



# Garage Sale, 4AM:

## The Black Hole Effect

by Hugh Hardy

The Wonderstuff is a prime example of an act that has, until recently, eluded me. However, being the precocious lad that I am, I was undaunted by the invite to cover 'em. I simply went out and "borrowed" a copy of their first EP from a buddy a few days before the show and proceeded to saturate my brain with it.

As I got through the doors, a sort of "creeping death" feeling nearly overcame me. I was in another George Romero zombie flick, and I had just been announced at the door as the evening's main course — I was sure of it.

I was stunned dorky for a few fleeting moments, bumping into people, spillin' drinks while I tried to put my finger on exactly what was eating me this time.

I didn't stand out in any tangible way. The night's tacit fashion theme: "Garage Sale, 4 am: The Black Hole Effect (Get Sucked Into My Soul Darling)" was nothing new to me. That whole

kind of latent en retard Euro-Garbo "I vawnt to be alone"-type ambience doesn't phase me. In fact, I usually get a few good chuckles from The Generation of Darkness. For all intents and purposes, I should have felt right at home in my carelessly worn brown leathers.

I decided to disguise myself with a Heineken, and infiltrate the dance floor, in search of a rational answer.

On the dance floor, I felt adrift in a sea of scowls. Not scowls of genuine hate and anger, though, more like scowls of boogy boredom. Then it dawned on me.

I was about to get to the point, when the band (remember them?) came on, shrouded in patented P.T. Barnum dry-ice smoke. "Ow fuck are ya?," said the singer, "we're four long-haired cunts from England colled the Wonderstuff . . ."

Honesty. I like that. It was pretty obvious that these guys weren't aspiring to be any more than they appeared to be. Malc Treec, the singer, is a kind of Johnny Rotten look-alike, but with long hair, and two pony-tails, which, when he's

flailing about, bears more than a passing resemblance to the coif on Barbara Eden's character on the old cartoon version of "I Dream of Jeanie". Yaffle Daffle, indeed.

The Wonderstuff lays down threekord pop as it was ordained on the eighth day (or, for this crowd, the release date of Psychocandy). But as I was about to learn, there was more to this Jesus and Mary Chain cover band than meets the eye. With the addition of a fifth player on fiddles and a Hammond Cheesemaster organ, these guys can lay down country stompers with the best of 'em. Sloppy as all hell (their rhythm section is uniformly awful), but who cares?

The crowd pogoed timidly at first, as if they didn't want to get their hair mussed, but as time wore on, an adventurous few threw in a few horizontal moves, and eventually one truly existential hero performed the obligatory stage dive to a hero's reception from the crowd.

Lately, these time-worn rituals have really been making my skin crawl. My thoughts had begun to

wander out the door, to the subway, and home, when something unexpected happened.

The moment came during an ambitiously drawn out dance track based vaguely on the beat from PIL's "Rise." Treec had been basically reading a story scrawled on a piece of scrap paper about a bullet-to-the-temple relationship while the guitarist spewed chordal non-sequiturs; when quietly, almost imperceptibly, the band squeezed out a gentle "Jane says." by Jane's Addiction.

Treec read the lyric softly, with a childish inflection. I looked around. The whole crowd was grooving with their eyes closed, each the star of their own Jane-like drama. Ah, to hang out with idle Euro-trash . . . to be showered with baubles . . . to shoot smack, life should be so grand! Here they were, the self-proclaimed "nubility," the would-be Dadaists, Situationists, and Punks— The Children of the Revolution, all too caught up in their boredom to care.

Maybe I'm just making something out of nothing. Besides, it only went on for about a minute.



Robert Cabral photo



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