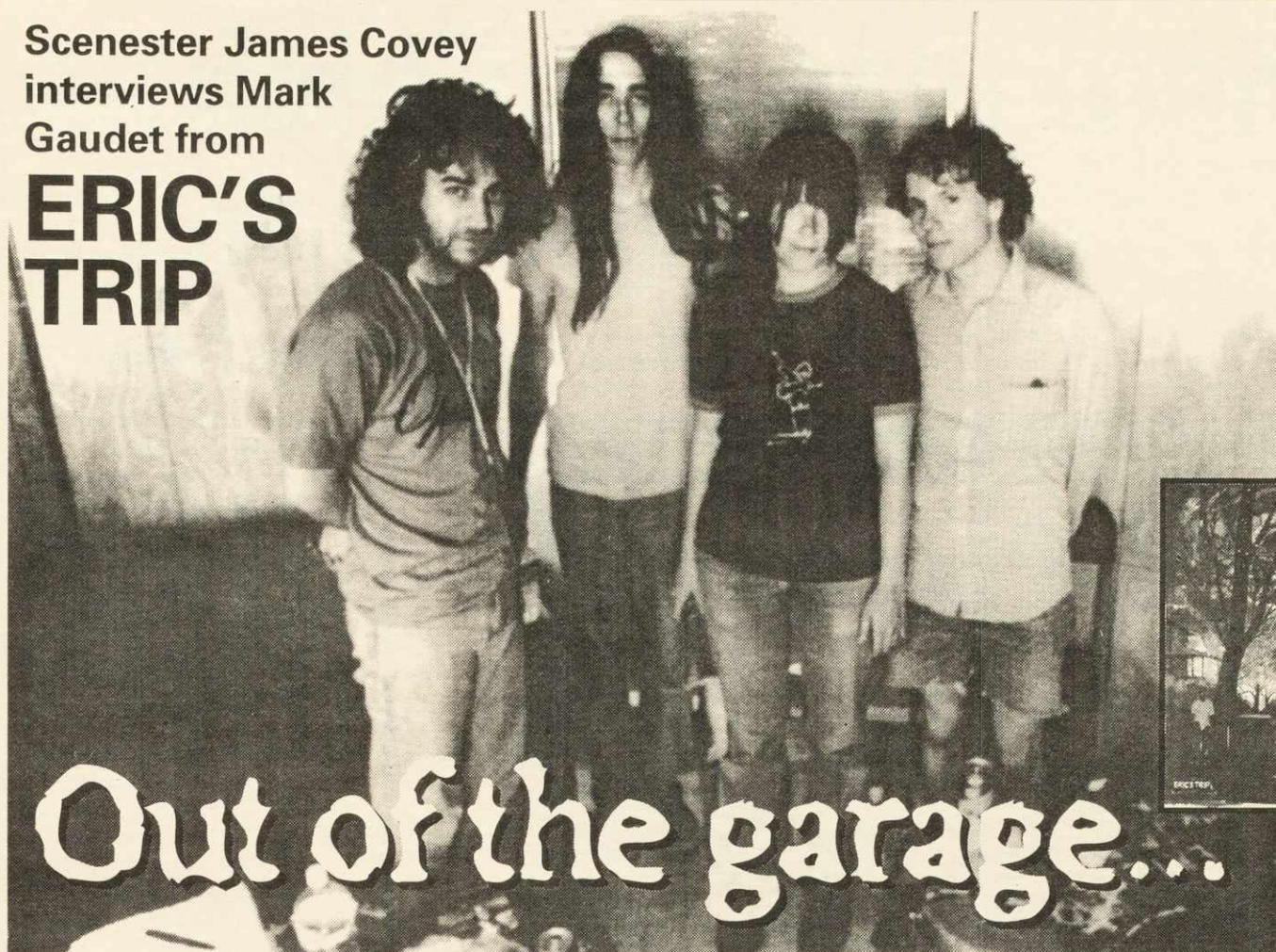


Scenester James Covey interviews Mark Gaudet from **ERIC'S TRIP**



Eric's Trip at creative peak

MUSIC
Purple Blue
Eric's Trip
Sub Pop

BY JAMES COVEY

Moncton's Eric's Trip are back with their third Sub Pop LP, and this time they've finally made the big jump from the basement to the professional recording studio with the help of famed indie-rock producer (and performer) Bob Weston.

Weston came from Chicago to Moncton last September to record the band. And no, *Purple Blue* is not slick or overproduced or glossy. But this time,

the bass and drums go right through you if you dare crank up your stereo, and you will want to when you hear these songs.

"I'm sick of writing love-gone-wrong songs," Rick White sings in "Sun Coming Up." He delivers on that manifesto with assertive rockers that show a definite progression from his mopey past, especially the full-on MC5-ish "Spaceship Opening" that has been a live highlight for the band for some time now. But all three front members have matured.

Julie Claytor's frank and anthemic "Soon, Coming Closer" might be the best Eric's Trip pop song ever. Chris Thompson chips in with three of the best tracks on the album, including the mesmerizing waltz "Alone & Annoyed," which he has also recorded for his Moonsocket solo CD.

It's bittersweet irony: a band that may be on the verge of breaking up is in its most creative phase to date, and has just put out the best Sub Pop east coast release ever, hands down.

Out of the garage...

Moncton's love-garage heroes Eric's Trip, for the second time in a row, had to cancel a scheduled Halifax gig last weekend. This latest one had been planned for Saturday the 13th at Birdland, but fell victim to New Brunswick road conditions.

Their third and newest LP for Sub Pop records, *Purple Blue*, was released on Tuesday. All four members also have forthcoming releases from their solo side-projects: guitarist Chris Thompson's Moonsocket has just released a compilation CD on Derivative Records; there will be new material soon from guitarist Rick White's Elevator to Hell (EP on Sub Pop); bassist Julie Claytor's Broken Girl (full length CD on Sappy Records); and, drummer Mark Gaudet's Purple Knight (seven-inch single on Sub Pop featuring collaborating guitarist Ray Legere).

I talked to Mark on the phone while he was on the job at Sam the Record Man in Moncton, where he has worked since 1980.

GAZ: Are you tired of being referred to as a "lo-fi" band?

MARK: Well, we haven't heard it for awhile. If it was mentioned three times in one week, maybe, but I haven't heard that term for about six months, so it's not too bad.

GAZ: Do you think this record is going to change how people see the band, since it's less of a "lo-fi" recording?

MARK: No, it's still shitty old sounding Eric's Trip (laughs). We haven't made it a big super-sonic-soundscape thing, so it's pretty well as drab as the others. I don't think it's going to get airplay from anything major; it'll still be slotted in its "lo-fi underground" thing anyway.

GAZ: Did you guys learn much from Bob Weston, recording with him? Was it weird working with a producer?

MARK: We worked with him for the [Sub Pop east coast compilation EP] *Never Mind the Molluscs* sessions back in '93, and he had helped us a bit with [Eric's Trip debut LP] *Love Tara* for the mixing, so he's just like a really laid back, cool guy that you can bounce ideas off of. And I think Rick learned about vocal recording through him, and then also about different microphones, 'cause he's into collecting old microphones, for all their different personalities, so, yeah, we've been learning stuff from Bob. Bob knows a lot.

GAZ: I heard this story that Rick discovered the benefits of low end bass when

he bought a new stereo. Is that true?

MARK: Well, yeah, on this new album we were supposed to start off the album with a song called "New Speakers." The lyrics of that song kind of celebrated the newfound [bass range]. Once he got the new speakers he wanted to make the new album slightly more bottom end than the older ones.

GAZ: So what sort of promotion are you guys going to do for *Purple Blue*? Are you going to be touring a lot again?

MARK: Hard to say at this point. We don't usually tour too much in the winter 'cause we don't want to get killed in a highway accident. We did our video for "Sun Coming Up." Hopefully we can string together some kind of tour once spring begins to spring a bit.

GAZ: Is Moonsocket ever going to be a band, or will it continue to be Chris' solo thing? I heard that they played as a band before.

MARK: The last Moonsocket gig, Rick played drums, and they were switching actually, it was like a two piece. Chris would sing and play drums for a couple of songs while Rick played bass or guitar, and then they'd switch. Broken Girl is rumoured to be adding stuff so they could be a band at certain times.

GAZ: The side projects do let fans get closer to the personalities in the band. Do you think that sometimes the fans of Eric's Trip can be too obsessive?

MARK: Not that I've seen yet. It's just kind of neat that they're even interested in the first place, or express any amount of caring. One night it could happen that we might realize, 'this is getting out of hand,' but not so far. There's been strange letters and a few strange people showing up at gigs but they're all quite nice and stuff like that, so as long as no one wants to hurt us!

GAZ: Is this the last record for the contract with Sub Pop?

MARK: No, there's one more, that's why I'd like to keep going.

GAZ: I know there's been rumours about Eric's Trip breaking up and just going their own ways with the side projects. Do you see that happening now?

MARK: It's hard to say. That rumour's been going around for a long time. I know Rick wants to work a lot more with his wife in Elevator to Hell. Every time we do something with Eric's Trip, I'm kinda wondering how close we are to the end, and trying to enjoy every little bit of it. 'Cause there's been a bit of a cloud looming. I'd like to see Eric's Trip last for another year-and-a-half, but I just don't know if that will be a possibility.

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