



ENTERTAINMENT

A BAND ON THE EDGE?

by Michael Edwards
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It's been well over a year since the last long player from Moncton's Eric's Trip. In the meantime there have been a few bits and pieces which came out, and the inevitable touring including a couple of stops in Fredericton. But they have broken their silence at long last with their third album for Seattle's Sub-Pop Records. Not only does it come with a lovely, sparkly CD tray, it also contains some of their best songwriting and a satisfyingly 'big' sound that we have come to expect from their live shows. But here are *The Brunswickan*, we want to know more. We want the inside scoop. And who better to ask than guitarist and vocalist, Rick White for the real story behind *Purple Blue*.

So tell me about Purple Blue.

Well, it's been out about a week or so - it's just the new chapter in the story of Eric's Trip

And what do people think of it so far?

We just recorded it to be more of a live sounding record as the other ones were more pieced together. So we wanted to capture the band live, and people have really been noticing that.

There has always been a real difference between how the band sounds live and on record - was there an effort to make that difference smaller?

Yeah, there we do sound quite different live than we do on record, kind of on purpose as we wanted to make two separate forms of the songs. There was a louder version live and a more dreamy version on record. This time we tried to make it sound more like the live versions.

So does that mean that your live performances are going to have to change so that there is still a difference?

No...we just finally wanted to have a record where we finally captured the bigger sound.

That's the most obvious difference with the new record. The sound is so much bigger and fuller.

Yeah, we tried to do that. And if people think that it did happen then I guess we did ok.

Do you see it as a definite development for the band - the next step?

Just another step really. Sometimes we don't know what direction we are moving in - you just kind of let people go from day to day.

And you worked with Bob Weston on this one?

We worked with him before, and we felt comfortable with him as he was really relaxed. He didn't pressure us at all, and to record live we needed someone to help push the buttons as normally we did that kind of thing ourselves. So we got him as he was willing to come and spend a week in Moncton to do the record.

So will you be working with Steve Albini next?

No...I don't think that he really likes our stuff at all. Bob is more like a friend, and he has lots of good microphones too. It felt like we were working with him rather than just having someone there producing the record.

You recorded Purple Blue very quickly, didn't you?

We recorded all the music in the first three nights, and then spent the rest of the time mixing it. I guess that we were so ready to record that we didn't want to analyse every version of a song. We just went through them - I think that we only rerecorded a couple of songs. The rest of the time it was just first takes...we were ready to record I guess.

Are you happy with all the tracks seeing they were first takes?

Pretty much. We just trusted fate. We never really overpractise as if we do, we seem to get worse. But if we just get into the studio, as soon as we start playing, it is usually the first stuff that is the most inspired. So we try to record straight away.

What about the first track on the album ('Introduction Into The...parts 1 to 4') - it must be the longest track that you have recorded. What's the story behind that?

We used to stick those little songs all over the record wherever we wanted to fill a space. But this time we put four of our songs, which we recorded separately, together into one big song at the beginning of the record so we could leave the rest of the record as one big concert.

I had the idea that it was one of those epic songs from the 1970's...your 'Bohemian Rhapsody'...is this your concept album?

I feel that *Purple Blue* is less of a concept album than the other two. The other ones have more of a story to each one. But we try to do something a bit different each time to keep your attention.

So there isn't a double album just around the corner?

No, I really don't like really long albums. Ours always tend to be around forty minutes. And it is the same with our concerts. We don't like to play for too long, as I've been bored by some of my favourite bands before because they played for far too long.

The band is pretty prolific too; not quite up there with Lou Barlow, but getting there.

We do have a lot of releases, but if you go through the last few years there is about eight months between each release. And that is long enough as there isn't much sense in holding onto something if you have it recorded.

So do you end up tossing out a lot of songs?

When you start recording, you go through all your old songs but you also end up writing new songs too. So some songs just don't get used - I have a whole bunch of tapes at home full of songs that just never get done.



Eric's Trip relaxing at home.

(from left to right) Mark Gaudet, Rick White, Julie Doiron and Chris Thompson

The band also puts out lots of singles on various labels.

Sub-Pop is like our parent company, but we have lots of friends that we meet when we tour who have labels that press 500 copies of a 7", and they ask if we'll do a single for them. If we have some songs then we'll do it - Sub-Pop don't mind as they aren't ready to put out a single. And as long as it isn't in competition with them, they don't care. We don't really care about making money off it - we just take the opportunity to put out music.

All of the members of Eric's Trip have their own side projects - is that something that is essential to the band's survival?

Well, we are all separate people and we just started playing together as friends, and as time goes by we are still in this band, Eric's Trip, together. But there are so many other ideas in all of our heads so we release them in our own projects. I mean, we don't do Eric's Trip 24 hours a day - we just practise here and there. Right now I am playing in another band, Chris has a new CD out and Julie has just recorded a new album recently too.

Is it ever difficult for you all to get back together and function as Eric's Trip again?

Sometimes it can, and as time goes on, it does get a bit harder as you don't have that driven passion to play that you have when a band first starts up. You don't have anything to prove any more once you have played together for a while - you feel that you are doing the same thing over and over. Especially when you are touring.

And what about those rumours about the band splitting up?

Well, we will eventually. We have been doing things with our own projects, because we want to see what we can do by ourselves. But we still

love playing together, so I think that even if it does come it won't be an unhappy thing.

But it's not something that you anticipate in the immediate future.

Not too immediate - we're going to go on tour in May, so it won't be 'til after that anyway. We're going through Ontario and Quebec and then down the east coast of the US. And after that we'll be touring with our own bands.

All the side-projects played down at the Pop Explosion, didn't you?

Yeah - it was fun to play Elevator To Hell live with different people doing different songs. It felt different on stage - I've played about 200 Eric's Trip shows live, but only six with Elevator With Hell. It's more new and exciting.

What else is happening with Elevator To Hell?

They are putting the record out on CD at long last as the original vinyl was kinda limited. And there will be ten more songs on the CD which will be released on a vinyl EP too.

So even when you get bored with the new album by Eric's Trip (something which will take quite a while to be perfectly honest), you can pick up CDs by Elevator To Hell, Moonsocket or even Broken Girl. That's one of the good things about those bands that can write songs even when they are asleep. That should tide you over until they stop off in town again in the Spring during what could be their final tour. Fingers crossed that it isn't.

COMPETITION TIME!!!

We have some rather nifty Eric's Trip stuff to give away to you, our lucky, lucky readers. You can win one of TEN poster and buttons sets (which you can't get in any shop no matter how much money you offer them) if you can answer this very, very simple question.

Which American city is Sub-Pop Records based in?

Just get your answer into The Brunswickan office by first light on Wednesday morning, and you can win yourself something cool.

...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...

The answer to the oh-so-hard questions was either A Soap Bubble And Inertia or Kicking In The Water.

The winners of the Gandharvas CDs were: Pamela Craig, Percy Jones and Susan Benjamin.

Pop by our Office on Friday at noon to get your prize.