

the Pipettes



contents

magic of marit	4-7
alphabeat	8-9
greg wells interview	10
martin of cherrytree records	11
vinyl vendettas: sisters in sound	12-13
hypnote-ising	14-19
what happened to the future	20
a funny thing happened on the way to the forum	21-23
in defence of cigarettes	24
us tour diary	25-27



The Magic of Marit

We don't really know what it is about Sweden that we like so much. We just always seem to discover brilliant music when we're out there. Our first trip was to the Emmaboda festival, which was our first jaunt off the island. We fell in love with the festival and discovered one of our favourite bands ever, Billie The Vision and the Dancers (check their shows early next year with Seasick Steve, it'll probably be one of the best shows ever).

Similarly, at this year's SXSW, Gwenno was sitting there enjoying a band when an incredibly well dressed young lady approached her and gave her a CD. This was Marit Bergman. She said we should play some shows together in Europe. A few weeks later 'ABC' was synced up to a Fiat advert in Italy, France and Germany, so the European wing of the label wanted us to go on the road to capitalise on the free advertising. So there you go, we asked Marit to support, she did it (with her eight piece backing band) and without being vain, it was probably one of the best pop tours that could have happened. We all became close friends as we shared a love of classic pop and the belief that music can be serious, but should also be fun. Especially live.

We all stay in contact with Marit, though she's always busy as she's kind of a superstar in Sweden. She's had three massive albums out that totally took over Scandinavia, she's also a song-writer on a freelance basis who is often behind the latest dance craze in Sweden too, she's recently written with Kleerup (who's worked with fellow Swedish sensation, Robyn), and lives between Sweden and New York. So Seb was very lucky to get Marit to answer a few Q's. Hope you enjoy.

Seb Pipette: Hey Marit, where are you at the moment?

Marit Bergman: "I'm in my office room, in our apartment in Brooklyn, NY. We just moved here to this new place and I'm loving it."

SP: With 'I Think It's A Rainbow' (her last album) being released almost a year ago, what are you up musically at the moment?

MB: "Still trying to have it, and my other albums properly released outside Scandinavia, so I haven't left 'I Think It's A Rainbow' all behind. I am going to Sweden in November to have a recording session with my band. I don't know, I guess I'm still aiming at making classic pop songs that will last forever."

SP: With Swedish being your native tongue, what led you to write your songs in English?

MB: "At first it wasn't even an active choice, it just so happened, I didn't really have any role models when it comes to writing in Swedish, I've always listened mostly to American music. I've been writing songs sporadically since I was like 12, but my songwriting was

really boosted when I got heartbroken at 17, by an American. And to explain to him what an asshole he was, through the songs, I had to do it in his language of course haha.”

“But now I’ve actually started to write a song in Swedish. It seems to take me a while to finish it but once it’s done it’s going to be like the new National Anthem or something.”

SP: Recently I’ve heard that the indie music scene has been declared dead in Sweden, and that Emmaboda festival is going to stop having live bands play. What do you think of this?

MB: “Well, indie, the term can really have us talking for a couple of days here. But if the definition of indie is guitar-based pop, not too tightly played and with quirky sometimes out of tune vocals, sure, you can say it’s dead, at least if you want “indie” to be something “alternative” that you as a youngster can identify with and that the jocks at your school won’t understand anything about. But, also, I don’t think this has really been the case since mid 90’s. But the new establishment is always really slow in understanding that they, themselves, set the new agenda. It was the same with rock’n roll and baby boomers. They think it’s radical to be a man and have long hair and play guitar, haha.”

“And then again, of course, if we define indie as the attitude that you can do it yourself and you don’t have to wait for some lame old record company man to say your allowed to record music and to put it out there, then it’s bigger than ever. I don’t know any statistics but I’m pretty sure that the percentage of records/music released on independent labels has increased immensely over the last decade.”

SP: Living in America, do you still follow the Swedish music scene, and if so what bands are catching your attention, and what bands are globally catching your attention?



MB: “I still don’t feel like I’ve really moved, since I’ve been going back and forth, and I spent the whole summer touring in Sweden. I guess I do follow the Swedish music scene as much as I follow the New York scene, which is not too actively. I used to be so up to date but I guess I’m getting old, or maybe it’s just temporary, I don’t know. I listen mostly to really old stuff. The only show I’ve seen in New York this fall, except for going to friends shows, is Jimmy Webb (the guy who wrote ‘Wichita Lineman’ amongst other classics) and I’d say me and my friends were definitely the

“I guess I’m still aiming at making classic pop songs that will last forever.”



“But now I’ve actually started to write a song in Swedish...once it’s done it’s going to be like the new National Anthem or something.”

youngest people in the audience, by a good 20 years.”

“I like the new Jay Z-song. And I like a lot of music that people are playing in their cars in my neighbourhood. I don’t know, maybe it’s Soca? I’m not so well informed. And at the moment I’m sort of obsessed with Alice Coltrane and also Jean Sibelius.”

“In general, I think Swedes nowadays make more great music per capita than for instance Americans. If you go and see a random show here in

New York at say, Bowery ballroom, a three band bill, two bands are gonna’ suck and one band is going to sound really good, look really cool, but having no good songs. If you do the same thing in Stockholm, none might sound good or look cool, but at least two of the bands are going to have decent songs.”

“But then again, I’m Swedish so I guess there’s something in me that is drawn to what other Swedes do.”

“The best Swedes are Frida Hyvönen and the Field.”

SP: With the year drawing to an end what have been the highlights of the year and also of your career so far?

MB: “This year? Touring with you guys, of course. And maybe, the last show of our summer tour, at the Malmö Festival. Perfection.”

SP: If you could write a song for anybody in the world, who would it be?

MB: “I guess it should be someone who can sing in a way that I can’t. Maybe Jennifer Hudson.”

<http://www.maritbergman.net/> <http://www.myspace.com/maritbergman>

Alphabeat

I don't know much about Alphabeat, but I know they're from Denmark and are making the most perfect pop going right now. Stumbling onto their Myspace their influences were cited as the B52s, the Pointer Sisters and Chic. This instantly attracted me to them as it was a carefree and unashamed declaration of their love of pop. Then as 'Fascination' and unashamed declaration of their love of pop. Then as 'Fascination' blasted out my tinny speakers I was left thinking 'fuck, I would give my left arm to have written that song' it's just the most perfect mix of dance grooves and melody, I listen to it about eight times a day.

Having had success in their native Denmark already, EMI have picked them up and look to spread their happiness everywhere. 'Fantastic 6' was a riot in a two minute pop song and 'Fascination' should hopefully brighten the nation when it's (hopefully) released in January. I managed to email over a few banal questions to band member Troels.

1 - Please could you give a very brief outline as to how this band started.

A - The boys founded the band in high school, tried to be indie but since this didn't work out very well for them they began playing pop and brought in a cute girl to join them. They played lots of live gigs and got well known in Denmark as a sparkling and joyful experience for the audience. Influenced by the blue eyed 70s, melodic 80s and hit pumped 90s their songs took form and the debut was set. Now they're heading for total world domination!

2 - Scandinavia always makes really good pop music, why do you think this is?

A - That's because we've got so much countryside in Scandinavia and because people get stuck

inside their tree houses in the cold frosty winters left with nothing other than a guitar or a piano ...

3 - Do you think Swedish and Norwegian bands are rubbish?

A - Well ... Not much music that we know of has come out of Norway for many years besides A-Ha and Bertine Zetlitz. But Sweden has got a great culture and tradition of song writing and ABBA have not lived in vain. Sweden is extremely productive in making experimental and melodic pop music, so if you guys in the great UK have not heard of it you better take a listen.

4 - Are there any other good pop bands coming out of Denmark?

A - No not really ... Haha well there's a very good musical development in Denmark at the moment but many bands are very introvert and try too hard to be original without succeeding - They way too often become copycats. But yeah we've got "new" fine pop bands as well. Check out Junior Senior- The inventors of the smash hit "Move Your Feet" which you probably already know. Grrreat it is!

Private - A very new and hip pop act from Denmark. Not unlike The

King of Pop.

The indie poppers in Oh No Ono have got some cool things going as well !

5 - You're music is very happy and uplifting, English people seem to have a really hard time accepting that it's possible to have fun without coming across as a nerd/loser, does that worry you?

A - Not at all! The Revenge of the Nerds is coming!!! Happiness is the new black! People didn't expect our happy-go-lucky vibe here in Denmark either but they couldn't deny you just wanna dance whenever you listen to us. We know that we're very pop but we have a kind of "healthy" distance to our music.

6 - How would you go about changing the mindset of the average record-buying English person who loves the Libertines/Joy Division but can only listen to Wham when they're alone?

A - We like the Libertines and Joy Division as well so why shouldn't they buy Alphabeat as well? It's just good melodies and it's not like we've got "We only like pop music" written in our faces! We believe that the kids of UK might hunger for something refreshing in a time where indie is everywhere.

7 - What do you think of Mika and his music?

A - He's very talented! He's a musician with a heart and ear for the good melody. His singles are very well performed and produced and in Denmark he's very popular at the moment.

8 - When will the album come out, have you recorded it already?
A - We're going to release our UK debut around February 2008. Some will sound different from the Danish release and new songs might hit the track list. Wait and see!

9 - What are your favourite bands at the moment? Do you have any tips for bands destined for greatness in 2008?

A - We really dig the old stuff these days: B-52's, The Supremes, Clash, Wham, The Buggles and good ol' Bowie boy. We do also like "new" acts like Gazelle, The Go! Team, I Scream Ice Cream, Robyn (her new stuff), Private, Yelle and a fantastic smash hitting band called Alphabeat! However, we're pop nerds if you like, party vibe and good melodies. We certainly think that pop is coming back in the year 2008 and not just Britney and Sugababes pop, not saying it's bad but bands of non-manufactured pop. For us, pop music is at a higher level when there are "real" people behind it and it's being written and performed by "real" people.

10 - If you could have one thing for Christmas, what would it be?

A - A nice apartment where we all could live together in peace and harmony after a great x-mas meal

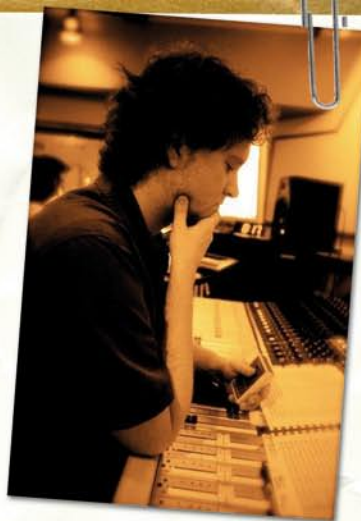
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Jonathan Falcone

TOP SECRET

Greg Wells is one of the nicest people in pop, he remixed our album for the US and recorded the bonus tracks for us. He didn't kill us for being pinickity, so check it out!!!

Name: Greg Wells
Age: 39
Current Residence: Los Angeles



So how did you get into music production/record label work?

I have always been addicted to music and used to stare at the few vinyl LPs we had in the house, thinking "how do you get IN there"? That's really how it started. Once I was able to, I played in many bands and after my first couple of studio experiences, I got the record production bug.

What do you look for in acts you produce/sign?

I like to feel like I'm learning something when I produce an act/artist. I don't like cranking the same type of record out, and welcome the challenge of making something work. This helps explain my psychotic discography.

What are your favourite songs and albums you've been involved in producing/putting out and why?

Rufus Wainwright's version of "Across the Universe", Amy Correia's "Carnival", Louise Goffin's "Sometimes A Circle", Otep's "House of Secrets", and most recently Mika's "Life In Cartoon Motion".

What type of music do you think will hit it big next year? Also what bands/acts will do the same?

Regardless of genre, it's down to catchy songs. Vibe and aesthetics are important in music, but when an act explodes it's always because of a song. A vague but strangely specific answer!

I'm imagining that when you finish work for the day, you don't go home and listen to music, maybe you do, but what else do you find helps you relax and switch off, when need be?

I have two little boys so that immediately helps pull me out of studio world once I walk through the door. It is difficult to fall asleep often, though, because making a record is often a very mental process (derive what you want from that statement).

What do you think you'd be doing if you weren't a producer?

Terrifying question. I have no idea, because I threw all my eggs into one basket years ago. Um...maybe...teaching something?

What's (one of) your favourite song(s) of all time?

"You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman"



Name: Martin Kierszenbaum

Age: Old enough not to know better

DOB: AD

Birthplace: California

Current Residence: California

1 - So how did you get into music production/record label work?

I'm a musician and songwriter and, at the same time, I always got elected, by the rest of the band, to talk to the club owner, rehearsal space manager, journalist, etc. Eventually, that developed into being the representative for musicians on the record company end.

2 - What do you look for in acts you produce/sign?

Signing a group and striving to spread their music is such an all-encompassing endeavour that I can only do it with a group that's near and dear to my heart and whose work moves my meter musically and emotionally. If I get that feeling though, I can't help it, I have to get behind that group and help push.

3 - With the state of the music industry at the moment, with more and more acts self recording/releasing, has it affected how you operate at all?

The excitement of finding great music, enjoying it and trying to spread the word about it burns in me like the first day I heard "I Wanna Hold Your Hand." Ever since I worked in the mailroom at PolyGram Records in the 80's, I've been hearing, "hey kid, you missed the heyday of the music business" so why should gloomy predictions about the state of the music business start discouraging me now? They shouldn't and they won't.

4 - What are your favourite songs and albums you've been involved in producing/putting out & why?

I'm proud of all of the artists on Cherrytree Records. Each has a compelling twist on their approach to music. Some may call it idiosyncratic. I call it good.

5 - What type of music do you think will hit it big next year? Also what bands/acts will do the same?

Like every year, there will be some writers/musicians/performers that push the envelope and are recognized for it. At Cherrytree Records, we have a lot of artists that will contribute to what I call the "eclectic pop alternative continuum." It's so exciting when an artist pushes the envelope creatively and develops an audience. It's our mission to help with that goal.

6 - I'm imagining that when you finish work for the day, you don't go home and listen to music, maybe you do, but what else do you find helps you relax and switch off, when need be?

It's hard to exit music-obsessive mode. Lately, I've been going home and listening to Cherrytree Radio on <http://www.live365.com/stations/cherrytreerecords>. It's a new Web-based radio station that features music, life-style based programs and lots of artist participation. I love our acoustic performances from the office - what we affectionately call The Cherrytree House - probably because we pretty much live there 24 hours a day!

7 - What do you think you'd be doing if you weren't a producer/record label boss?

That's hard to fathom. Luckily, I became obsessed with music at a very early age which ended up keeping me out of a lot of trouble probably. I convinced my folks to let the band practice at my house and asked the other members to keep their instruments there so I could learn how to play them in between rehearsals. That kept me pretty busy and single-minded.

8 - What's (one of) your favourite song(s) of all time?

"My Funny Valentine" - Elvis Costello's version is particularly awesome.



Vinyl Vendettas

SISTERS IN SOUND!

We know Fionna Vendetta, she tour manages us and tells us what to do. We need people to tell us stuff like that otherwise we'd just walk off cliffs and dig holes and stuff. She's also in a Cardiff based DJ collective who play all over the place, especially all the really massive festivals. Thank heavens they're about, otherwise all the DJs at festivals would be shit.

1 - How did you meet and how do you know each other, what then spurred you to become the 'Vinyl Vendettas'?

We all live in a little-known welsh village some folks call cardiff, where we found each other through personals advertisements...actually, we were bored with the music we heard in clubs & wanted to release the discos in our heads, so we rebelled against all the boys in town playing their music, and decided to show off our awesome record collections and DJ booth dance moves. And we love the way vinyl crackles. we met through some band who imploded. we are sure they were jealous of our greatness.

2 - Do you always insist on DJ'ing as one massive posse, or are you willing to split into groups to spread the music further-wider-faster?

More Vendettas means more love to go around...we chop & change our line up to suit the occasion and our massively challenging social lives. Next year we plan to always be in at least 2 places at once...we managed that this year, with Vendetta DJ Action happening in New York & Wales simultaneously.

3 - DJ'ing the places you do, do you find that most people who attend have pretty much the same taste as each other? If so what are these tastes right now? If not, do you find it encouraging that you can sense individuality in your audience (and does that mean you can put on some guilty pleasures)? We love to encourage individuality and have no guilty pleasures...why should we feel guilty about playing "Owner of A Lonely Heart" or Van Halen's "Jump"?! We manipulate their tastes, the kids are like putty in our wicked hands...having said that, we do need to placate them with a "big hit" or two every now and then. it tricks them into thinking we are playing what they want all the time. Last weekend someone requested !!! and we nearly cried with joy.

4 - Who is the hardest member of the posse? Could you beat up Take That? Could any one of you beat up Mika?

Oh most definitely we could beat up take that! we would just sing "i want you back" at them for hours until they melt with embarrassment, shame & humiliation. Mika, pfffft! Jemma would just blow a little syd barrett in his direction, Catrin dance some Edwyn Collins at him, Beth could ping pong him with Operator Please, Laura would shame him with some Elvis and Fionna would shut him up for good with early White Stripes.

5 - What would be your dream DJ gig, similarly, what would be your nightmare DJ'ing scenario? We love playing Silent Disco at Reading, although it can also be a nightmare with millions of mashing

limbs and dancing bodies begging you to play something better than the gold we are already spinning....our ultimate DJ gigs are the ones where we play what we love, and the crowd love it back. Small clubs where people dig The Beach Boys & The Creation as much as they love The Klaxons or CSS. And places Fionna can play tons of Phil Spector produced girl groups... Beth & Jem totally rocked Latitude Festival this year - their set was a killer, and we're often randomly surprised by crazy dancing to random tunes at our Vinyl Vendettas Saturday Night Dance Offs™

6 - You all have like totally awesome media jobs too, from tour managing to radio DJ's, are you competitive about who has the most bazzin' job?

Yeah, we are constantly beating each other up behind the bike shed after DJ school. Beth seems to continually humiliate us with her shiny hair, drum lessons & TV appearances, not to mention her kick-ass new radio show (shameless plug #1)... although Jemma's is looking totally hot on stage with her new band Heck (shameless plug #2) - they supported The Fall for their 3rd or 4th gig, she's so fucking cool. Catrin manages to always look like she's the cover of St Etienne's "Fox Base Alpha" whilst booking bands at Clwb Ifor Bach and having the coolest 7"s in the coolest 7" case. Laura kicks freelance arse on & off stage, playing & writing awesome folk & shouty rock music & sorting out all the children backstage at Reading. She makes art and music, and people feel good. We never know where Fionna is. She says she is in South America tour-managing Hot Chip at the moment, but we think she's driving a white VW camper around the

roundabouts in Milton Keynes. She does other stuff too. We don't understand what it is, but she sure talks about it a lot.

7 - Do you think it's important to dance and have fun, if so, why? Of course. Everyone should dance & have fun. It should be a universal law. Imagine if we all went to a big disco, with sparkling lights & mirror balls, and danced away the heartache...danced away the pain...

8 - 'Man In The Mirror' is the best song in the world ever, please confirm that you agree and explain how this song changed your life?

We've been thinking about this one for ages. of course we agree (although we can think of many other "best songs in the world ever" - like Mary Jane Hoopers "I've Got Reasons", and pretty much anything by The Sonics or April March). this song liberated a generation of bedroom dancers & hairbrush microphone singers. it told them "it's ok to look at yourself and dance. it's ok to love yourself in creepy ways". he should have stopped there though.



Basically, I met **David Rothblatt** at an after show party we had in New York. I knew he was going to put out **Monster Bobby's** record, but I'd never spoke to him personally. He was really nice, interesting and polite. I instantly thought he was the kind of person I wanted to be my friend (and he looked, to me, a bit like **J Mascics**). So I thought I'd email him some questions for the zine. Now I think he's probably one of the coolest and inspirational people ever, and if this interview doesn't make you think the same, and make you want to buy all his label's records, then you're dead to me. I have no brother.

HYPNOTE-ISING!!!!

Jon Cassette: What is your personal history to the music industry, what have you done in the past and how did it bring you to where you are now?

David Rothblatt: "Whoa... well, maybe the easiest way to answer this question is to come forward with a realization that I recently came to, which is that I am basically now attempting to relive all of my past experiences working for other record companies as something of a Zelig of the NYC indie music industry through Hypnote Recording Concern."

"Like, my first job in the business was working in the mailroom at StreetWise Records, which was Arthur Baker's label so I think that is one reason that I am still involved in making dance music 12"s on my Hyptone imprint. I don't really follow all of the current microtrends of dance music, don't care about any of it at all really, and am not even especially fond of the way the culture of dance music has evolved since, say NYC in 1982 when I was HEAVY into the club scene here. But I still trust my own ears when it comes to dance music and I just put out the stuff I like. I really like freestyle, electro and early house music

and I don't really think that has changed much, except that it used to be part of a broad spectrum of dance music that you might hear in a club along with all sorts of other music and it now all seems very separated off into different genres and subgenres. I was very into the absolute earliest house music and I used to split my time between my hometown of Chicago and NYC and it was all very cool until someone started calling it "house music".

"It was right about that time that I met Rick Rubin and became the first employee at Def Jam. I had been into rap since the absolute beginning and could even rap a bit myself, mainly just being able to recite the entire Rapper's Delight and stuff like that. I have always been into all kinds of music so of course I was already down with what was then currently going on in Hip-Hop and he and I shared a quite similarly deep obsession with Run-DMC. I used to stare at my copy of "It's Like That/Sucker MCs" and wonder who this guy Russell Simmons must be that he would be the producer of such a mind-blowing record. But Rick did me one (or really several) better - he went and found the guy and convinced him to go into business with him! It's funny, from the



Monster Bobby and David

very beginning Def Jam was really quite divided between Rick's wing of the label and Russell's. I mainly spent my time at my desk in Russell's Rush Management offices, which was really a great thrill and privilege because I would routinely find myself in two hour conversations with people like Kurtis Blow or a 15 year-old LL Cool J! I would pop down to Rick's dorm room, which served as his wing of the company, for consultations with him about the Beastie Boys and that crowd. I think he respected me because in all reality, I knew a lot more about black dance music than he did and he knew that. He would listen with seemingly genuine consideration to the things I told him about his productions. In a weird way, it was a black/white thing. Rick really wanted his productions to be respected and played on "black radio" and Russell was obviously very into the idea of hip-hop being accepted by the white world, so to say. I was right there in the middle doing the radio promotion for all of it simultaneously. I worked my ass off on the Beastie Boys and they found a bit of success on my watch but mainly on college radio. Nobody else really wanted anything to do with them, it was all business stuff

really, nothing to do with the music. Black stations did not want to play any white artists and the commercial alternative stations, such as they were at the time, were not ready for the Beastie Boys as indeed most people weren't. In fact, many of my friends and family thought I was quite literally insane for even dedicating my life to working on this stuff. Anyhow, the point is that I am still involved with rap music today with Hypnote. I have signed on a South London rap label called RaggoTech which I believe to be quite special and now that is "the set that I rep".

"This answer is beginning to seem a bit long but to follow it through, I spent a year in about 1990-91 working at the American Rough Trade. I worked on some pretty big releases, the debut Mazzy Star album, the Breeders debut (which was licensed from 4AD here), some Lucinda Williams stuff, Galaxie 500, Grant Hart, Butthole Surfers. We had some cool records like Scrawl, the Clean, Straitjacket Fits, Snuff (who were clearly ages ahead of their time, if anyone even knows what I'm talking about), Victoria Williams and I don't know, loads more. The company was having some

financial problems and to save money they got rid of our A&R man, who is a person whom I loved and have a great deal of respect for. He left such a gaping hole in the company and I used to physically sit right next to him that eventually I became something of a de facto A&R man, which was reasonable enough since I was already dealing very closely with all of the artists. The heads of the U.S. company basically deferred to me and the other relatively young members of the label staff as to whom to bring to Geoff Travis, effectively allowing me to “sign” both Grant Hart and Mercury Rev, although I had nothing to do with the actual negotiations. Unfortunately, I was the only person in the office who wanted to sign Pavement, so poor Geoff was never even given an opportunity to hear Slanted & Enchanted, which I actually viewed as something akin to an homage to his label. Everyone in the office wanted to sign Velvet Crush but they never made it to Geoff’s ears either. Great band. I also tried to sign an old friend of mine from Chicago, a blues man named Buddy Guy but no one liked the idea and it never found its way to Geoff. The album he made that year won a Grammy and would have saved the company! Anyway, that is where I get my kind of “broad-based record company” worldview. Rough Trade US was not just a label, but we had about 25 labels that we manufactured and distributed and also were a huge distributor of “finished



goods”. When I started Hypnote, I really wanted it to be a bit like Rough Trade, both the company and the label. Lastly and to finally wrap the answer up as quickly from here as possible, I then went on to run a label called Shimmy-Disc that had a lot of very strange and wonderful artists on it. I ran it for about five years before getting pushed out in a bizarre and upsetting Byzantine series of relationships and events, which took place. I was a huge fan of the label before I was asked to run it and have always had an affinity for music which is a bit odd but somehow still has popular appeal. All of these influences are meant to be distilled into the Hypnote label.”

JC: The music you’re putting out on Hypnote (and Hyptone) is very electronic based, where has this leaning for electronic music (or at least music with electronic components) come from?

DR: “I personally got my first electronic instrument in about 1970. I couldn’t tell you what it was but it was really cheap and it broke fairly soon after I got it but it was my favorite thing in the world at that age. I had taken piano lessons but I wasn’t interested in playing the kind of music that they teach you when you are learning to play the piano. But this thing made lots of weird rudimentary music sounds and was loads more fun to mess around with. The real answer to your question is that the Hypnote label is not actually meant to be electronically-based. After I did the

Wolfgang record (which for anyone who doesn’t know, was made on all vintage gear circa 1982 and the closest it ever came to a computer was some processing that was done on a Commodore 64), I was worried that people would think I was an electronic label because the record did very well on all the electronic charts here in North America. I didn’t want people to expect a weird vintage-leaning electronic record each time out but in signing Monster Bobby, that is exactly what seems to have happened. The very few fans that the label has are happy with this orientation but I don’t expect that will be a consistent thing for people to expect. Anything that is really Electronic (cap E for the contemporary genre) will go on the Hyptone imprint, which is really my outlet for electronic music. For Hypnote, I just want to be able to do whatever I want, in the manner of a Rough Trade, Sub Pop or Matador. I never wanted there to be a “Hypnote sound” and I don’t expect there will be.”

JC: Does your city of residence, New York, influence the music you currently listen to, has it been a formative influence on you more generally?

DR: “Well, although I all but consider myself a “Native New Yorker” (yes, “I know the score by now”!) having spent 25 years here, I actually grew up on the south side of Chicago, which was really just about the hugest possible influence on me musically that I could think of. First, the house that I grew up in was just behind this Baptist church that had such a great gospel choir that they were broadcast every Sunday on WVON, the top soul station in Chicago. I can remember hearing Gospel music as a nearly constant backdrop growing up, along

with the soul and jazz of my immediate neighbourhood, which was mostly black and poor. With the black power movement in full swing, this was not an especially great time to be the only white kid around, especially after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot. I can honestly say that the exact place I grew up in had its own indigenous music and, not only that, it was some of the most influential music of the last century. The south side of Chicago is a big place but I grew up about a mile from its blues epicentre. I also lived within a block or two of Jesse Owens, Muhammad Ali and Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Black Muslims. At the exact same time, the AACM was also centred in my immediate area and they did regular gigs at the local burger place so I used to see Lester Bowie, Anthony Braxton and Muhal Richard Abrams all the time, just out of the sheer coincidence of a burger craving. Then just a mile or two southward, you had the Ramsey Lewis, Earth Wind & Fire and the Emotions scene happening. So if all that wasn’t really heady enough, Sun Ra was there too and his guitarist was a friend of both my sisters and took as many meals as he could at our house, which is another way of saying he was nearly like a big brother to me for a time there. During that time, all I ever heard about was Sun Ra and I began to think he was the centre of the universe, which of course he is! There was also a heavy “experimental” and “world” music component in the neighbourhood and in some ways you could even make some sort of argument that “world music” as it came to be marketed, started there. There was a guy called Adam Rudolph, who still makes records I’m pretty sure, who

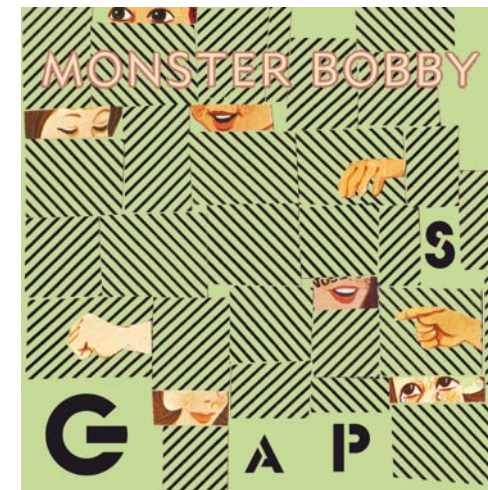
took the very unusual (and some thought downright freaky) move of sponsoring an African "Griot" called Foday Musay Suso to come over to the U.S. in about 1975 and stay in residence with him. I was friends with his younger brother and our weekly poker games were usually spent shouting "I fold" over the din of the mystifyingly pure African sounds emanating from their basement. Many years later, my friend Jesse Saunders started House music in this exact same area. In contrast to this, when I think of the music of New York, I think of things like "Planet Rock", Pussy Galore, Sonic Youth, Run-DMC and Larry Levan which are all really massive but really pale in comparison to what I grew up with. But, to finally answer the question, New York has been my sole experience in the music business and I think has pretty much solely shaped my ideas of what kinds of records to put out."

JC; You've obviously got very good taste in music, giving our own Monster Bobby his first solo album, how did this release come about? Where did you find out about him etc and do you regret knowing him now?

DR: "Why, does he regret knowing me? What has he said? Well, I was a huge Pipettes fan from the very beginning (meaning early on but certainly not as early as someone living in Brighton). I haven't really had a chance to mention what a huge Indie Pop fan I am (to whatever extent that is actually really a genre) but I am twee as fuck in some layer of the onion of my being. They appealed to me far beyond the average indie pop group. Was it the outfits? The attitude? The songs? Not sure but I was hooked. Anyway, of course I was a

myspace friend of theirs. Then at one point I got an automated message from a label called Remake/Remodel announcing that there was a Monster Bobby single coming out. So I went to check his page out. And I kind of hate to say it like this exactly especially in this context, but I found that I liked him even BETTER than the Pipettes. I found myself there listening to his stuff all the time when it dawned on me that I am a record company and I wanted to put this exact stuff out on record immediately. I think I messaged either him or Nick Levine, who is a great guy and runs R/R as well as Index7 and Tack!Tack!Tack! (and probably lots of other things by now) and asked whether there were a lot more tracks like this. I don't really remember a lot of the details but I just remember that Bobby sent me a CD with all these great songs on it and I decided after just one listen that I wanted to put them out. After a lot more discussion, it came out that Bobby was really quite a bit more interested in making a more cohesive proper debut album since he has really been at this awhile. Now that is always a bit of a mad one. You have the stuff in hand that you know for a fact you love and instead you find yourself wiring the commensurately measly amount of money over to have a record made that you have no idea how it will come out. I wasn't nervous about it of course because I have loads of faith not only in Bobby's music, but also in his choices. I knew that this would be the best thing and, moreover, that is incidentally meant to be how this label is run anyway. I was still sweating these songs so Bobby agreed that I could put them out sometime after the album, in a collection that we began referring to as

"Bits & Bobs" but which is now actually the proper title for it. It is due to come out in 2008 and will feature as many Bobby gems as I can cram on there! So after some months, Bobby finally got a bit of time off from the Pipettes and, not exactly being the sort to use this time stretched out in front of the telly (in part because he doesn't own one), set about making his debut album. 'Gaps'. I am finding that funny all of a sudden because I actually just realized I don't actually know exactly why it's called that! I think it was not so much that this is not the type of question I would ask Bobby, but that is was so perfect a title that I just thought, of course! Gaps! Wicked! Well anyway, eventually the CD arrived and I listened to it. It doesn't take too long to listen to. I was puzzled by it. It wasn't the same as the songs I had wanted to put out, it had all sorts of noisy bits on it and it all flowed together in one contiguous piece.



I listened to the whole thing again. It is beautifully arranged and orchestrated and the singing is fantastic. Yes, this is good. Few more listens and, well, hundreds more really. THIS ALBUM IS GENIUS! I LOVE MONSTER BOBBY!!! And no, I don't regret knowing him. However I do regret letting him drag me to that biker bar..."

JC: What were you thinking giving him his own label? I mean, how did this come about?

DR: "I think that in keeping with some of the things I have said I want to do with this record company, it all makes perfect sense. I mean, it does, right? I honestly have no real idea what he has planned for Little Other Records so I can only hope so!"

"It was actually the extreme beginning of a company model that I am by now already in full swing with, which is that I have really good physical and digital distribution, why not open that up to people? At first it seemed like it would be cool thing to offer it to friends and somehow I knew that Bobby would be well into doing his own label. I have now started doing deals with people I don't know to put their labels through here as well, starting with the RaggoTech deal. The great part is that they are now very close friends of mine too!"

"I do want to work in a lot of different genres and with lots of different people and labels. New music, new friends. Sounds good, right?"

JC: What's the next signing for Hypnote or Hyptone, do you have a next release pinned for either label?

DR: "My next release will in all likelihood be a Hyptone compilation called "Work It! Volume 1". I don't want to put out any more 12"s until this has come out to showcase this label properly. Then loads more 12"s!! As for Hypnote, I am very close to signing someone great to be the next long-term member of the roster. I am desperate to spill on this but it needs to get done properly. Maybe by the time this runs I might know the answer..."

www.hypnote.com

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FUTURE?

In 1992, American neo-con *philosophe*, Francis Fukuyama, published a book, *The End of History, or The Last Man*, which claimed that, with the fall of the communist regimes in eastern Europe, the world had reached the 'end of history' in its current state of liberal capitalist 'utopia'. Of course, it wasn't long before history came along to bite Fukuyama from behind. In the meantime, fifteen years later, it does seem like something is missing. Not history, but in a sense, the *future*.



In the middle of the last century, when people were first preparing to go into space, and electronic music was being produced by modernist composers and enterprising outsiders alike, the presence of 'actually existing socialism' in the eastern bloc provided a locus

for both the utopian dreams and the dystopian nightmares of several generations. All of this came together in American science fiction films like *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *This Island Earth* and *It Came From Outer Space*, in which space travel, electronic music and invaders from a red planet, formed a kind of symbolic unity. The scarcity of information about socialist society, as well as public knowledge of the tendency for what little information there was to be distorted by both sides, only added to its ability to act as a kind of fantasy space.

In today's post-political society in which the public are systematically discouraged from taking an interest in politics, and political decisions are always presented as ideology-free, technical, administrative choices, we seem to have lost our grip on the future. Without a broad-based popular opposition to the status quo, we are left with the rather grim sense that there is no alternative. The future, as J. G. Ballard put it, is boring.

Walking into almost any music venue in Britain today, be it jazz club, concert hall or rock gig, one could be forgiven for thinking that, since the 1970s, history had in fact taken a few steps in retreat, or that a pan-generic cult of conservatism had taken hold at the root of all musical activity. Lecturers in 'Innovation Studies', surely a forward-looking discipline if ever there was one, write papers on the 'post-original' – a term suggestive of the idea that the very attempt to do anything new is now thoroughly passé. Even our science fiction films are remakes of old favourites like *Godzilla*, *War of the Worlds* and *Transformers*.

And so what, you might say. The modernist demand for relentless innovation led to an art that lost touch with its public and the socialist 'utopia' in eastern Europe led to large-scale butchery and corruption. Good riddance to the future, I hear you carp. But behind these empty clichés concerning the Twentieth Century, what kind of baby are we throwing out with the avant-garde bathwater? Isn't the messianic promise contained, in different ways but equal parts, in revolutionary societies, stories about other galaxies, and music composed purely of electronic sounds, in a sense, the only real possibility of hope and transcendence: the promise of a better world in *this* world, i.e. *before* death and without the support of any mysticism or theocracy.

Monster Bobby

A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum

The adventures of designing a record sleeve

What you get out of life is more or less due to what you put in to it. You know it's true: Give and take. Compromise (or 'backing down', as my married friend tells it). It's the tune we dance to, and the code by which it is written. And some glorious internet forums are like that too. You know the ones. Those special cyber covers, off the beaten track. Those confection-lined domains where the connection is all the more remarkable because no-one, absolutely no-one feels that same way as YOU do, and yet, there they are. Under the one banner that ties you all together.

And so we find ourselves in front of the roaring fire of The Pipettes Forum; a place dedicated to the collective and collected musings of Brighton's perfectly-wrapped gift to the pop world. It welcomes everyone and anyone with open arms. It really does. All the members are quite the most courteous you'd ever hope for. Cynicism is seemingly left at the door (unless football arises it's partisan head). A place that's also frequented by some of the band themselves, happily nattering or arguing the toss with the fanbase (I remember a particularly truculent thread between Monster Bobby and myself about the merits [or not] of Doctor Who. Was there a winner? Well, the Doctor won I suppose). Here is a band who believe the fans are part of them and all they do.

One morning, in an attempt to avoid work and search out any fan-rendered mp3s in the offing, I stumbled into the forum and happened upon a post by Jon - the amiable and articulate bass player with The Cassette (The Pipettes' backing band) - titled "Design our album cover for the US?" The artwork for the US release of their debut long player "We Are The Pipettes" due to be launched ridiculously soon had been left wanting and I found the prospect exciting in the extreme. Especially after looking at the brief contained within. This was right up my street.

Design our album cover for the US?

Hey guys,

Big question/request for help.

We can't guarantee they'll be used, but we're after people to submit album covers for the US release of the album. We'll have to have the logo, album title and photos of the girls on the cover (so if you don't have any, just outline where the girls will go and we'll work through it together when need be, if you do, whack them in and if we feel we need to change them, we'll all work on it together when need be). Basically looking for this kinda' thing:

A bold image of the girls, one we're all love the idea of is the girls as 50foot women invading a city, possibly in a b-move style (think Hammer Horror, Attack of the Fifty Foot woman, hell even the computer game Rampage if we're being literal) where the girls look bold and empowered. If you can work to this brief (and by Tue morning latest) we'd love to look at your designs basically, I've included some stylistic ideas we're looking to infuse into the cover, somehow (as attachments).

Lots of love, hope some of you can help and we'd basically love it if a forum member came up with an image that we used, it would be ace.

Jon and the gang.

You see, I'm a designer by trade and the work that was then scattered on my desktop could go to hell, for the time being. The town's tax payer's were going to have to wait for their damn dull recycling leaflets. Not only do I adore The Pipettes but I have deep and intense love of 50s B-Movie artwork. They're quite simply wonderful! Gloriously structured and evocative pieces of art. I have books and books on the subject, brushing their tattered spines against The Adventures of Tintin on one side and a weighty Dirk Bogarde filmography on the other. The only problem, the small, nano, tiny irk I had, was that it was already Tuesday. The same Tuesday the artwork had to be in. Hmmm. Bugger. Well, if it's late,

it's late. Things are ALWAYS late in this business. So, tomorrow it is. It was going to be a long night but I figured if it was going to be good enough 24 hours made no difference.

Of course, one thing I didn't have were photos of the girls. But the forum is a giving place with treasures to be had (ask my girlfriend. I met her on the internet). In between my boss's frequent visits (he NEVER comes to see me) I downloaded scores of pixelated, low-resolution photos. And by mid-afternoon I'd decided that the obvious and easier route to take was that of Attack of the 50ft Woman. That would be the ticket. Simple, and a great announcement of their stateside arrival. So back again - Google image search. Skyscraper. City. Crowd. Scenes from War of The Worlds, a political demonstration and various skyscrapers from across the world would eventually and seamlessly snuggle together to make one huge rucked doormat for the girls to wipe their feet on.

So, that night armed with tea, toast and the bonhomie of Monday night's TV bubbling in the background, I took to Photoshop and worked my iMac like a dog.

Yes, the first round of concepts were rough around the edges.

Yes the photos didn't quite look right. But there on the screen was something that would work. And how! The band, the label and management loved them. Great news! Off I could go. AND the opportunity to do the whole packaging (not just the front cover). This was going to feed my soul and pimp my portfolio. But with an ever growing Pipettes-Industry contact list in my inbox there was going to be alot of people wanting their say on it and in just over two weeks there would be over 50 variations of the cover. Yes, over 50!!

So, here, displayed below is a truncated, less-bothersome and simplified voyage through the cover art...



Versions 1 & 2

These were the two covers I initially submitted to the band's management. Six hours work there all in all. Cutting out the girls. Building the cityscape (which would have to change. Too many copyright issues there). The composition was straight-forward enough – and as you'll see, didn't really change much at all. You hope people can see through the general roughness of it and get the gist pretty quickly. You have to rely on creative minds at the other end of the email.



The photo of Gwenno is inappropriate. Awful pose and is at such an uncomfortable angle compared to those of Rose and Becki. Quite early on I'd hit on running the text along the bottom like credits on a film poster. These also had white borders and fake folds to give it a 'vintage' feel. The grey and pink cover is more sci-fi whereas the yellow cover reflects the palette from Attack of the 50ft Woman. Becki casually tipping a man out of a captured helicopter was all part of the mood of those 50s B-Movie posters. I'd originally had the idea of some of the crowd holding up banners with "We've had just about enough of sweet" painted on them. But not only did that not make it, the crowd had to go too.

The typography is all wrong for the era too. If the cover was chosen I knew I'd have time to get this right.



Version 3

The real significant change here was to display a more authentic typeface. I'd tracked down some great fonts through freeware at various sites. They had gorgeous names too like Flying Leatherneck, Bomberman, Cramps, Edo, Godzilla, Feast of Flesh etc. How can you refuse fonts like this! Adorn all my artwork from now on! This was the first time the painted 'swoosh' containing the title was used too.

The border was ditched as I felt it wouldn't work in a CD jewel case with a see-through tray. The faux distressing and rips were made more life-like. Some parties hated them. Some like them. But they remained for a few more variations down the line. I was also notified that two bonus tracks would be included so made provisions amongst the tracklisting across the bottom of the cover.



Version 4

This is where opinions on the use of photos became more intense and protracted. If the cover was going to work the right photos of the girls had to be used. Here Gwenno looks empowered but Rose and Becki's long dresses diluted the effect of them striding over a city. The pics were already on file and would have saved the band a lot of money but we all agreed that better photos would have to be found somehow. The previous pics were low-resolution fan shots and tracking down them down could take time and may not necessarily be of the required quality.

Here a rejig of the typography was tried too.



Version 5

By this stage the band were in Tokyo and were able to organise a photoshoot specifically for the cover. Hurrah! But of course each girl had 5 or 6 shots each. I had my opinion on what worked for the cover. The label's marketing team had their opinion on what worked for their market. The girls/band had their opinion on what photo they preferred, and of course all three had to work together. All the photos were great but only one or two of each girl would really work suit the cover. The pics used here of Gwenno and Rose would eventually work their way into the booklet. The monochromatic approach was tried to reflect some posters I found whilst researching the job. The girl's names placed above their heads was also very filmic.

The titles of the bonus tracks had been provided too, so they were slotted in place of the temporary text.



Version 6

This is much the same as the previous version but the palette is deliberately based on the original Invasion of the Body Snatchers poster art. Some parties felt that this was far too strong to the point that it obscured the girls, while others felt it authenticated the vintage B-Movie look.

The girls were still to decide their photos. This was the decision that was one of the last elements of the cover to be decided.



Version 7

Due to the label's love of the "Your Kisses Are Wasted on Me" sleeve they requested a version of this cover in a similar colour (blue). Both covers are heavily influenced by 50s aesthetics but YKAWOM displays the twinkly Doris Day side of the decade compared to the grittier-flavoured album artwork. Despite this, the cover worked quite nicely, especially with the addition of planet and stars in the sky.



Version 8

Back to the Attack of the 50ft Woman palette. Going just about full circle, everyone had settled on this cover. Still the photos had to be chosen and a debate continued as to whether they should be rendered to make them look painted (as from version 6 onwards).



Final Version

And the final, artworked cover. All iTunes and ready to go. The real work for this was creating a new, non-copyrighted cityscape. Being the keeper of stacks of CDs containing Royalty-Free photos I was able to take skyscrapers and buildings from pics from all over the world. I think some of it is Boston, USA and there may even be a bit of Sydney, Australia. You may even see the same building more than once, albeit mirrored. By this time the label had decided on only one helicopter scurrying across the sky. The girls and the label had agreed on the photos too. The painted effect was knocked back by request. In fact the final decision was whether to make the swoosh red with white text or white with red text. Either worked. The label eventually changed the order of the girls' names to reflect the order of them from left to right and not the lyrics from the opening track (which was my original intention). The logo was displayed larger and the whole picture filled the frame more significantly.

So, there you go; "We Are The Pipettes" from beginning to end. Being subjective, no matter if it works or not, design is always up for debate. The thing is, you can't please everyone. Others may prefer earlier versions but the final cover hit the democratic mandate and was ticked by all parties involved.

Whatever you think, no matter what you prefer, go seek out The Pipettes Forum. You can chat about it in there. The hospitality is as cordial as you'd expect from a band who's fans put up the bunting and sweep the carpet everytime a new member introduces themselves.

Now just wait til the matching merchandise reveals itself... Seen it, done it, got the t-shirt!

Sean Coleman 2007
sean.coleman@hotmail.co.uk

In January 2006 The Arctic Monkeys released their debut album, 'Whatever People Say I Am, that's What I'm Not'. The front cover photo, plastered onto advertisement hoardings on train stations across the country, featured a close-up of a man's face smoking a cigarette. A few weeks later, after the album's release, the posters were replaced by an almost identical image, with just one crucial difference. The posters featured exactly the same photo, the same close-up of the same man, but with the cigarette removed. The cigarette in contemporary British society is becoming rather like that of Leon Trotsky at the height of Stalinism: erased from photographic records, disavowed by former associates and supporters, and exiled from public life.



In Defence of Cigarettes

The recent smoking ban in this country has revealed two significant archetypes: on the one hand, you have the incessant complaints filling up newspaper letters pages concerning those few brave souls who continue to smoke at bus stops, in flagrant disregard for the ban, and the deadly second-hand smoke the plaintiff has to suffer as a consequence of their recklessness; on the other, we have this curious neologism - *smirting*, which refers to the practice of simultaneously *smoking* and *flirting*, characteristically in the smoking areas outside pubs and clubs. What these two images betray is that the fundamental attitude of the smoker is one of openness to the other, and necessarily so. What smoker has never had to ask a stranger for a light, a cigarette paper or a smoke? And what smoker can say that this exchange has not led, at least once or twice, to a longer conversation, perhaps even a new friend. The characteristic attitude of the non-smoker, however, is fundamentally one of fear and suspicion of the other, and of the diseases one might catch from them.

The whole argument for the ban in Britain, and all publicity surrounding it were couched in two basic discourses: a biomedical discourse of bodily discipline against decay, and a sexual discourse of appearing attractive to the opposite sex; fresher breath, whiter teeth, more able to appreciate refined food (and thus, a more sophisticated person). This, however, totally misses the properly religious aspect to smoking: "the little pantheon of an open packet of cigarettes" as Leonard Cohen wrote¹. Aside from the numerous examples from ethnography of the use of smoking in ritual, it is important to remember that cigarettes are truly, as the title of a recent book put it, sublime. Like Coca-Cola, cigarettes have little taste, do not make you feel pleasingly woozy, and have no nutritional value, and yet for their very lack of use value, cigarettes are all the more essential, all the more compelling². Cigarettes thus come to act rather like the Lacanian objet petit a or, in the terms of Ernesto Laclau, an 'empty signifier,'³ lacking in all positive content and thus capable, magically, of being filled in by almost any imaginative material by the desiring subject, fulfilling all fantasies.

From the Navajo peace pipe to the Indonesian practice of sharing kreteks with a new acquaintance, smoking has been a symbol of peace and friendship in cultures all over the world for many hundred years. It seems perversely appropriate that their final removal from public life should be enacted by such war mongers as Tony Blair's cabinet.

monster bobby

The opinions expressed above are solely the opinions of Monster Bobby, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the band as a whole.

Pipettes on Tour

Becki wrote this article for Decembers F*@K! Magazine.

The question always remains as exactly where to start on a tour diary; when days off include industrial sites in Medford or Salina, Kansas; it wouldn't be interesting to cover absolutely every day. So instead I thought it would be more fun to give you our highlights, and as with most things Pipettes, there are quite a few!

We girls began our tour shooting a video for the Japan release of 'Because it's not Love' in L.A, which was a very strange experience. We'd never had the chance to shoot a high budget video, and yet here we were stood in the middle of Universal Studios (oh yes, the park) wondering what the bacon smell engulfing us was. Upon further exploration Gwenno discovered that in fact the bacon smell was disgustingly fake and pumped out



to hypnotise passers by into thinking they were hungry.

Pavlov would have been proud, but sadly we weren't. Bacon was exactly what we needed. By the end of the day we were stood on 'Europe' street filming the last shots in front of paying visitors, it was pretty surreal, but I had other things on my mind; notably bacon - damn Universal Studios!



Luckily a reunion with the boys saved us from strange scenarios stood inside big polka dotted boxes (but not bacon), as the tour finally got underway. We moved on to San Francisco and hooked up with our new favourite friend Keith Boadwee. Boadwee was introduced to us through Ben Lee, who we'd had a great time partying with, but boy did we have a contender for Party Queen. And thus begun an onslaught of partying on our bus. This included our boys The Booze, Jimmy Eat World (I don't think I've ever seen Jon, Seb and Jason so happy), and a limbo competition



1 Cohen, L. 'The Cigarette Issue' in The Book of Longing.
2 cf. Zizek, S. The Fragile Absolute or Why The Christian Legacy is Worth Fighting For.
3 Laclau, E. Emancipation(s).

with our support band Nicole Atkins and The Sea, during which I somehow managed to cut open my nose. I guess I always thought I was more limber.



I don't want to give the false impression that we're some sort of party all night band, because we're not. We turned into geeks this tour. Every morning I would fall out of my bunk, stagger into our lounge to see various members of band and crew hidden behind their MacBooks. We liked to call this exceptionally sociable time 'MacClub'. This then

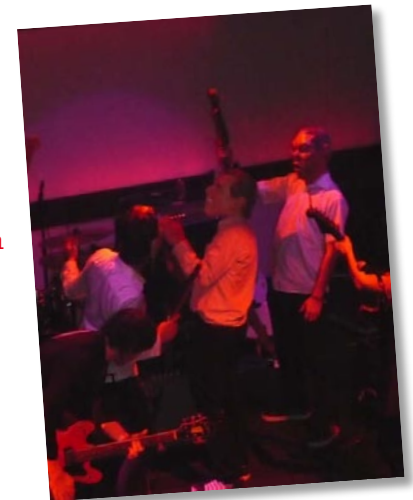
turned bad after we all became obsessed with Scrabulous on Facebook. There were many hours where the only thing uttered to each other was "Your turn!" although the competitive nature of us all flourished with one band member (I name no names) refusing to move against me because at that point in the game he was winning. Slightly more interestingly addictive was our Twin Peaks watching. I firmly believe that every band, on every tour, becomes obsessed with various different things and Twin Peaks is something to become obsessed with. I mean, who doesn't love Agent Cooper?! And black coffee? And the log lady? And Audrey Horn?!

Anyway back to the tour. We had some amazing shows. Eugene, OR was a complete surprise, which is always great when you're playing somewhere you haven't played before. New York was totally awesome. We decided to add some audience participation before 'Pull Shapes' and New York was the trial run. I don't think I've seen the seven of us smile as much as we smiled then; the whole venue full of people doing the dance moves to the first verse! And Montreal was overwhelmingly brilliant. However, even that was overshadowed by our first gig in Boston. We agreed to play a student fashion show. There was a runway attached to the end of the stage which we invited people to dance on, only to realise that then meant we were going to have our microphones smashed into our teeth throughout the set. As funny as that was, during 'Dirty Mind' smoke started pummelling out from behind us.



Momentarily I thought it was a smoke machine that had been turned on, until I took a breath. It was so toxic I jumped off stage to see a monitor behind Jason on fire. Ever the professionals, Jason and Rose carried on playing where the rest of us stopped, until a bouncer started evacuating us. Within five minutes two fire engines, containing about fifteen firemen, had turned up. It was a hilarious sight seeing these men try and figure out what to do whilst we laughed and took pictures. The next day we realised this event had been written about in a few papers and online zines. Queue stupid headlines involving the obvious puns. Yes, it appears we were too hot for Boston!

The final highlight of the tour came on the last night with Nicole Atkins. Jon, Seb and Jason thought it would be hilarious if they dressed up wearing Arnold Schwarzenegger, Colin Powell and George Bush masks to bombard the stage and shoot at the band with fake guns. Take it as you will. The rest of us couldn't stop laughing, it was probably the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen. But, I guess you probably had to be there.



So there it is, another Pipettes tour with only a few minor scrapes. A few other things to include that occurred: breakfast finding (mmm... bacon and eggs), avoiding bad food (and subsequently eating loads of Thai), playing lots of pool, meeting fantastic bands such as The Nouvellas, dancing on the bar in The Walnut Room in Denver (totally Footloose), listening to loads of Turkish psyche and Brazillian music that the Monster found, and finally running from our gig in Cleveland directly into Sharon Jones and The Dap Kins (who were playing next door), I wish every gig could end that way as they were knock yourself out amazing.

Look out America, we'll be back soon.

RiotBecki and The Pipettes.

the Pipettes



ALBUM OUT NOW