

RHETORIC FARM

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Mighty Sphinx
Interview with James Jordan (50p/50c)
concert and Record Reviews... and Words*

STOP-SDI PROTEST AT UA

by J. Gruener

Students Organizing to Prevent the Strategic Defense Initiative (STOP-SDI) staged a protest April 14, where approximately 20 demonstrators and 15 observers, in front of the UA Administration Building.

"The thing that we really want to put across is that things like SDI and nuclear war, they only happen if we allow them to happen," said James P. Jordan, member of Casa Maria Catholic Worker House and organizer of the STOP protest at the UA. "Because (if) we cooperate and pay our taxes and register for the draft, by doing all (those) things we vote for Ronald Reagan a thousand times over."

Jordan works at the Casa Maria soup kitchen and attends classes in religion and philosophy at the UA.

Jordan is not satisfied with the government's financial output to social programs, as well as the new cuts to these programs. Conversely the military budget has been increased and is still increasing.

The Optical Sciences department at the UA reportedly received \$1.5 million for "Star Wars" research.

"It's very decrepit when a system pays 63 percent of its federal budget for military purposes and only 20 percent for human resources," Jordan said.

One of the few ways to change the course of the present system is through civil disobedience, according to Jordan. Though he also believes that working through the system is a worthwhile project.

Civil disobedience can't be disregarded by protest groups and Jordan explained that "this is the best method" to gain attention.

"Non-cooperation is the most direct way that I can resist a government that's gone mad with the desire to dominate the world," Jordan said. "For me the most direct way not to have nuclear bombs is not to pay for them, or for me not to live a lifestyle that pays for them."

"There's this whole propaganda all over the world...like 'America right or wrong,' or 'America love it or leave it,'" Jordan said.

Much of the UA campus was leafletted by supporters of STOP, as well as various sites throughout Tucson. Jordan gave no prediction on the number of persons who would attend the protest, at the time of this interview, but he did expect a substantial turnout.

"I think you have to challenge that, like creating dramas - you take charge of the situation - you create a drama that chips away the myth of the infallible America that always stands for truth and justice."

My Poor Cat

Save the whales,
Save baby seals,
Save my cat - he just got a taste of rapid transit,
But it's O.K. - I'll bury him at sea.
And I don't care what that French oceanographer says,
I still don't believe the seas are polluted with too many dead cats.
- R. Lulay

The Arizona Shore

When the rain finally does arrive
it's as if the ocean has rolled
to this desert town,
temporarily conquered
the terminal blue sky,
assuaged the bleeding edge
of sunset.
and if you walked long enough
or far enough
on these gravel-pecked streets,
damn
you would have to hit
the beach
under your feet.
the winter shore,
breeze-bitten and isolated.
and you would have to stay
for the sunspread
sliding to the end of the world.

by next light
the beach will recede to its proper
coast of California.
thirst will scratch
and the sun will bear down
like a red ox to his she-cow.

- L. Maroon

New Year Poem

hear the fat girl cry
spanish tears,
damn it
shit
shit.
asks for her purse
asks again.
- L. Maroon

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Heavy Mental's Musical Grey Matter

by T. Gassen

Heavy Mental, from Chicago, first gathered attention for their "Atomic Shockabilly" single, which sold 3,000 copies, an accomplishment in itself for an "indy" record label.

Interest in Heavy Mental stems from both their musical style and political bent. A revival of the sixties-type psychedelic and garage music has gathered steam over the past several years, and Heavy Mental see themselves as natural product of this form. They feed from variety of influences (from the Beatles to Hendrix and Zappa), but cannot be called simply revivalists. They push the barriers of rock conventions, and also couple this with consistently heartfelt activist lyrics.

The newly released "Economic Growth" EP clearly states the band's political intentions, both visually and musically. The record cover features a cancer-ridden Reagan, saluting foolishly, as a bomb flies past him. The EP then kicks off side one with "CIA Theme."

Heavy Mental explained a bit of their political and musical attitudes through a mail interview:

T Gassen: You make a point about calling yourself a "psychedelic band." How do you define a "psychedelic band?"

Heavy Mental: We call ourselves "psychedelic" to avoid being called a '60s garage band, which would make us look like mimics. We use the positive influences of the '60s in both music and decorum to create a cool atmosphere and a different sound. We don't think we could be classified as anything, truthfully, and that's good. Because it leaves us open to new sounds. I really can't define "psychedelic" as being anything in particular. . .

TG: Can a band play psychedelic music without using drugs?

HM: Sure. Just because we do a few drugs doesn't make psychedelic music drug music. It's all in what you create from your own mind. We smoke pot and drink. . .but we don't use it to write material. Well, correction, we have used mushrooms to create a few songs here and there, but it wasn't intentional. I guess drugs could be used for musical purposes, but we recomend using your head.

TG: You also state a strong committment for pro-peace ideals in your promo material, and in your music. Is this a main reason for your band to exist?

HM: It's one of the reasons. We feel liberalism is declining and that we should show that there are some individuals who care what the hell is going on this planet. We not only write about Peace, but also about love and brotherhood. People should talk to other people more and use understanding instead of violence to remedy problems and conflicts. What's scary is that

the new conservatism is stalking the public media and attempting to control it. It's up to us to inform through our music what's going on and urge everybody to think for themselves.

TG: Do you think it is possible to get other young people interested (through music) in a new pro-peace/anti-war movement?

HM: Only to a certain extent. During the '70s, after we lost the Vietnam War, and during the hostage crises, the American public took an aggressive of "kick their fucking asses." That attitude still exists today. It might take another Vietnam type situation to reverse this Rambo-type atmosphere. . .unfortunately, it will take something really bad to convince the American public that Peace is the way to go.

TG: What are your views on American (Reagan's) policies, both at home and abroad?

HM: His policies here or abroad are not working. Foreign Policy results: We have so many people willing to kill us that it's not safe. . .The people of western Europe (and I was there to see it last summer) have taken an anti-American stance. They think WE'RE just as bad as the Russians.

Domestic Policy results: There are so many destitute people living on the streets that it's enough to make you cry. The mortality rate among blacks living in the ghetto is almost three times as high as it was six years ago. Unions are being busted so executives can live high on the hog. . .We hope that something gives soon. . .

TG: Musically, do you believe that the new psychedelic movement will take hold in the next year?

HM: We think so. We hope that it doesn't fall into commercial hands. There are already signs of that if you notice the new paisley fashion. These people probably bought their clothes from South Africa. . .We have noticed that there are a lot of punk bands who are using psych and garage influences. Hey, it works. Psych will be around for a while. We think this world needs it for sanity sake.

You can catch T. Gassen as RANDY LOVE on KXCI (91.7) every Friday at 9 p.m. for the latest in psychedelic sounds.



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HARDEST WORKING GUITARIST IN TOWN

by V. Berzer

Gene Ruley is one of the hardest working musicians on the Tucson scene, playing his red Ventura guitar for the River Rose, the Johnnies and the Vegas Kids. When the River Roses open for visiting bands, I've heard many of them sing the praises of Ruley's guitar playing.

Ruley received his first guitar, a Gibson G.S., for Christmas when he was 13. This gift led to three years of guitar lessons, a year and a half of classical training, a pathetic high school band called Dense Saliva and a six month stint with a progressive religious rock band.

He became involved in the scene in late 1984 and has quickly become a central attraction along with the River Roses. The band is hoping to get their tape on to vinyl soon, as well as tour the country.

Rhetoric Farm: How did you first get involved with the Tucson music scene?

Gene Ruley: I met Julia Mueller at a party, and she said, "Do you want to try out for a band?" And I said okay, so I tried out for the Johnnies. That was in November 1984. The band consisted of me, Julia and Tina Evans, we didn't know who was going to sing.

RF: How did you get involved with the River Roses?

GR: We (Johnnies) played a party and Chris (Holliman) saw us and asked me if I wanted to join the River Roses and I said, "I don't know," but gave him my phone number. At the time, Chris, Caitlin (von Schmidt) and Rob made up the River Roses. I joined and we kept playing and playing and playing and got bad reviews.

RF: When did Splat join?

GR: Splat joined in the summer of '85 and was an immediate jolt. He is a natural musician and so fun to play with. This was the new River Roses.

RF: When did the Vegas Kids start?

GR: They started that same summer as a summertime fun band. It lasted a lot longer than I thought it would.

RF: You play a lot of last shows.

GR: We might even play another last show if they offer us enough money.

RF: You take the River Roses the most seriously?

GR: Yea, it's my most serious band. In the Johnnies, we're not serious about anything, so there are no personality problems. We just play and have fun.

RF: Do you write?

GR: I'm starting to, but not that much. I have half authorship of "Phoenix 99" and there's a new song. Basically, Chris will write the basic skelton of the song and I'll just think of something to make it better, to fill it out and make it more interesting.

RF: What are the band's future plans?

GR: I don't want to come off sounding like the Pills: "Yea, we got this big record company interested. . ." But we're trying to get the tape out as an album. I don't know who is going to put it out, but a lot of people are hearing



The River Roses, (l-r) Gene Ruley, Chris Holliman, Caitlin von Schmidt, and Splat

Photo- Paul Roth

the tape and like it. We're shopping it around and hopefully within the next couple of months we'll have it. We are going to try to play L.A. in June with a band called the Romans, who share a drummer with Green On Red, but it's not really definite.

RF: How are people reacting to the tape and the band in general?

GR: Finally people are saying, "Well, the River Roses, they're all right." At first all we got were bad reviews. I knew the songs were strong, it's just the way we played them.

RF: What's next?

GR: Once we get this tape out, if we ever get it out, we can go back to the studio. I can't wait to go back to the studio because we've got so much stuff...40 - something songs.

RF: Couldn't you just record another tape?

GR: We need money to do that. Hopefully, we'll get someone to give us the money to do that instead of us having to work. I'm really optimistic.

RF: What on your views on the Tucson scene at the present?

GR: There's a lot of stuff going on with all the albums coming out. I think the garage thing is dead (which included all of Gene's bands.) A lot of bands are splitting up and coming back together in other forms. There are going to be a whole bunch of new bands pretty soon. Some have been recording tapes at Sitting Duck Studios with an 8-track.

RF: I heard that the River Roses' ultimate goal is to open for the Replacements.

GR: It would be really great, but I don't think our music would mesh with the Replacements very much. They're more raw. I think it was said in jest.

RF: Then what is your ultimate goal?

GR: To make a decent living. . .to become self-sufficient playing music. I'd like to make a job out of playing music, so I don't have to do something respectable. I don't know how good that is in the long run.

SPHINCTER MOUNTAIN

INTERVIEW WITH MIGHTY SPHINCTER

by J. Gruener

-Sphincter Mountain-

Greg- It's gonna be like Magic Mountain it's gonna be an amusement park for hallucinagenics. You'll buy tickets at the door, which you stamp. . . I mean which you lick, and you stamp on your forehead; as you lick it you'll pick LSD up off the ticket.

You'll be able to enjoy that in the park's atmosphere.

-Mt. Sphincter-

Doug- Right along Squaw Peak will be Mt. Sphincter and it will be carvings of our butts. There'll be a rollercoaster ride inside the anal portion.

-Life After Death Rock-

Doug- Well, I wouldn't call it deathness. Well just because the way we appear on stage doesn't mean that it's necessarily deathish or anything.

Greg- . . . cocktail party music more than death rock. . .

Doug- We wanna be able to fit in appearance wise with the music.

Greg- He wants to know about penises, tits, and cocks and cunt.

Doug- We use all of those.

-Requisite to join Mighty Sphincter-

We like to take interviewers and cook them and eat them.

APRIL IN REVIEW

by U. Berzer

Simple Minds with The Call

UA McKale Center

April 12

Despite the recent wave of radio hits, Simple Minds were greeted by a nearly empty stadium at their show in Tucson (approx. 2500). However, the low attendance did not seem to bother the Minds in the least.

The main problem with this show is that the band is not right for the arena-size setting, their romantically atmospheric music was ripped to shreds by the overbearing P.A. that showed no mercy to their Scottish art.

Kerr and back-up singer Robyn Clarke were the only ones able to handle the over-sized stage, while the other musicians seemed engulfed by it.

The audience seemed almost oblivious to the all songs that were written prior to their "Once Upon A Time" release and the band ignored all songs written prior to their "New Gold Dream" album (4th).

The biggest disappointment of the evening was a newly reworked version of the classic song "Promised You A Miracle," all its splendor destroyed by a traditional rock production.

Overall both bands are better in smaller settings and on vinyl.

Gene Loves Jezabel with Rabid Rabbits and Bonton
Mason Jar (Phoenix)

April 18

BIG HAIR seemed to be the theme of the evening; I haven't so much posing since I was last in L.A. The most amusing thing was that the band was less image-conscious than the audience, which was a pleasant surprise.

The Welsh-goth rockers were basically concerned with playing their music and having fun, without touching their hair or make-up even once. I left the show with the euphoric sensation (until my friends and I got in argument about who was going to drive back at 1:30 a.m.) that this band actually cared about the show.

It's rare that a Welsh cult band will venture out to out-of-the-way places in the U.S. without having a guaranteed audience, so it was pleasure to see GLJ hacking it out like their U.S. counterparts do (however it's ironic that U.S. bands wouldn't receive such warm reception).



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The Church with The Souls
Nino's
April 24

This show was the sham of the year.

I believe I had the best seat in the house because I stood on a chair, went deaf from the large P.A., and watched longhaired Australian heads bounce up and down.

Every time I looked down on the seated/standing audience in back of me, I saw anger, aggravation and discontent; no one could either see or hear the band play, which was one of the best yet to come to Tucson this year.

When Church leader Steven Kilbey said "claustrophobia" he wasn't exaggerating, and the band did its best to put on a decent 60 minute show despite being trapped in the corner.

Drummer Richard Ploog expressed extreme disappointment with this show, but had an otherwise hopeful attitude that they will play a better place on their next visit to Tucson, thus seeing it as a learning experience rather than a total drag.

As for The Souls, thankfully this was their last public performance.

TINDERBOX SIOUXIE AND THE BANSHEES BEFFEN

The stunning photograph of a tornado on the cover reflects the apocalyptic vision and mystical presence on "Tinderbox." This haunting quality weaves in and out of both the vivid imagery in the lyrics and the pounding force of the music.

This combination is best demonstrated in the first cut, "Candyman," which is a poetic commentary on the evilness of child molesters with Siouxsie Sioux's deep, wailing vocals and appropriately tormenting, yet inviting musical accompaniment, making it one of the most powerful songs on the album.

"Cities In Dust," the first single from this release, demonstrates the Banshees' flare for musical understatement with snatches of hard-hitting percussion and short, sharp chord sequences with a funky undercurrent of sound.

The lyrics, which are really remorse poetry, focus on a fear of war-related destruction. "This Unrest" describes how this dread has permeated Sioux's thoughts to a constant state of unrest, "Metal and flesh will fuse today / These visions jump out and blast my days / Clean away."

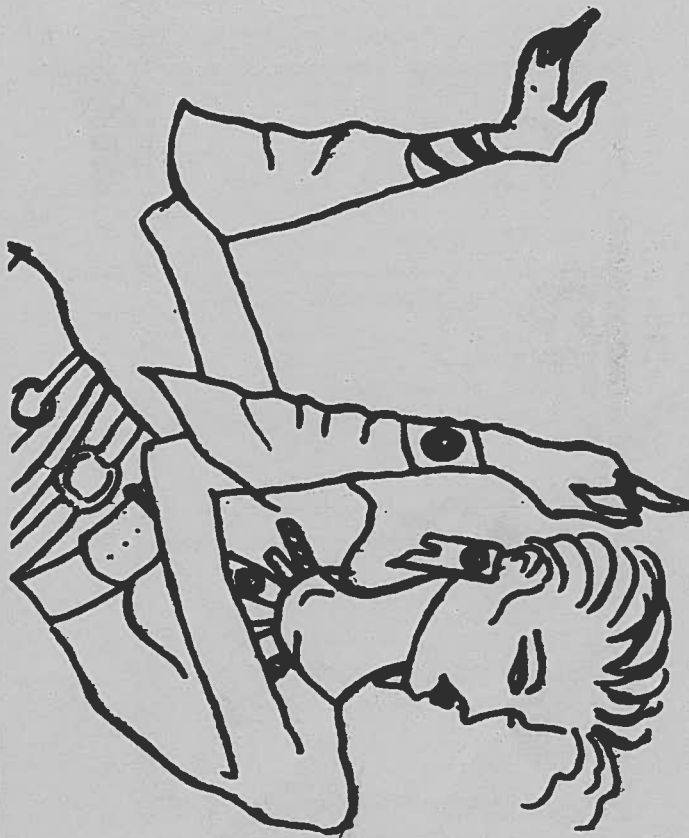
Other songs also speak of psychological turmoil caused by an uneasiness with modern society. Generally, the Banshees' lyrics have always concentrated on the seedier aspects of life.

"Tinderbox" marks the debut of a new lead guitarist/keyboardist, John Valentine Carruthers. Following in John McGeoch's (now of the Amoury Show) and Robert Smith's (the Cure) footsteps, he proves just as competent as his predecessors.

- V. Berzef

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