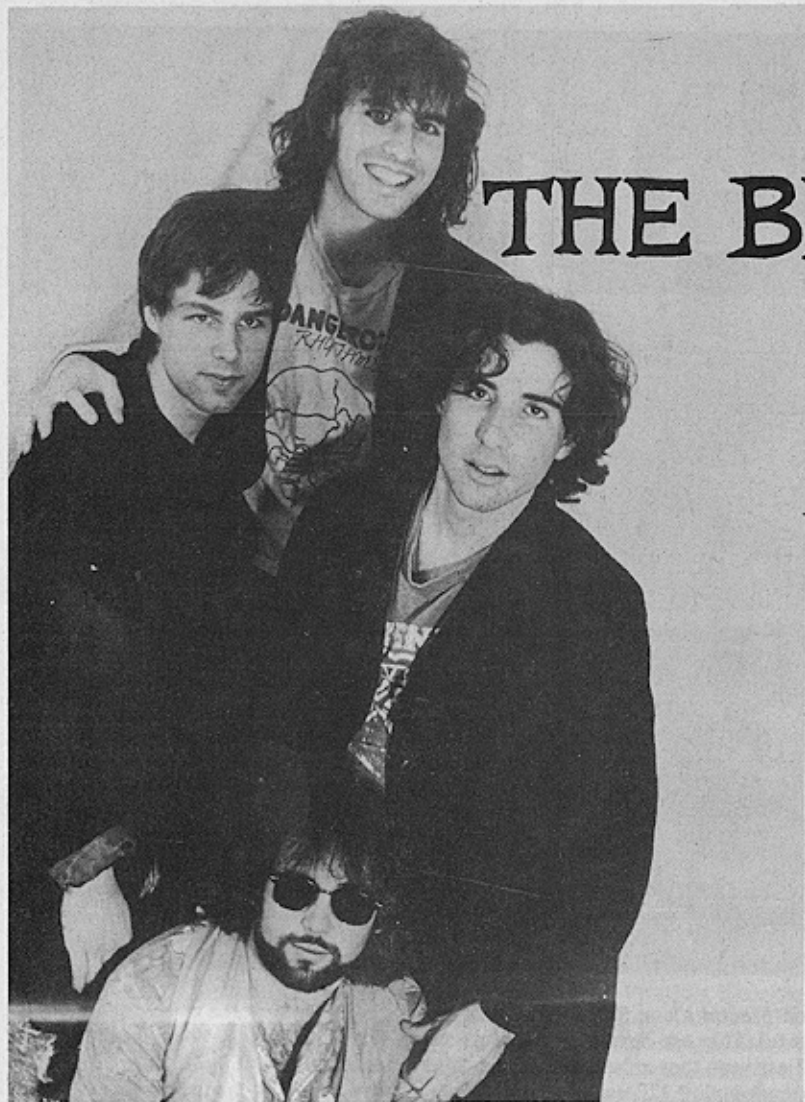
Spiral Jetty are in many ways the pinnacle of a 'Rutgers' band. Guitarist/vocalist Adam Potkay is a graduate student who also teaches upper level English, while bassist & harmonica Drew Gesner is an undergraduate senior in Journalism/Mass Media. And percussionist Dave Reynolds is no stranger to the campus police, either (Just kidding, Dave! No, really). More than that, many unofficial opinions speculate that of all

the local bands, the 'Jetty have the strongest and most faithful 'college crowd' following. No doubt they know a good thing when they hear it.

And they'll have another chance soon, as Spiral Jetty's second Incas release, a full LP entitled *Art's Sand Bar* is being released concurrent to this. "Keep It Alive," for the record, is culled from that and, like the other 11 tracks, represents a somewhat broader musical approach than their previous stuff. Well, that's what they told me. I like it anyway.

"Keep It Alive" words by Adam Potkay and music by Spiral Jetty. Produced at Waterfront Studios, Hoboken by Brad Morrison (piano by Henry Hirsch).

Spiral Jetty can be contacted at:
48 Henry Street
Jersey City, NJ 07306



THE BLASÉS

Alongside all the bands that have come and gone in the past 10 years in New Brunswick, The Blasés are one band that's come and *stayed*. Perhaps part of their staying power is due to the fact that the four Blasés were all friends first, especially songwriters Bill Donohue and Rob Wagner, who've known each other from childhood. Since their first gigs in 1980, they've only had one personnel change — Billy Sheils joining Donohue, Wagner and drummer George Decker when original bassist Rocky Verdon was killed by a train in 1984.

Ironically, '84 was a promising year for the band; their home video of "You Don't Know Me" came in second place in the Basement Tapes competition on

MTV. And, after a brief hiatus, The Blasés returned to the scene stronger than ever, with Donohue bringing both his keyboards and vocals more to the forefront. Their sound has been compared to everything from The Saints to Mott The Hoople.

The Blasés have one previous record: "Me And You," a self-produced 7" they put out in 1982. They continue to perform regularly, awaiting that elusive contract.

"Firefighter" words and music by Bill Donohue and Rob Wagner.

THE PLAGUE DOGS

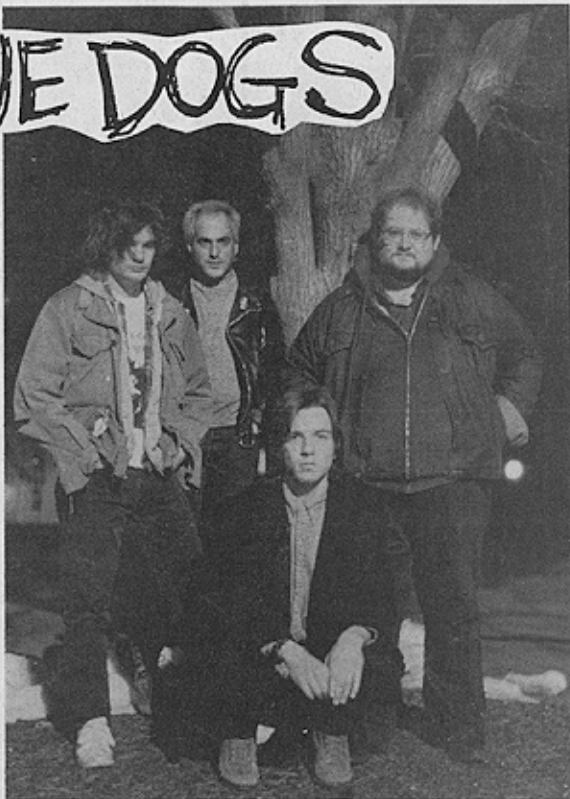


Photo by E. Gladstone / Logo by J.T. Quinn III

"The candle that burns twice as bright burns half as long." Dave Clark quotes the film *Bladerunner* (quoting someone else) in summing up his band. For all intents and purposes, The Plague Dogs are (or were) Dave Clark and Roland Keane. Not that they played all the instruments, but the number of band members that came and went numbered so high that the most common saying around Brunswick this Spring was "oh, are you a Plague Dog, too?"

Dave Clark and Roland Keane became friends while working on Rutgers' *Daily Targum* newspaper. The Summer after graduation, having time on their hands, they decided to get together for the sake of the Court Tavern's Sunday Open Jams, but when the jams were cancelled (after a volatile Butthole Surfers show) they found themselves with a real band on their hands. Ah Keane singing and Clark executing lead guitar and backing vocals.

The Plague Dogs wasted little time in establishing themselves, recording in a 24-track studio before they were six months old and becoming heavily requested on both WRSU and Trenton's WTSR. While they were together, they played less than 10 gigs, but every one was unforgettable, including one in Red Bank where Clark was so drunk he could barely stand (much less

play guitar); one in Philadelphia, opening for a major influence of theirs, L.A.'s Blood On The Saddle; and the apocalyptic "Feel Your Pain" show with Catharsis, after which Keane left and the group dissolved.

Dave Clark now has a new group, False Virgins. Roland Keane has retired from music for greener pastures. They've just released a posthumous cassette entitled *Afterbirth*, available from the address below. While they were together, persons in their band included Dave Machos (of the Null Set), Ethan Asia (of Outdoor Minor) and John Oreshnick (of Need State) on drums; John Quinn and Don Buchanan on rhythm guitar; "Vodka" Lee Kingsnake and Eric Gladstone (yep, that's me) on bass. And there were others.

For the record, the Plague Dogs on "It's Like That" are Clark-Keane-Asia-Kingsnake.

"It's Like That" words and music by Dave Clark. Recorded at Waterfront Studios, Hoboken.

Afterbirth and False Virgins information available from:

D.A.C.
39 Bartlett Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

3RD Party



Photo by Cathy Wojcik

"I want the music to be a medium ... a meeting point," says Third Party's singer/guitarist Joe Condiracci. He's trying to explain how the three-member band functions, coming from totally divergent musical realms. Joe is a firm believer in powerpop rock, having been weaned on Elvis, Johnny Cash and the Everly Brothers; bassist Rich Kelly used to be in Skulduggery, a hardcore group who released a track on Joyful Noise's 1986 *ComPILEation* LP; drummer Eric C. Paul is in the Jazz program at Rutgers U. "We don't understand each other's music too well," Joe continues, "but we try."

While the sound of "Fade To Grey" might recall U2 at first, Third Party's musical ambitions are obviously multi-directional. "Bon Jovi and Bobby Ezzy (of Genocide) both came out of my town" explains Condiracci, who grew up in nearby Sayreville. "I'd like to build a bridge between them." At the same time he admits "I come from a very pop background — I can't help that."

He does however become defensive against critics who call Third Party a "schlocky" pretty-boy band. "They're not listening to the music, they're just watching me. I'm not Morrissey and I'm not a cry-baby Pete Townshend," says Joe. "Fade To Grey" proves his point, with its haunting melody, driving beat and anxious vocals. Though Third Party offer many words of explanation, the quality of their music largely speaks for itself.

What the future holds for the band is uncertain. "I don't know what I'm doing yet" says Joe. "These guys will tell me what's next."

"Fade To Grey" words and music by Joe Condiracci.

Third Party can be contacted at:
88 Cleveland Avenue
Parlin, NJ 08859

Vendettas



Rybinski & Wattage mug pretty! / Photo by E. Gladstone

Vendettas leader Richard Rybinski certainly has his credentials together — in terms of both the Brunswick scene and rock'n'roll at large. Just ask him:

"I started playing the night I saw the New York Dolls at the State Theater here in New Brunswick."

That was 1975 and 15-year-old Rich was decked out in glitter-drag for the occasion. Unfortunately, his father, who thought Rich was playing basketball, was getting a pizza next door. He ran into Rich on the way out and, thinking his kid was homosexual, sent him to a psychiatrist.

Needless to say, Rich's therapy proved fruitless. Since then, Rich has played guitar in The Reactors, Automotive Angel, The Undesirables and now Vendettas and Bad Tuna Experience, a side project with D. Pop of the Bush Tetras. Rich, who lives in New York now, describes B.T.E. as a "funky Lower East Side punk band."

But what about Vendettas, whose membership includes Henry Seiz (rhythm guitar), James Dean (vocals), Fletcher Sirs (drums) and Mike Wattage of TMA (bass)? "Well you should say it's rumored James might have AIDS. Anyway, he owes me money."

Oh. With that out of the way, I chose the most obvious 'rock interview' questions to gauge Rich's reactions:

Me: Who are your influences?

Him: Johnny Thunders, Steve Jones, Pete Townshend, Chuck Berry.

Me: What's your all-time favorite band?

Him: Generation X.

Me: How do you like living in NYC?

Him: It's easier to get around. I'm spending less money and doing less drugs.

Me: What do you do on a night off?

Him: Go to the Aztec Lounge and look at girls with white make-up and black hair.

Me: What's your favorite food?

Him: Tuna (of course!)

Me: Favorite color?

Him: Elephant.

Me: What's your ultimate ambition?

Him: To get my driver's license back.

Me: What Famous Rock Stars have you met?

Him: Pete Townshend, Bobby Kennedy, and Sid Vicious at Max's Kansas City.

Well, there you have it.

"Leave Me Alone" words and music by James Dean.

wooden soldiers

COMBINATION PUBLICITY PHOTO & COLORING CONTEST!



THE WOODEN SOLDIERS got together in 1985 as an easier and more profitable way of worshipping Satan and his minions. They have recorded an EP hopefully due out before the year is over. To obtain more information about the coloring contest, write us c/o THE CHURCH OF TOM PERDUE 161 Hamilton Street New Brunswick NJ 08901.

*"Dans l'avenue de Commerce
On va danser comme des copines
Je vais passer la soirée avec toi
Dans l'avenue de Commerce
On pense que je perds raison-lentement
J pense qu'on devient fou dément
On chante la vie de dans
Que j peux trouver de hors
Je veux répéter ton nom, encore
Si je m'trouvais, si je m'trouvais
Dans l'avenue de Commerce."*

"Commercial Avenue" words and music by Paul Rieder.

Produced by Brad Morrison at Waterfront Studios, Hoboken.

DESTROY ALL BANDS

Violence disturbs NB party

About 150 people were unable to hear Destroy All Bands, one of the groups scheduled to perform at the Knights of Columbus Saturday night, because of a disturbance, according to New Brunswick police.

The "disturbance" occurred after a glass door was broken by unknown persons, according to Livingston College senior Bryan Bruden, a spectator at the show.

Destroyers, the members of the Knights of Columbus were having their own party and according to Chris Jones, the brother of Destroy All Bands, under cover spaces and loud the show should be shut down.

Knights of Columbus building, on the corner of Columbus Place and Jersey Highway Avenue, was moved out to "members of the past rock culture," according to Brunswick police.

Destroyers, the members of the Knights of Columbus were having their own party and according to Chris Jones, the brother of Destroy All Bands, under cover spaces and loud the show should be shut down.

There was a "real lot of blood," Jones said.

Official confirmation of the amount of any injuries remains unknown.

The crowd was dispersed and there were no arrests, according to police.

—Sophistic Chromosome



Photos by Bryan Bruden

"God dammit," vocalist Swinger McRafter says, looking down at the puddle around him. "Two perfectly good beers ruined by my stupid stage antics. Antics suck. *ANTICS SUCK!*" He looks genuinely depressed. In fact, he refuses to continue, throwing a tantrum until someone gets him a beer. He finishes it in one swig, throwing the bottle at bassist Bela LaKarloff Jr.'s feet, where a half-dozen of his empties already lie.

"Shit, Bela, look at all the beer you drank. That's disgusting." Bela replies only by shaking his head and smiling.

"Alright," says Swinger, "this next song is a little dootie that tells you what life is all about — beer, destruction and chicks." He looks over to guitarist Spider Webb to start the song, but Webb is busy drinking his beer.

"Dammit Spider, everytime I wanna do a song, you're messing around. Come on!" Webb calmly puts his beer down, looks over at drummer Tommy Sandito, and launches into the power chord that starts "No Time Left".

Destroy All Bands — are they heavy metal or hardcore? It's impossible to tell; oversize amp stacks and double-bass drum set notwithstanding, Webb, Sandito

and LaKarloff don't really fit into either category. Actually, they mostly resemble an early 70s "hard rock" group — what it used to be called before either phrase was coined. In front of them, McRafter, self-effacing to a fault, raves, dances and sings like a cross between an elf from Hell and a hippie-cop.

Destroy All Bands — their name implies they have a mission. Maybe they do, but where it originates from is their original incarnation as a strictly-covers band, with the intention to mutilate classic songs. They still do covers occasionally, by asking "alright, whose song do you want us to butcher?" and launching into the Gun Club's "Sex Beat," Stiff Little Fingers' "Suspect Device" or T.S.O.L.'s "Code Blue".

Destroy All Bands — they will destroy you.

"No Time Left" by James "Spider" Webb. Produced by Henry Hirsch at Waterfront studios, Hoboken.

Contracts and offers of marriage can be addressed to the band c/o Werehaus management:
15 Herbert Ave.
Spotswood, NJ 08884

Tom's *Electric* Tombstone

What can be said to describe Tom B. Stone? He is truly an individual: a one-man Ramones, a Billy Bragg without the frown, a modern-day troubadour, a saint in scumbag's clothing. Call it what you want — he calls it ... well, what do you call it, Tom? "I dunno, ask Bryan."

Bryan Bruden, Tom's manager and occasional spiritual advisor, has been accused of calling all the shots in the Tombstone success story. But Tom mostly does what he wants, which he proved recently when he decided to take a break from his solo venture to form a band — exactly the opposite of typical rock career moves. He surprised everyone — Bryan included — with an incredibly "Electric" performance.

Tom lists Todd Rundgren (whose own musical range defies description) among his favorite listening, but balks at the idea of any real influences. In fact, when I invited him over for an interview, he asked instead if he could listen to my Sex Pistols albums — he had never heard them before. Sigh.

"Large Plain Pie" words and music by Tom B. Stone.

