

Rusty: Definitely not the worm

BY TIM COVERT

The phone rings. I pick it up and hey, it's Mitch Perkins, drummer for the blazingly ironic Toronto band, Rusty.

Gaz: How are you doing, Mitch?

Mitch: Actually, I'm in a phone booth looking at my car which is parked illegally. So if the police come I'm gonna have to run.

Rusty, on the strength of their debut album, *Fluke*, has been touring extensively for the last little while, so it's understandable if Mitch is a little rushed. After a tour of the U.S. and Canada opening for Collective Soul, Rusty is swinging their solo tour east. The band plays the Birdland this Friday with local monster-pop groups Thruster and Madhat.

Gaz: Your album is called *Fluke*. Is that as in 'a fluke' or is it referring to the worm?

Mitch: Definitely not the worm. It's 'a happy accident.' This band is kinda neat. Other bands I've been in, it was kind of labour intensive to come up with a name for the band, a name for the album. But with these guys [Rusty], it's pretty cool 'cause it's like, 'Well geez, you know we all happened to get together, and it really went well, and it's kind of a fluke — ok, good, that's the name.' You could get really wrapped up in stuff like that. A year later it's just a sound that people make to designate that album.

Gaz: That little guy on the

album, that slacker character, is that supposed to be Ken [MacNeil, Rusty's vocalist]?

Mitch: It's not supposed to be anyone in the band, it's just supposed to be the archetypical Canadian, suburban kid. It's looks a little bit like Jimmy [Moore, the bassist].

Ken MacNeil and Jim Moore were both members of the punkish band, *One Free Fall*, a group which originated in Nova Scotia. It's interesting that in the short time that has passed since the band left for Toronto, a scene capable of supporting its own artists has developed in Nova Scotia. I mentioned bands like Superfriendz, Rebecca West, and Hardship Post to Mitch, and though he liked them, he wasn't aware that the bands were from Halifax. We both thought that the idea of artists being successful irrespective of geographic location was very cool.

Gaz: Who's the main force behind the songs?

Mitch: Well, a song to me is just words and melody. It's not a bass line, it's not a drum, guitar line, so obviously to me Ken is the main force. However, it is a totally collaborative effort. Maybe Jimmy and I will just be jamming on a bass line of his, or Scott will make up a guitar part. So Ken is building on something that's already there. It's not like he comes in with the chords, the words, and melody.

When I mentioned to Mitch Rule#46 of Rock and Roll, that you can never have a vocalist who doesn't play anything, he mentioned some small-time bands who have had some

modest success with instrument-free vocalists. Let's see, I have them written down here...uh, Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Sex Pistols...must be an Ontario thing.

Gaz: Do you feel that all four members of the band are equal, that Ken's not the frontman and everybody else is shuffled in line behind him?

Mitch: Absolutely. I mean, if we're playing, and the kids are asking for autographs, they want to talk to Ken. Which suits me fine. Not that I don't like them.

Rusty's video for the single "Misogyny" is a very unique video among the slew on MuchMusic today, and has been garnering a lot of interest. Aside from the footage of the band, the video consists mainly of clips from Ontario native Bruce Labruce's *Hustler White*, a romantic comedy about hustlers on LA's Santa Monica Boulevard. LaBruce also stars in the movie as a foreign visitor who pursues, and eventually catches, his hustler love interest, played by former Madonna boy-toy Tony Ward.

Gaz: How did the video for "Misogyny" come to be made?

Mitch: We just knew Bruce LeBruce and we liked his work, and he was there in LA [shooting *Hustler White*] when we were. And he liked the band. I think it was quite a humorous, interesting, powerful result. And it's "Misogyny," which is woman-hater, but I think that gay men often refer to themselves as "she" or "bitch" or whatever. And I think they get pretty much a hard time,

too, as women do in this world of ours.

Gaz: It's so unusual because the typical male rock band thing is very heterosexual, and to go and explore the homosexual side of life in that respect is kinda fresh.

Mitch: I think I can speak for everyone in the band when I say that people should be able to do whatever they want to do...as long as they're like, not hurting children or whatever. Even if you're stepping on someone else's toes. Oppression in any form is very oppressive.

Gaz: Have there been any negative response?

Mitch: I don't know. But if we did get any, we would just ignore it. People like that, and you can quote me, can go fuck themselves.

Many of the tunes on *Fluke* are very hard punkish tunes, but the album isn't consistently like that. There are a number of spots where it's more mellow, melodic, and quiet. Mitch indicated that they are writing more songs like that, and that they like all the different song types on the album. The great response they've been getting to what Mitch dubs a "fairly eclectic album" has been very encouraging to Rusty.

Gaz: Is this the direction the band is heading in?

Mitch: If there's any direction the band is going to take, it's that non-direction, of continuing to be eclectic. We've written some new tunes which are fast and raunchy, and we've written some slow, mellow ones. I think we all kinda feel that if we all can't explore everything we want to, then fine, we'll do something else. It's really nice to have success but not at the expense of someone saying, 'You have to do all songs like this...' I really look forward to writing cause I know we can basically do anything we want. I think that's rare.

Gaz: Well, I'm out of questions...

Mitch: I should go anyway, because there's somebody waiting for the phone booth and I'm getting quite cold.

Rusty is playing at the Birdland tomorrow with opening bands Thruster and Madhat. After that, they're heading out west for two weeks and then plan to begin work on their new album, due out in the summer.

There's no redemption in *Leaving Las Vegas*

FILM

Leaving Las Vegas

Starring Nicholas Cage and Elizabeth Shue

Directed by Mike Figgis

Nicholas Cage is Ben Sanderson, an alcoholic who has lost his friends, his family, and his job. He moves to Las Vegas where he plans on drinking himself to death. He sells all of his possessions and rents out a hotel room which he stocks with liquor. One evening he picks up a hooker named Sera (Elizabeth Shue). Ben is more concerned with companionship than sex and after a quiet night together, the two become friends. As their relationship progresses, they agree to accept each other as they are and not try to change each other.

Nicholas Cage is the nephew of Francis Ford Coppola. He changed his name early on in his career because he wanted to make a reputation for himself on his own. I think Cage is coming closer to achieving that goal. After an impressive performance in last year's *Kiss of Death*, Cage adds to his credibility with this film. His portrayal of an alcoholic who has gone over the edge is both disturbing and fascinating. He will likely be a contender for the Best Actor this March.

To my surprise, Elizabeth Shue is also very good. After years of playing 'the girlfriend' in movies such as *The Karate Kid*, *Cocktail*, and the two *Back to the Future* sequels, she shows that she can actually act quite well when given the opportunity.

The only problem I had with Cage and Shue was that they were in pretty damn good shape considering the lifestyles of their characters. Shue looks like an amateur body-builder while Cage lacks the excess weight associated with heavy drinking. I've always been impressed by actors who prepare themselves physically for roles, such as when Val Kilmer added on 40 pounds around the gut to play Jim Morrison. It adds some consistency to the character as a whole.

Multi-talented Mike Figgis directed *Leaving Las Vegas*, wrote the screenplay, composed the musical score, and even has a small role as a mobster who knocks off Sera's pimp. His background as a jazz musician shows through in the soundtrack, most of which is sung by Sting. The haunting lyrics fit right in with the downbeat tone of the movie.

This is a good flick but it is damn depressing. The excesses of alcoholism and the brutality of prostitution, including a viscous gang rape, are graphically portrayed. It's a tragic love story without your Hollywood happy ending. This must be because Figgis is British, and not American. I recommend seeing this movie but you have to be in the mood for it.

LUKE MERRIMEN



beautiful girls

If you can name two of these actors, come on up to room 312 of the SUB and tell us. If you're right, you'll win one of 30 passes to the preview of Beautiful Girls on Thursday, February 8.

ALLIANCE

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