

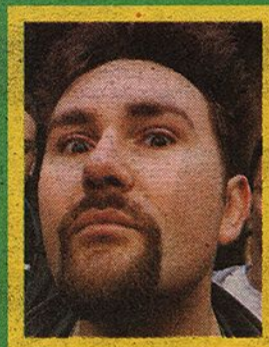
**FREE!** Giant double-sided poster of **BRETT** from **SUEDE**



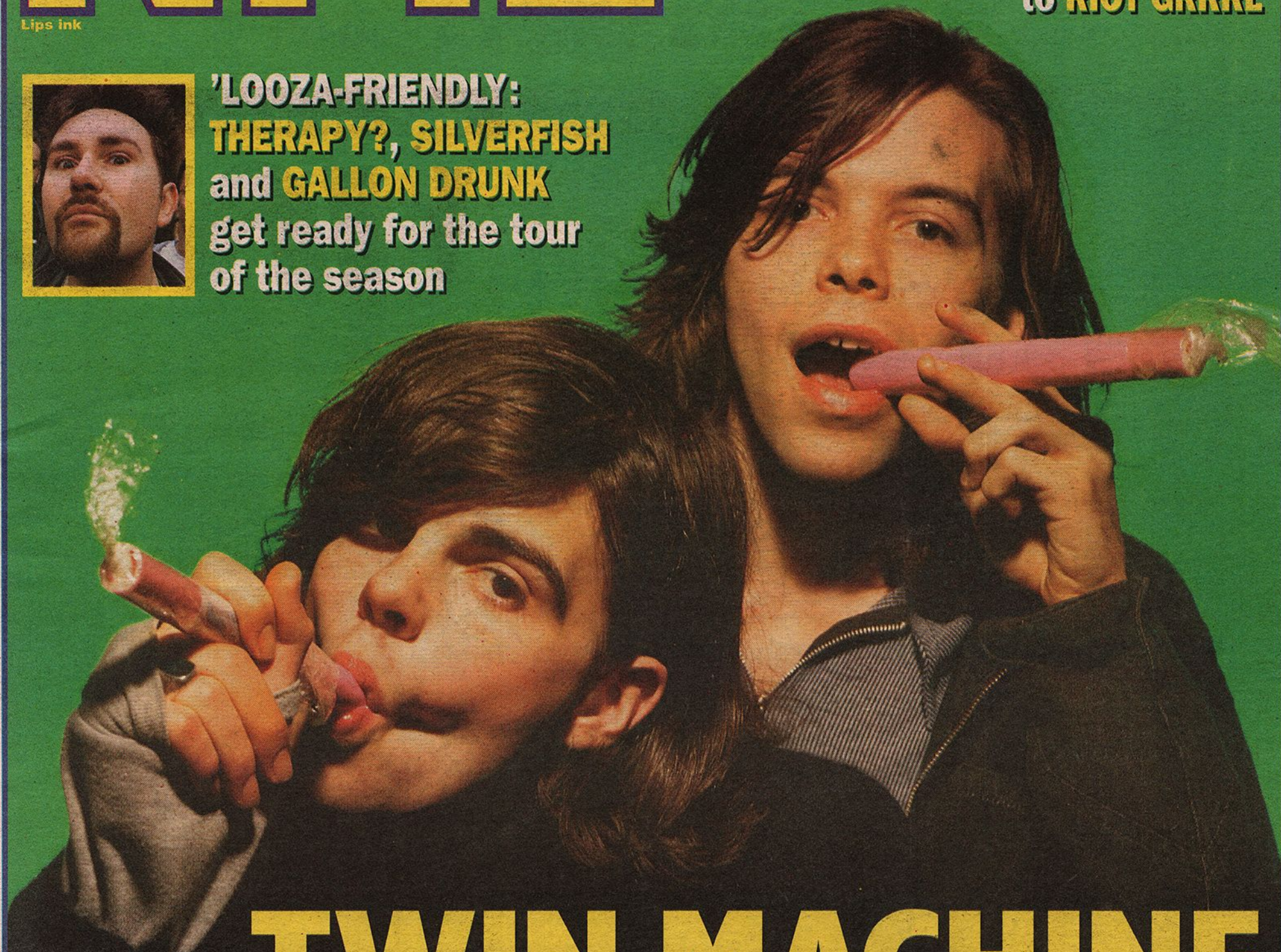
# NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS NME

Lips ink

**THE HUGGY BEAR NECESSITIES:**  
NME's definitive guide  
to **RIOT GRRRL**



**'LOOZA-FRIENDLY:**  
**THERAPY?, SILVERFISH**  
and **GALLON DRUNK**  
get ready for the tour  
of the season



# TWIN MACHINE

**Let's rock! RIDE and THE CHARLATANS trade licks**

**BELLY ★ 808 STATE ★ DINOSAUR JR ★ ST ETIENNE ★ NICOLAS CAGE**  
**DARLING BUDS OF MAY ★ FRANK BLACK ★ BETTIE SERVEERT ★ COME**  
**JIM ROSE ★ KITTENBIRDS ★ BOOMA ★ FRETBLANKET ★ STEELY DAN**  
**CHARLES & EDDIE ★ AND PRINCE IN THE CLASSIC NME INTERVIEW**



Germany Dm 5.00 Spain Psa 250

Rock icons Tim Burgess and Mark Gardener suck up to Steve Double

**DA LENCH MOB**  
FREEDOM GOT AN A.K.  
CD 12"  
Live on THE WORD March 5th  
In the shops March 8th

**GIGOLO AUNTS:** Gun (Fire) four melody-packed tracks from the hotly tipped Bostonians who include a member of Velvet Crush in their line-up. Their UK live debut last month started punters when the encored with a cover of The Vapours' 'Turning Japanese'. The single is out on Monday

**FREAKS REALISTIC**  
ALL YOU WANT  
ALL YOU NEED!

**HYPERHEAD**  
metaphasia  
Released 8.3.93



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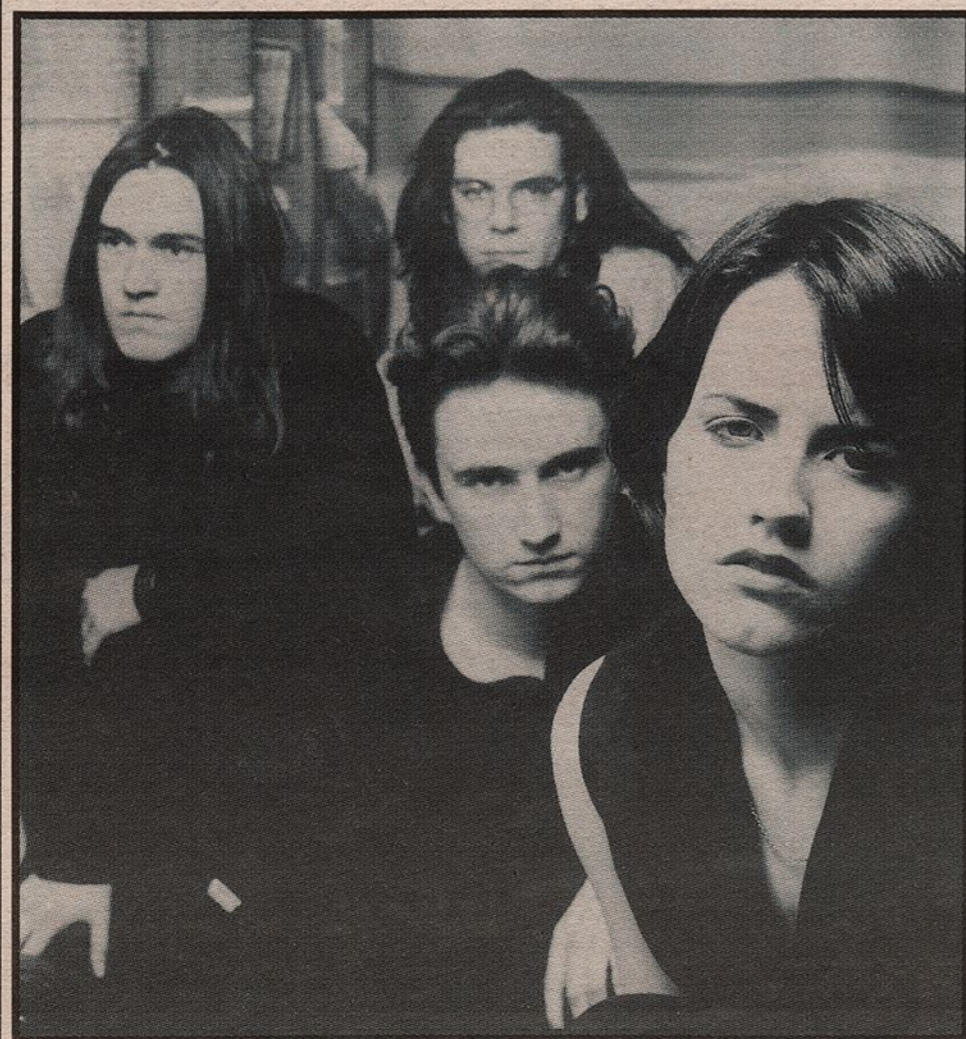
**45s** **ALICE IN CHAINS:** Them Bones (Columbia) follow up to the Seattle boys' Top 20 smash 'Would?' backed with the previously unreleased 'We Die Young' on all formats - out Monday ● **ANIMALS THAT SWIM:** Roy (Bleachheads In Space) seven-inch only single on the London outfit's own label - out now ● **THE BEATNIX/NEIL PEPPER:** Stairway To Heaven (Vertigo) two more versions of the Led Zep track from Beatles and Presley imitators - out now ● **BLOOD SAUSAGE:** Touching You In Ways That Don't Feel Comfortable (Willja) aggravated poetry meets leftfield pop on four-track seven-inch EP from the label which brought you Huggy Bear and Cornershop - out now ● **DREAMSCAPE:** Cradle EP (La-di-da) haunting melodic pop from the young Bristol outfit on Brighton's La-di-da label - out now ● **FLOWERDRUM:** World Turned Upside Down (Wac) second single from EMF-related Forest Of Dean band with Jam producer Vic Coppersmith-Heaven at the controls - out now ● **THE GRID:** Crystal Clear (Virgin) cut from the dance supremes' '456' LP, the 12" contains two Justin Robertson mixes - out now ● **JAMIROQUAI:** Too Young To Die (Orenda)

funky cut with jazzy instrumentation from fast-rising stars of the dance world - out now ● **KEROSENE:** Worthless (east west) West Didsbury quintet follow their 'Collision EP' with a new single, backed with a cover of the Pet Shop Boys' 'Heart' - out now ● **LIQUID:** Time To Get Up EP (XL) ravers turned progressive house outfit follow their 'Future Music' EP - out Monday ● **MATRIX:** Organ Grinder (First Love) first in a series of anti-packaging limited edition white label vinyl releases from the dance label - out Monday ● **MERCURY REV:** The Hum Is Coming From Her/So There (Beggars Banquet) the Revs try their hand at jazz and a bit of orchestral backing on an experimental limited edition ten-inch - out now ● **MOLLY HALF HEAD:** Taste Of You (Playtime) long awaited debut single from Manchester's brightest hopes on CD, ten-inch and limited edition seven-inch available for 99p on production of a dole card - out Monday ● **MOUNT RUSHMORE:** The Vibe (That's Flowing) (Ore) white label club success gets a full release to launch new Beggars Banquet spin-off label Ore - out Monday ● **BRYAN POWELL:** It's Alright (Talkin' Loud) soulful debut release blending gospel roots with jacking grooves - out now ● **PREFAB**

**SPROUT:** I Remember That (Columbia) song originally from 1988's 'From Langley Park To Memphis', re-released to plug the greatest hits package 'Life Full Of Surprises' - out now ● **MAXI PRIEST:** One More Chance (Ten) follow up to the enduring reggae figure's Top 30 collaboration with Apache Indian on 'Fe Real' - out Monday ● **SNOW:** Informer (east west) hip-hop guru MC Shan-produced US hit from the Canadian born reggae man - out now ● **STRANGE NATURE:** Incantation Man (Spider) own label single release for female fronted rock act - out now ● **THREE AND A HALF MINUTES:** Bled Me Dry (Scared Hiltless) pop melodies meet atmosphere and gloomy aggression on the second single from acclaimed guitar-led indie newcomers - out Monday ● **TOM WAITS:** Heartattack & Vine (Asylum) 13-year-old Waits classic re-released after being plundered by Levi's for their latest ad - out now ● **THE WISHLANTS:** Circus Rain EP (China) three-track debut vinyl outing for the Northampton four-piece - out now ● **XYMOX:** Reaching Out (Zok) former 4AD band Clan Of Xymox, since turned dance act, release their first single on their new label - out Monday

**LPS** **DEACON BLUE:** Whatever You Say, Say Nothing (Columbia) Perfecto duo Steve Osborne and Paul Oakenfold give the Scottish chart band a cred injection by producing their latest LP which includes the hits 'Your Town' and 'Will We Be Lovers?' - out now ● **FIREHOSE:** Mr Machinery Operator (Columbia) California band formed by former Minutemen Mike Watt and George Hurley collaborate with Dinosaur Jr's J Mascis, who also produced this LP - out Monday ● **HEAVEN 17:** Higher & Higher (Virgin) greatest hits package from the initial chart including 'Temptation' and 'We Don't Need This' Fascist Groove Thang' - out Monday ● **KAM:** Neva Again (Street Knowledge) Ice Cube-produced debut album from the LA rapper, the second release on Cube's label which also has Da Lench Mob on its roster - out now ● **LENNY KRAVITZ:** Are You Gonna Go My Way (Virgin) Kravitz reaches out musically on his third album, with blues guitar augmenting the usual compliment of funky pop - out now ● **LOOKING FOR ADAM:** Bombshell Marie (Abstract) mid-price debut CD-only album from the Hull mainstream popsters, includes their acclaimed singles 'Sal Paradise' and 'The Grass Won't Grow Till' - out Monday ● **NAKED TRUTH:** Fight (Soho Square) first full-length LP for Atlanta based rock-jazzcore outfit, including the NME/SQW 'Black' - out now ● **THE NECTARINE NO. 9:** A Sea With Three Stars (Postcard) influential maverick songwriter Davey Henderson's latest outing, who boasts that it contains no singles, no songs you will have heard of and no remixes - out now ● **THE SCREAMING JETS:** Tears Of Thought (Roar) no holds barred punk-boogie rock from Aussie outfit who cover The Birthday Party's 'Shivers' on the LP - out now ● **STEREOLAB:** The Group Played Space Age Batchelor Pad Music (Too Pure) more madcap guitar musing from the Brighton-based combo - out now ● **THOUSAND YARD STARE:** Fair To Middling (Stiffed Aardvark) budget-priced compilation of tracks from the first three EPs, including early live 'No Score After Extra Time' - out now ● **VARIOUS:** Goosebumps (Org) limited edition 17-track cassette-only compilation from the makers of excellent fanzine *The Organ* featuring The Wisplants, Fretblanket, Poisoned Elektrik Head, Mint 400, Kerosene and more, available for £2.50 from PO Box 790, London E17 5RF - our now ● **VARIOUS:** Malcolm X - The Soundtrack (Columbia) 26 tracks composed by jazzman and Spike Lee collaborator Terence Blanchard, featuring Branford Marsalis - out now ● **VARIOUS:** Mega Dance (EMI) Stereo MC's, The Prodigy, Saint Etienne, The Grid and Arrested Development meet Sister Sledge, West End and 2 Unlimited on 19-track chart fodder special - out now ● **VARIOUS:** Stairways To Heaven (Vertigo) 22 different interpretations of the Led Zep classic by the likes of the Australian Doors, Vegemite Reggae, The Rock Lobsters and, of course, our Roll - out now ● **VARIOUS:** Til Def Do Us Part (Def American) compilation reflecting the musical range of Rubin's label from Sir Mix A-Lot to Slayer - out now.

**THE CRANBERRIES:** Everybody Else Is Doing It So Why Can't We? (Island) the singles 'Linger' and 'Dreams' are among the 12 tracks on the debut LP from the acclaimed Limerick four-piece - out now



**ANATHEMA,** supercharged doom metal merchants from Liverpool, warm up for European dates supporting Bolt Thrower at London Tufnell Park The Dome on March 20.

**JOAN BAEZ,** legendary folk singer, makes a rare public performance at London Camden Jongleurs Club tonight (Wednesday).

**CHUMBAWAMBA,** enduring figures of the political pop scene, have rearranged their UK tour. They now play Barnstable Club Chaos tonight (Wednesday), Exeter Cavern Club (March 4&5), Stoke Newington (10), Brighton Pavilion (11), Brentwood Anglia University (12), Truro City Hall (13), Derby Warehouse (14), Keswick Labour Club (19), Wolverhampton University (20), Milton Keynes Woughton Centre (21), Southampton Joiners Arms (22), Dudley JB's (26), Guildford Merristwood College (30), Reading Trade Union Club (31), York Fibbers (April 2) and Peterborough Shamrock (3).

**THE CRANBERRIES,** Irish foursome whose debut album 'Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?' is out this week, follow their Belly support dates with shows at Coventry General Wolfe (April 2), Bedford Esquire's (3) and London Astoria with American Music Club (4).

**DAISY CHAINSAW** have confirmed a one-off appearance at the Feet First club at London Camden Palace on March 9.

**DEACON BLUE** have added an extra date to their 'In Your Town' tour after unprecedented ticket demand for their Glasgow shows; they now play Glasgow Barrowlands on April 4.

**DOA,** Canadian political hardcore exponents visit the UK to promote their Tom Jones-trashing single 'It's Not Unusual But It's Ugly', taking in London Clapham Grand (March 19), Brighton Pavilion (20), Leicester Princess Charlotte (21), Newport TJ's with Therapy? (22), Derby Warehouse (23), Leeds University (24), Cambridge Boat Race (25), Edinburgh Venue (27) and Newcastle Riverside (28).

**DR PHIBES AND THE HOUSE OF WAX EQUATIONS** precede their 'Deadpan Control Freak' 45 with a short tour taking in Leicester Princess Charlotte tonight (Wednesday), Brighton Richmond (March 4) and Cardiff University (5).

**ENERGY ORCHARD,** Irish pop rockers, have announced three London dates at Clapham Grand (March 6), Tufnell Park The Dome (17) and Harlesden Mean Fiddler (April 23).

**THE FAT LADY SINGS,** Irish acoustic-tinged quartet, precede the release of their forthcoming LP 'Johnson' with dates at Sussex University tonight (Wednesday), Loughborough University (March 4), Bradford University (5), Manchester University (9), Newcastle Riverside (11), Colchester University (12), Warwick University (13), Windsor Old Trout (16), Kingston University (17), Leicester Princess Charlotte (18), London Harlesden Mean Fiddler (19) and Bath Moles Club (20).

**FLOWERDRUM,** indiepop outfit from the wilds of Gloucestershire boasting the brother of EMF's Derry in their ranks, play gigs at Cinderford Dean Centre (March 5), St Albans Marlborough Club (11), Leeds University (12), Birmingham Pen & Wig (17), Reading University (18), Blackwood Institute (21), Bristol Fleece & Firkin (26), London Powerhaus (April 1), Gloucester Guildhall (2) and Hereford Entertainers (9).

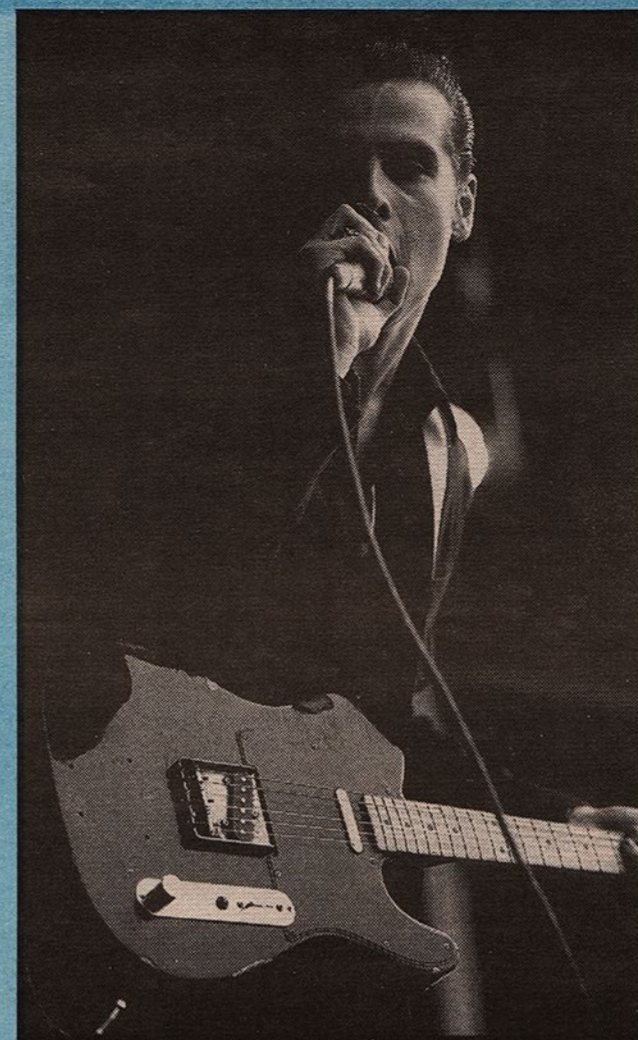
**GHOST OF AN AMERICAN AIRMAN** materialise for a couple of dates to celebrate the release of their 'Home' single, the Belfast band play Aberdeen Cafe Drummond (March 4) and Belfast Linneligh Club (9).

**BUDDY GUY** tours the UK and Ireland with his band in May. The respected blues guitarist plays Birmingham Town Hall (May 22), Edinburgh Usher Hall (23), Manchester Apollo (24), London Hammersmith Apollo (24 & 25), and Dublin Stadium (26).

**BOO HEWERDINE,** former Bible vocalist, joins **EDDI READER** and **CLIVE GREGSON** on a triple singer-songwriter bill for gigs at Manchester Royal Northern College Of Music tonight (Wednesday), London Queen Elizabeth Hall (March 5), Nottingham Old Vic (10), Warwick Arts Centre (13), Glasgow Mayfair (14), Edinburgh Queens Hall (15), Leeds Irish Centre (18) and Cambridge Corn Exchange (21).

**HYPERHEAD,** featuring former Gaye Biker On Acid Mary Mary, head out to promote their 'Metaphasia' LP at Newcastle Riverside (March 16), Aberdeen Cafe Drummond (17), Glasgow Cathouse (18), Edinburgh Cathouse (18), York Fibbers (20), Windsor Old Trout (22), Derby Warehouse (24), Leicester Princess Charlotte (25) and Bath Moles (27).

**KRUNCH,** London-based all-female group featuring former Lunachicks drummer Becky Wreck, play London Marquee tonight (Wednesday), Whitley New Inn Stocks (March 5) and London Borderline (9).



**GALLON DRUNK,** who release their debut LP 'From The Heart Of Town' this week follow their Bigmoneyoza dates with Silverfish and Therapy? with their own headlining shows. Leicester's political noise pop outfit **CORNERSHOP** support on the tour, which takes in Brighton Pavilion (March 28), Southampton Joiners Arms (29), Coventry Tic Toc (30), Stoke Newington (31), Derby Warehouse (April 1), Bradford Queens Hall (2) and Harlow Square (3).

**WENDY MATTHEWS,** top Australian solo artist, supports her debut UK single 'The Day You Went Away' with a one-off appearance at London Camden Jazz Cafe on March 10.

**MOTHER EARTH** return from European dates to play their most extensive UK tour yet with dates at Preston Lord Byrons (March 5), Liverpool Templer 2 (6), Swansea University Mandela Bar (9), Portsmouth Gaiety (10), Bournemouth Hothouse (11), Stoke On Trent (12), Newcastle Riverside (13), Hull Blue Lamp (14), London Town & Country Club 2 (16), Plymouth University (17), Cardiff Terminal 396 (18), Royston Assembly Hall (19), Derby Warehouse (20), Sheffield Leadmill (21), Kingston University Penryn Road Bar (24), Cambridge Junction (25), Windsor Old Trout (26), Luton University (27) and Norwich Arts Centre (April 3).

**NAKED TRUTH,** acclaimed Atlanta band who fuse metal with jazz and funk, open for Atom Seed at Corby Festival Hall (March 7), Nottingham Rock City (9), Swansea Mothers (10), Buckley Tivoli (11), Liverpool Crazy House (12) and Birkenhead Stairways (13) and then headline London Borderline (15).

**NEW MODEL ARMY** kick off a world tour to support their 'Love Of Hopeless Causes' album with UK dates at Birmingham Hummingbird (April 21), Newcastle Riverside (22), Glasgow Barrowlands (23), Leeds Town & Country Club (24), Leicester De Montfort Hall (26), Cambridge Corn Exchange (27), Bristol Rainbow Club (29), Bournemouth Tregonwell Hall (30), Liverpool Royal Court (May 1), Manchester Academy (2) and London Kilburn National Ballroom (5).

**NORTHSIDE,** currently negotiating a new deal in the wake of the Factory collapse, play a one-off show at London Tufnell Park The Dome on March 12.

**PAUL OAKENFOLD, MIKE PICKERING** and **XPANSIONS** join a host of A&M/PM acts and other DJs for the label's 'Spring Collection' tour at Liverpool 051 (March 6), Leeds Warehouse (18), Newcastle Scirocco (19), Middlesbrough Arena (20), Leeds Warehouse (25), London Wandsworth Holywoods (26), Romford Holywoods (April 2), Bournemouth Venue (11), Mansfield Renaissance (17), Southampton Weekender (25) and Birmingham Fische (May 1).

**BRYAN POWELL** plays three London PAs to plug his 45 'It's Alright'. The recent Talkin' Loud signing appears at Hammersmith Palais tonight (Wednesday), Starlight Club Mutiny (March 6) and Camden Palace (11).

**PRAM,** Birmingham band signed to indie label Too Pure, play headline dates at London Kenish Town Bull & Gate (March 5) and London Hampstead White Horse (7) before joining The Hair And Skin Trading Company for gigs at Cambridge Boat Race (18), Coventry General Wolfe (19), Taunton Four All's (20), Leeds Duchess Of York (23), Oxford Jericho Tavern (24), Edinburgh Venue (26), and Hull Adelphi (27).

**RADIOHEAD,** currently nearing the end of their own 'Pablo Honey' tour support Belly at London Town & Country Club on March 14.

**ROCKINGBIRDS,** who enjoyed widespread acclaim last year, showcase new material at their first date of '93 at London Harlesden Mean Fiddler on March 12.

**RUNRIG,** Scotland's most popular homegrown act but relative unknowns south of the border, headline a Scottish Fleadh Festival at Glasgow Green on June 5; supporting acts will be announced soon.

**SCRASH,** new recruits to the Southbridge mafia who supported Pop Will Eat Itself and Meat Beat Manifesto on their last tour, play London Islington Powerhaus with Senser (March 10) and Dudley JB's (12).

**SHARKBOY,** Bristol-based spooky-indie band, follow up dates supporting Suede with two shows opening for The Auteurs at Brighton Richmond (March 25) and London Camden Underworld (26).

**SKATENIGS,** Alternative Tentacles-signed skatecore band play a one-off UK show at London Camden Underworld on March 19.

**ROB STRONG** and his band, featuring several members of The Commitments, play a full UK tour visiting Lincoln Ritz Theatre (March 4), Wentworth Leisure Centre (6), Glasgow Pavilion (7), High Wycombe Swan (9), Ealing Town Hall (10), Newmarket Cabaret Club (12), Brentwood Centre (13), Hastings White Rock Theatre (14), Leicester De Montfort Hall (15), Sunderland Empire Theatre (17), York Opera House (18), Skegness Butlins (19&20), Margate Winter Gardens (24), Bristol Rainbow (25), Minehead Butlins (26&27), Swindon Links (31), Maidstone Corn Exchange (April 1) and Croydon Fairfield Hall (2).

**SULTANS OF PING FC** have rescheduled their cancelled Cardiff show and added two more appearances to their 'Casual Sex In The Cineplex Tour'; the Cork nutters play London Piccadilly Tower Records at 1pm (March 5), Hatfield Forum (6) and Cardiff University (7).

**THE TANSADS,** Wigan Celtic-crusties, headline London Borderline on March 11 before joining Stiff Little Fingers at Leeds Polytechnic (15), Newcastle Mayfair (16), Glasgow Barrowlands (17), Manchester Academy (18) and Bristol University (19).

**THOUSAND YARD STARE,** who have just finished work on their second studio album with ex-Smiths producer Stephen Street, play a 'Putting Our House In Order' charity show with **VOICE OF THE BEEHIVE** and **AIRHEAD** at London ULU on March 16.

**TRASH CAN SINATRAS** preview new material at their first live shows for two and a half years at Cambridge Queens College (March 5) and London Borderline with Kinky Machine (6).

**THE WISHLANTS** round off their current UK outing with a headline gig at Bedford Esquire's on March 27.

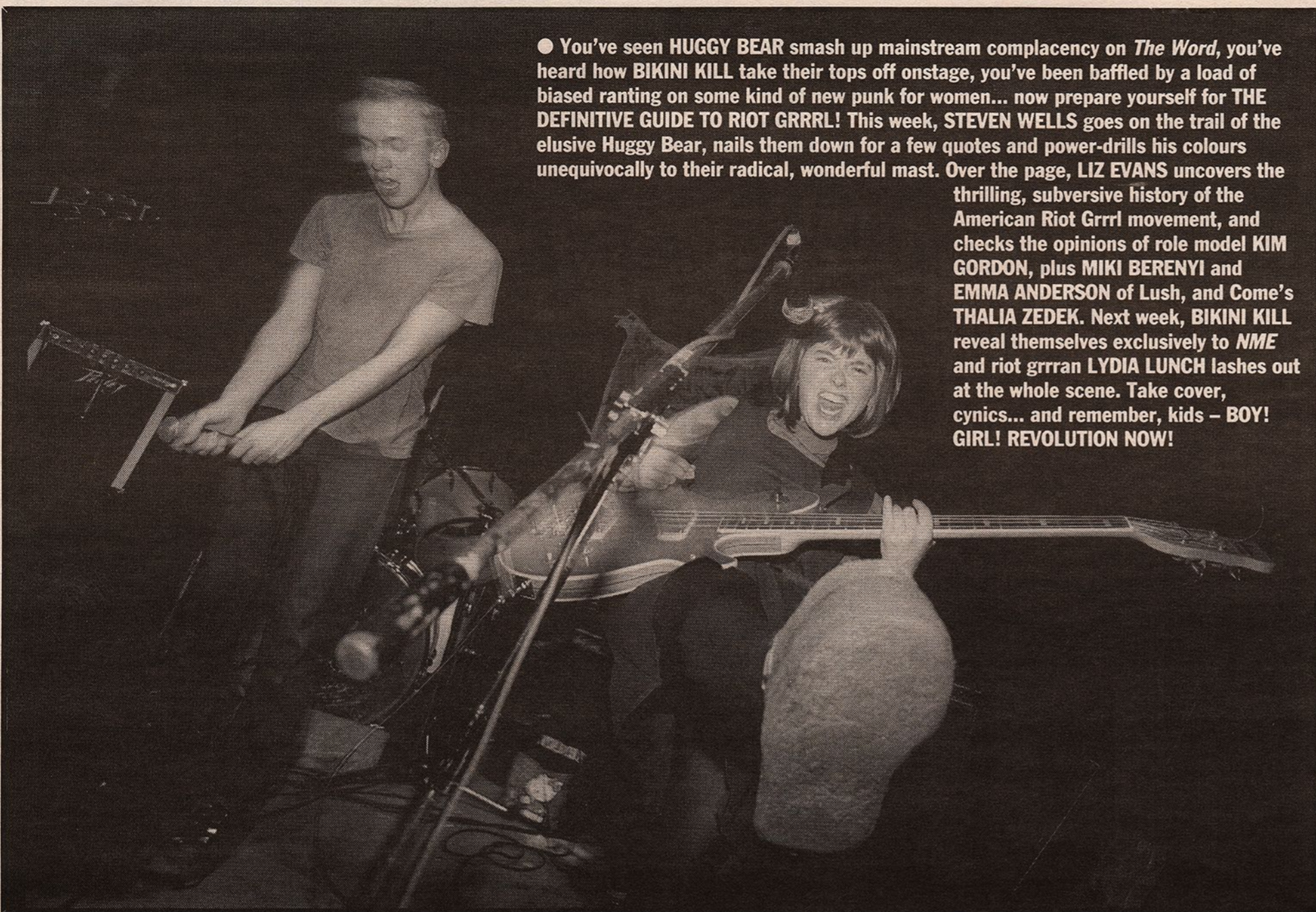
**WIZARDS OF TWIDDLY** take their jazz-punk crossover sound to Coventry General Wolfe (March 6), Liverpool Haigh (25), Manchester Royston Assembly (27) and London Brentford Waterman's Arts Centre (April 10).



**ULTRAMARINE** headline this month's Club Dog all-nighter at London Holloway Road The Rocket on March 26. Eat Static, NME's own Sherman At The Controls and Fruit Salad Lights now are among the other attractions.

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PICTURE: ROGER SARGENT

● You've seen HUGGY BEAR smash up mainstream complacency on *The Word*, you've heard how BIKINI KILL take their tops off onstage, you've been baffled by a load of biased ranting on some kind of new punk for women... now prepare yourself for THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO RIOT GRRRL! This week, STEVEN WELLS goes on the trail of the elusive Huggy Bear, nails them down for a few quotes and power-drills his colours unequivocally to their radical, wonderful mast. Over the page, LIZ EVANS uncovers the thrilling, subversive history of the American Riot Grrrl movement, and checks the opinions of role model KIM GORDON, plus MIKI BERENYI and EMMA ANDERSON of Lush, and Come's THALIA ZEDEK. Next week, BIKINI KILL reveal themselves exclusively to *NME* and riot grrrran LYDIA LUNCH lashes out at the whole scene. Take cover, cynics... and remember, kids – BOY! GIRL! REVOLUTION NOW!

# READY, TEDDY, GO!

The following are advised that they should not read this article:

Cynics, baby-boomers, transpotters, musos, racists, sexist, consumers, record collectors, the culturally conservative, the sad, the generationally patronising, the corporate, the compromised, the nostalgic, the blinkered, the myopic, the BORING.

This is bigger than Riot Grrrl. Huggy Bear's performance of 'Her Jazz' on *The Word* (that sordid morgue of mock youth culture) was like watching an angry fist punch through a blanket of warm, festering shit. I was grinning like an idiot, ringing up friends who I knew mainlined on energy like this – "Did you see?" – and then the programme exploded.

After a Katie Puckrik interview with a couple of LA Silicone Valley Dolls, we cut back to Terry Christian pinned to the couch by a torrent of furious female voices impolitely pointing out that the programme that loves to boast of its 'dangerous' mission – panicked. Bouncers steamed in and dragged angry, shouting young women out of the studio. After the adverts, Terry Christian tried to pretend that

everything was back to normal. Normality is *The Word's* creed – it holds that all anybody really wants to be is a dumb consumer of mind-numbing crap. 'Tabloid TV'. It defines 'danger' as lame, clumsy, laddish sexual innuendo, the odd 'f---' and a freakshow man sticking a needle through his neck.

That a pop band and their followers should go berserk just because the programme is degrading, insulting, woman-hating, dumb, patronising crap took *The Word's* tiny, facile hivemind by total surprise. A dash of real anger, of real danger, blew all their circuits. It is possible for *The Word* and Huggy Bear to exist in the same world, but only as the deadliest enemies.

"Hmmm, yeah!" says Jo Huggy Bear. "That sounds like our kind of relationship!" A Xeroxed Huggy leaflet rages: "Queer kid punk rockers give off organised and tactical aura known as Lad Repellent... remember this as you male bond in your hardcore scrum..." This is much bigger than Riot Grrrl. This is war.

**BUT WHICH** side is *NME* on? I phoned up Jo Huggy and pleaded for an interview. "We have a million reasons for not doing it," she told me, "the main one being that if we did we'd just be another band selling out yet another principle. Let's talk," she said. We talked for hours on the phone that week. In my other ear, people were force-feeding me rumours and scandal. The word 'buzz' is hardly adequate for the excitement, denier and gossip that this band generate. Word was that a woman at the TV studio had her

face bitten by a Huggy fan. Word was that *NME* photographer Roger Sargent, working at a Brighton Huggy gig, was assaulted and threatened by male Huggy fans who later tried to take his camera bag, and that Nicky the singer tried to kick him in the face.

The two incidents both happened but are unrelated, the band denying any knowledge of the assault. It's all grist to the mill for the band that bites the hand that would desperately like to stroke them. On Thursday I collapsed with near fatal food poisoning. *NME* phoned to tell me of letters they'd received with a Sussex postmark accusing me of paedophilia.

In a dehydrated, fevered and sweat-drenched delirium, I began to concoct a conspiracy theory. On Friday, Jo told me that Blood Sausage, Huggy Bear's mad poetry alter ego were playing a lunchtime date at the Covent Garden Rough Trade shop and, yes, the band would meet me.

"You won't hit me, will you?" I asked, in all seriousness. "Don't be silly," said Jo, "we're not like that..."

The British recording industry is rotting from the head down. There has never been a greater need for an alternative. What alternative? The word 'indie' – once a term with political/ideological connotations, once a term which reeked of rebellion – is now synonymous with ideology-free, inferior, tame pop. The stench of the anti-erotic macho/apathetic say-nothing southern mumbler still lingers in the air like cheap, nauseating aftershave. We don't need any

more 'boyrock' bands, we really don't. "The UK is sick cool empirical powerful only is dog memory... sad old Boyrock f---ing Boyrock all of it stop the rot..." – Sleeve notes for 'Whores, Black Radicals And Pirates'

**WHEN BANDS** like Huggy Bear (and there are lots of bands like Huggy Bear and there will be a lot more bands like Huggy Bear) burst amongst us, spewing attitude and hatred and fannies and idealism, a chorus of thirtysomething hacks witter "HEARD IT ALL BEFORE! THEY WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING! THE MUSIC'S AWFUL! THEY CAN'T PLAY THEIR INSTRUMENTS! THEY'RE NAIVE!" Does it sound familiar? Ask yourself – where is the fire, the passion, the contention, the controversy, the snottiness, the balls, the ideas, the naivety, the anger? Where is everything that makes roots pop exciting compared to, say, juggling? Blood Sausage are a demonic mess, the gig is dominated by beer-swilling Jo's Lizzy Borden (the child axe-murderer, not the poodle rock band) stare and laconic base-playing. Again, I am grinning like an idiot.

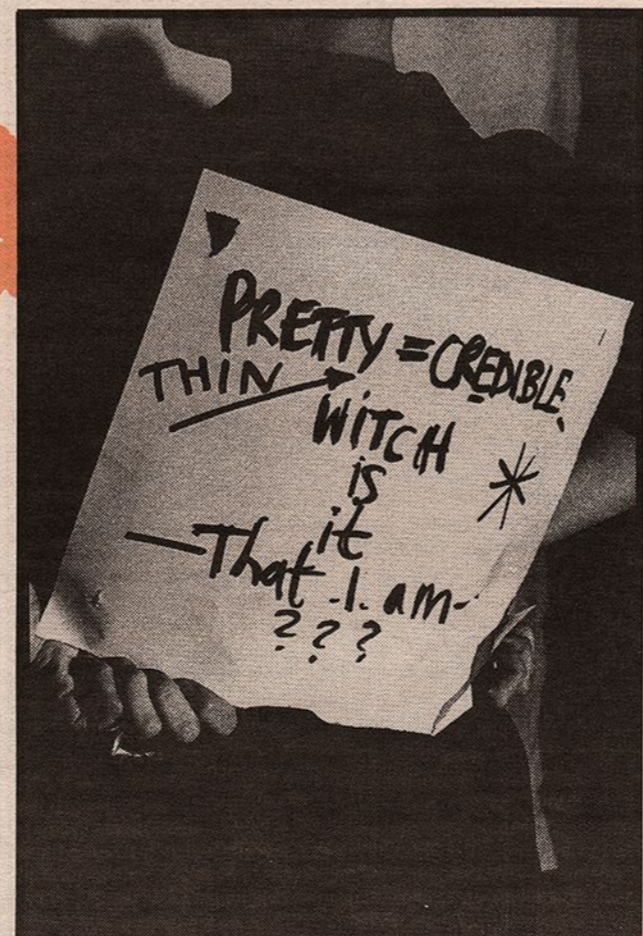
On the way out I see Karen, the Huggy drummer. "See you at 3.30, then?" "What? Who are you?" "Um, didn't we speak outside just now?"

"Yeah, but who are you? I don't know what the f--- is going on!" Huggy Bear, minus co-singer/writer Chris, have arranged to meet in a pub with a publisher and some boys who

want to make a video. Huggy Bear have got strong ideas about the video, they have strong ideas about everything. They are here to check us out – the suitors, those who have seen something glorious in Huggy Bear and want to contribute something to it – or suck something out of it. On the phone, Jo says Huggy Bear are worried about this whole thing being jumped on by

the media and distorted. She's got a point. Did you see the "R-Oxford Rules OK!" article on 'grunge' in *The News Of The World*?

"Are you faking it? Look at it this way... you're either a New Soul Kid or you ain't. You're a Skinbag if you ain't a New Soul Star. If you're a Skinbag, well, you can have



PICTURE: VALERIE PHILLIPS

anything written on you. A sell-by date. A Bar Code. 'They' can carve that Indie Top 20 onto your bland brow for life!! Look, DON'T LET THEM MANUFACTURE A T-SHIRT FROM YOUR DREAMS. The marketing devil is tapping his foot – however begrudgingly – to your pulse..." – From *Huggy Nation 3*

**THE HUGGY** Bear ideology is dynamic and contradictory. One of the biggest contradictions lies between their essentially situationist and populist 'art terrorist' instincts (they talk of smoke bombs and gate-crashing live TV shows) and their need to be and to be seen as sincere. They need to stay in control yet they see the need for publicity, for a channel through which to communicate ideas and inspiration.

"Who do we want to reach?" asks Jo. "We want to reach those brilliant punk rock women who've been through all that worrying about what men think about them and are now cool and sassy f---ing punk rock women. But if they're alone and isolated then they're going to end up like my mother. We've got to make contact."

But they know their history. Their distrust of "mainstream" media is intense. Yes, they like the idea of using *NME* to reach X number of pissed-off, pissed-on kids who are sat staring at a life consisting of signing on and The Levellers. But they see all around them the indie whores, tedious transit van bands who don't want to change their T-shirts, never mind the world, all of them gagging to be interviewed by white, male, middle-class, boring rock hacks for a white, male, middle-class, boring readership.

They want to conduct an anti-crap jihad, to use the media. And not be used. It's not an easy contradiction to solve, it's the gap between the cottage industry purism of Crass and the burn-out media devastation of the showbiz Sex Pistols. The difference being, of course, that the Sex Pistols reached and inspired millions of people and acted as a catalyst for a blizzard of new ideas about pop – the best of which have now filtered down to Huggy Bear – whilst Crass's holier-than-thou lifestyle has merely given us crusty. There is a third way and Huggy Bear will, I believe, discover it.



PICTURE: VALERIE PHILLIPS



PICTURE: VALERIE PHILLIPS

Grrrl trouble: Karen (top) and Nicky (bottom)

This, in case you're wondering, is not an interview. It's an article written with the band's co-operation. My fee for the article will be donated to the Kings Cross Women's Refuge.

This is bigger than Riot Grrrl. Huggy Bear are not 'the Riot Grrrl band' or even 'a Riot Grrrl band'. "What are Chris and John?" asks Jo. "are they Riot Grrrls?" Huggy Bear are a symptom of a fundamental rebellion at the roots of pop; the rebellion this time, however, won't merely include women, it starts with them.

"Christian capitalist ideology is monologic," claims Jo, "that means it will only allow one voice, one race, one sex, one physique, one accent, etc, to succeed. Cornershop and Sidi Bou Said know about this. And this is not a revival."

Huggy Bear are not punk revivalists in the same way that the Sex Pistols were not 'situationist revivalists' – revivalism is the ultimate oxymoron. 'Punk' ("don't give it a label," says Nicky, "don't help to kill it...") is fundamentally anti-nostalgic, it is about kicking over the statues, drawing a line in the sand, creating a Year Zero, a cultural revolution.

It is about the new, about originality. Punk isn't a musical form or a fashion phase. Punk is like soul or the blues, it's a vaguely definable state of mind – the state of mind being charged, witty, aggressive, perverse, verbose, cheeky, angry, insolent, profoundly discontented.

Put it this way – the lad with the mohawk and the fingerless mitts who hangs around the town square with a can of Special Brew and a hound on a rope is definitely not punk rock. But my mate's mum, Margaret, who has just been sacked from Leyland Daf and has decided to dedicate her new 'spare time' to kicking shit out of the Tories, definitely is.

**THE WORD** 'punk' has changed its meaning at least three times in the last three decades. It's about to change again.

Huggy Bear, and the energies they are both part of and inspire, are, in part, a reaction to nostalgia. The early 1970s (if you hadn't noticed) are back and we have the retro bands to prove it. They represent a malaise, a failure of contemporary culture's confidence.

"This generation seems to have been convinced that it can't do anything for itself," says Jo, "that it's all been done before..."

And she puts her finger on her generation's cultural cringe. In *The Guardian*, Barbara Einreich asked of youth: "Why don't they do anything bold or interesting or simply foolish? Because they have been raised to believe all these things have been done before, and probably by their parents..."

Why protest the Gulf War or form a band with a vision when you can watch a video of 1960s footage of an anti-Vietnam demonstration complete with a Rolling Stones 'Street Fighting Man' soundtrack?

The baby-boomers – the generation that grew up in the '60s – have a death-grip on our culture. It is they who have spawned the demand for such graveyards of transpottery as Q and Vox. It is they who have consigned all discussion of our culture to the tedious ghettos of the pop columns of the serious papers and the blip-hell trivialisation of *The Word* and Janet Street Portersvision. It is they who compiled the nominations for the Brits. You can join them in their nostalgic,

PICTURE: VALERIE PHILLIPS



Boy and girl revolution: Huggy Bear (l to r) Chris, Karen, Nicky, Jo and John

bedfelled opium dream if you choose. Or you can turn your back on them and create something new. "We want a new literature,"

says Chris. Try and think why these bands are striking a chord with so many youth (yes, A MINORITY, it's always a minority that get off their arses

and DO something – the rest of you can buy the T-shirt later). I am sick to the point of anger of hearing the same old lame argument trotted out against

bands like Huggy Bear and Cornershop. Yes, a lot of these bands DO sound vaguely like some Peel bands circa 1978 – of course they do!!! If you're a musically incompetent non-metal scratch pop band not consciously trying to sound like The Velvet Underground – a band whose brains will always whizz and click faster than their fingers ever will – what else are you supposed to sound like? F--- the 'music' (and what a strangely narrow definition of 'music' you have) you boring bastards, this is POP, this is ROCK AND ROLL! Listen to the energy, the wit, the style, the fury, LISTEN TO THE IDEAS! Then ask yourself why you suppose a pop fan in the first place. Just for the music??? F--- off and go read *International Guitar Player Monthly*.

## HOW TO PLAY ANY INSTRUMENT IN 30 SECONDS:

1. Plug it in.
  2. Hit it.
- "Yeah," says Jo, "that's pretty much how I got started." Be disgusted or excited. Whatever you decide, it's time to take sides.

# the cranberries

everybody else is doing it, so why can't we?

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