

# T-t-t-talking 'bout my generation

by Emily MacNaughton

You might get to a point in your life when you want to be part of Something. You might want to become a part of history, a Somebody Somewhere Important in the midst of Something Big. The restrictions of Adult Life are just around the corner so it's time to make a mark, join a movement, fight a movement: to feel completely powerful, alive and free, as if you have nothing to lose for possibly the last time.

## Close the door on the world, listen to Soundgarden, bliss out, forget everything

This was the point in our youthful predecessors' lives when they overthrew monarchies, joined the army, fought for the vote, for disarmament, for the end of the war, for racial and sexual equality; when they bootlegged, did the Charleston, got drunk on the wrong side of town and hitchhiked or hopped trains across North America, listening to Bebop and Ragtime, inventing Rock and Roll. They were the Youth of the Revolution: the flappers, the beatniks, the hippies, the Black Panthers, The Jacobins, The Libbers. All Somebodies Somewhere Important in the midst of Something Big hurtling toward Immortality with breathless conviction.

Certain books, music and movies

stand firm as timeless Testaments of Youth; one chapter, one song or one scene can capture the vital essence of a generation and although representative of a certain era, transcend time's boundaries to become immortal portraits of the rebellion, freedom and uncertainty of turbulent ascent to Adulthood.

The young are, in some ways, the siblings of yesterday's visionaries. The predecessors, music, ideas, actions fuel new movements of youth culture. However, in identifying with the spirit of previous decades, with novels such as *On the Road*, musical events such as Woodstock or movies like *Rebel Without a Cause*, many run the risk of simply mimicking the past. The blood of a past pop culture shouldn't be sucked dry; there is a need for originality, for new ideas representative of the problems, concerns and joys of the present era - in short, something new has to happen.

Last year, Douglas Coupland published his novel *Generation X* and Nirvana released their *Nevermind*. These were promising signs of Something New, tentative plans for foundations of a new epoch in Youth Identity. Not since the late sixties and early seventies has there been the potential for a pop culture with such universal force and impact. Movements since then, like Punk, only spoke for a small proportion of the continent's youths; *Nevermind's* expression of boredom and nihilistic anger and *Generation X's* anxiety over the economic, environmental and spiritual poverty of the present and impending future struck chords among a large audience. These two works began to speak the mind of an emerging, frustrated generation.

Vancouver and Seattle are the

hometowns of the creators of *Generation X* and *Nevermind*. In the last year, largely due to the success of Nirvana, the west coast music scene has been closely monitored by the continent's restless and expectant youth. In this age of war, unemployment, rising racial consciousness and intensifying division between the races, of ecological disaster and political upheaval, there is a need to give voice to the generational pain. Grunge, a name given to the throbbing, distorted guitar rock of Seattle bands such as Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and Mudhoney, seemed to affirm this need and underline the general mood of the moment. The sound hit the airwaves

and then its impact quickly spread eastward. So what's my carefully elaborated point? Well...when the movie *Singles* came out in September, I thought my carefully elaborated idea was coming into clearer focus. Here was a movie with the potential to say it all - to examine the incredible impact of the Seattle music scene on the youth of today, to drive another nail into the foundation of our timely identity. A movie that could represent the moment, yet relay a message so timeless that it would continue to transmit to the souls of future generations. But it didn't (idealists are generally disappointed). It did what it risked doing: it gave an accurate,

slick presentation of today's Hip, today's together, today's, dare I say it, politically correct and upwardly mobile. *Singles* risked saying that this was just the Year of Grunge, that the initial intensity and vitality of the movement has been watered down and turned into an insipid fashion statement. The movie took the an- them of a possible era and turned them into a best-selling soundtrack. *Singles'* characters are cute, cool, together and marketable: Campbell Scott is a former college DJ turned urban planner with a conscience, Kyra Sedwick, his love-interest, works for an environmental action group,

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# Is that all she ever thinks about?

by Geoffrey Ineson

My first response to Madonna's book was, well, a stock response I suppose. But that I mean I was rather nonplussed by the level of self-abasement the artist achieved. But that would be knocking a primarily pictorial work with social morality, and ignoring any critical convention.

**Madonna SEX**  
Warner Books  
ISBN 0-446-51732-1  
\$49.99 (US includes CD)

So... about the book *SEX*. Well... er... a... you see... It does have artistic merit. Even the presentation of the book is unique. The two large pieces of aluminum which comprise the cover, I think redefine the term *Hard Cover book*. But insofar as yet, I am unable to draw any analogous conclusions about the metal cover unto

the contents. Other than "cover for cover sake".

So... about the contents of *SEX*. Well... maybe... hmmm... er... Lots of pictures. Lots of pictures in very much the tradition of epicureanism. Pictures of Madonna nude in the streets of Miami. Pictures of New York night clubs - the ones that don't make the travel brochures. Pictures of people (including Isabella Rossellini and Vanilla Ice) mostly posing with their various partners. I should add that these are mostly suggestive erotic photos, as opposed to the real McCoy of hard-core porn or the basics of biology. I think that the artistic merit of the book should be argued that the people are in fact posing for pictures, and not actually having sex, which the book over-orchestrates. But it sure looks like they want to.

There are no pretensions here about the book being about anything

else than illustrating erotic/exotic sex. However, the book also contains Dr. Dita's (Madonna's) erotic prose letters, in which she addresses a mate called Johnny. I'm not sure about their relationship - the particular culture that's often portrayed is at a polar end to my own - but I will be optimistic and say that they'll live happily ever after. Of the few pages with words, there are some interesting 'advice' pieces that won't give Dr. Ruth Westheimer a run for any authority on the subject of sex, but they signify that the book may not be as self-indulgent as it appeared.

If you don't like the idea of Madonna's *SEX*, or have exceptionally better taste than the audience which Warner Books intends, or maybe you're like me and are not mature enough for the nineties, anyway, I suggest that you pay the fifty American dollars, tear out the pages, and use the covers to bake cookies.



# Jamming traffic with the Shuffle Demons



by Heidi Radford

The Shuffle Demons will be playing two nights of concerts at the James Dunn Theatre, Friday and Saturday Nov. 6 & 7, at 8pm in conjunction with the release of their new CD *Alive in Europe*. The spontaneous and funky sax jazz quintet plays with a sense of the unlikely and always with an element of surprise. Tenorsax Demon David Parker fore-

warns Halifax concert-goers, "Expect the unexpected."

"We are more carefree in *Alive in Europe*. It captures the Demons' visual, candid and spontaneous nature," says David. "I hope people will respond to this and be crazy in the theatre this weekend." The Shuffle Demons pride themselves on being unpredictable no matter where they play.

This decision to play in theatres is

what the Demons call, "an effort to upgrade the quality of venue for acoustic purposes." This is a definite contrast from their early days of busking on the streets of Toronto and proves gigging pays off. The Shuffle Demons guarantee their carefree style will remain as is in their first soft seat performance at the Dunn.

Moving off Toronto's corner of Yonge and Bloor to the recording studio was a transfer many Toronto

pedestrians predicted. Toronto Shuffle Demon fans now share their original street band's sensational saxophonic sound with enthusiasts across Europe and Canada. They have released four popular albums - *Streetsniks* (1986), *Bop Rap* (1988), *What do You Want* (1990) and *Alive in Europe* (1992).

Demon energy exudes from the three saxes, bass, drums and vocals. Their puting brass music provides a unique blend of rap, blues, funk, swing, country and latin tunes.

Our 4th album *Alive in Europe* is 'very live', says Demon David, tenor sax. *Alive in Europe* is a selection of songs chosen from over 90 hours of recorded live performances from their six European tours in 1990-1992. Full of anecdotes, David says, "It is as if we wrote our own book: 'My European Vacation' by the Shuffle Demons."

Busking their way across Europe offered the quintet an opportunity to play their wild free jazz and be somewhat influenced by people David called, "Crazy international musicians with eclectic music. We met so many funny people and have great stories to tell. Our tunes tell these

stories." For those of you planning a visit to Europe, don't be surprised if the Europeans seemed mystified and ask why you are not wearing a beret, tacky glasses and loud demon painted clothing.... The Shuffle Demons assure Europeans that yes, everyone dresses like them in Canada.

What can Shuffle Demon fans expect from their band in the immediate future? "We are composing more vocal tunes which are more approachable for video," says David who reveals the Shuffle Demons are currently at work on a 5th album to be released in February. David suggests Demon fans watch for new tunes like "Soleil de Lion" and "Stop the Rot".

The Shuffle Demons promise to be entertaining. David assures me their songs are not about love and heartbreak but about cockroaches, public transit, maple syrup and puke. The Shuffle Demons are presented by CKDU and tickets are now on sale for this weekend at the Cohn box office for \$10.

Check this zany, upbeat band out for yourself this weekend and catch the "Spadina Bus" to the Dunn.

# Bourbonites set sights beyond barscene

by Steve Mills

Last Friday night, Toronto's Bourbon Tabernacle Choir invaded the Grawood Lounge with their infectious grooves. Touring in support of their brand new CD release, "Superior Cackling Hen", the B.T.C. decided to venture east for a couple of one-off gigs. I got together Friday afternoon with the lead-vocalist team of Kate Fenner and Dave Wall, over coffee and poutine, to discuss life, the band, and everything.

SM Tell me about the title of your new CD.

DW Superior Cackling Hen. It's from a Jimi Hendrix song. You know the song that was stolen for "I'm too sexy for your party..."

KF "Third Stone From the Sun" is what he's trying to say.

DW Yeah, in the middle of it he goes "Oh baby, you are a superior cackling hen", and it's totally psychedelic.

KF We were having a brutal time coming to a consensus on an album title. So Andrew (Whiteman, guitar) came in one day and said that, and we're all huge Hendrix fans and he's been a big part of what we've done. So it seemed like a logical thing.

SM Does your album cover have anything to do with the title?

KF The very inside of the cover is a photograph that Jason, our bass player, took of a guy in Washington Square park in N.Y.C. where Chris (Miller, guitar) was busking. He was wearing this beak and he was on glue

and he was just sort of out there. So we had a great picture of him with his head back and his mouth open, he was laughing. So we took that as the centre of it and built around it.

DW Chris was not on glue. It was the guy...

SM Tell me about the record deal that you've come up with.

DW A new record company that has formed in Toronto, Yonder Records. We're their first signing. We're distributed through Sony, which in some ways is better than direct signing in Canada.

KF This way we were able to make the album totally independently. So we paid for the whole thing, well we haven't quite yet paid for it, but creatively we had total control over the whole project.

## it's totally psychedelic

DW Yeah, The other record deals we were offered wanted to exert much more control in the areas of money, publishing, things like that.

SM There was a period when Kate was in school in Montreal, yet the band continued as an entity in Toronto.

KF I'm going into my third year of doing this full time, but everybody slowly gave up what they were doing. Other people started going to school

and gave it up, and finally I was the last to really give up all hopes of a regular life.

SM So was it conscious in everyone's mind that you would return at some point?

KF I think so. It wasn't in mine until I actually did. After second year in university I was still feeling somewhat disenchanted. University wasn't what I expected it to be. I thought it would be a lot more encouraging and creative.

SM Superior Cackling Hen is your first official release after three indie cassettes. Are you satisfied with the outcome? Is there anything that you would change at this point?

## Soul-gospel booty shaking

DW It's hard to tell, you know, it's too new. Maybe in six months we'll be able to sit down and analyse it. But with any art, I find, you can't really look at it objectively for a while.

SM Does it capture your live sound?

KF A couple of songs sorta do.

DW Well that's not necessarily a great thing, you know. There are some bands, like NRBQ, this really popular cult band from the States, who are just insane live. But on album, most of it is almost verging on wimpy. So they really understand that it's a different medium, a whole different genre between recording and live.

SM There is such a diversity of sounds and structures on your album. How would you describe yourselves?

DW Soul-gospel-booty shaking-cel- ebratory-transcendent music.

KW Right on. We actually have a lot of ballads and slower tempo tunes, but we have to be selective of when we can play them live. You can only throw in a couple every night. A bar is not really a listening environment.

## no deletes allowed

SM What sort of venues do you see playing in the future?

DW In Toronto we've been playing bigger and bigger places, and I think the audience there is willing to listen, as opposed to just getting drunk and partying.

KF To do the bar circuit too long is exhausting. The energy becomes unfocused, there are so many distractions. We did Kingswood and that was just heaven. We opened for the Barenaked Ladies, and the sound was great, and having everybody focussed on you is great.

SM Can you expound on what is important lyrically or philosophically?

DW We have a tune, "My New Thing", which features a poem that Chris wrote. One of the lines says not to do things just because you can. There is a tendency not just in music, but in everything, to do things because you are able, and you ruin

things. And we all have this temptation. Some bands do things because they can; kind of a show-off thing which is definitely not part of what we want to do.

KF For song content, it's the notion of "think about what you do". Consider your actions, consider your thoughts and what you say, how you influence things around you. The establishment in general discourages people, making them think that things are beyond their control and that they have no choices. That's what we're trying to learn about ourselves and also show other people, that you can make a choice.

SM Can you express these ideas in video medium?

KF Now that we have a basic studio grasp, we need to realize the potential of video, because we haven't so far. It's a valuable medium but so much of it is disposable.

SM What are the short term and long-term goals for the band?

KF The short term is to plug the hell out of this record. We're proud of it and we want it to run it's course.

SM No deletes allowed.

DW Exactly. We don't want it to be in 7-11 in the bin somewhere.

KF And long-term it's I think...

DW International.

KF... to reach a stage where we can record whenever we want to, and be financially in a position to explore every idea that we have.

This week in Spiff: Author intrusion and subsequent post-modern hijinks.

**M.F. GUSHUE'S S.P.I.F. Part Road Moves PROLOGUE**

Greetings o' loving Fandom! M.F. Gushue here to give the play by play commentary on what occurred after that incident with the dumb thug.

With Hobbes' disposal of the thug from Moes' gang, Marmaduke was called in to handle the problem... in his own unique way.

NOM, come see what MARMADUKE found!

Learning of the death of his fave gang member, leader Moe Tovolotch sends out 'the boys' to dispense a bit of friendly advice!

I destroyed the damn Tiger once, I can do it again!

After a quick ride in Calvin's "little red wagon", they decide it best to leave town, and inform the gang.

Lacking funds, the choice to trainhop is made. VIA RAIL (what's left of it!) is the target.

It's a yearn calling for all upper class TIGERS!

Oh wow! Bob the parking meter thief.

And so a new adventure begins... but not without a few friends.

You were a hero of mine in my cleft years!

HE'S NOT GETTING MY CAR!

I get stuck with a companion (who wants to go to Boise, Idaho)

Obvious self-portrait to make the artist cooler and more hip to readers.

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