

GENRECID

MICHAEL EDWARDS

SEVEN INCHES OF PLEASURE

I have a fetish, and I'm not ashamed to admit it either. A fetish for vinyl. I was somewhat late at embracing the new technology of CDs because I didn't see any real reason to leave records behind. Even now I still think that one of the most fun things you can do with a compact disc is dabble passing motorists on sunny days. But now that the major record labels have turned their back on vinyl then most people assume that is no longer available. Disappeared. Gone.

Nothing could be further from the truth - vinyl is still out there for anyone who wants to find it. And thanks to the efforts of some independent labels, the somewhat lowly seven inch single has undergone a rebirth in the past few years. Indeed, if you go to any credible record shop these days, you should be able to find a healthy number of 7" singles waiting to find a good home. Record labels like Sub-Pop, K, and Simple Machines have always kept it as more than just a marketing ploy. But in the UK, it seems to have become simply that where there are limited editions, picture discs and all other manner of gimmicks to sell it. Still, as long as it keeps the 7" single around then who am I to complain?



In addition to the cheapness of the 7" single for both the musician and the listener, there is an aesthetic connected to it which no other format has been able to duplicate. With only a few minutes to impress, any song which graces the A-side has to be something special. The B-side, on the other hand, can be quite disposable without doing too much harm. But if you have few more groovy songs up your sleeve then you can head down the double A-side route too. Then press it on some coloured vinyl (although you just can't go wrong with black...), stick it in a pretty sleeve and there you have it - something which is a sheer joy to behold.

Maybe I am being a bit melodramatic about it, but the 7" single has always been my weakness. And so here are a few of my favourites from the last while and I hope that it will inspire you to go and blow the dust off your turntables.

Hopefully you were lucky enough to catch Pluto when they were in town a couple of weeks ago. I was, and I also picked up their two singles from their concessions desk. And what damned fine singles they are too; four tracks and all pop gems. The first of the

brace contains the absolutely fabulous *Rock Candy*; nice bass intro, fuzzy guitars and sweeter-than-sugar vocals. Sigh. Beg, borrow or steal a copy of this. They can now be found on Vancouver's Mint Records, who released the follow-up *Deathstar/Million and Two*. This one has a bit of a harder edge, but still delivers the proverbial goods in a no nonsense kind of way. They sounded real good live, and the vinyl doesn't disappoint at all.

That same night, Plumtree were also on the same bill. Their recording debut is a split 7" on Cinnamon Toast with Charlottetown's Strawberry. It is impossible to talk of Plumtree without at least thinking of the word 'cute'. In fact, if they were any cuter then they would be Cub. They have a much fuller sound than Cub, thanks to having two guitarists who pluck out some pretty complex fretwork. The two songs, *Dog Gone Crazy* and *Have A Banana*, are witty but a wee bit too slight. At the gig they had plenty of other impressive songs though, and this is still a lot of fun. The lovely mauve vinyl is a nice touch too.

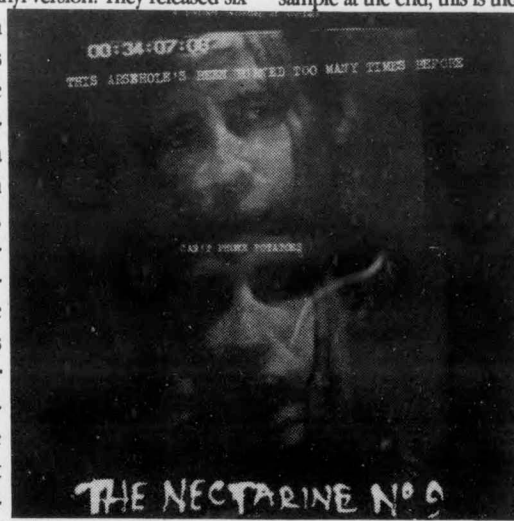
The masters of shambling guitar pop (since the second demise of the Shop Assistants) are the Far Tulips, and they have just followed up their first album with two new singles on Vinyl Japan (which are also available combined on one CD single for the non-believers out there). They don't exactly take a new direction on any of the songs with the title track from the first single, *Driving Me Wild*, being the liveliest. The other two on that single are mainly acoustic, and more contemplative, but that doesn't last thanks to their two singles from their concessions desk. *Confessions Of An English Girl*. But the best of this bunch is *New Spring Rites For Sarah* which shows that they can write pretty de-

cent pop songs when they put their mind to it. And in just over fourteen minutes, its all over - it makes me want to pick up the album as soon as I can.

This next review appears to be a posthumous one as the Sugargliders have decided to call it a day I was informed recently. And that is a real pity as they were rapidly becoming one of my favourites, if only for their decision to put LESS tracks on their CD singles than on the vinyl version. They released six singles on Sarah records which have now been collected onto an album (with some songs, not surprisingly, missing...) but the best one was *Will We Ever Learn*. A peculiar song as the chorus isn't nearly as important as the bridge, and it ends just when it begins to pull you in. But the driving acoustic guitar and passionate vocals make you play it so many times that its length doesn't really pose a problem. Help mourn their loss by investing in some of their work and then ask yourself why you didn't care when they really needed you.

And finally, my (cue fanfare) 'single of the month' from one of my favourite Scottish bands to emerge in the past couple of years. Namely, The Nectarine No. 9, and their new single (deep breath) *This Arsehole's Been*

Burned Too Many Times Before is probably their best yet. Davey Henderson has a real gift for writing some of the most memorable pop songs even though they are somewhat unconventional to say the least. The guitars are distorted and twisted as severely as the vocals. Yet the hook is a sharp one, and its going to get under your skin without any real problem. From the buzzing guitars at the beginning to the "have a beautiful fucking day..." sample at the end, this is the work of a very sick man. A very sick man who just happens to be a genius. Once more Postcard Recordings of Scotland have hit a very rich vein of gold in their popmine.



Contact Addresses:
 Mini Records, 699-810 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4C9.
 Cinnamon Toast Records, 2464 Robie St, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 4N1.
 Vinyl Japan Records, 281 Camden High Street, London, NW1 7BX, ENGLAND.
 Sarah Records, PO Box 691, Bristol, BS99 1FG, ENGLAND.
 Postcard Recordings of Scotland, PO Box 546, Glasgow, G12 8NY, SCOTLAND.
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