

The Killjoys get very silly...

One of the more enjoyable concerts on campus this year came right at the beginning of term when The Killjoys turned up to support 54-40. They performed a rather good and frenetic set, and if you ask me, it was more enjoyable than the headliners. Mind you, that could have something to do with that fact that I spent the entire time 54-40 spent on stage hiding in the 'dressing room' with Mike (guitars and vocals) and Gene (drums) from The Killjoys chatting about life on the road, life in the band and life in general. Gene did the majority of the talking, though Mike did get the occasional word in. But not that many.

Your live show tonight was more than a little economical - you just did the songs with no small talk in between. Is that usual?

Tonight we really had to because we had the set list made out, and we ended up with less time than we thought. So rather than cut out songs, we just didn't talk to the audience. We like to keep the set moving along, unless we think of something totally insane that we need to share with the audience; today was pretty normal, so we didn't have anything to say. We need to be a little unstable to have a really stupid show.

You made the jump to a major label with this album - how did that feel?

We haven't had any real problems, but the last album was sort of half on a major too as it was re-released after six months on Warner. *Gimme Five* was our first completely company-made and promoted album, but they are giving us a lot of control - they didn't take us over or anything.

But it does mean that you have the budget to do more promotion and make more impressive videos, doesn't it?

We're still broke though - Mike even got a cheaper apartment. That's what you get with a record deal - a cheaper apartment with less stuff in it. And I need a muffler for my car that I can't pay for.

The videos must mean you get more exposure, and more people turning up at your shows though.

It does help - I've seen bands make it on just video alone, without even getting into the charts on the radio. Much Music just take a video and play it to death, and they get success that way. We had that a little of that with 'Today I Hate Everyone' because it came out independently before the record, and people knew us from that. Other from touring, videos are the only promotion we get.

Mark Robinson continues...

and was big into Factory. We got promos from their US office, they sent the Miaow record, and I thought the second single, 'When It All Comes Down' was amazing. I would read her stuff in NME, and she just seemed pretty cool. Then, for some reason, I wrote a song about her for *Perfect Teeth*, and the guy who runs 4AD said that he knew of a great picture of her by Robert Mapplethorpe for the cover of the record. He contacted the Mapplethorpe Foundation and he also had to get Cath's permission. So there was a loose connection between us although we never talked. At some point, she sent me a postcard to say that she liked the song, and Unrest did a Miaow cover too which I sent to her - she thought it was really strange because it sounded just like her version. So we just sent postcards, and eventually I asked her if she wanted to do a

And they even let you sing on the new record too - a drummer singing!

Well, they didn't let me sing - they made me put it on the record. We all have four-tracks at home, and I had just got mine. I was just trying it out in my bedroom and recorded 'Space Girl' and when I let them hear it, they just flipped. They thought it was cute and childlike, which isn't like me at all. But despite what the others might tell you, I was not just in my underwear when I recorded it.

You recorded *Gimme Five* down at Ardent Studios - did you bump into Alex Chilton at all?

We did actually, and Jody Stephens was all over the place too. We went to see Alex Chilton play at a place that was going to be closed down, and that was really cool. The first time we went down to Ardent to see the place and meet the producer, he was there and we got to spend some time with him.

So did he invite you to join Big Star the next time they get back together?

No, he saw our band and decided to stick with those Posies guys instead.

Was Big Star a big influence on the band?

We got to Big Star via The Replacements, like the song 'Alex Chilton' on *Pleased To Meet Me*, and that was recorded at Ardent too - it's a neat little circle. Jody Stephens, the original drummer for Big Star, runs Ardent the record label at Ardent Studios. We got to meet with him too.

Who are some of the influences on the band?

Well, The Replacements, and I like singer-songwriters like Thomas Van Zandt too - it's a real mixed bag. What happened in Hamilton is that there was a guy booking really cool bands in a club and he'd bring in some really influential bands like The Chesterfield Kings and The Liars. And then we'd want to sound like the last good band we saw - The Liars show blew us away because they all came in holding their backs because they'd got in a fight onstage the night before. Then the lead singer, who was on heroin, took a vodka bottle and smashed it into his hand with a screwdriver, and started to use it as a percussion instrument. He kept banging it and banging it, and blood was going everywhere. So we really got off on that kind of stuff.

So what's your funny tour anecdote?

Well, usually the stuff that we talk about we can't put into interviews because it would be too incriminating...

If you tell me, I promise not to put it in

single for Teenbeat, and she said yes. We eventually met at an Unrest show, and it blossomed into this thing where she is on the label now.

Is she still on Teenbeat?

Well, it's hard to say since Teenbeat doesn't have any contracts. We don't have any plans to put any more records out, but she did give us a tape with two new songs and she said she'd like to put out another single out, so we'll see what happens. I think that with Cath Carroll, she'd probably do better on another label to tell you the truth, because her type of music just won't sell well on Teenbeat because it sounds too mainstream. But if nobody else will put her records out, I will definitely do it.

What's coming up in the future for yourself and Teenbeat?

We have a lot of new bands, and we are putting



Mike's infamous ten-gallon hat (not actual size)

PAT FITZPATRICK PHOTO

the interview. Really, I won't.

The van we are touring in is a little cramped, so Mike took along his inflatable baseball, his fiddle and his ten gallon hat. And nobody has figured out yet that we should maybe deflate the baseball to give us a bit more space. It is so big that it is pushing up against our faces, and the fiddle is digging into our bodies. And the worst thing is that Mike can't even play the fiddle - he's shit, but he keeps telling us that it sounds great in his head.

And then things turned nasty - Mike started to tell drummer jokes (How do you know if

the stage is level? The drummer is drooling out of both sides of his mouth) and Gene threw some more accusations about Mike's inability to play the violin. But then they made up, and started telling stories about bassist Shelley instead (who apparently eats dirt). Then Mike became insecure about interviewers not liking him (which is incredibly hard to believe since he is just so lovable), and Gene just continued to be very silly. Very silly indeed. That meant that the interview came to a gradual end, and I never did get to tell them that they look a lot smaller in their video...

Selected Discography

1994 - *Starry*

1996 - *Gimme Five*

(both are full-length albums and are released on Warner Records)

out a lot more 7" singles. There's a band called True Love Always which has a guy that I went to high school with, and there's a band from Richmond, British Columbia that doesn't have a name yet, but we're doing a single with them. We're putting out Tel Aviv's second album, and Phil Krauth, who was the drummer in Unrest, has his third record out next year. There will be a new Air Miami single soon - we've done two

and a half songs so far, and I want to do at least four. There may be another Air Miami full-length, or I will do another solo record. Or maybe even start another band. That's probably all that we're working on just now - we lost a lot of our bigger bands lately like Tuscadero and Versus; we're in a transition period, but that's nothing new for Teenbeat.

Selected Discography

As Unrest: 1992 - *Imperial f.f.r.*

As Air Miami: 1995 - *Me Me Me*

1993 - *Perfect Teeth*

As Olympic Death Squad:

- Cath Carroll EP

1996 - *Olympic Death Squad*



(all should be available from Teenbeat Records)