

Entertainment

"And then I was red dust"
—Wolfgang Weyrauch-

Choke music

Elliott Lefko and Reid Dunlop

They were once labelled punks, and the tag still applies.

Last week *The Stranglers* performed their high-energy, high-decibel music to a very crowded Masonic Temple audience. For many of the faithful on the dance floor it was the first chance to see the group that, along with *The Sex Pistols* and *The Clash*, was at the vortex of the punk hurricane that swept through England in 1975. Here is an interview with *Jet Black*, the 46-year-old drummer, in which he discusses the successes, failures and aspirations of his six-year-old band.

You've had problems getting here. Your lead singer, Hugh Cornwall, has a record for drugs, and the Canadian border officials didn't want to let him in. Is this a common occurrence?

Yes, it's like as soon as *The Stranglers* tour, all the police forces of the world go berserk. And it's all about nothing.

Is it because of "The Bust"?

They think we're evil people. But we've learned to live with it, it's been going on so long. In England we have a problem with getting bookings and hotel reservations. Everytime we go through an airport there might be 300 people coming off an airplane, and they'll stop four people for questioning. You wanna guess who those four people are?

Were you ever that rowdy type of band that would throw things around your hotel room?

No, we've never been into that trip. We respect hotels, because these are our homes, this is where we live. We're touring for nine, ten, eleven months of the year, this is where we live, what would we smash it up for?

How long have *The Stranglers* been at it?

Six years. The last year was the first we slowed down a bit, out of necessity to sort out some problems with management, record companies, agents, and people who work for us. Things got really screwed up for us in the last 18 months. We've now emerged from that with a new manager, new everything, and things are beginning to look up.

With the trouble you mentioned earlier, did you ever get involved in any fights during your concerts?

In our career of six years of touring, probably touching thousands of gigs, I've probably seen four fights. The incidents of violence and trouble at any of our gigs are rarer than getting killed walking across the road.

Do you have the rap because of the bust and the riot that you were supposed to have provoked at one of your concerts in Nice?

I don't know what it is, but I guess it has to do with the name. When we started you have to remember that we were getting towards the end of an era of music; an era when rock music had backed itself into a corner and didn't know where to go. Everybody was doing the same thing. It was long hair, high heel boots, flashy guitar solos, all this boring crap. So when we started the feeling was that this was so boring we have to do something different. So we reversed everything, we wore our hair short, we wore flat shoes, we never did any guitar solos and instead of the prettiest name we could think of we got the ugliest. We've always done the opposite. But it worked in that people sat up and noticed. But it also brought with it lots of other problems. It was association by name. Like there was *The Sex Pistols* saying 'fuck' on television. A colossal outrage. And the newspapers were saying 'this is latest punk outrage'. And the word punk had been coined.

After your last tour of America it was reported that you didn't like the country.

We were dissatisfied with our previous record company, in America. They didn't know what to do with *The Stranglers*. They couldn't understand what we were, what we stood for, what we had done and how we wanted to do it. All they wanted to do was put us in a box and put a pretty ribbon around it and tie a bow on it and hand it to the public and say, "Here's a beautiful package call *The Stranglers*—buy it." We didn't want to be treated like showbiz product.

What happened in Nice?

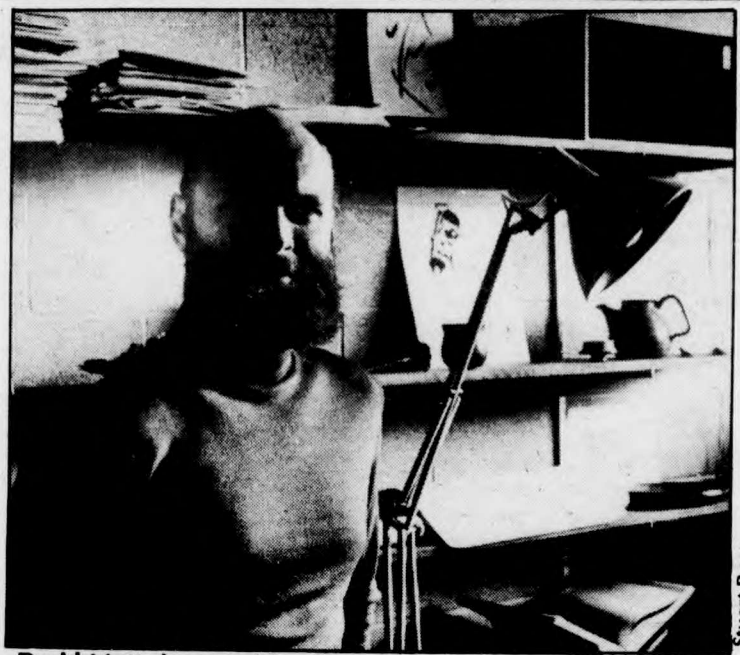
Before we got to Nice, the local paper had written a piece about

The Stranglers touring in France, and it said something about us blazing a trail across France, leaving scenes of violence and destruction in its wake. So the university who had booked us must have read that and tried to cancel us, only we had a contract, so they did their utmost to screw the gig up. They pulled the electricity, no dressing rooms, wouldn't let us bring a truck in, did everything they possibly could to stop the gig happening. I'm assuming that they read the article.

We tried to play and within eight minutes the power just packed up. We hired a generator, but they wouldn't let us bring it in. The kids who'd waited to see us for two or three years were frustrated. So they just smashed the university and I don't blame them. The kids split and the police had to arrest someone; so they said, "Let's arrest the band." So they arrested *The Stranglers*."

There was a benefit for *The Stranglers* shortly afterwards, in which many fellow musicians came to your defense by volunteering to jam, including Robert Fripp.

There must have been ten or twelve guitarists, and all came and did one or two songs. And vocalists. There were the three of us (without Cornwall). And a couple of blokes would come off, and a couple would come on. It was such a lot of fun that the musicians, like 20 of them, all said that this has been such a lot of fun that we should do it every year. So it might become an annual jamboree. It was amazing.



David Mott: in a sentimental mood

Mott jazz

Sonny Badman

The *York Jazz Orchestra* concert at Bethune last week was an impressive display of student musicianship and further testimony to the high calibre of *York's* jazz department. Under the direction of David Mott, the 13-piece big band played through eight arrangements, ranging from jazz standards such as "In a Sentimental Mood" to more adventurous material like Sam Rivers' "Impulse".

For the most part the band played cleanly and precisely, although there was trepidation on a complex arrangement of "A Night in Tunisia". The trumpet section was particularly crisp and accurate. Anchoring it all was the fine rhythm section, with Ben Heywood's limpid guitar chording and Morty Melanson's solid bass-work being the stand-outs.

A considerable portion of the evening was devoted to improvised solos by Director Mott feels that

that improvisation is the essence of jazz and emphasizes spontaneous soloing. All the soloists had good ideas but Rob Frayne on tenor sax, trombonist Steve Donald and altoist Del Dako were especially impressive.

Perhaps the most intriguing selection of the evening was "Distant Harmonies" by Frank Bennett. Bennett composed the tune in India where he is studying South Indian Karnatak music; the piece reflects this in the strange mystical mood it evokes.

Interestingly, for their next concert, the *Jazz Orchestra* is hoping to augment the band with faculty member Trichy Sankaran, a master of South Indian drumming. In the process of crossing musical boundaries, the collaboration should provide for some fascinating music. Mott is also considering putting together a concert of compositions by Thelonious Monk. In any case, judging from last week's show, we can expect much from the *York Jazz Orchestra* in the future.

It's a black and white world

Lydia Pawlenko

In the course of their artistic explorations, Ron Martin, Malcolm Rains and Colette Whiten have abandoned the use of colour, choosing to develop the elements unique to achromatic art. The works of these three contemporary Canadian artists are being concurrently exhibited in a show appropriately titled "Beyond Colour", at the Glendon Gallery until December 21.

Most immediately striking to the viewer are the sculptural works of Colette Whiten. Her stark, immobile plaster castings of live subjects survive as remnants of the artist's ongoing exploration of the human form. The two works exhibited, "Paul I" (1980) and "Paul III" (1980), are not unlike forsaken chrysalids—fossilized remnants reminding viewers of the ritual which had involved the bodies they contained and supported.

The artist's molding procedure consists of wrapping a friend in damp surgical cloth, then encasing him in a heavy layer of burlap for about an hour, after which he is cut out of the hardened mass and set free. The resulting concave molds immortalize the negative impressions of the individual's anatomy. She confronts these negative spaces by shading them in with graphite, effectively achieving a positive reconstruction.

Whiten has wisely abandoned the use of heavy lumber and metal supporting contraptions whose sinister associations had overpowered the plaster castings in previous works. In fact, Whiten



Whiten's "Paul III" (1980)

has actually hung one piece from the ceiling on a chain, suspending the figure like a side of beef.

The use of the colour and texture of clothing have also been removed from the sculptures, and the artist no longer finds it necessary to provide documentary photographs and written descriptions explaining the casting process to viewers, as she had in

past exhibitions. Rather, exposed without camouflage in the tensions and ambiguities of the plaster is the naked and vulnerable body of her friend Paul, who appears as a ghost-like victim of his space.

Demanding an even greater sense of contemplation from the viewer are the works of Ron Martin and Malcolm Rains.

It is light which defines the surface of Ron Martin's "Water on paper" series. In these creations, Martin eliminates colour and paint. His method consists of drawing on white paper with a water-soaked brush, permitting him to create images which expand into the third dimension. Produced in 1973, this series is a result of Martin's own personal exploration of the fundamental conflicts at play in his unconscious.

Malcolm Rains' white, plaster rectangular forms are smooth, simple and quite refined. They engage the viewer in a moment of quiet study. The artist's process begins by pouring white plaster into a plexiglass and wood mold. Then, before the plaster has completely dried, the resistant surface is marked with a rigid metal scraper, and this creates cracks. A tension is created when the broken pieces are replaced, and the surface is rubbed with turpentine and oil, then polished with wax.

There is directness and refined simplicity in the works contained in this exhibition. They draw from the viewer strong emotional response by allowing much insight into conceptual contents, artistic processes and mediums.



The Stranglers, including *Jet Black* on the right. Lead singer *Hugh Cornwall* is missing as he had a dinner date with *Canadian Customs*.