

## Tangents and changes

MICHAEL EDWARDS  
THE BRUNSWICKAN

One of the earliest articles I read about Throwing Muses kept talking about tangents. At that point I hadn't heard anything the band had recorded, but as soon as I did, it all made sense - songs would suddenly change tempo or change key for no apparent reason. It made for some of the most unpredictable music of the past decade. And then there was the voice, Kristen Hersh wailed like a banshee, as if possessed by some kind of muse of her own. But it was all about tangents.

While Throwing Muses has always been Kristen Hersh's band, the backbone of the band has always been David Narcizo. His drumming has driven the band's music since its inception all those years ago. Over those years, the original bassist, Leslie Langston has moved onto new challenges while Kristen's sister, Tanya Donnelly, left to form her own band, Belly (who, alas, recently broke up) but the core of Kristen and David have always been there (even when Kristen's personal life threatened to engulf the band). The current line-up is rounded out by Bernard Georges on bass.

The band's new album, *Limbo*, might be the highlight of most bands' careers, but for Throwing Muses it is just another wonderful album. And, best of all, it has plenty of those tangents. I was fortunate enough to talk to Kristen about the band and their music just before *Limbo* was released at the end of August.

So the band has been together for about ten years now.

Probably even longer than that ... maybe even fifteen or sixteen years but we've been recording for about ten years.

And your eighth album has just been released - did you ever think the band would be around this long?

I don't think that I thought about it to tell you the truth - I didn't think I'd live this long (laughs).

The band has been through quite a few ups and downs over the years too, and you've also had problems in your personal life...

I can't seem to handle that either! ...and there have been all kinds of changes in the band's line up too. Is the current line-up going to be a more stable one for the next little while?

I never say that any more, but really the line-up has not been unstable given what happens in other bands. My bass player, Leslie Langston, played on six of those records and the band has been pretty much based around me and Dave the whole time. My sister was with us for nearly ten years, so that's longer than most bands. And now with the trio line-up, we've been this way for five or six years which is also longer than other bands. We've just been doing it for so long that things are going to change.

What is Leslie doing these days? She's currently in Boston getting her Masters in Social Work - we're very proud. She's a great lady; a very funny person.

Was it tough when Tanya finally left the band?

Not really. Not in that way. It was a tough time because the band was falling apart, but I was probably worse off than her in relation to the band - I hated the business, I was bored, I was losing my focus and I just didn't care any more. I was letting things go down on records that were just wrong, and the whole impetus for being in a band was just falling away. So I wanted to quit the whole music business. Tanya just had a bunch of songs that weren't Throwing Muses songs, and so I was

telling her to just go and do them as I wasn't going to be doing anything any more. The main work in the band was done by me and Dave most of the time - I'd bring a song to him and we'd work it out, then Leslie would work out her part, and very often Tanya wouldn't have anything to play. So we never wrote songs together or worked that closely.

It was normally fairly easy to pick out Tanya's songs on the album.

Exactly. And that's how it should be, and it got more and more like that as she gained her own identity as the years went by. So it was clearly not her band, and that was a good thing - she played her role in this band, and she needed to go and have her own. There was nothing broken about it, and it was more me than her - I was bitter, and really not liking it at all. This band was falling apart. We have never stopped getting along - she just spent the day here and left a few minutes ago. Things have never been better for either of us; it shows you what time can do, and what learning how to get the bullshit out of your life can do.

The new album, *Limbo*, reminds me an awful lot of your early albums - it has a lot of those 'tangents' that make the songs unpredictable.

That's great, as that's what I originally thought, that it was sort of a fan's record and it was a good one to do on our own label. But a lot of people have said that it's our most accessible to the point of almost implying that we are selling out. And I was just stunned as I was sure that the only thing I would ever here was "This is a very strange record," and "You're not going to win any new fans with this one" which would be good, I think. I like it when everybody says something different about it, especially when it's opposite things.

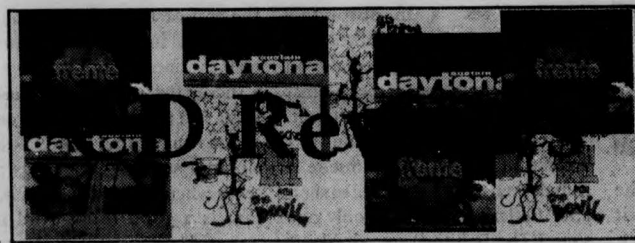
The only way that I can think of it being more accessible is that people's ideas about music have changed over the years.

That's true. There are lots of those tangents and key changes, and I'm used to thinking that it turns people off or confuses people, but I think that within each of those sections there is nothing very dissonant, not much screaming or melodic taking of chances so that they can deal with each little section. And I'm not sure if they know that the key is changing or the time is changing and all that - they can deal with what is going on right now while listening.

And what about the title of the album - what sort of limbo does it mean?

It's called *Limbo* so that we could have a title track and we don't actually have to name the record anything because we don't like titling records; it is so artificial to us. The only reason a record is a record is because there is only a certain number of songs we can fit on a CD. But I like *Limbo* because it is a funny dance, and that once you've been to heaven and hell then you end up somewhere inbetween.

For more Throwing Muses, check out The Bruns website: <http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns/>

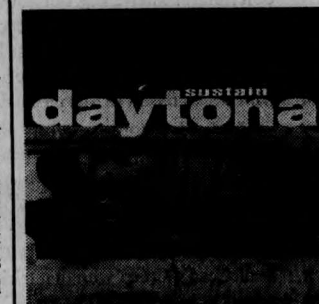


This album is repetitive. Repetitive, repetitive, repetitive. Think you're listening to a broken record? I thought I was. Ten of the fifteen tracks on the album are one riff or chord progressions played *ad nauseum*. Aside from "Me and Chuck" (good solos by guitarist Charlie Hunter and shifting dynamics save this one), the songs aren't very good. Another annoying fact is that Claypool himself decided to play all of the instruments on most of the songs. He should stick to playing bass, as his performances on drums and guitar are lessons in mediocrity. The few highlights on this album include the aforementioned "Me and Chuck," the funky "Holy Mackerel" and the only song in which Claypool plays all of the instruments that's good is "Granny's Little Yard Gnome." For die hard Primus/Les Claypool fans only.



Les Claypool and the Holy Mackerel *Highball with the Devil* Interscope/MCA

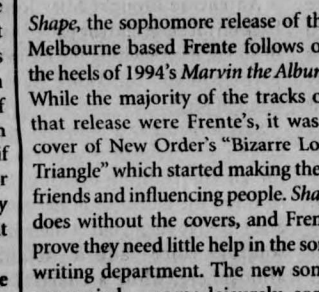
- Charles Teed



daytona *Sustain* Zulu Records/Cargo

daytona set sail on a sea of fuzzy guitars and clever choruses -- or should that be "Clever" choruses? Main man Colin W. Cleaver sings, writes songs, plays guitar, and also assists with the mastering, mixing, and producing processes of *Sustain*, the Vancouver band's true successor to their debut, *Chicane*. Chiefly produced by Glen Reely, the man partly responsible for 54-40's breakthrough *Smilin' Buddha Cabaret*, the album contains everything that might be expected of him: catchy bass lines, powerful guitar and a drummer let loose with a mission -- all the while wrapped entirely in a rock/pop-like blanket. The distorted vocals and smart mixes in tunes such as the lead-off single "Shannon Kissed a Train," "1987," and the boisterous "Chances Are..." help establish a consistent flow to this work that makes this album a true keeper.

- Peter J. Cullen



Frente *Shape* Mammoth Records

*Shape*, the sophomore release of the Melbourne based Frente follows on the heels of 1994's *Marvin the Album*. While the majority of the tracks on that release were Frente's, it was a cover of New Order's "Bizarre Love Triangle" which started making them friends and influencing people. *Shape* does without the covers, and Frente prove they need little help in the song writing department. The new songs are varied -- some leisurely, some wistful. You could even say that some of them rock. Well ... almost. The common denominator is Angie Hart's voice: clear and clean. Meanwhile, her words are stinging like bees. Not all of them, but some pierce the skin. There are so many good lines - jibes at self obsessed ignorance, diagrams of shortcircuited mental wiring, descriptions of desire. Of all the songs, "Harm" has my favourite lines: "today's too much for you ... you just want to go, don't you? you're damned if you don't and dumb if you do" "Horrible" gets more from less. Its descent into disillusionment ends with repetitions of: "Missing out what might have been the meaning of," with Hart's voice falling down a scale as duplicates begin their fall. The shape? Definitely candy. But the contents have a full range of flavours, not just the sugar that the shape implies.

- Neil Duxbury

## Ron Hawkins: not 'The Hawk'

CHARLES TEED  
THE BRUNSWICKAN

When most people think of Ron Hawkins, they picture an obese, 50 year old man who appears on commercials, selling his "Greatest Hits" packages. They do not usually think of the former ead singer of the Lowest of the Low.

"I've had middle-aged women show up at the Ultrasound in Toronto and be disappointed that it was me," laughed Hawkins, who is currently on tour with the Matthew Godo band in support of his solo album, the *Secret of My Excess* "I get that way more than I expected."

Hawkins, like the elder musician who shares his name, is no newcomer to the Canadian music scene. With *The Lowest of the Low* he released an album independently which was eventually picked up by A&M Records. Extensive tours and another record followed, but by 1994 Hawkins found himself tired of being in a rock band. "It was great, all the stuff we did (in the Lowest of the Low), I was really proud of it, but I wanted to experiment with other styles."

Hawkins does have a chance to exorcise these musical demons on *The Secret of My Excess*, his solo debut on Shake! The Record Label. Hawkins describes the project as "all over the

map." From sleazy rock n' roll to punk to more melancholy material, the album shows off all of Hawkins' musical abilities. However, there are a few people who are not completely pleased with Hawkins' progress. "some people aren't quite as into the new sound as they were the old sound." But he added, "There are some people who were never into the Low that heard my new album and liked it."

Hawkins' current tour is the first major tour to promote the album. This is slightly unorthodox, as the album has been in stores since March. "I took off to Europe after the record had been out for a month. I needed a break. It was poorly timed, really."

Another oddity is the band supporting Hawkins. It consists of a Hammond organ player and a baritone sax. Not exactly what you call a conventional three piece band. "I got a call from Matthew (Good) and he offered me three seats in his van if I wanted to put a group together and support my album. Because I now have more flexibility than I did (in *The Lowest of the Low*), I am now able to do things like this."

Hawkins hopes that this tour, coupled with the video release of the single "Hey Valerie" will be "the rebirth of the album." Decide for yourself on Saturday, September 28 at The Cellar.

We have one TRAGICALLY HIP album to give away this week!

If you don't already own *Trouble at the Henhouse*, here's your big chance to win, win, win! Just let us know what the "trouble" at the henhouse could possibly be. Coolest (ie. creative) answer picks up the album.

Drop your entries off to The Brunswickan, room 35 in the SUB. Leave your vital statistics (ie. name) and we'll post the winner in next week's issue (ie. next week's issue).

GRECO CORNERS ARE BACK!

**GRECO**  
Pizza On Time... Or Pizza On Us!...

TWO 12" SQUARES  
3 Ingredients

**\$16.15** PLUS TAXES

ADD \$2.00 FOR STUFFED CRUST

Free Delivery

**454-3030**

**PIZZA SHACK**  
★ Student Owned & Operated ★

**PIZZA SPECIALS**

#1 16" Square • 3 toppings

#2 12" Pizza • 2 toppings  
9" Garlic Cheese Fingers

454-45-45 FREE DELIVERY ALWAYS!

**NOTICE**

The Faculty of Science, as part of its Peer Mentor Program, has established a peer mentor section for native students. The Peer Mentor is Sheena Nicholas, telephone number 455-7176. If you are interested in participating in this program, please call Sheena or drop into the Dean of Science Office, Room 109, Physics & Administration Building.

**Babysitter Brokers**

Do you have days, afternoons, or evenings free. We have parents who will pay you to care for their children. Call now to arrange an appointment 459-7487

**THE FREDERICTON SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY (FSFS)**

Will be holding its monthly meeting on Thursday, Oct 3rd at 8:00 p.m. in SUB Room 203. Newsletters presented, discussion of conventions, latest news on sci-fi occurrences. For more information, contact Lynn Stapleton @454-9012. Or E-mail at [d7uk@unb.ca](mailto:d7uk@unb.ca). Check out our Website: <http://www.unb.ca/web/clubs/fsfs>

USS HAWKING  
"TO SEEK, TO STRIVE, TO FIND, AND NOT TO YIELD!"  
NCC-1850

FREDERICTON SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY

**THE GOODY SHOP**  
ESTABLISHED 1966

SPECIALIZING IN HOME BAKING

COOKIES MUFFINS PIES & MORE

FRESH DAILY

"Home of Fredericton's Famous Whoopie Pies"

**OPEN**  
5am - 8pm Weekdays  
7am - 6pm Saturday  
11am - 5pm Sunday

701 Albert St  
Open 'til 8pm weekdays