

Entertainment

TUPELO

CHAIN SEX!

by Bill Doskoch

Mention the Clash to most people and they probably think of political/punk sort of songs.

Mention Count Basie to others and they think of big band/jazz music.

This leads to problems when you get a band like Tupelo Chain Sex; after all, when you combine political songs with jazzy music, it makes it really hard to fit them into a nice, neat slot.

It's even harder when after listening to their albums, you recognize the strains of swing, ska, bebop, blues, reggae, rockabilly and latin music wafting out of your speakers.

However, when you look at the members of the band, the reasons why they cut such a wide stylistic swath become apparent.

For example, lead singer "Limey" Dave Dahlson is from England, but was working in Los Angeles in 1982 doing design and album cover work for groups like the Clash and Rocking Russians when he met up with the other founders of TCS.

One of those founders, guitarist "Tupelo" Joe Altruda, could play eighteen different instruments by the age of 20.

Two other members, legendary violinist Don "Sugar cane" Harris and sax player Bill "Stumuk" Nugent, have brought their fifty-plus years of living and music-making experience with groups as diverse and eclectic as John Mayall, Frank Zappa and Johnny "Guitar" Watson to the band.

The band is rounded out by drummer Willie "Dred" McNeill and bassist Kevin "Eleven."

Their political sentiments tend to be anti-mainstream U.S.A., as the lines "Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, chevrolet... you can shove

them all up your ass!" would indicate.

However, if the thought of political lyrics makes you want to puke all over your Sperry topsiders and start looking frantically for a Lionel Ritchie tape, relax! Their tunes aren't all political or even all that serious, as any band that sings about "Champion the Wonder Horse" obviously isn't into a total gloom-and-doom trip.

Aside from music, what makes TCS a really exciting new band is the vitality of their live shows, which should dispel any pre-conceived notions about bands with political lyrics being anti-fun.

"Wild, funny, crazy, spontaneous, eccentric and vaudevillian," characterize reviews of TCS shows and lead singer Dahlson said in an interview with *Cashbox* magazine, "I think we're in the American tradition of vaudeville, though we're not really trying to resurrect it, I just think there is something in that kind of variety that really appeals to people — they want to be entertained."

Handstands, cartwheels, rafter-swinging, slam-dancing and assaulting each other with rolls of toilet paper are all know occurrences at TCS shows. But despite the weirdness, they never sacrifice their musicianship.

So, if watching the *Fall Guy* or *Hotel* just doesn't do it for you any more on Wednesday nights and you'd like to put some musical adventure into your life, check out TCS at Scandal's (Sheraton-Caravan Hotel, 100 Ave and 104 St.) on Oct. 9. Tix are only five bucks and the doors open at 8:00 p.m.

If they come out flat, you'll lose your money and one night, but if they're hot, it could be one of the wildest and most unique shows to hit Edmonton in some time.



Tupelo Chain Sex: strains of swing, ska, bebop, blues, reggae, rockabilly and latin music.



Gilbert Bouchard MEDIA WATCH

by Gilbert Bouchard

The national Parent-Teacher Association in the United States and allied organizations are pushing a modest proposal asking the record industry to put a warning label on records that contain vulgar language, explicit sexual references, and favorable descriptions of suicide, rape, and sadistic violence. William Shannon *Boston Globe*, reprinted in the *Edmonton Journal*, Sept. 26, 1985

Do people jump off bridges because of Twisted Sister? Slash their wrists because of Michael Jackson? Drink poison at the bidding of the Boss?

I don't think so, but that's not what the above quoted citizen group seems to believe.

In Alberta, suicide rates have gone through the ceiling over the last few decades (with or without the help of Black Sabbath). The primary reason for this demographic swing probably has more to do with the social restructuring of our province in the last two decades after the discovery of oil than any rock and roll influence.

Where you once had a rural culture rooted around large extended families and centered in close-knit farming communities, Alberta grew overnight into an urban and cosmopolitan province. Fort McMurray is symbolic of this swing — a city where only bush and moose had been before. Unfortunately, in this rapid urbanization we lost most of our social super-structure. Families were broken up and scattered as the young followed the rigs, and people found themselves living in large faceless cities next door to strangers.

In the past, a troubled teenager had places to turn to, people to confide in when life got rough; now your typical disturbed teenager is alone at home, both his parents are working, he's miles from any close relation and is usually the new arrival in whatever community he happens to be living in.

In time the province will adjust to its newfound urbanization and suicide, like other social ills, will bottom out. But will the potential censors have the patience to wait? Probably not.

Censorship of the arts — particularly the popular arts — is one thing people do to feel they've helped to alleviate our social ills.

No one really knows how much popular art affects rather than reflects behavior. Personally, I lean to the side arguing that art reflects more than it affects. But that concerned citizen — like the concerned citizen in the Parent-Teacher Association — can easily convince himself of the 'affects' of popular art without fear of any substantial evidence refuting his stand. So the citizen can take action against these formidable social ills, bringing suicide down to size if not in actuality than at least psychologically.

The second effect of censorship is much more insidious. If you wipe away all mention of suicide in our art, and couple that with the (unofficial) ban of coverage of suicides in the newsmedia you've managed to make suicide at least appear invisible. After all, what you can't see you can't feel guilty about.

While you can arrest the damage caused by the arts by curbing them, you cannot remove the problems that art reflects by wiping away the image. In the long run censorship amounts to running away rather than facing the social ills that plague us.

The *Media Watch* disinformation of the week award goes to Barbara Amiel for her essay *AIDS and the rights of the well* (*Maclean's*, Sept. 30, 1985). In this essay Amiel argues against laws protecting the rights of AIDS victims and argues in favor of forcibly isolating these victims. She uses the bubonic plague and leprosy in building her argument.

What Amiel fails to mention in her irresponsible, hysteria-induced ramblings is that unlike leprosy or the bubonic plague, AIDS is not spread casually; it's still a venereal disease. Apart from those unfortunate enough to share tainted needles or receive infected blood products, you can't catch AIDS unless you're intimate with an AIDS victim.

What clowns like Amiel don't tell the public is that AIDS still hasn't spread outside of the traditional high-risk groups (or at least not enough to be concerned about) and that friends, family members, and the medical personnel in close contact with AIDS patients by and large have not contracted the illness. While nothing about AIDS is certain there is more evidence against the casual spread of the virus than there is in favor.

But like suicide, AIDS is one of those subjects that robs people of the ability to think clearly. People feel threatened by AIDS and want to do something about it, and it's up to the media to make certain that this energy is harnessed in the proper channels rather than in attempts to run from the problem by isolating the victims and trying to make the disease invisible.

It's been estimated that up to two million people are carrying (and spreading) the AIDS virus, so try as you may, rounding up the victim of the illness won't do anything to halt the spread of the sickness.

Rather than waste precious energy venting frustrations on scapegoats, let's try to do something productive like pumping money into research and hospital facilities for the wave of victims to come.

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