

making WAVES

issue 1

featuring

Jeri Cain Rossi
DEBSEY WYKES
Veronica Ortuño
STEF PETTICOAT

Linder Sterling
Sharon Cheslow
LILIPUT
Alice Bag

Secret Girlfriend
Records

AGSFB
Germes
Of Youth

**Plus
More**



MAKING WAVES' was born about a year ago in a discussion between us: Camille, Paris and Mary, Los Angeles. Taken from the name of a comp which featured '*a collection of 12 women bands from the U.K.*', we aim to explore the intersections of punk, feminism and womanhood. We wanted to get in touch with the women that made the songs we love, and asked our friends that share a common enthusiasm for music to contribute. We tried to contact our favorite bands and artists, sometimes with success, sometimes not... The finalized project has taken a year and has contributors from around the world. Regardless of communication barriers and hectic schedules, this will hopefully be one of many projects to come.

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LIFE IS A SLOW DEATH

Interview with Jeri Cain Rossi

First off, as a sort of introduction, it would be nice if you could describe how the city of Denver was in the late 70s and early 80s, and how the whole underground music scene started. I am intrigued to know if the fact that Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady and Allen Ginsberg had spent time living in the city in the 40s, gave Denver a reputation of being an alternative place to locate during the next decades, and if that was the original seed for the whole alternative movement.

Cassady grew up in skid row section of downtown Denver. His father was hobo and an alcoholic. Cassady did petty theft and might have been a gay hustler when he was in his teens. Stole his first car when he was fourteen. He was in and out of reform school.

Cassady met Ginsberg and Kerouac in NYC when Allen and Jack were going to Columbia University. Ginsberg fell in love with him and followed him to Denver. Neal met his wife Carolyn while she was going to grad school in Denver in the 40s. There's a story she tells that how she met Allen Ginsberg is she came home from class one day to find a naked Neal & Allen sleeping on her dorm bed.

Ginsberg was in love with Neal and that's how he came to be there on and off. He helped in the founding of the Naropa Institute in Boulder, a school that focused on Buddhism and writing. Yes, the Beats hung out here in Denver because of Neal but Denver and Boulder are more known for the Hippie scene of the 60s and 70s: a laid back, open minded, nature loving, spiritual vibe when I moved there in December 1980 just after John Lennon was shot.

Musically speaking I guess Wax Trax label had a huge role in its development as well. Were there any other factors? What were your personal reasons for moving to Denver and when did you settle in?

This is confusing but the original owners of Wax Trax – Jim and Danny – sold it and moved to Chicago to start the Wax Trax label. I worked for Duane and Dave, who bought the store in Denver from Jim and Danny and kept the name. Duane and Dave were crazy music fanatics. They used to be social workers and big hearted, so as employees we could get away with a lot of shit and they understood. It was the best job I ever had, working at Wax Trax Records in the early 80s.

When I was going to college in Champaign-Urbana Illinois I was lucky to have been friends with The Vertebrats. They were truly great and rootsy. I moved to Denver there after college to live with my sister and wanted to start a band. There was an underground scene in Denver and lots of performance art. Very arty. Like the Great Carbon Dioxide Orchestra where we all played metal holding dry ice with gloves. Or the Small Appliance Orchestra where we all played amplified toasters and blenders and blow dryers and the like. I missed the true punk years of Denver. I witnessed the new wave, the avant garde / industrial and the hardcore scenes.

Once you were in Denver how did you get involved in the burgeoning DIY scene? Were there any local band that you liked and really spoke to you?

Denver underground was a fairly small scene so it wasn't too long where everybody knew everybody else. Before I started working at Wax Trax I was doing a music newspaper with Duane, one of the owners, called *Local Anesthetic*. Then I started working at Wax Trax also. Since I lived at the hub of it all, I knew what was going on and went out a lot. I remember loving Crank Call Love Affair, The Frantix.

Regarding Your Funeral, how did you meet Karen Sheridan and Cleo Tilde? How did the idea of forming a band start? Did you play in other bands before? What were your influences?

I met Karen from hanging out at art gallery openings, gigs. She had spent time in London and was very cool & stylish and had big aspirations. We became friends to start a band, a British influenced Cure-ish kinda band which became Your Funeral. I knew guitar from playing folk bars in college and she picked up bass. We met Cleo who was more into The Ramones. She was in an all girl band called The Guys.



At the time my musical style was more rootsy and pop, case in point: "I Want To Be You." Besides The Cure I was also influenced by Echo and the Bunnymen, Joy Division, and especially The Gun Club (though you can't tell by our music). The Gun Club had toured to Denver and Boulder in '81 and that was the first time a performance changed my life. The other time was when my band opened for The Birthday Party in '83. I wasn't the same after either those shows.

My lyrics were way depressing, dark. By the age of twenty four I had lost a boyfriend in an apartment fire and my father to depression. I took their deaths incredibly hard. Thus the name: Your Funeral. A little-girl-lost take on the impermanence of nature. Karen was way into it as well, but our dark, unsmiling broodiness drove Cleo crazy.

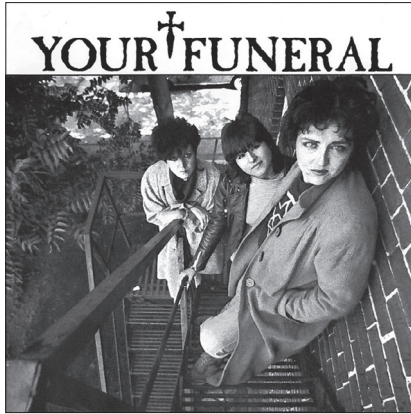
Back in the late 70s and early 80s, I guess the number of people involved in the scene wasn't very big, so you knew each other pretty well. Although punk really opened doors for women, it seems that scenes were still male-dominated and there were not many women playing in bands. When Your Funeral started what kind of reactions did you receive from audience, local groups, etc? Were people supportive or did you have problems for being an all girl band?

There had been other popular all female punk bands before our time in Denver called: The Profalactics, The Guys and The Varve. I never saw them. The alternative scene was very supportive of us. When Crank Call Love Affair went off on tour (who were also very dark and so so great) we were pegged to fill the gap for the brooding and troubled. We were together for less than a year as an all female trio. Then we split up, Karen ran off to London, and I retained the name and played with other people, mostly guys.

The story behind Your Funeral 7" seems to be very funny – that whole evil and satanic thing coming from the pressing plant. Could you please tell me a little bit more about that?

I started *Local Anesthetic* with Duane and we covered musical happenings around Denver, mostly underground. Wax Trax published it. Then Duane got the idea to press a single Allen Ginsberg playing with The Gluons, a song called "Birdbrain." I think later Ginsberg did the song with The Clash live. We went to the recording and sat in

the sound room with the great Allen Ginsberg while he was reciting the poem “Birdbrain” on to a track. Well, Allen Ginsberg was having a hard time keeping to the rhythm of the song The Gluons had laid so the producer was getting quite irate and demanded that everyone clear the sound room. But Allen Ginsberg, like a gentle, holy saint, spoke “no, don’t send them away. I like artists.”



So that was the official first single Duane put out. Then he asked if Your Funeral wanted to do a single. We recorded it with Geoff Landers and Bob Drake at the Packing House in 1982. Five hundred copies. It was when we went to repress the single for another five hundred copies that the Wyoming pressing plant refused to as they were a Christian based company and the name Your Funeral, and the suicidal lyrics appalled them. I don’t know how much all that cost, not much as we sold them for a couple bucks each. (I might have a xerox of the letter in storage). The picture from the single was from some fire escape in Capitol Hill area, where I lived, and where Wax Trax is located.

Apart from these very specific details, the fact that a pressing plant refused to press anymore records for the only reason that you seemed to be evil or satanic is really surprising. Was it really hard to be a punk back in the day in Denver? Are there any anecdotes you can recall?

I don't remember anything out of the ordinary. It was a shock to us about the pressing plant's rejection. We viewed *them* as bizarre and cultish.

How long were Your Funeral active?

Less than a year.

How many gigs did you play?

Under twenty gigs.

Did you ever play outside Denver?

No.

What was the reason you only recorded a 7"?

We broke up.

After the initial all girl trio disbanded I reformed with Phil Teague and Michael Sidlow and that was the best formation of Your Funeral. We were loud and noisy and crazy great. I played bass. Phil played a noisy noisy rootsy style on his Fender Jaguar and Michael played drums. I threw out most of my songs except for a few and we added other songs that Phil wrote. By this time I was throwing out the gothy British thing and going for the Americana roots thing. We had volatile personalities and unfortunately we didn't last long. The day we got The Birthday Party gig, was the day they both quit. I asked some friends to fill in and opened for The Birthday Party and it was great, but I always regret I didn't beg Phil and Michael to let bygones be by-

goners and do the gig because it was truly one of the best bands I was ever in. I don't even have a practice tape of us.

Could you tell me a little bit more about Die Migrains?

Die Migrains also started out all female, a noisy sloppy Flipper-esque quartet. That was Mary Frembgen and Suzanne Lewis on guitar, Linda Dershang on bass and myself on drums. I remember I got this scheme to have a battle of the bands with The Frantix so I went up to Matt the bass player, threw a drink in his face or something and challenged his band to a duel on the stage. We organized the battle of the bands at the Gaga Club in the Meat Packing District, a lonely industrial area. Both bands got on stage at the same time and we were supposed to trade songs but The Frantix started playing through our songs, so we started playing through their songs, then it became one big cacophony and something happened, we started sounding like Glenn Branca orchestra or something, it was over the top. Jello Biafra was in town and jumped on stage and did an impromptu spoken word rant over the cacophony.



After Your Funeral and Die Migrains disbanded you moved to New York and got in touch with Cinema of Transgression. Later on you moved to Boston and created Black Cat Bone, then to New Orleans and finally San Francisco. As a person who has lived in so many different places and been involved in the underground scene, could you tell me which cities do you consider the most interesting? I guess each city has its own charm, but which one do you prefer and why?

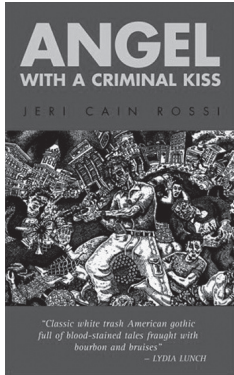
I moved to Boston first. It was because of a Lyres song. My tastes were more and more rootsy Americana and Boston was the town for that. The Boston scene in the 80s was incredibly inspiring with The Lyres and The Flies and later The Titantics. So many great bands. I moved out their with Michael from Your Funeral. We had patched things up and had done a punk folk duet called No Time For Flowers. Michael didn't like Boston and moved back to Denver but I stayed and started Black Cat Bone. We had a bit of success and started getting great opening slots around town for bands such as Foetus and Sonic Youth. I had a few side bands also: Death House Pussy, Trashed Out Lez Boys, Hogtied... I can't remember them all. After that I gave up music for a while, started writing fiction, went into the MFA program for filmmaking. When I got my MFA I moved to NYC for two years and worked in the film industry. No music.

It wasn't until I moved to New Orleans that my music was resurrected and I was in the greatest band of my life thus so far: Dolly Dillon. We were stripped down Americana and it was divine. The Dolly Dillon recordings are pretty much my favorite. I had finally come into my own as a songwriter and a singer and guitar player. And we went NOWHERE! After Dolly Dillon I solo'd a lot. Focused on my fiction writing, had two books published, had two plays produced.

After Katrina I moved to San Francisco. The weather is nice. But I left my heart in New Orleans.

INTERVIEW WITH JERI CAIN ROSSI

By far Boston had the most bang for the buck as far as great music. But there's something about New Orleans that lures me back again and again.



What do you think was so important about the whole late 70s and early 80s DIY scene? The fact that we are talking about it now thirty years later means something. What was the most important thing you learnt from that time? What are the differences you see between past and present? Any advice you would say to young kids just getting started?

I was just a kid growing up trying to make sense of life like all these kids are now. There's a coffee shop I go to where twenty-somethings are the baristas and I like some of the new stuff I hear but I'm mostly impressed how kids today seem to have eclectic tastes of all eras. I think the most important advice I'd give is listen and study the masters. Cover their songs and make them your own. So when and if the Muse speaks to you, you'll know how to answer.

Please name the five most important records in your life. Could you explain your reasons?

Let's Get Lost soundtrack directed by Bruce Weber, artist Chet Baker. This documentary was filmed just before Chet Baker died. He was the jazz trumpet golden boy with good looks, talent, honey voice and a fierce heroin habit. At the end of his life, he was singing and playing trumpet with dentures, his good looks were ravaged by drug use. His voice on this record is like honey on a razor blade. His voice is even softer, I can tell the sound engineer had to tweak his volume up. You can hear the dentures clacking. But it's the best damn record of all time.

Time Out of Mind by Bob Dylan. He wrote and recorded this record after a major illness that almost took his life. It seems like he wrote a lot of the songs for a lost muse, perhaps his ex wife Sarah, the mother of his children. It's mournful and regretful and features genius Daniel Lanois in the line-up and production.

American Stars & Bars by Neil Young. Anything from the 70s Neil Young has been influential to me. The first song I ever learned on guitar when I was fourteen was "Helpless." I have a deep admiration for Neil Young. Neil Young is my personal saviour. I once dated a boy who was a spitting image of Neil. He died tragically in a fire within a month that we split up. I never got over it, never will.

Junkyard and *Mutiny/The Bad Seed* EP by The Birthday Party. When my band opened up for The Birthday Party in Denver in 1983, The Birthday Party was coming to an end, and The Bad Seeds were still germinating. That show and The Gun Club, both at the Mercury Cafe in the early 80s became my musical north star.

When I was in the thick of playing in bands I listened earnestly to John Lee Hooker, Lightning Hopkins and many other deep blues players. I had bands that opened for The Birthday Party, The Bad Seeds, These Immortal Souls. Rowland S Howard (RIP) is one of my guitar gods. Lydia Lunch's *13.13*, and early Cure influenced Your Funeral.

Today I enjoy *Belladonna* by Daniel Lanois, and soundtracks from

films like *Alamo* (the remake with Billy Bob Thornton), *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *The Assassination of Jesse James* (soundtrack by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis), old R&B like *Nothing Takes the Place of You* by Toussant McCall. Etta James, Irma Thomas. Barrelhouse piano blues. Bordello jazz. Jazz funeral music. The mournful and wistful the better. I guess I have an “Americana” slant, that is, I enjoy rootsy music that hail from blues, jazz & country, especially the old stuff, or new stuff with a jagged take on the old stuff. And Graham Parsons!

Please make a list of your five favourite books and writers, and a list of your five favourite films and directors.

Writers, more than five! Anything by Flannery O'Connor. Anything by Bukowski especially the poetry. *Love is a Dog from Hell* especially. Anything by Cormac McCarthy, his use of language is gourmet. Wolfgang Borchert's *Sad Geraniums* was very influential on my writing style. Ernest Hemingway. David Goodis. Jim Thompson. And last but certainly not least: the immortal John Fante.

Directors: Robert Altman, Gus Van Sant's more poetic films, John Cassavetes, Roman Polanski, Dennis Hopper, Terrence Malick.

If I had directed *The Bear* by Jean-Jacques Annaud, I could die happily knowing that I had created art that helped humans understand the need to revere the animal kingdom. I gave a copy to my beloved nephew who is an avid hunter. *Brokeback Mountain* and *Lust, Caution, Desire* directed by Ang Lee. *Chinatown* directed by Polanski. *The Last Movie* directed by Dennis Hopper deeply affected my vision as a director / writer. Early Robert Altman films like *Theves Like Us* and *Nashville*, *McCabe and Mrs Miller*, and *3 Women*. John Cassavetes' *Opening Night*. Terrence Malick's *Badlands*. *Remember My Name* directed by Alan Rudolph. And I have a soft spot for anything Sam Shepard writes, directs or acts in.

If you only could choose one book and one film what would they be?

Book: *Ask the Dust* written by John Fante because I'm a hopeless romantic like the main character. Fante makes me laugh and cry on the same page.

Film: *Last Tango in Paris* because I relate to the decay of the Marlon Brando character. His scene sitting with his dead wife, talking to her tenderly then crescendoing into cursing her, calling her a whore and a pigfucker, then breaking down and crying, calling her pet names. I can't think of a better performance that capsulate the loneliness and craziness of this thing called mortality.

In your opinion, who was the most influential band from Denver? If you had to choose three records made in Denver, which ones would you pick and why?

I own an original single of The Frantix *My Dad's A Fuckin' Alcoholic*. They were all so adorable, the whole band. I had crushes on all of them. Ricky showed me some great grungy guitar tricks. This is before grunge was a genre.



I also saw the last show of The Healers (from Boulder) which was a wall of sound, fronted by John Greenway who co-wrote “California Uber Alles” with Jello Biafra of The Dead Kennedys. And I’d have to say Jello Biafra (from Boulder) is the most influential music force coming out of Colorado in my generation. After I left Denver there was another Renaissance of Denver music: 16 Horsepower and the many projects of the former members, such as Slim Cessna’s Auto Club, Woven Hand, and Jay Munly & The Lee Lewis Harlots.

Is there a book or film related to New Orleans that you recommend?

The Mardi Gras acid scene in St Louis Cemetary Number 1 in *Easy Rider* is my favorite. And of course there’s Jarmusch’s *Down By Law* which is a masterpiece. Then there’s the old melodramatic black & whites that are great to watch if nothing to see old landmarks: *Walk on the Wild Side* based on the Nelson Algren book and *Panic in the Streets* directed by Elia Kazan. But no film totally captures the lost soul / tragi-comedy of New Orleans.

What do you like most about living in SF? What differences do you see between SF and NOLA? Do you see yourself living in NOLA again?

What do I like about SF? The weather. It’s temperate. No scorching heat. And it’s close to forests, lakes, ocean, beautiful landscapes! And of course it’s close to Napa and Sonoma Valley vineyards. People read books here, are more serious, into money, lots of hipsters, lots of poets and artists as well.

The difference between SF and NOLA apart from the weather is that though SF is a big party town also, people are more serious and have to make money because the rents are outrageous. People are more health and politically conscious in SF.

All over the quality of life is better in SF. But the reckless, baccha-

nal, tragi-comedy that is called New Orleans is irreplaceable in my heart. I can't get the boy named New Orleans out of my mind.

What was the most important thing you learnt of being a young girl involved in the punk / underground scene? How do you think it has affected your life?

I was a misfit. Even with the underground scene I didn't completely mesh. I was very lonely and I felt like I had to be wild to be accepted. This preoccupation with experiencing wild adventures propelled me to both exotic and horrific landscapes which I can't defend really. It's just how my life unfolded. It took me a very very long time to finally grow up and not be so self absorbed. Is it better? Yes, but there is loss of movement involved when you become more responsible. I'll tell you this though: living on the edge gets old, too.

What music do you listen to nowadays?

I mostly listen to the old stuff, and soundtracks. As far as new bands are concerned, there's a million unsung heroes. I know they are out there, just don't know their names. I go to a coffee shop where all the baristas are in their early twenties and every so often I hear something and ask them who is playing. Little has moved me to actually go out and buy the CD.

But I do believe in Ryan Scully. Our bands played together on and off in New Orleans. His new band is R Scully and the Rough 7. He writes songs that make me wanna cry or else go get drunk and screw some boy who will surely break my heart.

What are you currently involved in?

I just got a new roommate who moved in his upright piano into his room and an electric piano into the common area. My roommates

and I are decorating the common area to be a *sporting room* which is what the lounges in the old bordellos of Storyville were called. That's where jazz took root – in the *sporting rooms* of the Storyville neighborhood of New Orleans. I'm tinkering on the electric piano, trying to learn barrelhouse blues and such. So one roommate plays classical piano and another plays Erik Satie kind songs. It's great to have live music wafting in the air.

Otherwise I've been concentrating with the screenplay form. Whatever the Muse tells me to do, I do it. Whether it's writing, playing music, sewing, knitting, gardening. I'm in no hurry anymore to prove myself. I compare myself to Marlon Brando's character in *The Godfather* after Michael takes over as the head of the family. Marlon Brando is still deadly but prefers to now focus on the simple pleasures of life.

The interview was conducted by email.

Barcelona – San Francisco, summer 2010

JERI CAIN ROSSI

Jeri Cain Rossi was born and raised in America's rural Midwest. She is the author of *Angel With A Criminal Kiss* and *Red Wine Moan*. Her writing has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum in New York and performed at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art, among other venues. As a musician, Rossi has opened for Sonic Youth, The Birthday Party, and Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds. She directed a 16 mm short film, *Black Hearts Bleed Red*, featuring artist Joe Coleman. Rossi currently lives in San Francisco.

IMAGE CREDITS

- p. 4 Jeri Cain Rossi; pic by Jim Merrill (1995)
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- p. 13 *Angel With A Criminal Kiss*, Creation Books (1996); *Red Wine Moan*, Manic D Press, Inc (1999)
- p. 16 Frantix, *My Dad's A Fuckin' Alcoholic 7"*, Local Anesthetic (1983)



Dolly Mixture

an interview with Debsey Wykes

▽ Last June, I wrote the questions for my very first interview. I'm so glad that they were for **Debsey Wykes** of **The Dolly Mixture**, who kindly agreed to answer my questions. As you can imagine, the **Demonstration Tapes** are one of my favorite albums in the world. So when I started writing the questions, I tried to remember all the things I've always wondered, or that I wanted to know about the record and the band. Ultimately, I don't know if there is much in this interview that really reflects that. It's nice and exiting to read **Debsey's** answers when she explained where and when the band started, but I think the better way to learn this would be to look and hear the whole band in **Take Three Girls : The Dolly Mixture Story** (Paul Kelly, 2008). Unfortunately, we're probably not going to see it in France for a long time. My questions probably rehash everything that you may already know about the band, and if I had to start all over again, I would probably ask **Debsey** to tell me more about her favorite songs, albums, dresses (yes, dresses ! **Dolly Mixture** wore such pretty dresses!), books, films...

But here is my first try, by email and in english (it's sometimes difficult to write exactly what I want even with the invaluable help of my dear anglophone friends) and fortunately, I still had fun : I even met some peoples like James from Germs Of Youth Record' (who also answers some questions at the end of the article).
SO here is my first little try, and finally I am very very pleased with the way it turned out.

1. The reissue of « The Demonstration Tapes » is already SOLD OUT in most stores even before the vinyl comes out, and on Ebay it's very difficult to get your singles without spending a lot of money. Are you aware of your cult status for punk / post punk music lovers ? Was it your decision to reissue Demonstration Tapes ? And how much control and agency has the group had over their recordings ?

I think that we are aware there is a small group of people who feel very strongly about the group. Over the years people have come to us and asked if they could do a re issue. In the end we decided to put as much material together as we possibly could of ours and release it ourselves. As we own the rights to all our music we were able to have complete control over how the release was done which was very important to us. A young friend called James spoke to us about doing the vinyl release so we agreed to a limited run of 300 replica (almost!) albums. We probably could have made more than 300 but didn't expect demand to be quite so high.

2. I have the feeling that the Dolly Mixture was, at the time, very close to success. In fact we can see you in the shadow of Captain Sensible in Top Of The Pop video or in first part of the Undertones or The Fall, two groups which are rather famous now. I feel that you were really integrated into the English punk scene, is it true ? Do you feel the same way ?

We always felt a bit on the outside looking in! We often believed we were on the verge of great success but nothing much materialised!



3. How the band start ? How did you become involved in playing music ? Did you have any vocal training or a background in any other instrument prior to playing bass ?

I think I had always wanted to be in a band and by the end of 1977 when Hester and I did some backing vocals for someone else's band, the time was ripe for anyone to do it. You didn't have to be able to play much (if at all!) and everyone borrowed equipment and held parties to play at. Before I played the bass I had learnt some piano as had the other two. Rachel also had learnt the cello for a while, but this was all classical schoolgirl stuff!

4. Were you purposely only a group of women, was that important to you ? Was this also a feminist act ?

Our intention was to form an all girl band although our very first singer was in fact a boy called Christopher, at the time none of us had enough confidence in our singing to take the role of lead singer. He only played one gig though and we decided that we would all take turn on lead. I think that it seemed like it would be really great to be all girls because most bands were all boys and I suppose it seemed like a really fun idea! A strange mirror image in a way, but we didn't consciously think these things, it was an immediate impulse.

5. There are many women in the punk and post-punk scene of the late 70's / early 80's, who played in fantastic groups, but the most famous bands are groups of men. Was it difficult to be a female punk band ? Do you think that made things more difficult for you, for the band ?

It was definitely a novelty! This worked in our favour for a while but eventually some people began to resent this. We had to justify our existence constantly and I think people (especially the music press) were more suspicious in general because we were female. This may have been partly the type of music we played and the clothes we wore but I feel we were given a bit of a tougher time than if we had been boys.

6. The Dolly Mixture is a punk band, but who seems also very influenced by pop music, even more than punk music. I have a live record with covers of Little Eva (The Locomotion) Velvet Underground (Femme Fatale) ... On your first 7" you played "Baby It's You" by The Shirelles; were these bands that you listened to, that influenced you? Who gave you the desire to create a band of your own ?

Oh yes. Everything we played was an illustration of what we were listening to. 'Baby It's You' was recommended to us and was the only way we were able to release a record with one of our own songs on the other side. As we went along we heard loads of records and people would suggest things for us to listen to. The best relationships we had with people were the ones where we had a love of the same songs! I think that the first Blondie album was a big influence on us actually playing in a band, the general fashion for short simple songs was undoubtedly an inspiration for us to actually imagine we could play!

7. When I think of bands like Heavenly (their clip for Our love Is Heavenly, for example) I always think of The Dolly Mixture ... Do you think the Dolly Mixture were making a kind of pre-twee pop music ?

We were definitely post-something and pre-something but I don't know about twee! That expression really didn't exist as a musical term and to me it sounds so ineffectual. The live music scene was quite a tough place in those days and you had to be pretty tough to hold your own. We were probably more melodic than a lot of the music around us but we wouldn't have survived if we weren't a little tough.

8. For me, you have something pop, something twee and something decidedly PUNK! What is PUNK in the Dolly Mixture?

Attitude! (But subtle!)

9. Your latest EP : « Fireside EP » is different. It has some strings- Where did this desire come from ?

This probably came from a desire to do something different and to have some fun. We were pretty fed up with everything by the time we recorded those 'numbers'. It was actually released after we had stopped playing and without our knowledge !

10. Can you talk about your experiences in Saint Etienne and Birdie ? How can you compare it to Dolly Mixture ? The other members of Dolly Mixture, do they still have other musical projects ?

Playing with Saint Etienne is pure luxury. We laugh so much. I enjoy it because I can relax, dance, sing nice bits and bang a tambourine sometimes. Years ago it was with Saint Etienne that I met my future partner in crime - Paul Kelly. He was the guitarist in the touring group that I joined back in 1992. We then

of course went off together when they

(Saint Etienne) took a year off and formed Birdie - then also started our

family. I particularly like the Birdie records myself, it was quite hard doing the band, having a small child, having very little money and having this intense working relationship in and out of the home - but I liked that band and the music we made! All very different experiences, Dolly Mixture was the leaving home and going out into the world experience. As for the others : Hester doesn't play anymore, Rachel had a group called Fruit Machine a few years ago and she writes and plays music with her husband Steve and I still play occasionally with Saint Etienne.



11. What groups from this era were you listening to at the time ?

Do you mean the 90's? If so, apart from St.Etienne most of my favourite music at that time was dance music. We danced a lot in the 90's!

12. I am a big fan of the lyrics of most songs, my favorites are "I'm Sorry To Leave You", "Shoonay Shoonay" and "The Didn't Song", I must have listened to each of them a thousand times. Who wrote the lyrics in the Dolly Mixture ? Were lyrics important to you ? What did you want to write ?

(The songs you mention in particular were written by Rachel, me and Rachel again I think- all about boys.) Hester often wrote the words. We sometimes wrote together and Hester would tidy it up. The songs started off being more playful and then started to get more thoughtful and personal, Occasionally Rachel and I would write a song on our own. The songs were usually about something going on at the time or about other people. We never wanted to sound clumsy or slogan like- the words had to match the music.

13. I know that a movie was made about you, how can it be found ? Will it be available on DVD one day ?

There are in fact two, one 'Take Three Girls' -Made by my partner Paul- will be screening at a few select events this year, I'm sure it will be on DVD one day.

14. Any singing tips ? Or any advice for young women now who are starting bands/playing music ?

Just do anything you want to do, but it won't necessarily make you money! Just make sure you enjoy it because that should be your reason for being in a band.

15. Are you planning a reunion tour to coincide with the reissues ?

No reunion. Rachel and I have played a few songs together but we will not be playing as Dolly Mixture again. It's a young girl's pop group. Long live the music !

August 2010 by Email



1. Can you tell us about the label ? Who created it and how and when did it come about ? What did you hope to achieve and is there a sort of "guideline"? And what are your future plans for the label (if you can talk about it)?

I started the label myself as it was something I had wanted to do for a long time. I started the label about four years ago. There's weren't (still aren't) that many decent small labels in the UK focusing on the style of music im interested in. That said there are an abundance of new labels that have emerged in the last couple of years. But most are not to my taste.

2. How did you discover Dolly Mixture ? What do you like about them ?

I've know about the band for quite a long time. I've always loved the songs. Everything about the record great. The production works very well and the all the instruments do exactly what you want them to do. The vocals are wonderful throughout.



The Demonstration Tapes (A double Album) - Vinyl reissue of 1984 album limited to 300 copies worldwide. Germs Of Youth Record, 2010

3. Who is behind the recent reissue of Dolly Mixture's Demonstration Tapes LP? Did you try to contact them on your own?

I contacted Debsey and her Partner Paul Kelly about the reissue. There was no one else involved at any stage. As they own all the rights to the recordings so we never had to go through anyone else and were in control.

4. Can you tell us about your meeting with them, and how the project came about ?

We met many times in the Islington area near by their house in a appealing workers café (sometime, if we were feeling more upmarket we'd go to the sausage & mash place) as we initially had no set

release date to work round it took quite a long time to finalize the project. From the early stages we thought of combining the reissue with a live show and paul's film. They obviously had their own box set in the pipe line so it fitted together well.

5. It appears as though you chose to reproduce the first edition of the vinyl as faithfully as possible . Was that your intention? Did the members of Dolly Mixture hand-sign each one of the 300 copies? And was the original stamp used ?

We wanted to produce the record as an exactly copy of the original one. We were going to continue the numbering where the original left off so it would be a direct continuation but we couldn't get the precise end number and though it would be slightly confusing. The band stamped and numbered all the records. The stamp is the same one used on the first record.

6. What happened with the Rough Trade pre-order? I know that some of my friends who had ordered the vinyl through Rough Trade weren't able to get it in the end. Are you planning on doing a second pressing of the reissue ?

I allocated them 50 copies and they over sold.
I had already agreed to give all the others out so couldn't supply them with more. (**NOTE** : James told me later that there was probably no other edition)

7. Are you interested in reissuing other bands from the late 70's / early 80's ?

Definitely. I'd like to re issue Astaron's L.P. I thought about the idea of the Dolly Mixture Peel sessions.

November 2010 by Email

OH, and for those who couldn't buy the latest reissue you can order now the new Dolly Mixture reissue "Remember This - The Singles Collection 1980 - 1984" on Rough Trade !

Thanx to : **Debsey** for her patience and for giving me a little bit of her time, **James** from **Germes Of Youth Record** for the answers, the gig that I missed and the sweet compilation, **Roxanne Carter** & **Darryl Kostka** for helping me with the translation. And of course a very special thank you to all the amazing people who participate in the fanzine and made suggestions for the interview.

Illustrations made with photograph by Sara Bor & covers of **Remember This 7"** (Dolly Mixture, 1983) & **Happy Talk 7"** (Captain Sensible, 1982)

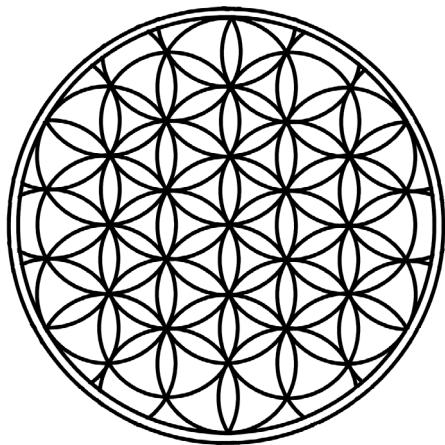
A MESSAGE FROM SECRET GIRLFRIEND RECORDS

FEMINIST?
IN A FEMINIST BAND?

NEW DIY RIOT GRRRL LABEL!
ANY FORMAT/AGE/GIRL

FIGHT THE
PATRIARCH

PUSH THE LITTLE
DAISIES AND MAKE
THEM COME UP



« The day I discovered RAOOUL is the day my whole life changed. It sounds so lame but to me it's the coolest thing in the world. I think I'm in love with Riot Grrl and that's why I've started Secret Girlfriend, I want to push RIOT GRRRL into peoples faces and make them take note! We're here! I'm sick of the patriarchal scene that I've had to suffer, thinking about it, it's probably just my paranoia, but it's hindered me in any kind of progress. What I mean is the amount of boys thrashing around at shows and the distinct lack of femme input has made me feel weak and I've often avoided going to shows because I feel instantly uncomfortable. Imagine how amazing it would be if we could push these boys aside just for a little while and thrash about our-

selves. My thrashing about is feminism and it's basically everything that excites me. It excites me when I meet like-minded girls and we can chat about things that really matter. It excites me when a boy outside a club calls me a dyke for having a partially shaved head and I feel so empowered to not conform to his standards. It excites me like it excited me when I heard the first BIKINI KILL record. So basically, Secret Girlfriend is my passion channelled into the genre I care about, but it pains me when I've handed out a million flyers and I get nothing back. Sometimes I question that the girls don't care, but then I know that we're all one big girl gang –we just have to look in different places to find each other. So I'm trying to find you all now. If you're in a band, and if you're a girl or a feminist, then I want to make tapes of your music and I want to distribute them around and I want to make artwork for your band just because you're a feminist/girl band and I'm so stoked on that.

Get in touch with me at jennhair@hotmail.co.uk, I want to push the little daisies and make them come up. DIY OR DIE ».

Jenn Hair



All Girl Summer Fun Band interview

by Jaspin Inadress

1. How did you girls first meet?

Jen: I feel I have known them in past lives!

Kathy: Practically! It was ten years ago! We all knew Kim and she brought us together.

2. What is your favourite place to hang out/play shows?

Jen: We don't actually play a lot of shows, but I love to hang out at the beach! Maybe we should play a show at the beach? Kathy: Yeah! I think that's my favorite place to be too. It's also fun just playing in Kim's basement, where we practice... and chat between songs. Kim: I love driving and talking on the way to shows and on tour. We are all so busy these days that we rarely get to see each other so it's a great time to check in with one another and to catch up on each other's lives.

3. Portland's rock and roll camp for girls sounds amazing. what is your involvement in it?

Jen: I have made some posters and collateral pieces for them. Kathy: In the first few years of the camp, we played the end-of-camp showcase, and got to see the bands the girls formed during the week. They learn one song, or write their own. Its amazing to see!

Kim: I taught guitar there for the first 4-5 years. It was an incredible experience. I had to stop working there because I was so busy but I'm hoping to get involved again in the future.

4. Are there any new bands coming out of Portland that people should check out? I really like New Bloods.

Kathy: We just played with Explode into Colors. They rule! They are all-girl psychedelic garage rock. I also like White Hinterland, Holy Sons, Pseudosix, Shaky Hands and White Fang.


5. I really love your stencils Jen. how did you get into illustration of album covers and when did you make your first zine?

Jen: It was what I knew and loved - Bands! I made my first zine in the early 1990s.

6. What are some of your favourite bands? What is in yr record player now?

Jen: I love Robots in Disguise and can't stop listening to the new Weezer. Kathy: I love 'Calling Out of Context' by Arthur Russell, Elevator to Hell, Arthur & Yu, Nomo, Sharon Jones. Recently I've been listening to the new Walkmen album and the new TV on the Radio album.

Kim: Lately I've been listening to a lot of my all time favorite bands, Dinosaur Jr., the Pixies, the Breeders and The Velvet Underground.



7. Kim and Kathy you both have your own clothing lines, how did this come about?

Kathy: I started designing my own t-shirts in 2002. I liked creating graphics encouraging the involvement in music (playing, listening and recording). I don't have much time these days to design anything new, but my website (www.daydreamfactory.com) is still up!

Kim: I started sewing bags and selling them in local stores here in Portland around 2002 as well. I then made a site (www.kissycake.com) and expanded the business to include t-shirts and baby onesies.

8. When your not on the road touring, or busy with side projects what do you like to do in your spare time?

Jen: I love to surf and hang out at home, and to cook big batches of soup. Kathy: Make art, collect sweaters, spend time with my sweetheart. Kim: Watch movies, hang with my husband and our dog, go to the park, sew, write letters to friends and family, and make art.

9. I adore The Softies is there any chance of another record Jen?

Jen: Thanks, that's very sweet! It's not impossible but I really doubt that it will happen.

10. Do you ladies have any plans to come tour Australasia/New Zealand?! A tour with photo Jenny would be cool.

Jen: I'd be on a plane tomorrow if we could! Let's go!

Kim: Someday soon hopefully!



Conducted by email, fall 2010

www.agsfb.com

I HATE POP PUNK

An interview with VERONICA ORTUÑO
by DARRYL KOSTKA

Art by Veronica Ortuño



BODILY DESIRES

Let's start from the beginning. Where did you grow up, and what are your earliest memories of music as a child?

I was born and raised in Orange County, California, in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood in Santa Ana. My family is pretty musically oriented; mostly singing with the church and relatives who are in well-known Norteño bands from Southern California and Mexico. My mom's a good singer, so in a sense, I strived to do the same at a very young age. I'd hear her sing in the shower every morning while my siblings and I were getting ready for the day, and we'd pray and sing hymns on the ride to school, where I was always involved in choir.

In those earlier years, I was getting into Selena and Mariah Carey on my own; both of whom I am still very fond of. My aunt Esperanza introduced us to music that stuck with me. She was somewhat of the black sheep of the family and the youngest of all my aunts, so we deemed her 'the cool one', clad in over-sized Morrissey shirts and Doc Martens. On the rides to the park or drive-in, wherever, she'd play Smiths, Depeche Mode, and Björk. It wasn't until a decade later did these bands mean and make any sense to me.

When did you first become interested in punk and writing and performing your own music? Were you trained in any musical instruments prior to starting your first band?

The only instrument I was remotely interested in as a child was violin. In elementary school, we were allowed to rent instruments and offered an after-school program for training. The violin was the coolest instrument in my book. I played for two years, won a trophy, and haven't picked one up since.

I didn't really delve into punk until I was just out of high school. Before then I wasn't sure how to swallow any music whatsoever; I don't think my mind was developed enough to understand music that way. Bands weren't something I was conscious about before becoming an adult. Prior to this revelation, I was listening to Tool (who introduced me to Black Sabbath and Swans) and Björk (who is actually a punk at heart). My younger sister, Lizet, was the first person I knew who listened to 'punk' music. She listened to the Sex Pistols non-stop and I loathed them! The sound was so harsh for me and I couldn't understand how anyone could even listen to that type of music. My senior year of high school, my friend Matt –still one of my closest friends and plays in Cold Girls with me– made me a mixtape with bands like Sonic Youth, Filth, Christian Death, and the Make Up. Initially, I thought it was the weirdest/worst music, offended him by telling him so,

and that was that. Later when I was ready to give it another listen on my own terms, I played it over and over and over and one day I snapped out of it and thought, «Okay, I get it».

In a lot of ways I still think about this and how that particular tape saved my life. Music truly saved my life.



A FEELING

What was your initial motivation for starting a band and has that changed over time?

The first band I was in started out of desperation. I was angst-y and wanted to yell and scream and be the center of attention and fuck shit up. That has changed a bit, but not completely... I can appreciate the chaos and still like ripping down the walls, but now there's more connection to the music and all that good stuff. At the time, I was singing about taking pills and the teenage recipe you live by in your late-teens. We were known for annoyingly covering the Germs and The Doors from time to time.

Was Finally Punk the first band that you were in or were there others bands that came before it and if so what did they sound like?

The Tigers was my first band at the age of 17; we were a bunch of noisy-punky-snotty-brats. Second in line came The Carrots, which started two months prior to Finally Punk and is still an active band. We take a lot of influence from old girl-groups and soul music and we're often referred to as 'pop with a punk-edge'. I'll take, «Punk Pop Travesty», as Lung Leg would say. By the way, I hate pop punk.

Was making Finally Punk an all-female band a deliberate political act or did it come about more organically?

That band came to be in a very organic way. I was 18, when the band started, and apathetic about politics –I didn't vote until I was 21– but we were definitely aware that we wanted to start an all-female band. We were getting into Kleenex, Raincoats, Bikini Kill and The Slits. A lot of mention was made of being the post-Mika Miko band, but none of my band mates but me had any idea or had heard them at the time. I saw Mika Miko on their first US tour in 2004 with Coughs and it really made an impression on me; they were such a great band.

Do you consider yourself to be a feminist and what does feminism mean to you? Who are some of your feminist role models?

For the longest time I wasn't sure if I did. I know that sounds strange, but I had a foggy view of «What is feminism?» Now, I can say, Yes. I am a feminist. To me, feminism means: The empowerment of women. Believing, ensuring, and supporting a woman's right to freedom. Plain and simple.

I was raised by my grandparents and a single-mother for a stretch of time. After my dad passed away, I witnessed the hardships my mom went

through for our family's sake at the time, and that's something I think about regularly. She comes from a family of ten consecutive females; all strong-willed and hard-headed. My mom taught me to appreciate myself and the people I have, altruism, and to identify and speak out when myself and others are treated unjustly and not respected as human beings. This is the foundation of my beliefs and continues to be the example I live by. Being a strong and loving woman like my mom is feminism to me.

Other feminists I champion: Linder Sterling, Björk Guðmundsdóttir, Selena Quintanilla, Nina Simone, Frida Kahlo, Sylvia Plath, Diamanda Galas, Lydia Lunch, Tobi Vail, and I could go on and on forever. So many are role models for me and I am continuously amazed and influenced by women, especially my peers.

As a female musician, have you ever felt marginalized or stereotyped and had to deal with sexism be it at shows or through critics and if so, how do you manage to overcome this issue?

I still see bands with some guys, acting like total wankers, getting off on their own guitar solos. I call bullshit on the punk scene\lifestyle of brainwashed conformist males who continue to belittle and have absolutely no respect for women as musicians and\or artists. I always took punk as a freeing, self-expressive, open-minded way of living, but in reality, the majority of its followers are narrow-minded, listen to one style of music, hang with people who look and dress the same, talk the same, and smell the same –it fucking stinks. You could smell it from a mile away. Some 'men' don't and will never take a woman seriously in music and that's why you still see bands comprised of mostly men.

From time to time I deal with male acquaintances who have the wrong idea of me as a person and see me as an object. These male acquaintances start off being real nice, probably to acquire sexual favors or to use me; how can I benefit them? Once the realization comes and they don't get what they had in mind, they immediately become assholes, say I'm a «bitch», ignore and\or completely stop talking to me. I can't say I truly care because I've gotten pretty good at reading between the lines, in this case, ignoring it by my own volition. I don't like wasting energy on something that negative anymore. Some guys just can't deal and understand the concept of «a friendship» with the opposite sex. They're too busy thinking with their dick. And if reading this upsets you, you're part of the problem.

Me, as a sole being, cannot change the way the world works. I can only start by changing the way I do things for myself and hope people will



(HOMMAGE TO MAN RAY)

respond positively. I'm constantly seeking within myself and make an effort to radically change the things I'm not necessarily happy with. I challenge my own way of thinking and ideas and try to bring new meaning to any doubts I inherit. No question about it, I can say I strive to live my life without fear in the choices and decisions I make. There's still a long and uncompromising road ahead, but at least I feel secure knowing I have no fear. There will always be haters abound in this world; you just have to look ahead in your own path.

Does your Chicana identity influence your music and art? Do you feel that it has affected other people's perceptions of you as a musician\artist.

I am extremely sensitive to my culture and the morals instilled in me since childhood. Everything I do is influenced by my background because not many Chicanas or Women of Color get involved in the underground, art, or the punk scene, which is run by a predominantly white male audience. Regardless, there are a handful of women in bands from the past and present who go against the grain –The Brat, Weird TV, Ratas del Vaticano, XYX, New Bloods, Criaturas, and some L.A. bands coming out of the scene right now– but not many. I'm not sure how it has affected other people's perceptions of me necessarily; however, most people don't know I am first generation Mexican-American. People are careful when they ask of what descent I am, «Are you French? Eastern-European? Native American?» And when I reply, «I am Mexican», they're surprised.

If I am spoken to in Spanish, I respond in the same tongue. If I go to a store or restaurant and the server, bus-boy, host, whoever, look hispanic\latino, I'll do the same. I do not hide who I am. The reality of it is this: I'm not Mexican enough for the Mexican and I am not American enough for the American. Or as Oscar Acosta put it: «We are the 'Cockroach People'».

If my Chicana identity has affected anyone's perception of me, it's probably my family. I was raised to live at home until I was ready to marry, be a good mother and wife, go to church every day, and so on. Mexican families are extremely close-knit, which I admire about my culture, but there should be room for self-expression. What I am doing is extremely 'white' and 'blasphemous'. I don't think most of my family understands what I do. My mom doesn't agree with most of my choices in life, but has never doubted me and has always been supportive –that is the monumental compliment for me.

What are your feelings about touring in general? Do you have any fun tour stories that you'd like to share? Which are some of your favorite bands that you've enjoyed touring with?

It has its pros and cons. Being Sagittarius, naturally, I am a wanderer and enjoy living life on the road, but I hate leaving the things I love behind. If I've been in one place for too long I start to panic, «When's the next tour??!!» It's an addiction. I had most fun on Finally Punk tours because they consisted of complete debauchery. The Mutating Meltdown tour was great, too; we toured for over six weeks and had every Monday off, so we were able to relax in nature. Hahaha... the occasional psychedelic was consumed, we'd sit next to a body of water for hours, and take it all in. Chain and the Gang tour is one positive breeze and intellectually stimulating experience; Ian Svenonius and my band mates are all great teachers.

Yeah, I've enjoyed almost every band I've toured with for many reasons, and I feel lucky in that sense. To name a few: New Bloods, Sex Vid, The Sticks, Sewn Leather, Calvin Johnson and the Hive Dwellers, Ty Segall, The Strange Boys, Kiosk, Night Wounds, Golden Triangle –they were all great, and the added bonus is the new friends and bands I've met along the way.

The one constant member in all of the bands that you've been a part of, with the exception of Chain and the Gang, is Erin Budd. How did the two of you meet and do both of you share the same artistic vision and goals as far as making music is concerned?

Erin Budd and I have exceptional chemistry. We know each other well and we are great at communicating with one another, be it verbal or not. We met in 2003 or 2004 and I invited her to join the Carrots. Once we started Finally Punk things kicked off from there. We always try to make time for a musical project to work on together, and we share a lot of common interests, specifically in music. She's extremely talented at her instruments considering we started from the ground up, and a great song writer, too. She'd come in with a bass\guitar line and I'd have a completely different drum part ready, and when we played together it just made perfect sense; most of the songs flesh out this way. We like weird shit and it's difficult to connect with some of my other female friends on this level. If I introduce Erin to new music, she responds in a positive way –that was a good sign.

Your latest group Cold Girls sounds fantastic. It seems to have a much darker sound compared to your other projects. How did the band come about and are there any plans in the works as far as record releases and touring is concerned?

Oh, thank you. Matt and I started the band in 2007 as a two-piece. It wasn't until 2009 when we realized Cold Girls as a triad made more sense and we invited Erin to join. We got together, practiced for a total of eight hours, wrote six songs, and played our first show the following night. It is a darker music because we're exploring the dark side of ourselves –this is a healthy thing for me, personally– most of the bands I'm in are emotionally afloat. For me, this band is a great way to express the hidden emotions within myself. It's comforting to know I'm in a band with two people who know me inside and out, but even the pit of those emotions is extremely difficult to express sometimes, so drumming is my tool for projecting those feelings I can't necessarily put into words.

We hope to release a record in time for tour in February. We're gonna record in New York with one of Matt's friends in December and go from there. As far as touring is concerned, we're talking with Weird TV on knocking out the West Coast together. Gonna be so killer!

The thing that I like the most about M'lady's is the diversity among the releases. What was your motivation behind starting the label and is there an underlying philosophy behind it which helps determine what gets released?

Most people think I started M'lady's with Brett, but I didn't; he started the label on his own in 2007. Later, I was invited to be his right-hand-woman. Essentially, the label is to release just our friends' bands, but there's just so many bad ass bands out there, of all kinds, and we want to support and help these bands be heard. We strive to be a label with a diverse catalog because we each have such broad musical tastes. It boils down to this simple philosophy: Any and all radicals.

What are some of the difficulties that you've experienced over the course of running an independent record label and what advice would you give to someone that's interested in starting one?

My advice is, save lots and lots and lots of money. M'lady's credo: «We let the ARTISTS decide», and although that's fine and dandy, sometimes that'll come back and bite you in the ass.

What are some of the forthcoming releases on M'lady's that you're especially excited about and can you tell us a bit about Hormones.

I'm looking forward to The Sticks and Weird TV releases; both phenomenal bands. Hmm... Hormones is a quarterly publication-slash-zine Brett and I plan to start for M'lady's... eventually. So yeah, a zine with art, writings, photographs, interviews, kind of like this one. Maybe we'll add them to the mail-orders, who knows. We've had this idea forever, but we're constantly engaged in other projects, so it's hard bringing it into fruition. I'd like to get this going soon.



STILLNESS

You recently launched an online radio show (Cease to Exist!) and I should say that I've thoroughly enjoyed every episode that you've done so far especially the «Girls Bite Back» series. What are your thoughts on online media and the role that the internet has played in your own music career.

I started the show out of boredom; out of hating the idea of conventional radio stations and the music you're subjected to on a day-to-day basis. Not all of it is bad, but music is so expansive and some obscure or underground music will speak directly to your soul. I'm a strong believer in sharing the

things I own, specifically, music, art, films, books, etc. All these things help your mind grow. For the show, I generally include songs I'm feeling that day or week, or a certain mood I'm in, and not be genre-specific. Doing themed shows has been fun and incorporating interviews adds a new element to the whole thing.

As far as online media goes, well, things are evolving in a major way right now and you get to a point where you realize you have to adapt. I got offered to do a radio show on KAOS here in Austin, but this was just more convenient. As fucked as the internet is, it's global and it's convenient, which is particularly why I wanted the show to be accessed online. I can't tell you exactly how many hours I spend on each show, somewhere between two and 16 hours, but it's all worth it. This is all new to me. I am exercising self-reliance and learning in the process and I am so grateful people are reacting to it.

Was «My Finest Hour» the first public exhibition of your artwork. How did you find the overall experience? You've mentioned earlier that you believe that music and art should not be mutually exclusive. How is your music related to your artwork?

I make an effort to represent the sound of the music in the artwork; if I'm the one in charge. It can be tough at times because I tend to overanalyze and work myself into stress mode and anxiety and end up creatively floundering to the last minute. Ironically, that's when some of my best work comes out.

In relation to art and music not being exclusive... the name of the radio show itself has a lot of meaning behind it. It came from two things: one, being my obsession with the «Manson» (1973) documentary for years now, and the other, is the dissection of the phrase itself: «Cease to Exist» –naturally, we are dying to live, but in more subjective terms, it means—giving up the ego, recognizing personal artifice, and letting go. Expressing who you really are and the things you genuinely enjoy; breaking down things to a rudimentary and comfortable state of mind and honesty with oneself. Lauren O'Connor and I talked about this at length, on and off the air and it's a matter of lowering the level you perceive yourself, appreciating it just as the opposite, and not seeing it as self-defeating but empowering. Just the realization of this is a wild feeling.

Music and the arts have completely influenced my perception of how I view the world. I find it difficult calling myself an 'artist'. I don't think I fully know what my artistic trajectory is and I still have so much to learn.

Are you currently working on any art projects and do you have any plans to organize another exhibition of your artwork in the near future.

I'm working on a piece for Domy Books, but no solo exhibitions any time soon. The minute I took down the exhibit at End of an Ear, the knobs started turning in my head of what I'd do on the next one. I want to bring my Mexican background into focus somehow. My friend Nathan, who runs Fast Weapons, has expressed interest in releasing a zine of my work and writings, but I am being slow about it. There aren't enough hours in the day. I want to do so much and sometimes I feel my time is running out.

What is your overall impression of the art scene in Austin, Texas? Which local artists\musicians\bands do you currently enjoy?

I can't say I understand it. As much as I'd like to embrace and point out the great qualities of this and that, I don't understand it. I was just talking to my friend about this last night and we see a lot of people creating things right now, but little or no meaning behind the work. There are a lot of doers in this city, but the work isn't necessarily something I'm partial to. I'll admit though, I own a particular palate. I'm generally only supportive of my friends' work.

Some local artists I follow are Mikaylah Bowman, who is a great photographer and writer and Ben Aqua, who is a mastermind. I just saw my friend Anthony Garza's exhibit at MASS Gallery last week and I was floored by his art pieces, all done with pencil. They were massive, stark black and white, which I'm into. They reminded me of something Robert Longo would do. And damn, there's so many tenacious bands in town right now, I don't even know where to begin.

I find it quite remarkable that you've also managed to launch an online clothing store (Las Cruces) in addition to all of your other current projects. Do you have any plans to turn it into your own full-fledged fashion line and is designing clothing and accessories something you enjoy doing? Who are some of your favorite designers that serve as inspiration for your work?

Since I was a tiny kid, I was sewing. My grandmother taught me how to sew Barbie clothes and embroidery at an early age. I was making clothes for the longest time, then one day I stopped. I moved from Houston to Austin to pursue clothes making in hopes of opening a shop in town and I kind of lost my place somewhere along the line. I've always enjoyed



SHE, SHE

fashion, patterns, fabrics, and jewelry. As I evolve as a person, I try to keep some of the things that have shaped who I am with me. Clothes making is an art-form and an extension of myself and the way I feel. Besides the rudimentary skills, I enjoy teaching myself how to make things. If I like a piece or garment I can't necessarily afford, I try to replicate it my own way –this way I appreciate it more. Aside from refurbishing items, I'm figuring out jewelry making on my own. I wish I had the money to go to a great college or university and learn so much more and take interesting classes, but I feel content. I'm doing all the things I've always wanted to do.

As for inspiration, Alexander McQueen has been a constant since I first got into fashion and I was sincerely heartbroken when he passed away last year. His mind worked in many interesting ways; visually and aurally. I also enjoy Hussein Chalayan, Rick Owens, Proenza Schouler, Vivienne Westwood, Vena Cava, and individuals with their own unconventional style. Old ladies who come in and out of my work have amazing style –serious carefree souls.

I still have the same dream since forever, and that's to buy some space and turn it into a shop or collective of sorts –clothing store\art and show space\book store\record shop\coffee shop– all the things I enjoy in one place. It's all hard work...very hard work and many sacrifices. I question myself often and some days I cry out of exhaustion and frustration and I know I just have to persevere. I've been called an «overachiever», but I don't buy that for a second. I have strong-will and I do the things I want to do with honesty and respect.



ON THE WEB

Cease to Exist (Radio)

mladysrecords.com/ceasetoexist

M'Lady's Records

mladysrecords.com

Las Cruces (Clothing)

lascruces.com

HERSTORY

Linder: From Photomontage to the Darktown Cakewalk.

During the summer months of 2010 I travelled the length of the country to see, first hand, a collection of works and performances by artist Linder Sterling. My first trip took me to Glasgow for “Hybrid Tea”. Two months later I’m lured down to London for the second instalment, a 13 hour performance piece “The Darktown Cakewalk: Celebrated from the House of FAME” on what would be an uncommonly hot weekend, I am ill prepared.

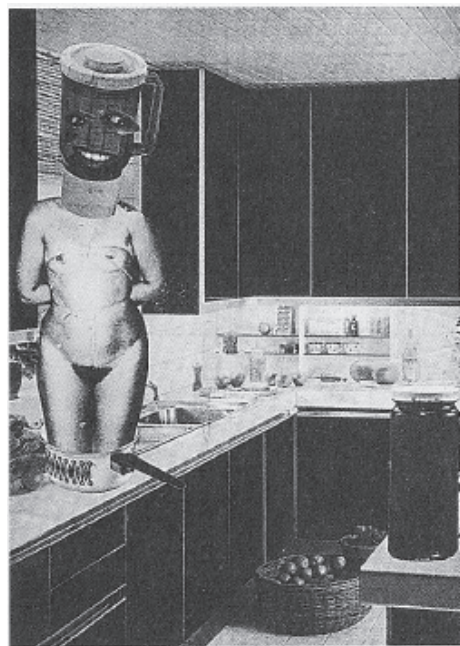
Linder (born Linda Mulvey in 1954) - radical feminist, punk collagist, musician, performer and muse became a pivotal figure within the early Manchester punk scene. It is only in recent years that her work has started to gain the wider recognition it is so deservedly owed. A monograph of her work, “Linder: Works 1976 - 2006”, was published in 2006 chronicling thirty years of creative output. More recently she has gained attention for her collaboration with fashion designer Richard Nicoll.

I cannot pin point when I first became aware of Linder’s work, her iconic photomontages produced whilst still a student at Manchester Polytechnic in the mid 70’s *somehow* seem to have always been there - their potency retained. It was upon re-discovering those photomontages and delving further into her work that my interest deepened.

A posturing female nude, iron instead of a head, a pair smiling lips covering both nipples - the cover for Buzzcocks single Orgasm Addict is probably Linder’s most recognised work and became an icon of punk culture. The iron came from an Argos catalogue and the female torso from a photographic maga-



Buzzcocks, Orgasm Addict sleeve (1977)



Photomontage, The Secret Public (1978)

zine. The creation of Linder's early works came about via a process marrying images cut out from men's magazines (cars, DIY, pornography) and women's magazines (fashion, cookery, household). *"I wanted to mate the G-Plan kitchens with the pornography; see what strange breed came out"*.

A series of these early montages were published in *The Secret Public*, a fanzine produced by Linder in collaboration with the writer Jon Savage. The objects of desire, detached sexual scenarios and domestic environments sit uncomfortably together. A tied up woman, naked and inserted into a saucepan on the pristine work surface of a modern kitchen - cut out eyes and a painted smiling mouth adorn the Kenwood mixer that replaces her head. The images within the pages of *The Secret Public*, informed by feminism and exerted with punk's DIY ethos and aesthetic, act as Xeroxed critiques on consumerism and mass media's portrayal of gender and sexuality.

By 1978 Linder was applying the sexual politics of her visual art to music and performance with the formation of post-punk band Ludus. Ludus were one of the most interesting bands spawned from the Manchester punk scene - their sound unconventional and avant-garde yet melodic. Whilst the women of punk protested in harsh tones Linder's vocals ranged from soft and sung to outbursts of erratic Ono-esque howls and screams of laughter. I was hooked.



Ludus, Pickpocket: SheShe booklet (1981)

The striking black and white sleeves designed by Linder for Ludus made the records *even more* desirable. The first Ludus recording I managed to get hold of was *Pickpocket*, sold to me for a mere £6.50 by a Manchester DJ who'd found it stashed in a cupboard at his home. He informed me that it hadn't seen the light of day for the past 25 years - upon excavation I was to find a truly exceptional artefact. *Pickpocket* was a six-track cassette tape released by New Hormones who had also published *The Secret Public* a few years previous. It came packaged with a booklet titled *SheShe* containing black-and-white photographs of Linder taken by Christina Birrer. Through these images Linder was able to step into her photomontages, using herself as a found object. Like the female subjects in her montages Linder's face is obscured, this time by use of heavy make up, kitchen utensils, cling film and bandages, *"objects from the first aid box and the kitchen drawer"*.

Then of course is the legendary Ludus performance at The Haçienda - perhaps Linder's first foray into live performance art? Taking to the stage in a dress covered with raw meat; during the final song she whipped away her skirt to reveal a 12-inch dildo. A retaliatory act, rebuking The Haçienda's blasé and unremitting showing of pornographic films at the time.



Ludus performance at the Haçienda (1982)

"Bucks Fizz had just won the Eurovision Song contest. At the end of their song the men pulled up the girls' skirts, and that ticked off an outrage in me. At the same time at The Haçienda they were showing lots of soft porn and they thought it was really cool. I took my revenge. I was a vegetarian; I got meat from the Chinese restaurant, all the discarded entrails. I went to a sex shop and bought a large dildo. Meat was supposed to represent the reality of womanhood and the dildo - here's manhood, the invisible male of pornography that it can be reduced to this - a thing that sticks out like a toy."

Stepping into the cool sanctuary of The Chisenhale Gallery, what to expect? Described as an "epic invocation of glamour and fantastical pageantry. Witch trials and beauty queens, ragtime and Euro Pop merge to enfold the viewer in a secret history of prejudice and dissent," the ambitious performance, kicking off at 10am, is divided into two six-hour sessions ("masque" and "anti-masque") with a thirteenth hour. It all seems incredibly overwhelming, not to say exhausting. When queried as to the lengthiness of the performance Linder responded; *"When I look back to British culture in the late 1970s, the 7-inch, two-and-a-half minute single was very radical, they were vital because the culture was quite slow and sluggish. And the actions to do with protest were like punk itself - spiky, pointed, fast. Now we're in a culture of instant gratification and soundbites. Everything is so quick. So now the most radical thing to do is 13 hours of the most intricate dissonance, consonance, harmonic, rhythmic possibilities you can think of. And the shocks come in more subtle ways. We live in a culture bombarded by stuff, whether pornographic or very, very violent. The most radical thing is to get rid of the stuff, empty out and slow down. So I think the most radical acts are the most slow, clunky, inarticulate ones."*

I take my seat on the cold concrete floor on the edge of the darkened gallery. Coloured lights reveal the performance space in a fantastical glow, eerie soundscapes circulate

creating a hypnotic atmosphere. An assortment of dancers inhabit the space, the Star - high spirited and garbed in gold lamé, a Witch cloaked in black floats across while Puella Aeterna playfully frolics, eating cake mix. Linder slowly emerges dressed in savage shiny black platform stiletto heels, boiler suit and orange wig. Her mouth is gagged by a bandage, a pair collaged enlarged collagenized lips mask her own. Pushing along an archaic vacuum cleaner, the cord begins to get caught up with her ankles - becoming tangled, Linder kicks out. The impromptu performances mingle, intertwine and collide with each other - a living collage with Linder's developed iconography scattered throughout. The cakes, domestic appliances and accentuated lips straight out of her photomontages. Heavy make up, bandages and the martial arts breastplate - accessories from photographic work. The performers themselves play selected elements too, but relinquished from Linder's control. Contrary to preconceived expectations I find myself enamoured.

Sitting here enveloped in this fantastical opus looking back on Linder's work, the various forms it has taken, it all comes to resemble one continuous experiment - extending the principles of those early photomontages. The Darktown Cakewalk could be seen as the culmination of this.



The Darktown Cakewalk (2010) images by Jannica Honey

“For me there’s connection between everything I do and have done. Categorisation of what I do has always been more of a problem for others than for myself. I can see a perfectly formed continuum between my punk photomontages of ‘76, dressing in raw meat and singing love songs in Ludus”.



Stef Petticoat with 69 Lies (Berlin, circa 1991).

Necessary Evil

An interview with Stef Petticoat

Steff Petticoat is one of those rare individuals with whom we find comfort in knowing that the art she produces, the lyrics she writes, are indeed entirely genuine. The seminal bands in which she participated produced some true post punk gems and her music resists the kitsch and retro-ist vibe of many of her contemporaries.

*Was **Necessary Evil** the first band that you were involved with or did you have other musical bands before?*

***Necessary Evil* was the first band. I jammed with various people before that but a band did not come out of that. I also auditioned for other bands as a singer before *Necessary Evil*, but they turned out to be rock bands with the usual rock repertoire and that did not interest me.**

What was the process of recording, pressing and distributing your first single (*Normal*, 1980) ?

I recorded the single at *Street Level Studios*. I think I chose them because I read an ad in a music paper and they were cheap. I designed the cover myself, can't remember where it was printed. There was no Internet in those days! So I went around smaller record shops and gave them records to sell on commission. After the single was «record of the week» by John Peel some people wrote to me for copies, also some record shops bought more records and *Rough Trade* distributed it.



Cover art of the *Making Waves* compilation (1981, Girlfriends records).

Your first single is quite unique, do you feel that you belonged to a particular music scene? The London DIY punk/squatter scene for instance ?

I met Zuni through the *Women's Arts Alliance* in London. We decided to create *Necessary Evil* and auditioned for other women musicians. When *Necessary Evil* was formed I did not feel there was a particular scene, but the DIY punk label fits. Later, around *Amy and the Angels* time

there were quite a few women's bands, some of them were featured on the *Making Waves* compilation. There were quite a few lesbians in these bands and we hung out together a lot.

What was your involvement with *Street Level Studios/Fuck Off Records* and *Girlfriend Records*. Are you still in touch with any of those folks?

I was only involved with the recordings and am not in touch with anyone now.

What made you move to Germany?

I moved to London from Bonn in 1978, because I wanted to be a punk rock singer and could not do that in Germany at the time. I moved to Berlin in 1986, I was not in a band then, I was offered a job in Berlin and later formed *69 Lies* here.

The songs that appear on the *Scaling Triangle* compilation sound very different from your earlier songs. They appear to share a similar aesthetic with the electro/synth-pop music that prevailed during the 80's. What brought about your collaboration with Robert Crash?

I met Robert Crash, in New York, in 1976. Unlike me, he is a professional musician and plays various instruments very well. We met occasionally and jammed together. I liked his ideas and he liked my style and that's why we recorded some songs together.

Can you describe your Peel Session recording experience?

I was over the moon to be offered that session! The songs were recorded in no time and when they were played on the radio I thought I would have liked a «heavier» sound, so was a bit disappointed.

Do you have memories of any particular concert experience that you would like to share?

I really enjoyed the gig we played with *The Raincoats* in the Deptford Albany Empire. It was such a good atmosphere there, we got a great reception, a lot of applause and the offer of a tour, wow. Also, it just blew my mind when I saw *The Fall* and *Gang of Four* for the first time, they played the Lyceum, in London – an old theatre with red velvet seats and all those punks in it. And the wonderful music, of course.



Amy and the Angels: Stef Petticoat (left), Angie and Sue (London, 1981).

What is your experience playing with different people and being in bands vs. making solo music, and what about playing music with women vs. men?

Solo music has the distinct advantage that you can do everything as you like it – if you have the money. It's great

in a band as long as musical taste, musical development and getting on well together is happening. It gets difficult in when there are different musical developments and this seems to be an inevitable process. I really was glad to play music with women – it felt more at home. I guess nowadays the concept of a queer band would also be quite nice.

On your website, you claim that your music has feminist and lesbian qualities. What does feminism mean to you?

Equality of women, socially, politically, economically and musically, of course. Freedom from stereotypes and fixed roles for women.

Who are your feminist icons and influences in general?

No icons. Patty Smith was an influence, I guess.

What are your thoughts on women's role in punk in retrospect? How do you feel about the current generation of women bands and DIY culture?

I think women in punk music paved the way for a lot of women in music to follow. I am glad that there still is a DIY culture and I think it is great that there are so many women in bands and so many women's bands today!

What was it like being a queer feminist punk especially in a male dominated scene? Were openly queer artists generally accepted or did you have to deal with any issues?

In London we had the *Rock against Sexism* organisation, promoting women musicians and also putting on concerts, there were lesbians, gays and straight men and women involved in that. In that scene we felt accepted. Otherwise, I think there was not so much contact with men at that time.

The lyrics of your first single *Normal* as well as those of *Life-No* evoke primarily a malaise towards society and a rejection of conformity. What were your claims and are they still relevant today?

Of course, things have changed for the better for women/lesbians and women musicians over all since 1978. But there are still a lot of issues need change! You should ask these young women's bands!

What is the status of your *69 Lies' Greatest Hits So Far* compilation? Do you plan on releasing your entire catalog on CD eventually or record new material?

I still hope to release more stuff, but one band member is blocking me.

Are there any projects that you're currently working on that we should be aware of?

I wish I had – but I have no time, no time...

Interview conducted by email, september 2010.
Official website : <http://stefpetticoat.de>



For further reading :

Interview with Stef Petticoat of The Petticoats by Jess Scott
(Maximum Rock'n'Roll #312, may 2009)

The Tale of Tales: Making Waves in Language with the music of Stef Petticoat by Fingers (Mongrel zine #5, may 2009)

SUBVERSIVE PLEASURE

Interview with Chalk Circle
(Sharon Cheslow)



Making Waves: Could you explain in general terms how was Washington DC, and more particularly, how was its musical scene in the late 70s just before the harDCore explosion?

Sharon Cheslow: Washington, DC had a vibrant punk and underground music scene in the mid-to-late 1970s. This was partly due to WGTB-FM, a local free-form radio station. WGTB was the student-run radio station of Georgetown University and it had a reputation throughout the DC area of being very radical — in its politics, in the music it played, in its programming. They played all sorts of music you didn't hear on AM radio or even on other FM radio stations, including obscure 60s / 70s garage & psychedelic & progressive rock bands. Basically anything that was freaky and weird and really good. They played punk when it very first started in the US and helped bring US punk bands to DC, such as the Talking Heads, Pere Ubu, Devo, and the Cramps.

There were all sorts of DC area punk bands that influenced younger kids, such as the Slickee Boys, Urban Verbs,

Razz, DCeats, Insect Surfers, Nurses, Black Market Baby, Chumps, White Boy, and Tru Fax & the Insaniacs. The Bad Brains evolved out of this scene and were part of it. When they first started, their sound was still based in jazz and reggae, mixed with punk. Then around '79 / '80 they speeded things up and amped up the energy, and it was as if a cyclone went through the punk scene in DC. We were whipped into a frenzy after seeing them, and HR — Bad Brains' singer — encouraged a lot of us kids to start our own bands. He was very kind and supportive to me, which meant a lot.

Many kids immediately formed bands, such as the boys in the Teen Idles and Untouchables, who went to the same high school as Anne Bonafede (later Chalk Circle's drummer). Ian MacKaye was in the Teen Idles before Minor Threat and Ian's younger brother Alec MacKaye was in the Untouchables before Faith. Bert Queiroz of the Untouchables (and later Youth Brigade and Double-O) played bass with Anne and me in 1980, when she and I were first starting to get a band together.



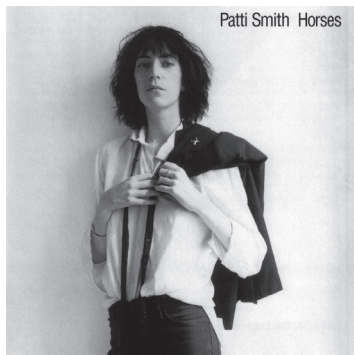
It wasn't until around '79 / '80 that younger kids started developing the sound that would come to be known as

DC hardcore. A lot of us went to the same high schools or met through punk shows. We all started hanging out together in Georgetown, where a lot of the kids lived or worked, and became close friends. We didn't have a separate music scene until we started getting called "teeny punks" or "Georgetown punks" by the older musicians and zine writers. We wanted to be taken seriously as kids. We wanted to have a voice, and we wanted to make a difference. Almost all of us in that initial core group of friends were still teenagers. Henry Rollins, Danny Ingram, and I were among the oldest. When Chalk Circle formed in 1981, we weren't considered a hardcore band because we didn't have that super fast, loud sound that our friends had. But we all had the same spirit and attitude about creating our own youth culture, apart from mainstream society.

MW: How was your first contact with punk and the underground scene in DC?

SC: Patti Smith! I became aware of punk through the CBGB's scene in New York in 1975, after reading about it in rock magazines such as *Creem* and *Rock Scene*. I'd been an avid lover of rock music from the time I was in elementary school, starting buying records when I was 10, and starting seeing concerts when I was 13. Reading these magazines was how I first found out about Patti Smith, Blondie, NY Dolls, Wayne County, and Television. Lenny Kaye of Patti Smith's band, was also a music writer and he was associate editor of *Rock Scene*. When Patti Smith's *Horses* LP came out at the end of 1975, I read a review in the *Washington Post*. And in early 1976, I saw her perform with her band on Saturday Night Live. I was completely enamored with what was going on,

especially after I started listening to WGTB. I loved punk music because it captured the spirit of 50s and 60s rock and roll, but had a unique sound and energy and look unlike anything I'd experienced before.



3

I listened regularly to WGTB starting around 1976, from the time I was in 9th grade. I also read *Unicorn Times*, an underground DC newspaper that wrote about all sorts of underground music, including local punk. Around 1976 I first became aware of the Sex Pistols and the whole UK punk scene, and also the Runaways. I remember that's one thing Bert and I had in common, a love of the Runaways.

So all through high school in the late 70s, I was listening to punk while at the same time still listening to all the other types of bands I heard on WGTB as well as top 40 radio. I think it's hard now to realize how off-the-wall punk was at that time. You were considered a real oddball for liking it. I was determined to learn as much as I could about it. And I wanted to get involved somehow. I'd been playing guitar since I was 10, and had bought my first electric guitar when I was 13, but it was rare for girls to be in bands in those days.

I started volunteering for Limp Records in 1979, during 12th grade. Limp

was one of the first independent punk labels in the DC area. It was run by Skip Groff, who owned Yesterday & Today, which was a record store not too far from my parents' house. He ran the label out of the back room in his store. Skip's label and store brought together a lot of local punks. Skip eventually hired me to work at the record store, and I worked there on an off from end of 1979 until 1984. I remember how much fun it was to get to listen to all the punk records that came in the store every week. It felt like an explosion of creativity. And I got to read all the zines and music weeklies there.

MW: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of those times?

SC: Freedom, excitement, change.

It was about accepting that things in the world weren't working and our voices weren't being heard, so it was up to us to make creative things happen. It was about standing up for one another. It was about using all possible resources.

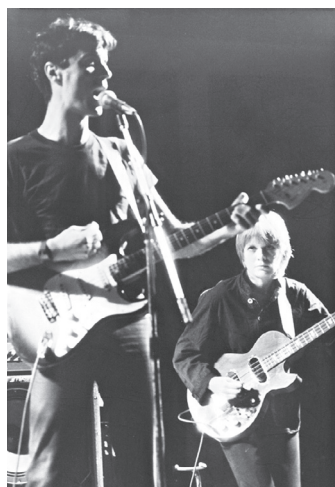
Punk was a call to arms. We fought back the best — and most positive — way we knew how — through our creativity.

MW: Which was the first punk concert you went?

SC: The first punk show I ever saw was the Talking Heads, at Gaston Hall on the campus of Georgetown University in November 1978. I'll never forget it. It was when I first realized there were other people like me. There was something in the air. After the show I exchanged glances with some of the other punks there. We nodded or smiled in acknowledgement that something big was going on and we were a part of it. We were like individuals of a lost tribe

finding and recognizing each other.

Also it was a momentous show for me because it was the first concert I ever photographed. Even though I loved music first and foremost, I also loved art and was influenced by a lot of photographers, including Linda McCartney who was a great music photographer before she played in Wings. I was lucky to see Wings on their Wings Over America tour. It was the first time I ever saw a woman perform live in a rock band. Punk opened things up for women tremendously, which is one of the things that appealed to me about it. So seeing Talking Heads was inspiring because Tina Weymouth was such a great bass player, and the only other female musicians I'd seen live up until that point were Linda McCartney and Bonnie Raitt.



4

MW: Were you at the Unheard Music Festival?

SC: Yes, I went to that. It was crazy! Howard Wuelfing of the Nurses organized the event, which took place in December 1980 at dc space. There was lots of dancing and friends hanging out. There were two nights. One was for all the "teeny

punk" boy bands (there were no girls in any of the bands that night, although there were girls in the audience), and one was for the more experimental art punk bands and older musicians like singer Martha Hull (who had been in the Slickee Boys and DCeats). It was the first time a lot of younger punk kids all came together and realized they were part of a larger punk community. It was also memorable for being the first shows for Minor Threat and Government Issue. There were lots of different covers of the Monkees "Stepping Stone" which were hilarious. We all had great time, lots of fun.

MW: What kind of music did you listen when you started playing with Chalk Circle? What bands did inspire you?

SC: Mary, Anne, and I initially bonded over the Rolling Stones and the Clash when we became friends in 1980. Mary had become a die-hard Clash fan, because she'd spent the summer of 1977 in London. She loved "White Man In Hammersmith Palais" and liked the band for their attitude, politics, and humanity. I'd seen the Clash play at Ritchie Coliseum at Univ of Maryland in Sept 1979, and they blew me away. Anne & I took the train to Philadelphia in March 1980 to see them, and I knew I wanted to be in a band with her after that. Anne and I started playing music together that summer and met Mary later that year.

Chalk Circle formed in early 1981, and I seriously listened to dozens of new records every month because so many great punk records were coming out then. I was a DJ on WMUC, the Univ of Maryland college radio station. So I heard records that I bought, or that I was able to listen to at the radio station or Yesterday & Today.

I found my Top 15 list for summer

/ fall 1981, published in DC zine *Now What?* These are the bands on my list... It'll give you a pretty good idea of what I was listening to back then: I'm So Hollow, Creatures (the side project of Siouxsie Sioux and Budgie of the Banshees — Budgie had previously drummed for the Slits and Big in Japan, both of whom I loved), Flipper, Joy Division, Flux of Pink Indians, Rip Rig & Panic, Rapid Eye Movement (local group REM changed their name to Egoslavia soon after, because of the REM in Athens), Theatre of Hate, Minor Threat, New Order, The Cure, Pete Shelley, Velvet Monkeys, Minutemen, Youth Brigade (the DC band, not the one from LA).

I was really influenced by the bands I heard around 1979 / 80, right before I formed Chalk Circle. It was a magical time. Punk was branching out into different styles and people were experimenting more. That gave me the courage to write music that wasn't typically punk or hardcore sounding. I was also influenced really heavily by all the 60s / 70s rock & pop records I'd bought growing up, as well as some blues, folk, soul, jazz, and electronic music.

Other than punk and the music that evolved out of that, Chalk Circle loved a lot of glam rock, folk rock, psychedelic music, soul, and funk — especially go-go. Go-go was a style of funk native to DC that was very percussive and rhythmic, with lots of repetitive call-and-response vocals, so people really got into a groove at shows. It had a lot in common with hip-hop. There was a great local funk scene in DC, with bands like Trouble Funk and Chuck Brown & the Soul Searchers, and it became known as DC go-go.

MW: How would you describe the nation's capital in three adjectives?

SC: Beautiful, political, conservative.

MW: Were you DC natives? If not, what were the reasons for moving to DC?

SC: I grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, right outside of DC. My family moved to the DC area from Los Angeles, where I was born, because my father got a job doing mathematical & engineering work for the US Department of Transportation.

I'm not sure about the other band members. I can't remember where they were born. Jan Pumphrey, our first bassist, was born in DC. Anne Bonafede, our drummer, grew up in DC, then lived in Bethesda for a bit, then moved back to DC. We rehearsed in the basement of her parents' house in DC near American University where her father taught journalism. Our second bassist Tamera Lyndsay grew up in the Oxon Hill / Ft Washington area of Prince George's County, Maryland, outside of DC. Mary Greene, our singer, grew up in Fairfax, Virginia, right outside DC. She also played guitar. Our third bassist Chris Niblack grew up in Madison, Wisconsin and Bethesda, Maryland.

MW: Which was your favourite club to hang out and see a show?

SC: Well, it wasn't really a club, but I loved seeing bands at Madam's Organ, which was the name of a run down, two-story group house in Adams Morgan, towards downtown DC. At that time it was a really seedy neighborhood. There was a small stage on the first floor. Things were run by a bunch of hippies, and it became completely chaotic after a while. There was graffiti all over the walls and an atmosphere of anything goes. People went wild. Pure freedom of expression

and lots of dancing. It only lasted from the end of 1979 to early 1980. I saw so many great shows by local bands there, and I also saw DOA from Canada.

I'd found out about Madam's Organ from Alec and Bert. I'd met them at Yesterday & Today and they told me the Teen Idles and Untouchables were going to be playing there, and mentioned the Bad Brains were playing there as well. I really wanted to see these bands. I was really adventurous, and I was determined to be part of the punk community in DC. Madam's Organ was great because I met so many people there, including Anne.



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MW: How many times did Chalk Circle play live? Any gig outside the DC area? How was your first gig? Any anecdote you remember from that glorious day?

SC: Chalk Circle played three out of our four shows at dc space, which was another really great place to see bands. It was a small artist-run performance space that had all sorts of music and art events, including shows like Sun Ra and Laurie Anderson and film screenings of underground and experimental movies. It had a very intimate, friendly, comfortable vibe, but I had to walk past the drug dealers, porn shops, and rats to get there.

It was at 7th & E, NW, right around the corner from the original 9:30 Club. At that time the area was known as the red light district. But once you were inside dc space, you felt safe and welcomed, like you were in a friend's living room. Almost every punk / hardcore band in DC in the 80s played there at one time or another. Chalk Circle never played outside of the DC area, unfortunately. It wasn't like today where it's easy to book shows in other cities. There was no infrastructure built up, no easy way to communicate other than by letter or phone (and remember this was before answering machines), no easy way to find out about places to play. And it was doubly hard for girls to tour. It was a big achievement for us to have played in the DC area, although I wish we'd been able to tour the US. When we played our first show at dc space in July 1981 (with Sally Berg of REM — later Egoslavia — borrowed on bass), we were the first all-female band to have played in DC since the 1940s!



Sally worked for District Curators, which was the company run by Bill Warrell that owned dc space. Sally then worked at the 9:30 Club with Tamera, and that's how we met Tamera and got her to be our bass player. Tamera was

originally a guitarist. She didn't play with us at that first show, but she played with us at our second show at dc space, which wasn't until Feb 1982.

I actually have absolutely no visual memories of that first show from '81. There's one photo of us from that gig and when I look at myself, it's as if I'm looking at someone else. I can't believe it actually happened. But I have emotional memories. I remember feeling excited, scared, nervous, happy. When I look at the photo, I see that I'm not playing the guitar I owned at that time, which was a Bradley Les Paul copy. I think I was embarrassed by it, since it wasn't a real Les Paul. So maybe I borrowed Don Fleming's Fender guitar, since his band Velvet Monkeys headlined our first show. Don had asked us to play that show with Velvet Monkeys, and then we opened up for them again for our second show.

MW: Could you explain where the name Chalk Circle comes from?

SC: Literally it comes from a play by Bertolt Brecht, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. I can't remember how I found out about it, but in the spring of 1981 I was taking a film class at Univ of Maryland and my film history professor taught us about Brecht's influence on certain 60s / 70s filmmakers such as Bertolucci, Pasolini, and Godard, so maybe it was through him. Brecht framed the play around an old Chinese legend about two women who must endure a test by a judge to pull a child from the center of a circle drawn in chalk, in order to prove who is the mother. Brecht's play is a parable about justice, family, community, and ownership. At the time I read it, I was heavily into dramatic literature, all the way from Ancient Greek and Roman epics to modern experimental

plays. Brecht's story struck a chord in me, on a lot of different levels. He used the Chinese legend as a play within a play, in order to comment on contemporary society. A lot of Mary's lyrics were filled with social or political observations, in addition to being poetic, so I thought the name would be a good fit.



But I also liked the name because the image of a chalk circle is open to different interpretations, and we all liked that aspect of the name. We wanted people to come up with their own meanings. Some people thought the name had to do with the chalk outlines around dead bodies after a crime or accident.

It also invokes a sort of playfulness. Some people thought the name referred to children's games that girls play, such as hopscotch. We all loved being playful as well as serious, but when we were too playful with the boys in the DC punk scene, we sometimes got put down for being too silly. We liked a name that was both serious and silly, because that's how we were with each other. Our initial band name was the Gutteremotions, because we wanted something raw sounding, but we ended up going with Chalk Circle instead.

MW: How do you remember recording at Inner Ear with Don Zientara?

SC: We recorded twice at Inner Ear, in Feb and Nov 1982. I had previous experience with recording, because my father had taught me to record and edit with analog tape using his reel-to-reel deck when I was in elementary school. But I'd never been inside a real recording studio before. Even though Don's studio was in the basement of his house back then, it felt like a professional studio to me and I was kind of intimidated.

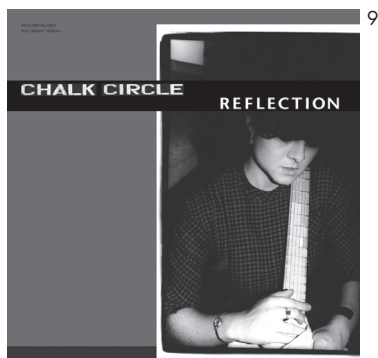
The first time we recorded, Howard Wuelfing came to help us out. He was going to produce us, but we ran out of time and couldn't do a proper mix. Geoff Turner and I did mixes of those songs in 1983 at WGNS Studio for a WGNS cassette. The second time we recorded at Inner Ear in 1982, I felt more confident about production and had ideas about how I wanted us to sound. I also felt freer to experiment. I think we got the sound at the end of "Subversive Pleasure" by recording and adding effects to one of his children's toys that happened to be on the ground.

MW: Your only vinyl release was the two songs in the *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* compilation. How did you end up being part of that now legendary record? Were you pals of the Nuclear Crayons?



SC: Yes, we were all friends. The DC punk scene was actually pretty small, so it was easy to get to know people if you went to the same shows. Lara of the Nuclear Crayons (aka Lynch LaVoison) was a fan of Chalk Circle. So when Lara decided to put out the *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* comp she asked us to be on it. We liked Nuclear Crayons and the other bands on the comp, so we said yes!

The two songs on the *Mixed Nuts* comp, "The Slap" and "Subversive Pleasure", were taken from our second Inner Ear demo. Those two songs, plus most of the songs we released on WGENS cassettes, will be released on vinyl with digital download in early 2011. Mississippi Records and Post Present Medium will be doing a split-label release. The LP will be titled *Reflection*, which is the title of one of the songs from our first Inner Ear demo, and it will come with a 16-page booklet. The booklet includes liner notes by Don Fleming, photos, and some press clippings.



MW: What is the most important thing you learnt while playing with Chalk Circle, and being involved with the harDCore scene?

SC: Make music with your friends. Don't worry about what people think. Have fun, be creative, stay positive, do it yourself.

MW: And last but not least, name a record, book, film, artist, fanzine, comix that has changed your life.

SC: Best life changing record that sounds like a book of poetry put to film in the form of audio: Patti Smith's *Horses*.

Interview conducted by email
Barcelona – Los Angeles
November 2010

CHALK CIRCLE

Chalk Circle were a legendary band that existed in the Washington, DC metro area punk / hardcore scene between 1981 and 1983. They were the first all-female rock or punk band to ever record and perform in DC, although in the beginning several boys offered to play with them.

SHARON CHESLOW

Sharon Cheslow is an American musician, composer, and artist. In 1981, she formed Chalk Circle, Washington, DC's first all-female punk band. She has since become an accomplished artist who works between different mediums, mostly sound-based.

IMAGE CREDITS

- 1 Chalk Circle (Anne, Sharon, Tamara); pic by Mary Green (1981)
- 2 Bert Queiroz (Untouchables, Youth Brigade) and Eric Lagdameo (Red C, Double-O); pic by Sharon Cheslow (1981)
- 3 Patti Smith's *Horses* LP, Arista (1975)
- 4 David Byrne and Tina Weymouth; pic by Sharon Cheslow (1978)
- 5 Anne Bonafede; pic by Sharon Cheslow (1982)
- 6 Chalk Circle at dc space (Sharon Cheslow and Mary Green) (1982)
- 7 *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, original german version, Suhrkamp Verlag (1963)
- 8 *Mixed Nuts Don't Crack* Comp LP, Outside (1982)
- 9 *Reflection* LP, Mississippi / PPM (2011)

LILIPUT INTERVIEW

by DJ Jenny Woolworth



LEFT TO RIGHT: ASTRID SPIRIG, KLAUDIA SCHIFFERLE, MARLENE MARDER.

As a teenager in the mid-90s I was introduced to LiLiPUT (a.k.a. Kleenex) on a mixtape I received featuring early 80's female-led punk. I was immediately drawn to the band, firstly because they were from Switzerland, my familial homeland, but mostly because their music resonated deeply with me. The openness and delight in their songs evidenced a certainty of person and place that appealed to me as I was trying to find my own way in the world. They were punk in exactly the way I wanted to be punk.

Since that first listen I have returned to their music over the years, each time finding it as fresh and relevant as ever. So in Spring 2010 I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to talk with three former members of LiLiPUT: Marlene Marder, Astrid Spirig and Klaudia Schifferle.

It was clear from our conversation that something special happened in Zürich all those years ago and the bond between the women was still strong after thirty years. What I had sensed as a teenager was confirmed during

the interview –they were not just a band and it was never only about the music– they were first and foremost a group of friends having fun together, playing their part in some greater experiment of creative production.

This is a synopsis of the interview that took place in Astrid's flat in Zürich, transcribed and translated into English from Swiss-German.

How did the recent compilation and reissues come about?

Marlene: A few years ago, I was approached by Kill Rock Stars asking if we had any further material to release. So we started thinking about what we could offer without just repackaging the old CDs and LPs. Then I remembered this road movie that we'd made on tour in 1982, but since that film is only about 15-20 minutes long we added TV-clips that a colleague of ours dug up from the archives of Schweizer Fernsehen (SF1) to get enough material for a full DVD.

Klaudia: Before Kill Rock Stars asked us someone else had approached us about a vinyl reissue so we knew it was time to get together over dinner and take note of what we had yet to release.

Astrid: And once we started digging around we uncovered things that we'd forgotten about.

What did you find?

Klaudia: Once, late at night, after we'd already started working on the project, I was bumbling around my flat, bumped into my bookshelf and a pile of cassettes came tumbling down. One of them had "Kleenex Live" written on it and I was so surprised because I didn't think I had any of those old cassettes anymore! So there I was at four in the morning, sitting on the couch, listening to this tape, completely shocked!

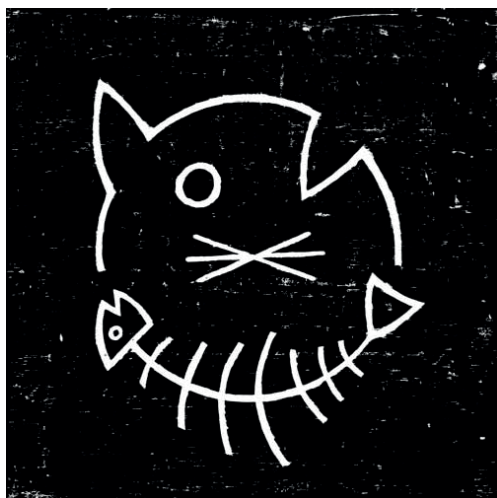
Marlene: The tape that Klaudia had was a Kleenex gig recorded at Gaskessel in Biel. We also had this live recording from TonModern at the Rote Fabrik in 1983, recorded for DRS3 Swiss Radio, and so we used those two recordings for the CD part of the "Live & Clips" release.

Klaudia: There are several things we don't have anymore, like a video from Cologne... But we still found some great stuff. Videos had started to pop up online and that reminded us of this or that clip so we went and sought out the high-quality original version.

Who designed the Live & Clips CD/DVD? It looks great.

Marlene: Peter Fischli, like earlier. He's let us use the catfish design wood-cut from the cover.

Klaudia: Peter did all the designs for Kleenex –flyers, LPS, posters the latter, I did some of the LiliPUT covers. Peter's daughter actually worked with Marlene and I to design the booklet for the 4×LP set. We did it all in one day, Marlene and I chose the images for the collage and she glued it all together and stuck a few of her own odds and ends in. It was great to have a young woman as part of the process.



Back in the day, when you yourselves were young women, how did you become part of the punk scene? Did it find you, did you find it?

Astrid: When I was part of LiLiPUT the founding principal was that this was an opportunity, for the first time and perhaps the last time, when you could make music even if you had not been playing an instrument for years. There was this opening there...

The punk influence came from England and that stimulated a different kind of access to music, encouraging us to act spontaneously and then see what works. It was actually really audacious for us. The attitude was punk with an impulse to just get up on stage even if you only had one song to play but still to just play that one song three times. It wasn't like that before or after.

Klaudia: Punk was a welcoming initiation when you heard it. It was so accessible and easy, we didn't even think about it before jumping in and getting involved saying "I'm going to do that too!" Then other people around you would jump in and say "ok yeah, let's do it!"

I was working at a clothing store with Lislot [Hafner] at the time and one day Rudi [Dietrich] came around and suggested we form a band together. Lislot immediately said "I'm playing drums!" and I said "I'm playing bass!" That's just how it was. So Rudi played guitar with us for a bit but then he suggested we ask someone else –he must have been frustrated because he was better than us! He said he knew a woman, a guitar player or rather a saxophonist, but in any case he would ask her if she wanted to join us...

Astrid (to Marlene): You were the only one who could actually play an instrument, weren't you?

Marlene: Yes, thank god! Otherwise nothing would have happened! Someone had to know a little bit at least.

Astrid: We desperately wanted to do something so we just appropriated the punk attitude for ourselves. For example, one day at the flea market I saw a violin and just bought it. Then we wrote a song including violin, although I'd never played before.

Klaudia: It was also a shared spirit among the people we knew. Everyone supported each other and thought it was great that we were in a band, no one cared if we could play or not. People acted out of goodwill and were very supportive.

What did the average person on the street think about you punks? What kind of reactions did you get?

Klaudia: They probably were not very afraid of us, at least!

Marlene: We weren't punk in the way you imagine punks today to be. If you refer to punks today in Zurich, you immediately think of the kids hanging out at Stadlerhofen Station drinking beer with their mohawks and flea-bitten dogs. It wasn't like that for us. In that sense we weren't punks, it was just a general term for that scene.

Klaudia: Lislot and I were both working in Booster at the time, this 50s style clothing shop in the Niederdorf. We had our hair in ponytails, wore stretch pants and were just so so stylish! At some point we went together to

Hamburg and when we came back I remember sitting at home in my bathtub, holding up a mirror and taking the scissors to my hair. The next day when I went to work, Lislot saw my new haircut and asked me to cut her hair as well. So I chopped off her ponytail right there in the store!

It was our own sense of punk for us women. We enjoyed fashion and selling clothes and it was more a “chic punk” but the attitude was the same.

Astrid: The attitude was definitely punk. But I remember sometimes we would be harassed by the “real” punks the ones with safety pin piercings, sleeping on the streets. They would yell at us saying we were not real punks. There were maybe five or so of those types, according to today’s definition.

Marlene: I can remember on our tour of Germany when I loved to wear this hat that I got while working for the Post. At some point this guy says to me “Hey you’re no punk! Punks don’t wear hats like that!” I thought that was so small minded, a punk tells me I’m no punk! For us it wasn’t about defining ourselves like that at all, when we started we didn’t know what to call what we were doing.

Astrid: The real punks called us “Edelpunks” (Glamour Punks)!

Klaudia: At Booster, after our new haircuts and updated look, they were ready to throw Lislot and I out. The owners saw the two of us with our hacked up hair standing behind the counter selling these 50’s style clothes and it just didn’t fit anymore.

Marlene: ...so they changes their selection !

Klaudia: Yeah ! Well it was a really uncomfortable situation for a while to the point where we were ready to leave but then they reorientated themselves and went off shopping to London. After that Booster became the first punk shop in Zurich.

We also never thought at the time about us being only women in the band. From the outside came the snide comments about Edelpunks and whatnot, but we just were doing what we wished and wanted to be left in peace.

Yeah, I always got the feeling that although you were all women you were not a Frauenband.

Klaudia (to Marlene): You were the only one with any real background in feminism. I had a bit of involvement through my studies at the F+F art school, but I was an outsider there because of my high heels and make-up

–the feminists all thought the higher the heels, the stupider you are.

Marlene: ...and you were a blonde too.

Klaudia: Of course and long blonde hair. It was horrid !

Astrid: During that time if you didn't fit the feminist expectations, if you dared say, for example, that you could have an orgasm from penetration it was a huge scandal ! Of course that's common with major movements, at first its taken to an extreme and the group cuts off to formulate their actions and opinons. But for me, and I think you two as well, we just didn't want to be pigeonholed.

Marlene: At the time I was very involved in the women's movement and the lesbian scene. But similar to what Astrid said, within the group there was this clear faction of extremist overall wearing lesbians and if you weren't wearing overalls you were not a real lesbian !

There were similar rules to follow in relation to what music to listen to – mostly anything from Olivia Records and so on. I found that music ok, but I really liked loud rock music and I didn't appreciate anyone telling me what to listen to. I was also one of the few women in that scene who from quite young was avidly listening to music and collecting records.

Before I joined Kleenex I was in a women's band that clearly labelled themselves a Frauenband and nothing else: Frauennerve.

Klaudia: Frauennerve !

Astrid: It's so great that name, you could almost use it again now.

Marlene: I jammed with them two or three times...

Klaudia: ...before we rescued you !

Marlene: I played saxophone at the time and often practiced alone. On the one hand I found it a great instrument but on the other hand it was incredibly boring to sit there alone in the evening and practice. It was also a rather difficult instrument so when Rudi asked me if I was interested in joining Klaudia and Lislot I was happy to switch to guitar. Then eventually at some point I was faced with the decision of staying with Frauennerve or going to Kleenex. I choose Kleenex.

Klaudia: ...to the *Edelpunks* !

Marlene: Yeah to those plastic chicks! Of course the lesbians didn't understand what I was doing and the rumours started that Klaudia and Lislot were lesbians. It was totally mixed up. But I didn't care, I just knew that with Lislot, Klaudia and Regula we could really turn up the amp and do what we wanted. It was fun and that's what compelled me.

Astrid: There was also the advantage of us being a bit older. Rudi [Dietrich], Stephan Eicher and a few others were our age but most of the punks playing music were about 17 or 18 while we were 20 or in our mid 20s. We knew what we wanted to liberate ourselves from while the very young ones were still searching. I think that's what made Kleenex and later LiLi-PUT so special, we brought another kind of toughness and awareness.

Klaudia: There was so much pressure on us from the outside. I remember these guys offering us a practice room if we did what they wanted... well you just couldn't do that with us anymore. That attitude and those comments came from all sides, which only brought us together as group even more.

We did experience some quite crazy situations though. I remember when we wanted to hire this practice room from some kind of music company. They offered to give us free equipment and so on and then thought that we would repay them with favours... Well we moved out right away! Then it came about that the Hell's Angels offered us a practice space. At first we were intimidated but in the end they supported us and even helped us transport equipment that summer.



So where you all still working day jobs while in the band?

Klaudia: I was working in Booster, the clothing store, but not much longer after the band started. Early on Marlene always had some kind of job and usually had a little something for me too. Lislott worked for Polaroid for a bit but really hated it and said she knew someone who could take over so I worked three months there. Then in the end I worked with Marlene, she was my boss at a big corporate company.

Astrid (to Klaudia): How was that?

Klaudia: It was cool! It was fine! Then I started to take my art work more seriously and I got a studio at the Rote Fabrik. I met another artist there who encouraged me to stop with these office jobs and, because he had come into a bit of money, he offered me 1000 CHF (swiss franc) to stop working and focus on my art. Which I did!

Can you tell me about your song writing process?

Astrid: Often we just jammed and recorded everything, then if an interesting riff came out of that we'd develop a song around it.

Marlene: At the very beginning it started with my harmonies or my riffs and a song developed from there.

Klaudia (to Marlene): Yeah, I just followed your instructions... you told me wait until the fifth fret then go crazy! But the process developed over time, I remember when Astrid and I lived together, we'd sit together in the evening and write lyrics... lying there on the bed, reading the dictionary picking out words. For example with Split, I picked out all these weird words and then came to you (to Astrid) and said "hey I have some lyrics!"

Astrid: That's right we did that together. We'd even pick out whole phrases like with Like or Lump It. I remember that well.

Klaudia: We were always looking for that oracle text!

Astrid: But normally we had the music first and then the text came after. Except that one song on the LP, when you (to Klaudia) brought the lyrics and we jammed to them –that was our free jazz phase. Then we had that other one about mourning, "In a Rush", we had the lyrics for that one first.

Klaudia: No I think that was "Might is Right", when Revo died...

Astrid: I mean the actual recording process...

Marlene: I remember on time, we were jamming well into the night and at sometime around four in the morning we got to the best part of the jam and wanted to record it. But the studio technician was sleeping somewhere and by the time we could wake him and get him to the mixing desk the best part of the song was already gone!

When you look back can you sense how this time influenced the rest of your life or what it meant to you then and now?

Marlene: For me it certainly had a big influence on my life. It's hard to sum it up in one or two sentences but yes my life would have been very different otherwise.

Klaudia: For me it means something different now after going through all this archival material recently. We were together a lot lately and I realized how much that means to me. That was such an important time back then and now, when I'm with these two, I feel totally at home. That's a special feeling and although we all had different experiences after the band it's still really important to all of us.

Astrid: For me it was like I was always searching for this intensity and during that time I could fully live that out. I took that feeling with me and it has never stopped inspiring me –that authentic intensive stick to it and do it attitude.

Klaudia: It was great to share that within a group. At that age you already know a lot but you can learn even more together about how to set up boundaries, deal with issues and then carry that with you later when you're on your own. My experience with the band was a base and grounding for me.

We didn't do any of this out of professional reasons –it was all based on a deep friendship. So it was difficult for me when someone left the band because it wasn't just about the group, it was an emotional experience. It only got better over the years and the high point of the three of us together in the final formation of LiLiPUT is something you can't fabricate.

Astrid: Yeah, that was a really unique time.

Marlene: That's exactly it. People ask why I don't keep making music but I can't just put out an ad looking for musicians to perform with because it just won't be the same as what I had already experienced.

It's about more than the music.

Marlene: Yes, it was about more than the music It was about the people. People ask me if I define myself as a musician and I sometimes wonder if I can honestly answer yes to question. Musicians play all over, everywhere at any opportunity and that is definitely not the case with me.

Astrid (to Marlene): You're a true Herzblut musician, always ! It wasn't about the music it was about the feeling and the creative act.

Klaudia: It was a deeper connection and like any big relationship you can't revisit it again in the same way. During that time period we opened ourselves up so much, even though I'm actually a really shy person !

Astrid: That's an important point. I could never stand in front of another band and sing the way I did with you two ! The music was a transport vehicle for something else actually.



What are the feelings that come up when you look back ?

Astrid: I feel so grateful that I lived this experience. I know I can still call on it for inspiration if I need it.

Marlene: Me too. It's incredibly inspiring when I see that Kill Rock Stars wants to re-release our recordings, thirty years later and that a whole new generation is interested in our music and who we were. I get correspondence from around the world from people saying that they wish they could

have seen us live and I realize just how important we are for them. I'm honoured that we are still listened to and respected.

Astrid: What pleases me most of out all of this is another aspect. I hope this doesn't come across arrogant but I think we really authentically put our energy into this and the people that are listening to our music are picking up on that feeling. As a mother I can make the comparison that it's like when you kid leaves home and you realize all that you've given them to take along the way. It's such a great gift to get back this gratitude and appreciation from fans.

Marlene: In the process of putting out these re-issues we had to listen to every song again and decide how to divide it all up on the four LPS. We couldn't just transfer the CDs to the LPS because they are very different formats. So we had to rearrange everything and the process was great fun.

Astrid: It must have been like a totally new project for you two. With the LP we never planned it or said here goes a long song, here goes a short one –it was all by feeling.

Marlene: They are good songs, I have to say. Now to listen to it all with thirty years of distance and hear the progression from the early days of Kleenex through to LiLiPUT, I really enjoyed hearing the development.

Klaudia: The coolest thing for me during this whole process was when I told my mom about it. She's in her 80s, and she said to me "Hey I want one of those CDs!" So I sent her one and about a week later she calls me and says "Well let me tell you, I just love it! It makes me feel so good to listen to this!" Of course at the time she kept telling me to do something more sensible with my life, now she says it gives her great energy!

Well I think that's a good note to end on. Thank you!

All: Thank you!

DJ Jenny Woolworth is the geeked out alter ego of Nicole Emmenegger. She hosts a website and blog featuring women in punk, check it out here: www.jennywoolworth.ch

Check out the the mital-u website for more info and a discography of the band. Required listening is the 2001 Kill Rock Stars reissue of a CD compilation of the band's studio recordings. Diehard fans will delight at the double CD/DVD of live recordings and video clips that KRS released in 2010, while vinyl aficionados will appreciate that Mississippi Records is releasing a 4×LP vinyl version of the studio recordings compilation in February 2011.

Violent Girl

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALICE BAG



I had the pleasure of interviewing chicana punk feminist Alice Armandariz, known as Alice Bag. Her memoir, **Violence Girl, A Chicana Punk Story** is scheduled to be released in fall 2011 by Feral House publishing. Visit Alice's website, www.alicebag.com, for further information on her bands, and to read her interviews with women in LA punk! She also blogs at alicebag.blogspot.com

How did you first become involved with the LA punk scene?

Depending on how you look at it, I was either in the wrong place at the right time or the right place at the right time. The punk scene in LA evolved out



of the glam scene of the early 1970's and I was too late to really be involved with that but I happened to be exactly the right age when punk started gaining speed in NYC with the Ramones and other bands. I was always musically inclined and I was born with a rebellious nature so it all fit together and happened very organically. Punk seemed like

the most logical thing in the world to me and it wasn't artificial at all.

Can you describe your experience being a Chicana involved in the punk music scene?

Being a Chicana in the punk scene meant that you wore crazy clothes and dyed your hair wild colors but no matter how much light foundation you put on, your skin always stayed brown. Seriously, I didn't identify as a Chicana at the time so it never occurred to me how being one might affect my experience. Early punk was so wide open that it allowed us the freedom to discard race, gender and sexuality labels for all intents and purposes. That's why people who were involved in it at that early phase consider

it to be revolutionary. It was a time when anything seemed possible and the only limit was your own creativity.

Do you consider yourself to be a feminist and if so, how did you come to identify yourself as one. What events helped shape your feminist identity?

I definitely do consider myself a feminist and have since I was a teenager. Seeing Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs in the "Battle of the Sexes" in 1972 really brought it all home for me that women were considered inferior and devalued in many ways by our society. Pretty much everything I've done since that time has been influenced by my feminist ideology, including forming The Bags with my high school friend, Patricia. The original concept for the band was that it would be all female musicians. Some of my projects have been more overtly feminist than others but it's always there under the surface and it influences everything I do, not just art and music.



How would you compare your experiences working with women as opposed to male musicians?

I like working with both male and female musicians and the make-up of any given band really depends on who I'm hanging out with and what the concept for the band is. I'd say my collaborators have been split about 50/50 male to female but since many of my ideas skew towards feminism or gender fuck (that's the Bowie glam damage in me) I seem to lean more towards females or gay/lesbian artists. I've learned a lot about not being timid when assessing your own worth or talent from working with men. Men are not accused of being egotistical and they don't apologize for being cocky, or what is now called



“swagger.” Women in general are much more modest about their talent and abilities, at least my generation of girls was taught to value modesty. Boys on the other hand are usually more outspoken about

their skills. I think it's interesting and somewhat telling that Lady Gaga, who projects total self-confidence, is often accused of secretly being a man!

What was your role in Castration Squad and how would you describe your overall experience in the band?

My role was as a "permanent temp", I was always filling in for someone else or a missing musician, sometimes on bass and others on keyboard. The band was the brainchild of my former roommate, Shannon Wilhelm (RIP) and former bandmate, Patricia Morrison. Although I never considered myself a regular member of the Squad, I ended up doing quite a few shows with them. It was an interesting collaboration, to say the least. I would say it was a bit ahead of its time in espousing militant feminism and I use the term feminism loosely because Shannon considered herself to be post-feminist. She believed that gender stereotypes were damaging to both male and female, so Castration Squad was really not about castrating men but about castrating the system that perpetuated debilitating stereotypes. Sadly, drug use was a band pastime and it interfered greatly with the success of the band.

How do you weave your political identity together with your art?

I think I'm more conscious of it now than I was when I was younger and performing actively. Then, it was just an organic expression of who I was and I didn't consciously have to weave anything into performance.

The message I wanted to express was personal and it all came out onstage in a very direct and straightforward



ward manner. I wasn't writing out lyrics very often so I didn't have to think about what I wanted to say. The medium was the message. In later years, I began to write my own songs and I became more politically aware. I wrote songs about topics that were of concern and interest to me, so feminism and human rights are sub-

jects that I sometimes deal with in my music and now in my writing.

Can you describe the projects that you're currently involved in that are important to you?

*I've written a memoir called *Violence Girl* that will be published by Feral House in 2011 and I'm in the process of editing it. It's about my life from a very young age to approximately my mid-twenties. It's kind of a coming of age story but along the way it provides a window into cultural movements of the times: Feminism, Chicanisma, Punk, Radicalism and an armed revolution in Central America, all told from my personal experience.*

*I'm also very excited about being included in *American Sabor*, which chronicles the Latino influence in American music. It's a traveling exhibit which has been in major cities throughout the US and will be at the Smithsonian in 2011. Oh and I'm also currently working on a load of laundry!*

In retrospect, what do you feel was the role of women in the early punk scene?

They could do anything and they did. Women were equally responsible (along with men) for the creation of the punk scene. You can't have anything that good without women being equal partners.

October 2010



Chuck Warner runs *Hyped To Death*, a label dedicated to reissuing obscure and underrated bands from the post punk era. In the span of a decade, his compilation series have become a reference for anyone with even the slightest interest in the origins of independent music. To mark the occasion of the release of a new volume in the *Messthetics* series dedicated to women's D.I.Y. and indie post punk bands titled *Let's Talk about Prams* (due this spring), I asked Chuck to share some of his favorite bands in the genre.

Chuck's list

« There are pitfalls to these things. There's something just wrong about lists of greatest-ever punk records entirely made up of priceless obscurities with nothing at all by the Damned or the Ramones (or conversations about women in punk that begin and end with current hipster-favorite reissues/rediscoveries without any Patti Smith or X-Ray Spex). Still, the only reason I've been asked to write this may be the hope that I can be both obscure and one step ahead of the hipsters...

So with this as a mea culpa, I present the more coherent of the several rants I've written (but ask me please about how deeply irrelevant Fanny are/were), then a shambles of should-be classics that in a perfect world would be at least a bit less obscure. And a couple beloved —by me— popchart things. Just to vex you further, the only all-women's bands I'll mention are the ones on the *Prams* compilation.

So... *Let's Talk About Prams* is *Messthetics*' (www.hyped2death.com) next release: a collection of women's D.I.Y. and indie postpunk —named after the classic *Vital Disorder* song. It's been ten-plus years in the making, and a lot of that time's been spent weighing what I'll call authenticity of voice (or just a sound that doesn't sound dated) against the less complicated criterion of how many women there were in the band. This "authenticity" has no prerequisite of lyrical or political content —and it certainly has nothing to do with recording methods!—, but it does seem to require music that's been made in a band situation where no one's trying to be something that they're not. This pretty much excludes all the "normal" bands who were self-consciously trying to appeal to a record-label or to the weekly music press or even to their next, hopefully-much-larger audience. But it's also essential that no one in the band was showing off for anyone else in the band —the situation's just as poisonous in an all-women outfit as with your generic (male) band with a "chick singer".

With all that time, I've been able to line up twentyish all —or mostly— women's bands that fit the, uh, *Messthetics* aesthetic, but I'm increasingly sorry to've left out folks who were making women's music just as authentically despite the fact that they were writing and singing as part of a husband-and-wife team, or with a committed ex-lover (or even just as a long-time member of a squat or commune). Ignore the absolute X and Y chromosome count - it comes down to a sexual dynamic within the band that is established and unmysterious (which is not to say it can't be incredibly colorful or volatile). Maybe that's the next collection? (John and Exene? Richard and Linda? Your name[s] here?)

Anyway, here's the band list for *Let's Talk About Prams*: they're all great in all their own many ways, but there's no chance of me singling out just one or two. Underlined means they were all-women or all save one, while asterisks (*) mean they've got MySpace or Facebook pages or websites of their own:

Vital Disorders *

The Petticoats *

Liggers

Red Roll-On

Rubella Ballet * [EVERYTHING'S

REISSUED ON OVERGROUND]

Property Of... *

Itchy Patch

Ettes

Mistakes

Sherry Flips

Cool To Snog *

Toxicomane
Strawberry Switchblade *
Spurtz
Amy & The Angels
Real Insects
Helen McCookerybook *

Catholic Girls
Debutantes
Devil's Dykes
Bright Girls
Mockingbirds

These last three have tracks at the wonderful punkbrighton.co.uk site... and even more bands on the MP3 portion of the enhanced CD... As for the rest of my "suggestions" ...

Alibabki. Polish superstars of the sixties –everything from girl-group to Beat to Northern Soul collides with the Eastern and Central European folk traditions of women singing as loud as they can– without any concession to convention. The records never made it out of Poland, but thanks to the Internet you can find these: try *Kiedyk pasła bydło* for starters; *Jezeli kocha to poczeka* for the Northern Soul fans. The culture mash-up/clash gets gloriously out of hand on *Niech wie jak jest*, and please don't miss their Monkees-worthy duet with male counterparts *Skaldowie, Z kopyta kulig rwie*. Apparently there were always six of them, but members rotated out for maternity leave and back in again. One of them had UK hits in the 1980's as *Basia*...

Snatch (New York/London, c. 1976–80). They shouldn't require any introduction. Judy Nylon and Patti Palladin teamed up for two essential 45's, a less-compelling third with Eno, a 12", and a criminally-unknown french LP with some of their best material. Still not reissued???

Aunt Sally – "Subete Urimono" (Japan, 1979). On YouTube. Absolutely stunning D.I.Y.-punk, though they didn't get a record out 'til a couple years after. Later experimental stuff and Phew solo are all worth checking out.

The Rentals (Boston, 1979). Jeff and Jane Hudson are royalty nowadays with the minimal synth crowd, who have no use whatsoever for The Rentals –their punk trio with Pseudo Carol on vocals. Gertrude Stein (their first) and New York (Jane's B-side to Carol's hit, *I Got a Crush On You*) are on streaming MP3 at officialjeffandjane.com (also on Homework #101).

Rebby Sharp – Green Street (b/w Hollow Earth) (Zensor 03). *Sublime D.I.Y. She'd played with Richmond art-band heavies Ortho-Tonics, but this was just her, singing and overdubbing guitars, with barely-audible percussion from Pippin Barnett. On Berlin's Zensor label (between releases by Throbbing Gristle and Sonic Youth). Cool artwork at www.rebbysharp.com, but the song's just on Homework #101 these days.*

GUILT-FREE PLEASURE (NINETIES): Elastica. *Did they cheat a bit on original hooks? Sure. Did you already love all the folks they stole them from? Yep. My album of the decade.*

Solex (Madrid, 1998–2004). *One single, one 10", one LP, each in editions of a few hundred. Two girls and a guy or two doing wonderfully catchy grindy D.I.Y. straight out of the Messthetics style-book, augmented by really smart/minimal trombone, melodica, clarinet, banjo, and increasing amounts of grubby electronics (as their career progressed)... I didn't find out about them 'til just after they'd called it a day - and it certainly didn't help that they shared their name with Solex a.k.a. Elisabeth Esselink, the excellent dutch singer/experimentalist whose career you should have been following already. Saddest of all they were only getting better. The 45 is merely charming in a scratchy/scrapey Throwing Muses-meets-The Girls sort of way, but the rest is unutterably cool. There are a dozen songs online at <http://lafonoteca.net/discos/canciones-robadas> (the 45 is La Triste sans Issue; the 10" is Canciones Robadas, and the LP is titled 3/4). Their label, Alehop, is at myspace.com/discosalehop and at least two of them have toured the planet as LCDD (also on MySpace).*

GUILT-FREE PLEASURE (OUGHTIES): Lily Allen – “The Fear”. *Friends of mine grumbled that the arrangements were not all hers. She probably didn't plan that bizarre mustard-gas incident at the end of the video, either. A perfect pop-song and lyric.*

Lido Pimienta (2010–...): *23 year-old single mom from Colombia, now living outside Toronto. Great story, all kinds of sounds, all sorts of collaborations... and the very soul of unselfconsciousness. Stuff's spread around the 'Net so don't just settle for what you find at myspace.com/lidopimienta. Her CD EP Color comes hand-decorated by Lido herself (and now a vinyl version, too!). She deserves every good fortune...*

MAKING WAVES #1

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Many thanks

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Each contribution is edited
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WANTED BERA MAOR AND HER LOST LP



LAST SEEN on the
'PARTYSNAKS'

COMPILATION on **INK RECORDS** in 1982

BERA MAOR recorded **ONLY** one **ALBUM** in 1981
which has **PROBABLY NEVER** been **RELEASED**
ANY INFORMATION WOULD BE **WELCOMED**
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