

Lost and Profound confronted in yuppie heaven

by Eric Alper

There is something about the Cultures restaurant at Yonge and Holly streets with its vegetarian and green attitude and ill-conceived interior decor of (what else) plants and brown cottage furniture that repeatedly brings to the mind the term "yuppie." It makes an unlikely sort of launch pad for the Toronto-based clique Lost And Profound.

For example, the photograph of the band's main counterparts, Lisa Boudreau and Terry Tompkins, inside their self-titled album shows them elegantly dressed in a black ankle-length dress and black suit, respectively (this ain't Culture Club, y'know).

The promotion picture, however, contradicts this image just as much as the pair feeling at home in yuppie-dom. It shows the duo's faces blurry, their bodies wearing ultra-stylish clothes, in front of a psychedelic colour collage background. Their appearance is one of the extremes the band paints themselves into.

Their influences are another. Citing The Ramones, The Clash, The Jam, LSD causality Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd as what they listened to in high school, one would imagine their first recordings might be on the angry, political side of sounds to smoke drugs to. But as their chart-rising single "Brand New Set Of Lies" reveals, not only is it smart pop, but lyrically it gets the message across as only a bitter love-breakup song can.

"My brother always had a great record collection," Terry says. "I was listening to Deep Purple when I was eight or nine. We certainly don't want to be boring live, and I think that's where our influences mostly appear."

Go back a bit further into the band's beginnings and perhaps Deep Purple or The Clash's personality appear more strongly. Terry details about his first band and how he came to... um... work with Lisa.

"My first band was in Calgary. I just picked up a guitar and started a band... 'The Snot.'"

Your album cover ideas must have been amazing.

"Yeah, a big piece of booger right in the middle of it. That was the title of it. The Snot. *Booger*."



Lost and Profound are neither hazy nor purple, as the photo suggests; they are lost indeed but none too profound. Expect Terry Tompkins and Lisa Boudreau with a follow-up album after their summer tour.

INTERVIEW

Lost and Profound guitarist Terry Tompkins talks about his previous bands, including "The Snot"

Sounds like a Sex Pistols one-off. "Well, that was the whole idea. Anyone could go out and start a band. A lot of people did. It didn't matter if you were good or not."

Lisa cuts in now: "He was in a good band and I was in a kind of bad hard rock band. His band opened for mine. It always happens that way, doesn't it? Anyway, he called me up one time after he found out I had just broken up with my boyfriend and asked to do some music together. *Yeah, right.*"

So, what has happened with the relationship?

Lisa smiles, "We're married." Hey, good going, Terry! "Thanks, it worked too good." "Watch it, buddy," Lisa retorts playfully.

Ladies and gentlemen. Lost And Profound: The Last Sessions. So, when did the beautiful music begin to take shape?

"We just lost our band," Terry replies. "We started recording on a 4-track, then on an 8-tracks I had in my

basement, doing some experimental music and Lost And Profound incorporated a lot of other people, starting out as this long mushroom-induced jam in the basement after we moved to Toronto.

Suddenly Alan Beardsell appears — in the story, and in the interview. "Well, they wanted me to play violin. I hadn't touched it in a number of years," Alan says.

Terry speaks: "He answered our 'violinist wanted' ad anyways."

Alan remembers: "I asked, 'You don't have to be good, do you?'"

"We're hoping you're good," came the reply. Since he had a 'good

attitude,' they invited him over anyway. "He brought his mandolin and became our player," Lisa says. "We got a drummer, Dave Quinton Steinberg, ex of The Dead Boys and he was loud, so we had to pick up the electric guitar which changed the acoustic stuff a bit. So we went from rock and Pink Floyd to... rock and... rock."

Ah, good ol' rock and rock. Didn't Alan Freed coin that one too? But didn't the earlier recordings have a country feel to them? Are those the ones that were left off the album?

Lisa explains, "Our bass player had left the band, and he was really

Soup Dragons want off bandwagon

by Eric Alper

Something happened halfway between *This Is Our Art* and *Lovegod*, the Soup Dragons' debut and second album. They became popular. *Very* popular.

It wasn't a case of 'finally arriving,' you understand. After all, their biggest North American hit, "I'm Free," (from *Lovegod*) was a radical interpretation of the closing track from The Rolling Stones' 1965 album, *Out Of Our Heads*. The middle eight is carried into a reggaefied toast-fest

INTERVIEW

The Soup Dragons take a look at their surprising popularity and predict their new album will be in record bins for decades. The Dragons appear at RPM July 3.

with the aid of former Black Uhuru member Junior Reid.

No, it was a case of that dreaded "Manchester" label that I, too, have just used. The group isn't even from England, for starters. Formed in Belshill, just outside Glasgow, the band has been lubricated with such compliments as "I have not heard your song, but people are telling me you are sounding like The Stone Roses. Or The Charlatans."

If there is such a thing, the Soupies represent the skillful end of the batch of hooded sweatshirt-wearing bands currently all the rave.

"We've always tried to separate ourselves from everybody else, but it seems that we've always been accused of jumping on the bandwagon of whatever musical fashion is around at the time," sighs drummer Paul Quinn. "Looking for more riots," he speaks from Los Angeles as they are currently promoting their latest album, *Hotwired*, which brings them to Toronto's RPM on July 3.

The days of being pigronholed, however, may be over. The Roses are into their third year of recording "that difficult second album," while The Charlatans are in a do-or-die tour schedule that, although the shows are consistent sellouts, their newest album is slipping down the charts fast.

Quinn agrees this could be the time for the band to set off on their own. "It's not for us to judge other people's work, same as it's not for others to judge our work. We're feeling good about the album, though. I mean, it's like this indie-dance thing

our country influence. When it came to put the package together, there were a couple of songs that just didn't fit with the rest of the album. I mean, they were *good*, they just didn't fit, anywhere."

Modesty. Not only did they write good songs they could afford to leave on the cutting floor, they also met (gasp!) the Drummer from Big Star!

Terry says of their percussive meeting in Memphis: "I produced the record down there. What a place! Good, good music. I went to dinner with him, his name is Jody Stevens, and talked a bit."

"Big Star were always obscure, but I liked them. I think they just signed some really bad record deals, and Alex Chilton had a lot of personal problems to deal with."

When new bands like Curve or Teenage Fanclub speak of Big Star as their main influence, it can only help Lost and Profound, even if it is 15 years later.

With various album cuts being played on all of the major Toronto music stations (no mean feat for any band), what are the future plans for Lost And Profound?

Lisa begins, "Number one album in America..."

"And tour the world," ends Terry. More modesty. Is this group headstrong or what?

"Seriously," Terry says seriously, "we'll tour here for a bit in the summer, the album is going to be released in the U.K., tour over there, and start to record our second album."

...Which will be Number One in America, also?

"Right," all three laugh.

— that's just someone who struck two words together. As far as we're concerned, our music was just as dancy before we were labelled as an indie-dance group."

The Soup Dragons had a distribution deal with *Big Life*, releasing a series of singles on their own Raw TV label when the indie... ooops, fuss started. Their debut album ("a load of demos and outtakes — a pure mess") was released in 1988 by Sire Records. Interestingly enough, the Dragons went back to Raw TV "We had no choice, really. Sire is an American company and we felt they couldn't relate to what we wanted to do."

When did you know the group had hit "the big time?"

"The tour with INXS last year probably told us things were going to change. I mean, they were there to see them, but I think a lot of people were surprised and got into us. Hopefully they bought our album," he jokes.

The tour with Hutch and the boys must have helped, as *Lovegod* went on to sell 350,000 copies around the world. "Yeah, but the shows were bad 'cos it was too many faces in the audience to actually feed energy off them, you know?"

Claiming "more electric guitars and stronger melodies" on *Hotwired*, the band looks ready to claim their own share of influences soon. "We wear our Jimi Hendrix or The Who or Sly Stone influences with pride. Our ambition is in 20 years time to be able to walk in a record shop and see a section of all our LPs in it."

With the wierd, dreamy medodies of *Lovegod*, such as "Softly," "Sweetmeat," and "E-Forever," *Hotwired*'s future sounds of yesterday's rock gods shows a depth of ideas that should carry them beyond the current trends — and permanently attached to the record bins.

Crowd Butchered

RIGHT AND BELOW: The Jazz Butcher gave Toronto fans an honest yet energetic performance at the El Mocambo on May 9. Lead singer and founder Pat Fish performed songs from his decade-long career as well as those from the latest melancholic release, *Condition Blue*. The two-hour set was energetic and honest with more than adequate participation from a very jumpy and receptive audience. High points included a cover of "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," for which he invited an exuberant member of the crowd to do the vocals. (It was his birthday.) Photo by Prasad Bidaye

