

# Entertainment

## GENRECIDER MICHAEL EDWARDS

single gun theory



Well, I did make it down to the Exchange last Wednesday night to see Ottawa's Jimmy George and it was a simply wonderful show. In fact, the only bad thing about the whole evening was the attendance which was a little on the low side. Or maybe that was simply the fact that Jimmy George comprises of eight members who were practically standing on top of each other. Just you try fitting an accordion, a fiddler, a mandolin, a banjo, a bass, two guitars (one of whom liked his distortion pedal an awful lot...), the drums and the occasional tin whistle onto the stage down there. They only have four microphones for their singing, and seeing seven of them can be singing at any one time, things did get a bit crowded.

And now I understand why they have such a reputation for performing live - they have an incredible amount of energy on stage and it was simply impossible to sit still while watching them. They also have a great repartee with both the audience and each other, such as an impromptu version of 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' although as the night progressed and the amount of alcohol consumed increased it did get a bit tough to understand them (just like the dear old Shane...). In addition to their own material (the stuff showcased on their album), they played a whole bunch of songs by people such as the Waterboys, the Pogues and Junior Gone Wild. Very good crack, and I hope that they come back this way again soon.

After the wealth of live music in the past few weeks, things seem to be a bit quieter for the moment so its back to recorded work now. And first up this week are the Cranes with their third full length album *Loved*. The Cranes did an interesting thing with some singles from their last album, allowing them to be remixed by various people such as Robert Smith and Ivo (the owner of 4AD). But the most unusual interpretation came thanks to Jim Thirwell who took one of their more delicate tracks and turned into a noisy, rollicking thing. And some of that sentiment has carried onto *Loved* with its heavy percussion and loud guitars though they do still have some quieter moments too. As always, one factor which puts off a lot of people is Alison Shaw's 'litle girl' voice; personally, I find it to be rather calming. It has a charm all of its own, so if you can cope with that then you'll be fine. Again there are some remixes stuck on the end; one in particular - 'Paris And

Rome' - is actually better than the original version. Overall, not a bad album at all which will keep their fans happy until the next Cure album comes along.

Trying to follow some sort of theme, namely groups with female vocalists, we come to Single Gun Theory. They are another wonderful Australian band joining such other luminaries as Even As We Speak, the Sugargliders, the Church and Nick Cave with his Bad Seeds. And I must admit that I have never heard of them prior to their latest album *Flow, River Of My Soul*, but they have been around since 1987 releasing two other full length albums (although I may be wrong) - now I really feel like I should check out their back catalogue as this is one very classy album. It would be far too simplistic to call this dance music as it goes far deeper than that; the word 'soundscape' is even bandied around and that is as good as any I suppose. There are dreamy, gorgeous vocals which intertwine with samples from a variety of sources which are dropped into the music so effortlessly. Lyrically, the album is a journey which explores and celebrates life in all forms. It all swirls around so pleasingly that I haven't stopped playing it for quite some while. A very pleasant surprise.

Another tenuous link now - seeing I was talking about dance music (although it wasn't exactly dance music, but that's what makes it so tenuous...) so that brings me to the second remix album put out by the Pet Shop Boys which is rather imaginatively entitled *Disco 2*. Whereas *Disco*, their first remix album, had some fine alternative mixes, this new one is one long megamix by Danny Rampling where all the songs merge into each other in a way that can only be achieved when all the songs are remixed to sound like each other in the first place. Don't get me wrong, I really like the Pet Shop Boys - they make the most wonderful pop records which are the equivalent of having angels on fluffy clouds dancing on tiptoes in and out of your ears (thanks to Matt for that description...). Yet *Disco 2* feels like that the Pet Shop Boys aren't even on there; the songs are so deconstructed that only 'I Wouldn't Normally Do This Kind Of Thing' and 'Absolutely Fabulous' feel like their songs. The remainder comes across as just another dance album, and doesn't possess the sort of thing that makes their songs so memorable in the first place - looks like I'm going to have to wait for *Disco 3*.

## Interview With the Watchmen



By Luke Peterson

The Watchmen are set to play the SUB cafeteria tonight and according to Drummer Sammy Kohn, this Winnipeg band offers a chance for students "to let their hair down and see an honest and sincere rock n' roll band."

"It's just important that people have a good time when they come to see us and (they) become a part of the show."

In support of their latest CM release "In the Trees," Kohn and company are embarking upon a gruelling tour of Eastern Canada which sees them playing seven maritime sets in a mere nine evenings.

In an interview last week, Kohn intimated that the band members are "looking to just be able to maintain a career at this. None of us are opting for the 'rich rock star' route. We want to honestly gain fans by travelling and writing and recording music."

Despite enjoying his vocation, Kohn does confess that life on the road is not all it's cracked up to be: "I personally like to see the cities that we're in. Walk around and try to make the most of the days. But at the same time, there's a lot of travel where you just see hotels and menus. You can go days without doing any sight-seeing at all; or weeks for that matter. It depends upon the touring schedule."

Certainly road trips like the recent twenty-two hour van ride from Toronto to Halifax, afford ample opportunity for reading and listening to new music to alleviate the boredom: "I listened to Joe Jackson's new cd, which is very nice. The new REM (Monster), I think we're all into. As far as Canadian music goes, I know we all like the new Sloan album a lot. It was sort of introduced to us by some MCA people, cause they're on the same label as us."

In fact, REM tended to be a conversation theme, as Kohn sides with Michael Stipe when it comes to choosing writing and recording over touring: "To be quite honest I'm not a huge fan of the road. I was actually just recently reading about Michael Stipe and he was mentioning that he loves to travel and he loves to perform, but the two together can sometimes be a very poisonous mix, and I tend to agree with him fully. I think that we all want to get to the point where we can tour on a comfortable sort of wavelength, not like ten months out of the year. As much as we all like to play ... I think with me the writing and recording is something I prefer."

Kohn's desire for a less strenuous touring schedule aside, he says that The Watchmen are looking forward to playing the UNB SUB cafeteria. In fact, venue's of the Sub cafeteria's approximate size are cited by Kohn as being conducive to a great set:

"(We've played) the full-blown outdoor venue with ten thousand people (most recently at the Kumbaya festival in Toronto this past August) which is obviously exciting, but what is more suited to us is a 500 to a 1000 seat room, packed. I think we've gotten to the level where we feel confident that we could grab everybody ... and do our thing."

While enjoying life as a recording artist, Kohn does admit that being in the limelight is not without its drawbacks. The recent case of three Quebec teenagers who, after listening to Nirvana tunes and lamenting Kurt Cobain's death, ultimately committed suicide themselves, particularly concerns Kohn:

"I think (musicians) are definitely held up on too high of a pedestal. Any kid who hasn't (matured yet) can get so influenced by these figures and they can get influenced by some of the negativities that they seem to project. Kurt Cobain was a perfect example, he made no bones about discussing how unhappy he was and displaying how unhappy and disgusted he was. But at the same time, he shouldn't have to be one hundred percent responsible and watch everything that he says, or he wouldn't be being true to himself."

I think that any kid that would go and do that has some serious ... problems to start with and it might, on the surface, be something that a song lyric caused, but I think there is a combination of a lot of things that would cause somebody to do something like that. It's incredibly sad, ... but it's not the first time this sort of thing has happened."

On a much lighter note, Kohn turned the tables at the interview's conclusion, by posing his own question: "I wanted to ask you actually, because I've been reading a lot of press about REM lately, what do you make of their five years off of the road? Do you see that as sort of a cop-out or was it necessary for the band's evolution?" After a few minutes discussion, Kohn ultimately drew his own tentative conclusions:

"I think it has a lot to do with (Stipe's) disdain for the road. The impression that I'm getting is that they almost were going crazy by the end of their ten year road swing. In hindsight, it was a brilliant career move I think. I can't really think of any other band's that could get away with that."

No doubt, Kohn hopes that one day the Watchmen will be able to afford a similar luxury of more laid-back touring schedules. In the mean time, however, the tour van rolls on. It stops here tonight.