

Blue Centrelight Pop

Bruce Pirrie

I was born in 1956 and was thereby destined to miss out on everything that was to happen for the next 20 years. Rock and roll was already accepted as something that parents would have to put up with and that society would deal with (make money out of). "Heartbreak Hotel" was number one that year. When the Beatles arrived in 1964 I was eight and too young to be caught up in all it has since come to mean. In 1967 I was 11, no acid for me. In 1969 I was 13 and the Woodstock comet had faded in all its great expectations. Then the world settled into the doldrums for awhile as the rock and roll generation sold herbal tea and bought real estate.

Five to ten years behind was the story of my life, growing up in the shadow of a catered-to generation. They talked about the problems of teenagers when I was nine. They talked about the unrest on our campuses when I was going into high school, the focus of attention followed the maturation of the war babies, I missed the boat, "man." So my friends and I sat around in the basement drinking beer and listening to the same damn records over and over again, rationalizing about not getting laid and the state of the world.

We were quiet and didn't bother the dog or give anyone cause for concern. My uncle smoked dope and his hair was longer than mine. Alice Cooper was on Hollywood Squares, defused in one year. By the time I went to university, they were already saying that it was a pointless exercise, there were no jobs for graduates.

One day there was a small blurb in the paper. SEX PISTOLS PUNK ROCK GROUP THROWS UP IN AIRPORT. Here comes something new. Now I've travelled a bit but I've never seen an article Drunken KIWANIS VOMIT ON PLANE, SING FILTHY SONGS although it occurred. I happened to be in England in the summer of 1977 as this "punk rock thing" was in the swing of things. Everything was in an uproar.

No longer was I out of sync, these people were drinking beer, playing loud fast rock and roll, old and new, and perhaps more importantly were my peer group. They had listened to the music that I had and other music that I discovered I liked (rockabilly for one). So I figured that if I needed a subject for a film in my fourth year at York, this was it, mixing business with pleasure I went out and become a tourist spy on the "scene."

It was something to be 22 and dangerous (looking anyway). At a speakeasy with Talking Heads, saying hello to Nazi Steve Leckie Dog on a Monday morning on the subway dressed to the hilt, he meant it, man. It was exciting following "your band" seeing literally hundreds of groups the worse the better in many cases to yell insults at them. You could be twenty again no matter how old you were. We had a portion of our proverbial 15 minutes (hopefully not all of it) or at least I did. I wasn't alone and I wouldn't have joined anything for the sake of joining (the club of the month club), but if it was a choice of being in a movement or phenomenon that grabbed headlines, I'm glad it was punk

and not disco, new wave, Jonestown, or God knows what else.

I didn't contribute much to punk, or to the betterment of the world and life in general but I had fun, so punish me with a bad hairdo. It was a part of growing up and cutting up, acting like a kid either again or for the first time.

It was a time and place occurrence when lots of things were in conjunction. Now I'm ready to get rich and famous good-bye punk. Now a few words of Hope, "Thanks for the memories, that night in Singapore when I had you on the floor...."

Bruce Pirrie likes girls, beer, and mental arithmetic, not necessarily in that order. He and lots of other people made the film Ziggy while at York, which was started in November 1977. He is currently with a vaudeville band "The Dead Bunnies" and working on the worst Canadian play.



Was David Burkowitz a rocker? This is a field recording of a performance at the Music Gallery.

Where does emotion fit into your music?

We have a love-hate thing with emotion. Emotions exist. They get in the way. We trivialize them. Think of them as a sick joke.

Why do you enjoy working with video?

A good video image is better than looking at a rock band. There are no performers with the focus of an Iggy Pop anymore. The Iggy used to throw himself headlong into the audience. The crowd had a choice whether to let him back up or not. They were really getting their money's worth.

How much do you worry about having your audience catch what you're throwing out?

Quite a bit. I want them to hear all the words, the components. I'm quite aware that there are things they won't get because they're peculiar to me. I'm not trying to shove a meaning down their throats. I'd rather they use their noggins and try to figure out what I'm all about. Meaning is shoving down the throat. Content is putting something on the table and saying what does this do for you? I'm for content. Meaning's a bit too Billy Graham for me.

Besides *Electric Eye*, you have an LP which includes the hit single "Flat Tire." It also offers "Zippers of Fire" and the delightful "Sponge." In the space of three songs you've cut open an intense, seamy lifestyle.

Gary Topp speaks out

Petit Mal

Remember a few years back, putting the Ramones on the turntable and all your friends screwing up their faces and asking, "What is this shit?" Remember also walking into those same friends' rec-room recently, seeing them pogoing madly in their brand-new Nike sneakers to *Blitzkrieg Bop* and you asking, "What is this shit?" That's about how Gary Topp feels.

Last week I spoke with The Edge's sleepy-eyed co-manager Gary Topp about the increasing popularity of punk. I asked Gary to try to set the record straight. Have rumours of punk's death been greatly exaggerated?

"New wave is exploding," he said. "In the last month it has hit nearly everyone."

Yes, but don't you see it selling out or being eviscerated? A new elite seems to have sprung up. If anything, punk was supposed to

have destroyed the old rock elite.

"Yeah, I see some bands and manager selling out, uh, a lot of people jumping on the bandwagon. The new wave is what everyone thinks is the saviour. It is, but financially, a lot of people see it making money so everybody's jumping on it now."

Gary feels it's the old school heavy metal style agencies and types throwing a monkey wrench into the works; grabbing up new wave bands with greedy little fingers and getting them bookings into the "wrong" clubs. This irks Gary and one can't help but notice the irritation poking up in his normally easy-going manner. This brings us nicely to certain business practices of the Edge's management which up until a few weeks ago, when I had a brief chat with a lead singer for a local punk band, I'd only heard of in the form of gossip. This is da scoop: y'see, basically if you play the Horseshoe (which was managed by the Garys Topp and Cormier once upon a time) you don't get booked at the Edge at least for a few months, if at all. Why?

"Because."

I pressed Gary for an eensy bit more. I got a flood of verbiage.

"Well, I don't think the Horseshoe knows their ass from anything. We felt that we helped a lot of bands so we asked some bands not to play at the Horseshoe just to do us a favour because when we booked these bands at the Horseshoe (in days of yore and the 2 Garys), we did them a favour. When we had to take money out of our pockets for them we did. We never made any money and we just finally finished paying everything back and it took a year. The Horseshoe (now) is just a big scam, just like the managers we were talking about before.

Despite my frequent attempts at objections and interjections, Gary goes on elaborating. Finally I saw a chance to leap in with a query. Whose interest is your house policy for, the bands' or yours?

"Yeah I think it's for the bands', 'cause I believed in this (the new wave) from the beginning when everybody said it was bullshit and when we did lose four thousand dollars a show."

A little bit like cornering the market, innit Gary? But me, I'm just a reporter so what do I know?

Gary Topp will be airing his own one-hour radio show on Q107 Sundays from one to two in the morning.

Luv the Gov

Who speak with their wings, and the way that they smile?

What are these secrets, they trace in the sky?



Who are these children, who scheme and run wild,

And why do you tremble each time they ride by?

Elliott Lefko

Hello Come In. I've got all the time in the world, for a while. It's time for an interview with *The Government*. Here they are: on bass, vocals, and writing, Robert Stewart; on drums, Edward Boyd; and Andrew Paterson contributing writing, vocals, guitar, and the quotes that appear here.

Is there a relation between rock and revolution?

Well, Captain Beefheart had the best answer to that question. He said, "Well, you see, you put it on the table, right? The record, goes around once. That's one revolution. It goes around twice, that's two revolutions."

You have a long-playing album out now entitled *Electric Eye*. It's about a psychotic killer. Was he also a rock star?

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