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Willy DeVille

A touch of Mink

*"I don't have to
open for people,
fuck it, I'm a
headline act."*

Ric Sarabia

Mink De Ville staggered through six sold-out shows last week at The Edge, managing to keep himself on the stage most of the time. The band is composed of six street-tough musicians from New York City, creating a Spanish-flavoured, strangling, R'n'B sound. I spoke with frontman extraordinaire Willy De Ville after last Wednesday evening's performance.

The 30-year-old De Ville was undeniably dapper onstage with his raunchy-ranged voice, lean, gaunt face, Peppi Le Pu moustache, high black pompadour, tiny little ass, and immaculate 3-piece suit. He was also extremely stoned.

Why are you opening a week at The Edge and not playing to the same number in a single night at the Gardens?

I prefer the more intimate feel of a bar than, say, the big concert halls we've played in Europe. We did a show two months ago in Holland with the Kinks and The Specials in front of 160,000 people. I hated it. I'm a night person—I can't get into the vibe of open-air concerts... Hey, I'm not Ted Nugent!

Is the band hot in Europe?

Yeah, especially England and France. We get a lot more airplay there. We're mismanaged in North America. Capital Records is very white bread music for Joe Six-Pack. They're into dollars, not art. You have to be McDonald's and made



the cash or else you get squashed. Capitol wasn't even gonna release the last album *Le Chat Bleu* here because it wasn't "New-Wavey" enough for a new wave band—whatever that is—until European copies started flying out of record stores in New York, Toronto and Los Angeles. We're popular in the urban centres over here, I mean we still haven't broken Des Moines.

Except for keyboardman Kenny Margolis, the present line-up in the band is completely different from the musicians on the last three albums.

I love the new band—they're all great professionals and for the first time I feel that everybody is as good as me. The old band nearly killed me, they were only in the business for the broads and the coke. There were nights when I'd be so wasted onstage and nobody cared that I had to go out there and pull off the show. It got pretty stupid, so I fired them.

In a Rolling Stone interview a few months ago you called Elvis

Costello a "borderline fascist"...

Our first tour ever as Mink De Ville was as an opening act for Costello. He is a fucking racist asshole and the band is like a bunch of little rich kids who've never been spanked. It came to the point where, if the tour was any longer, my band would have beat the shit out of them. Besides, I don't have to open for people, fuck it, I'm a headline act.

You know, in between De Ville albums one can get pretty hungry. Are we going to get a new album soon?

Yeah, we're recording it right now in Manhattan. It's gonna be called *Coup De Gras*. Recording is like being in a submarine so we work in the studio for a week and then tour for a week to keep the band in shape. It's gonna be a good one.

Why does the band all look alike?

We take the same vitamins, so fuck off.

Why, thank you, Willy.



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