

What's Dylan done for us lately? Is Spinal Tap's newest just wind? Does consciousness precede being?

SPINAL TAP
Break Like the Wind
Polymer Records

I remember the first time I saw Spinal Tap play live. It was 1977 — a friend told me he had tickets for this great British band from the sixties who were making an unannounced appearance at the El Mocambo.

When I found out it wasn't the Rolling Stones, I got most of my \$150 back.

When I got home that evening, I told my dad I was a Taphead. I'll never forget what he said: "Really? You're a plumber now? Can you do something about the downstairs toilet?"

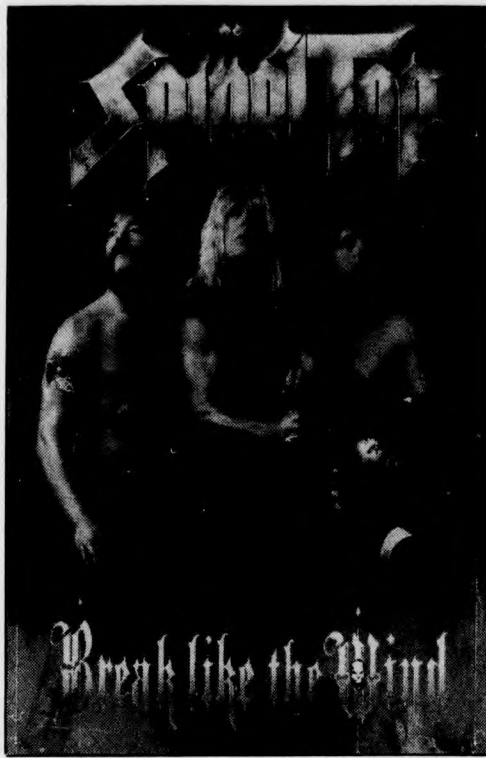
Back then they were a jazz-punk fusion band. They started the concert with a 20-minute improvisation about nuclear waste that featured a 19-minute saxophone solo.

The stage was dominated by a 20-foot inflatable cockroach with the face of then-US President Gerald Ford. Well, actually, due to a mix-up at the latex plant, it was a picture of then-US comedian Jerry Lewis. Guitarist/vocalist David St. Hubbins disgustingly poked it with his pick; it exploded, showering the first 10 rows with plastic cockroach parts.

Half-way through the set, drummer Nick "Stumpy" Brancato started smoldering. Fanboys in the front row shouted, "Burn, baby, burn!" Towards the end of the show, lead guitarist Nigel Tufnel commented into what he thought was a dead mike, "Drummers just don't spontaneously combust the way they used to."

The next day, I told my girlfriend I was a Taphead. I'll never forget what she said: "Really? You're an electronics technician now? Can you check the heads on my tape deck?"

The appearance was in support of the *Intravenous DeMilo* album, which we eagerly brought home and listened to. There was an unforgettable song on the album



called... well, umm, whatever — but we had heard a rumour that if you played it backwards, you could hear Nigel whispering, "Paul eats tofu." We wore through seven albums before we ran out of money.

This same combination of simple music and great business sense is in evidence on the band's latest album, *Break Like the Wind*, the follow-up 'best of' collection to 1986's self-titled album (now known as "The Black Album").

The most recent songs are probably the weakest. Like their metal brothers, Spinal Tap come across as misogynist (one example being the song "Bitch School," with lyrics like "It's time to give the whip a crack./I'm gonna have to send you back to/Bitch School./Bitch School.") and incredibly stupid ("Christmas With the Devil.")

Are we supposed to take these guys seriously?

But *Break Like the Wind* delves deeply into the band's rich musical past, coming up with, if not gems, certainly semi-precious stones. The original demo of "All the Way

Home," the first collaboration of St. Hubbins and Tufnel, was found in a box in a shed; it has that unique "buried under half a ton of dirt" sound that became associated with The Thamesmen (the Spinal Tap starter set).

"Stinkin' Up the Great Outdoors" captures the Woodstock Generation better than anything Joni Mitchell ever wrote. And, of course, there are the anthems: "The Majesty of Rock" and the title track, with lyrics like "We are the children who grew up too fast/We are the dust of a future past," blow away anything Queen ever did.

All the old Tap tricks are in effect on the album. St. Hubbins' unique vocals still attract dogs and small farm animals. Tufnel gets a little help from some of rock's lesser guitar heroes, like Jeff Beck. And drummer Mick Shrimpton is replaced by Ric Shrimpton, the twin brother he never knew he had.

Mmm... well, intelligence was never the band's strong suit. But, their music is guaranteed to annoy your grandparents, an important consideration in these days of corporate rock.

So, go forth you rock and rollers and proudly proclaim your Tapheadedness. And, if anybody mistakes you for a member of the CIA, turn the volume up to 11.

— Bill Burbell



The Dead Monkeys
"Terminal Identity Crisis Blues" CD Single independent

The Dead Monkeys are to split up again, according to manager Lefty Goldblatt. They've been in the business for 10 years, nine of them as other groups. Originally The Dead Salmon, they became Trout for a while, then

Fried Trout, then Poached Trout in a White Wine Sauce and, finally, Herring.

Splitting up for nearly a month, they reformed as Red Herring, then became Dead Herring for awhile, and then Dead Loss, which reflected the state of the group. Splitting up again to "get their heads together," they reformed a month later as Heads Together, a tight little name that lasted them through a difficult period when their drummer was suspected of suffering from death. It turned out to be only a rumor and they became Dead Together, then the Dead Gear, which led to Dead Donkeys, Led Donkeys and the inevitable split-up.

After nearly 10 days, they reformed again as Soul Dead, then Dead Sole, Rock Cod, Haddock, Whitebait, Fish, Mackerel, Salmon, Poached Salmon, Paoched Salmon in a White Wine Sauce and Mrs. Harry Arthurs. The last name, their favorite, had to be dropped following an injunction and they split up again.

When they reformed a record-breaking two days later, they ditched the fishy references and became the Dead Monkeys, a name they stuck with for the rest of their careers. Now, a week later, they've finally split up... Oh, there goes the telephone. Yes? What do I think of Dead Duck? Or Lobster... or what?

— Marque Wiseblood



— Bill Toeholds

aye reviewer O'Cherry goes one on one with rock pugilist Dirk Squidface



Dirk Squidface shows his form.

With the completion of a successfully violent North American tour, which saw the burning down of three hotels, seven roadies and an audience, aye WEAKLY music reporter Don O'Cherry talked to Dirk Squidface, the man who has played open wounds for The Uh...Hesitants for over 12 years.

aye: It's great to see you.

Squidface: Yes, it is.

Your new album on the Vegetarian Label, *Karmic Sub-topian Maximized Mantric Intrusions Rapid Emulsion Sick Custard Without Substance in Thornhill Daft Abstract Connections Hummdiggersquatbeebee-minnihaha* has been held up.

Yeah.

Why?

They're having trouble with the spelling.

How long have you been working on the album?

Well, about two weeks on the album and two years on the title.

When do you come out?

I came out last week.

Feel better?

Much better thanks.

How did the American tour go?

Oh, terrific. In fact, we're pretty proud of ourselves, because in just three nights, we did over seven million dollars.

Business?

No, damage.

Wow. How many people came to the concerts?

Including the roadies?

Excluding the roadies.

Excluding the roadies, altogether the official number for attendance at our concerts was about... five.

Not too good.

Well, that's three more than we had in New York. And on the European tour we just had the roadies.

I gather there's been a bit of trouble within the group?

Well, Al had trouble remembering his name after we dropped him down a elevator shaft in L.A., so his people are suing my people, although of course we still see each other and are the best of pals. Ronnie's got a small piece of brain lodged in his skull, which he's been coping with for years. He may have that out, I dunno... And Pete... well, Pete's a genius, you know, he's too much. But his alcohol intake...

Too much?

Far fuckin' too much. You know, he'd be playing bottle-neck guitar and drinking out the bottle at the same time. He became so rough our manager wanted to fire him, but I was against that.

You wanted to keep him?

I wanted to kill him.

As a group, you're really into violence. I remember in Kansas City you burned down your audience.

Yeah, that was great. Violence is great, you know. Only when I'm truly violent am I really at peace. That's a saying of Sigi's. Sigi's our guru.

He's from India?

No, he's from Twin Peaks. But he works in an Indian restaurant. Sigi always says "Mrs. Fletcher says that to understand everything you need to know nothing, and to know nothing is to truly understand everything."

Who's Mrs. Fletcher?

She's Sigi's landlady. She gets these terrific insights into human nature, and Sigi sells them.

Are they good?

They're expensive. Mrs. Fletcher says, "Death is only a kind of life, and all life is dying."

Great.

Yes, she's shit-hot on paradox.