

NOCTURNE MAGAZINE



MINISTRY

VOLUME III, ISSUE I
WINTER 1993



SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

Inside: Helmet, Exodus, LSD, Bad 4 Good and Local Bands!!!

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EDITORIAL

Predictions or Predilections?

Well, it's a brand new year and we're all off to a new start. As far as the magazine is concerned... well, faithful followers can tell that we have upgraded our image to more of a "magazine" look. 1992 was a good one for Nocturne Magazine but thank God it's over and that it flew by really fast. I can feel it in my bones (with whatever psychic ability I have or presume to have) that 1993 will be a great year for a lot of us. And, as I gaze into my "crystal ball" (actually I'm in front of my computer screen which is close to spherical in shape and is partly made of glass), I now bring you... my predictions for 1993! A quick recap of 1992 first, though. In 1992 the Seattle scene dominated the music-public's collective consciousness. This, I believe, was a natural reaction to the bleak political, social and economic outlook pervading the country. Music thus reflected darker views and more alternative ways of thinking. With the accession of a new and popular president there is a new reason for hope and a willingness for change. I think the music of the future will reflect this new attitude. Hopefully this favorable trend will continue.

On the home front... a lot of new rock clubs and new bands have been popping up of late. Also, a couple of the best and brightest in the Bay Area are poised to grab a share in the big league limelight. Here are my hot picks of local unsigned bands who we have either covered in the past, are in this latest issue or will be covering soon: the Organization, Liquid Sky, Louder than God and Skin and Bonz. As for signed bands... Exodus and D.R.I. are currently on tour with Body Count. This is a show you dare not miss! I got to see Fungo Mungo perform recently and I was really impressed. Is the SF scene showing signs of revitalization or what! Wishful thinking, perhaps? With the power of positive thinking plus, of course, actual support from all of us for the local scene, who knows?

Looking at the larger sphere of the rock music world... the upcoming Arista release of Enuff Znuft, "Animals With Human Intelligence", is something to look forward to. The whole album is full of, as the band puts it, "very melodic songs played very aggressively." Highlights include the lead-off track "Superstitious", the Beatlesque "Black Rain" and the sensitive ballad "Innocence". On the heavier and more alternative-side are the Stone Temple Pilots with their debut album on Atlantic, "Core". Reminiscent of Nirvana (yes, more grunge rock) with a more danceable beat specially on the song "Sex Type Thing" which has already gained them quite a bit of exposure on MTV. Other memorable tunes include the hypnotic "Wicked Garden" and the funky-psychedelic "Naked Sunday".

Well, that's all for my Jeanne Dixon impersonation for this issue (and for the whole year too... nah!). Time will tell if these predictions will manifest themselves or remain merely personal predilections. But for now, Nocturne Magazine wishes one and all a very happy and prosperous New Year!!!

by Jean Picache

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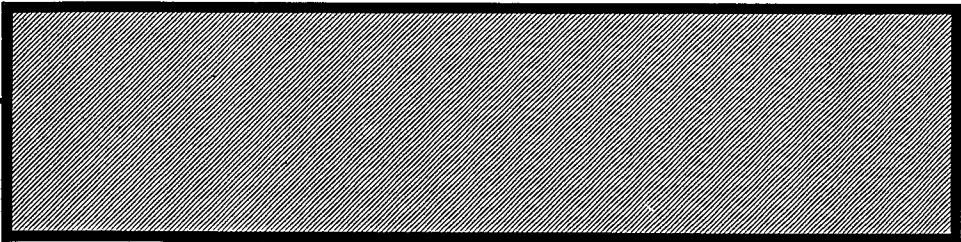
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Ministry

by Louie Senorelli

In a musical stew pungent with sorry ass performers like FIREHOUSE and SLAUGHTER one must be careful not to choke on one's vomit. It would not be hard to do. As video becomes more inherently related with music, so do the impostors that attack themselves to the industry's framework calling themselves musician. This kind of corrosion makes a band like MINISTRY all that much more important. For ten years the band has prospered within the system it despises. Starting out on the less desirable side of the fence in 1983 with disco/synth abortion With Sympathy, the band chose a new direction vowing never to sell and always be true to themselves. Today, Ministry is credited with four of the heaviest albums the record industry has ever hated to endorse. Bill Rieflin, drummer and long-time member of the band, elaborates on some of their shared philosophies, "in America, there are a lot of people who will tell you what it is you want and need. Certainly we would encourage folks to try and find out what it is that they really want in life. I think one of the hardest things in the world is to actually find out what it is you want, and then find the courage to actually go after it. It's really easy but it can be awfully rewarding. Everyone has to go through this process. If they don't it's likely they are going to have a really crummy life."

Formerly of the Seattle-based group THE BLACKOUTS, Bill has made major contributions to the band. Contrary to popular belief, Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker are not the only ones behind Ministry's unique sound. "Let's say the



writing goes like this," Bill offers, "he who has the good ideas wins. If Paul writes a song that's great, it's in. If I write one that's great, it's in. Everybody is welcome to contribute anything they want. So in that sense the writing is equal between all members. Al and Paul are just in the spotlight a bit more."

This doesn't seem to be a concern of Bill's though. His primary interests lie in making great records, not in super stardom. "If anything, Ministry's success is sort of a nuisance, only in that we're a lot more popular and a lot more recognized. When we go to shopping malls we're constantly asked for autographs. It can be a minor inconvenience, and sometimes it can be sort of interesting." Bill says.

"I don't want to give the impression that he was in anyway pompous or arrogant about the band's success because he wasn't. But popularity and fame are things the band claims never to have wanted, and it seems to me that it's easy to shun success while you have success. "It may be easy to shun success while you have it, however that has always been our attitude." Bill declares, "our aim is not commercial acceptance. Obviously we are successful commercially to a degree because we operate publicly and we sell records, that is commerce. We can live comfortably off what we do but we're not buying sixteenth

century castles in Luxembourg. We're not that successful. Our aim is to simply make the records that we want to make, that they be the best records that we're capable of, and we hope as a result of the quality of the record someone will buy them."

"Hopefully we'll appeal to the greater portions of people," Bill continues, "not the lowest common denominator, which is what a lot of successful, popular music does. I'm personally not against commercial success, however I will say that for Ministry it's very unlikely that we will exceed the level to which we have risen. Then again I'm quite surprised at the popularity level that the band lives at now."

Bill further expands, "there is a certain expectation that builds up when you're in the public eye. We're not interested in what people want from us. We're interested in what we're able to accomplish on our own within ourselves. If it got to a point where we simply couldn't work within the structure of the music business because it became too insane we would just quit making records. We would all to continue to work together, but Ministry would be dead. Killed by expectation and people who just want something from it."

I found Bill to be extremely passionate about his views. It was like talking to Mr. Spock at times - very intense. It is this intensity brought to the music that gives Ministry their sound. "It's not just

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Suicidal Tendencies

by Louie Senorelli

The emergence of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES from the L.A. punk scene marked the beginning of an era and it's not over yet! And although we have seen what for all practical purposes was the end of punk as we know it, S.T. have stayed afloat all these years as they battled Tipper Gore and the P.M.R.C. over issues of censorship, lived in a metropolitan area that for eight years restricted the band from playing live shows due to the possibility of revolution and lost all original members except leader and founder Mike Muir. Their ability to survive stems deep into the band's philosophies, "you have to have self-respect and integrity. Do what you want and believe in yourself and what you're doing," says Mike Clark, rhythm guitarist and five-album veteran of the band. "It's a life style. It's about taking risks and knowing what you want."

These fundamentals have been present in S.T.'s lyrical content and sound since its inception eleven years ago and they are not to be taken lightly. For this reason, the band shuns accusations of selling out without a second thought. Mike explains, "the music has changed but I'm still the person, I mean ten years ago I was ten years younger. What am I supposed to do, the same songs every record? We've all grown, if people can't handle that, I don't care."

And grown is exactly what they've done. Evolving into a major cult band then on to one whose debut album is the best selling American punk LP of all time, they have also just recently supported QUEENSRYCHE and MEGADETH in major arenas nationwide. Not bad for a group whose name is probably one of the most misinterpreted in the business.

In spite of all these changes the band has never forgotten their roots. "We know where we came from, you can't forget that. That's where it all starts. Wait until this spring when we re-release the first album. Mike says with an evil laugh, "we re-recorded it and titled

it Still Psycho After All These Years. This summer we'll do a headlining tour playing mostly early stuff. It's going to be crazy. Full on fucking mayhem."

This won't be the first time the band has invoked mayhem. In fact, they have a long history of doing so. S.T. ignited the punk scene with their first release Suicidal Tendencies, broke Billboard's Hot 100 sales chart with Join the Army and received a Grammy nomination for their work on Lights...Camera...Revolution. All of this with very little air play and a lot of loyal fans and ass kicking live shows.

This will be S.T.'s first time out in a long time with the absence of drummer R.J. Herrera. "R.J. got married after the last tour and recently had a baby so he decided to hang low for a while," Mike reveals. "Josh Freese (VANDALS, INFECTIOUS GROOVES) did the album with us. The guy's only nineteen but he plays like a seasoned veteran."

"We auditioned sixty drummers over the course of a month and a half," Mike continues. "We finally settled on Jimi De Grasso (Y&T, LITA FORD, FIONA). We were a little skeptical when he showed up but when he played our shit he just went off. He hits hard as hell for a guy his size. There's a lot more freedom with us, no more Lipstick and Leather."

I must admit that the existence of INFECTIOUS GROOVES has raised some fears about the fate of S.T. They have an impressive lineup (including Mike Muir and Robert Trujillo from S.T. and Stephen Perkins from JANE'S ADDICTION) and their material is exceptionally good. Not to mention had fairly good commercial success. Could this be the end of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES? "Not even," declares Mike. "The two bands are totally separated. When we tour INFECTIOUS writes, when we write INFECTIOUS records and tours. They should have a new EP out this January. They're totally cool but SUICIDAL is our first priority. We're all down for the S.T." Rumor has it that this spring's tour

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Helmet

story and picture by Jean Picache



From out of New York (yes, New York) and coming from varied musical backgrounds comes the most refreshing new collaboration known as Helmet. Dubbed as "thinking man's metal", Helmet relies on simple arrangements laced with raw emotion to carry their intense and often-socially-conscious messages. Armed only with my tape recorder, their press releases and my wits, I met with the band backstage at their recent show at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium filled with trepidation. I imagined them to be very serious individuals with superior intellect (as reflected in their Interscope album "Meantime") and I didn't want to appear inadequate. I needn't have worried. The band members were very down-to-earth, friendly and accommodating. They candidly answered my questions as you can see in the following snippets from our conversation:

How did Helmet come about and who are your influences?

PM (Peter Mengede, guitar): We just started a band because we all felt that we had to be in a band playing music.

J (John Stanier, drums): I went to school for percussion and I come from a punk rock kinda background.

PM: I'm Australian... Henry is influenced by anything from country to grindcore... Page has a very strong jazz background... and a little classic rock. (Myself) probably a little more garage... AC/DC through the Stooges through the Birthday Party. One thing we have in common is that we all have an aggressive way of playing.

Does Page (Hamilton - vocals/guitar) come up with all the lyrics or do you all contribute?

PM: It's just Page (John agrees and laughs). Fair enough... he won't sing anyone else's lyrics.

I'm quite comfortable (with Page's philosophies), I quite like it... if there ever were a problem or we'd be embarrassed about anything he was doing lyrically... it's democratic... if there's anything that's objectionable to anyone in the band it doesn't fly.

Has being based in New York helped or hindered you?

J: It definitely helped us. There's a lot of bands coming from CBGB's and stuff we're friends with... it's a nice little scene.

Your style is very stark and simple, was this something you consciously sought out to do?

PM: When the band first started, we were working towards a direction where the song as a whole is the most important thing... with feel and impact.

Which part of the band experience have you enjoyed the most?

PM: For me as a foreigner it's the travel... seeing the world. We've been a couple of times around Europe. Playing clubs is a lot of fun... it's where we came from... there's not much separation between us and the audience. What are your goals for Helmet?

PM: To write songs... we really enjoy playing and making records.

Your image is as unpretentious as your music, don't you think that image is

important?

PM: Of course, yeah, very very much. For me coming from Australia, we have a very Anglophile view of things... to create interest in a band you hype it, you make yourself up, you have an image to create... controversy... mystery whatever. (But then) it's not like we belong to any sort of dramatic movement. It's just a vast camaraderie of college boys playing music... maybe we just try to look like ourselves. We didn't buy into any peer pressure.

Your songs have two recurring themes, that of people losing intensity as they grow older and that of people getting carried away by their achievements. Do you think they happen often and how does one avoid these proclivities and keep one's perspective?

PH (Page Hamilton): It's pretty common, yeah... but I don't think it's necessary. The way to avoid it (feeling older) is to not think about it. The whole idea of losing intensity... if you're obsessed with your own physical, mental and emotional state all the time then yeah, you're gonna grow old. Music should provide the opportunity to avoid that. It doesn't have to be music... it's whatever activity you care as much to participate in a focused manner.

You could be a truck driver or a writer or whatever. If you do something with your life that you know will be a lifelong challenge. I know, for me, with music there will never be an end of the road. Music is completely limitless. (As for Helmet) As long as we can expand what we're doing... if together we get excited about getting up honestly and play every night and enjoy it than when it gets to be more about an ego gratification kind of thing... we'll probably quit doing it. (On how to avoid losing control of one's ego) By focusing on the activity, the process itself as opposed to the results of the process... great wealth... or whatever.

Words of wisdom that we can all live by. And as I waltzed out after the concert was over, I realized that not only did I gain a new appreciation for Helmet's individual members (bassist Henry Bogdan completes the lineup), their musical artistry and their intense live performance, I acquired a little more insight into the mystery of life and recaptured a bit of my youth... Thanks guys!

Ramones

by Christina Pirozzi

Heyyyyyyyy hooooooo lets go to the record store, that is, for the Ramones latest release "Mondo Bizarro." Listen to one Ramones album and you're hooked for life. Ever since their early New York punk days at clubs like CBGB's, the Ramones have been influencing waves of new artists. Hiding behind their thick dark hair and catchy refrains, this family is a definite rock icon. It was an honor to gabba gabba with drummer Marky "1-2-3-4" Ramone himself.

It seems as if the industry has caught on to the potential commercialization of the Ramones. "I'm not surprised. In a way it was gonna happen because you just can't keep ignoring something for so long that people are listening to" said Marky. The group even made its very first appearance recently on The Tonight Show. Now if that's not hitting the heart land what is?

In order to throw the usual Ramones musical curve ball, the band chose none other than a lesser known Doors song, "Take it As It Comes," to cover on the new album. Ironically, the group is highlighting the song over their own original material. "A lot of bands and individuals are doing Doors hits so we figured we'd do an obscure track from the end of the album. We just put our style to it and it came out good. And it gives C.J. the chance to play the bass a little bit on stage" said Marky. Indeed the newest member C.J. fits in comfortably with his position. "Mondo Bizarro" marks the studio debut of the young bassist. "It's great. He's gonna be there till the end" said Marky.

There is an essence to the Ramones that makes them so endearing. The first album is the same as the second is as same... But we continue to adore them "It's the same energetic quality" said Marky.

The Ramones are enjoying being the new "kids" on the scene again. Going into the studio was exciting as doing the first underground demo. Once again, the group worked with Ed Stasium who crafted their classics "Leave Home" (1977), "Rocket To Russia" (1977), "Road To Ruin" (1978), "End of The Century" (1980), and "Too Tough Too Die" (1984).

"He is the perfect producer. He knows how to get our sound. And he's our friend too so we had a lot of fun doing it" said Marky.

The creative process has changed for the group over the years. "It's basically individual stuff. We used to write together, but we don't anymore. We'll think of something and present it. Then we'll make a demo out of it. At the end, when we're choosing songs for the album, we'll on a vote decide" said Marky.

Along with a new album comes a new label for the Ramones in Radio Active which is coincidentally owned by the

group's manager. "Through MCA we have a better distribution set up. Sire after a while was like a dead horse. We can scrutinize more to what they're doing whereas Sire, you never knew what was going to happen" confided Marky.

The crowd diversity of a Ramones show is incredible. The pit is a concoction of every fan around. "The metal heads, the rock heads, the punk heads. It's amazing and you got the younger audience now with the older audience" joked Marky. Some very yuppie like individuals even made their presence known at the Ramones recent shows. Libert spikes amidst Sam and Libby?!

The Ramones have gotten on the touring train full force. They hit Japan, Australia, and come back to do more America touring. "We might do Viet Nam. We'll get some good Thai food" quipped Marky.

Bands who are able to gain the coveted opening slot for a Ramones show are always grateful. Bay Area alternative band, Overwhelming Colorfast, were ecstatic when they won the honor. Said guitarist-vocalist Bob Reed, "We submitted a tape to them and they said, "You're on! and we were like (mouth open). We were jumping around like crazy!"

A band will get that glazed look in their eye when describing the fateful night they shared a stage with their idols. "That's flattering" said Marky.

Marky had an instant answer when asked what band he feels should share the spotlight. "We really like the Dickies a lot. And we feel that they're a very overlooked band. They deserve a lot more attention then they're getting because they've been around for a long time and they're really good" admitted Marky.

Marky's own listening tastes is music from the heart. "I like the Beatles, The Stones, The Beach Boys." Bay Area's own Faith No More and Metallica even graced the list enthusiastically.

When the Ramones started, the music was confrontational punk. Now it can be traced from punk to new wave to progressive to the ever popular bile turning alternative label. "It's sprung out like an Octopus" joked Marky. "{It's still there in attitude and sound. You see it in the way people dress and their lyrics and the speed at which they play." And in turn the music has been twisted, warped, and melted to form the mainstream. "I think over the years it's been watered down to be radio friendly" said Marky.

Maybe it was a generation tightening the choke hold on a slightly "dangerous" music. "You look at the Reagan era and the Bush era and how conservative it was. People were afraid to say anything. I think now it doesn't matter anymore" revealed Marky.

Since we've entered the age of Tecno, real music like the Ramones keeps the faith. "I'd rather hear guitar bands then that synthesizer crap. You know, people not even singing on their songs and relying on tapes on stage." What 90's music listeners deem as the radical wave of back to basics music may be nothing more than the 70's stuff they heard growing up.

Could it be by osmosis then that these "so called" fresh riffs and soulful vocals have made a come back? "Another thing I don't like are these third rate heavy metal bands that sound like Led Zepplin doing stuff that was done twenty years ago" said Marky. It would be hard to compare the Seattle phenomenon to the 70's underground scene in New York. "Nothing is as original in the last twenty years as the New York scene that was happening in CBGB's. But it's good that this is happening with Seattle because even though it's not as original, at least they're playing their own instruments,

