

the
particles

"THE PARTICLES" ARE:

ASTRID - VOCALS, WOOD
BLOCKS & SNARE & DRUM
& CASIO PIANO

PETER - VOCALS, GUITAR

ALEX - TRUMPET & CASIO

STEPHEN - BASS

STEVEN - MANAGER

"DISCOGRAPHY"

Colour In ep: Driving me / Apri-
cot's Dream / Zig Zag

Advanced Colouring ep: Truth About
You / Bits of Wood / Remington Rand

1 Luv Trumpet ep: The Trumpet
Song / Dresses + Shoes / observations



I got a letter from The Particles yesterday, answering all my questions. It couldn't have come at a better time. So now I know all about them and if you read on so will you. Listen to their e.p's while you're doing it.

Q1: Why does the band go through continual line-up changes?

Astrid: either it's a case of it being obviously time for a change- like when we got a drum machine -mick didn't want to play with it so he left etc etc- it's good changing- it keeps you on your toes. and it was obvious at that stage that we didn't use a drummer properly- because we just needed a 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4- no rolls no heavy metal sensibilities -I think we might get drums again soon- I've been playing drums recently.

Peter: Reality is not static and nothing stays the same forever.

Steven: lots of different reasons- usually as the band evolved, conflicting ideas emerged- Also, a change must happen so as to keep spontaneous. The present line-up, on the other hand, has been consistent for about a year now. In 79/80 the line up remained the same for 18 mths. There was a lengthy "sorting out" period for the 2 years following- in that time the band turned over thousands of ideas which I reckon is a good thing.

Q2: How much time do you devote to the Particles?

Alex: Most of the time.

Astrid: I think about the band a lot. but it's important to do other things- they end up affecting the band.

Peter: I consider that most of my thoughts and actions are related to the band- I'm obsessed by it.

Stephen: Physically about 10 hours? a week but do spend a lot of time thinking about it & talking to (STEVEN), Peter's brother & our manager (sic.) & all the others about things like should we push ourselves? remain independant what went wrong at previous concerts etc... It's good & I wouldn't do it if I thought it was boring or businesslike, but do spend a large part of each day discussing.

Steven: Ah, I remember the days when my biggest concern was supporting Johnny Dole & the Scabs at the Grand Hotel. As it turned out Johnny Dole didn't play- I suppose we weren't good enough. This was quickly followed by the problem of actually packing up our equipment and P.A. & our bed side lamp. I think it was that night that I decided that the Parties were taking up too much of my time.

Nowadays, in between booking management; I find there's lots of time to get drunk.

Q3: Why do you just put out 3-track ep's ?
Do you have any plans for future releases ?

Alex: We just happened to have three good songs.

Astrid: actually the first single was supposed to have 4 tracks- but Johnny Johnny didn't quite make it. also- it's difficult to choose Just an A & B side- and it's very expensive to have an album. -further releases- well- we've only just started ! I want to record lots of records. Albums singles big singles- small albums etc.

Peter: The first record was to be a 4 track ep that would cost the same as a single. We thought our songs were very short and this was meant to make up for that, however one song (Johnny Johnny) wasn't as good as it should be so we left it off. We followed that format unconsciously with the second record however the most recent was deliberately three tracks to keep continuity.

Stephen: -yes planning on beginning to record 6 songs for one side of a 12" disc & extended version of bits of wood on the other side because it's such a great dance song.

Q4: What do you say to people who think you're really, really good ?

Alex: "Oh well, I'm glad you enjoyed it."

Astrid: I say thank you- I'm glad. that's really nice.

Peter: I've never been able to work out a response -I usually stammer.

Stephen: Thank you & why did you like it usually just blush & grin.

Steven: Ah gee !

Q5: What would you say to someone who thought you were really bad, obsolete, worthless etc ?

Alex: not very much.

Astrid: I usually don't say anything to those people because they don't say it to me- but if they did -I

would wonder why they felt so moved to be so energetic about something they didn't like.

Peter: I'd ask them what they liked -I don't remember this ever happening- but if it did I wouldn't take offense.

Stephen: A lot of people like to come up & tell

you what you were doing wrong. these people tend to be wasted MUSOS & I just try & get away if they have no constructive criticisms to make. Thankfully we seem to get a lot more compliments than worried drummers (a lot of people don't seem to want to accept a drum machine)

Steven: Ah gee !

Q6: Do you play live ?

Alex: Yes a lot, about once or twice a week. We have got our favourite places: for example the strawberry hills and the Britannia which are very relaxing; or the trade union which isn't. (I won't mention the others.)

Astrid: yes we do- but we are fairly erratic- recently we played a real lot- most of the time we play live but sometimes we use tapes- and sometimes we feel really dead sick or something (not very often at all).

Stephen: Yes quite often. This year we have played Geelong, Canberra x3, Melbourne, Armidale, Bathurst, & many Unis & inner city venues oh ! & Newcastle last week. The best fun is going out of Sydney for a day or 2 to Armidale, Bathurst, Newcastle & Canberra in particular gave us warm receptions whereas the inner city crowd seem to quite often have a large percentage of pretentious shits in it. (but not always)

Steven: I play in the LIGHT HOUSE KEEPERS- The Particles play about once a week.

Q7: Quote from "Inner City Sound":

"the PARTICLES were probably the longest-lived band in all of Sydney, having been together in one form or another since early 1977, though it wasn't until 1980 that they were "discovered" by Melbourne audiences !"

Is this true ? How did they discover you ?

Alex: Your question is very interesting at the moment I'm unable to answer it as I am playing a pinball machine but as far as I know it has something to do with publicity and a very nice person in Melbourne who um promoted us (?) That's all from Darian

I'll get back to this questionnaire.

Astrid: Well it's true that we change the line-up but not the name -(i don't think we're interested in the "OK this is it" fresh line-up new haircuts new image new name thing.)god, it makes us sound like we're pushing 50- the only one of us playing under that name since 77 is Peter- I joined in 1980 (79) and stephen and alex joined in 1982.well- we used to play in melbourne about 2 years ago in small venues and it wasreally nice- people like delorous- gave me some earrings and neil gave us things- and andy let us talk on radio etc- and we stayed in this great house-(that is now gone) and it was good fun- maybe we discovered- how much fun it is to drive long distances and play to nice people.

Peter: The Particles has been used as a name by dozens of completely different bands, and, as a name it is probably the longest-lived in all of Sydney (originally created by ex-Laughing Clowns saxophonist Bob Farrell.) In 1980 we did our first tour of Melbourne and played to audiences significantly bigger than we were used to- this news reached Sydney and our audiences there started growing larger too- so we considered to be "discovered" in Melbourne.

Steven: I suppose because at the time it was cool in Melb. to have fun & dance& joke with the band. I should mention that Delores, a melb. promoter, gave us work in 1980 when most promoters were too busy trying to work out who to make money out of. As it turned out the tours we did in Melb. were advantageous to both Delores and ourselves.

QB: How did the band form ?

Alex: Peter gradually gathered around him a group of friends who he never lost but rather kept in one way or another, Astrid in a musical way. I knew Stephen in Canberra, when we were going to start a band consisting of one song, namely "tequila"(?) this was very boring so I moved to Sydney and happened to be living next to Peter and Astrid.

Peter: Alex yelled up at the 4th floor from a back alley when he heard me playing my new saxophone. I mistook him for someone else and told him to come up from the fire escape on the outside of the building. 1 minute later a stranger walks through my door with a trumpet and starts teaching me scales on my new saxophone- his name was Alex Hamilton- I asked him to join Astrid & myself after he played



6 or 7 notes on his trumpet. He in turn asked Stephen to play bass.

Steven: Through various influences when Peter & Mick Smith (ex-bass player) lived in "Saintsville" at Berry st. Nth. Sydney. Peter is far more qualified to recall those days. I do know a band called the Particles existed in 1977-78 I joined in 79- Michael Wood (singer) joined at the same time and we played about 6 gigs before Michael left & Astrid joined. As I said before this line-up lasted about 18 months. I went overseas & the band auditioned different drummers. I recall 3 drummers lasting about 2 mths. ea. This isn't really news because you know we had a lot of line-up changes. Guitarists, bass players, keyboard players. Finally we had a long holiday ! One day Canberra called and offered us a gig. Alex had been jamming with Peter- old bass tracks were still on tape. Astrid, Peter & Alex started rehearsing with drum machine and tapes. It wasn't the first time the machines were used earlier it was just peter & Astrid on stage. 25/9/82 was at the Civic Hotel, Canberra- Stephen O'Neil came up to Sydney & joined as bassist. 2 months later we were back on the road.

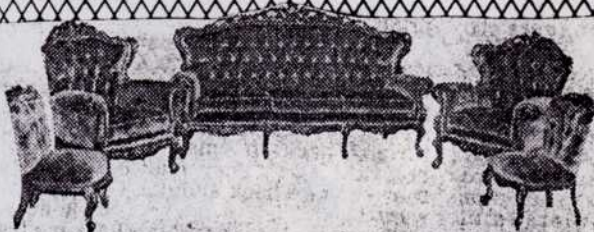
99. Do you consider yourselves to have any connection/affiliation with any other bands/people ?

Alex: YES. Alfred Jarry !

Astrid: Our manager (!) Steven is the lighthouse keepers drummer also- stephen plays bass and saxophone in LHK and alex and us sing or play trumpet with them occasionally also- tactics-my sister ingrid was in tactics- I can't think of any other close ones right now.

Peter: Yes- not many but a few

Stephen: Undeniably this is complex. I myself am



also in a band named The Lighthouse Keepers and Steven drums for LHK & occasionally Alex plays trumpet & Peter & Astrid do back ups on one song. Until recently both bands played together a lot for practical reasons as well as the way they complement each other. But LHK now have a 3-4 hour set of 50-50 originals & covers like the Big Noise, Whiskey & Gin & other obscure 20s-50s songs.

Steven: Alex plays trumpet for many bands including Do Re Mi, JFK & Cuban Crisis, Chris Bailey, Coupe de Ville.

Q10 I can't figure out "the Trumpet Song" at all. What's it about? How was it written?

Alex: It's a song that grew from a trumpet riff.

Astrid: we all just added bits- it's about looking really really good before you go out.

Peter: It's not about anything- each line was virtually pulled from a hat to constitute a lyric intended at first to be used only temporarily. We recorded it like that- so that's it!

Q11 I can figure out "Truth about you", but how did that song come about?

Astrid: I can't remember- but I remember- a friend asked me to sing it to him before he went on an aeroplane- O.S. so I thought- gee maybe it's a good song- (he has good taste)

Peter: I wrote it. It's imaginary, not real, in my head.

Steven: It came about in Flinders St. Darlinghurst when rehearsing- actually quite a prolific time for Peter's songwriting- I remember 2 other songs being rehearsed on the same night.

Q12 Would you like to go to England?

Alex: Yeah I'd love to go to England.

Astrid: I don't like cold weather- but I want to go travelling.

Peter: Sure- if I had enough money.

Stephen: Yes as long as we don't starve there, plans are becoming more oriented towards Japan but it's certainly nowhere near believable.

Steven: Too crowded, Too dangerous. Too cynical. Yes I would like to go. But I'd rather go to Japan.

Q13 Are your songs based on real happenings?

Alex: Yes.

Astrid: Yes & no.

Peter: No. Don't believe Alex's answer, it's wrong!

Stephen: I'm not the lyricist.

Steven: Dunno.

Q14: How much better do you think you can get?
Alex: Much better !!

Astrid: lots

Peter: Hopefully we'll continue to improve.....

did you ask this question seriously ? (!)

Stephen: ? I don't know how good we are, before I joined the band I was a fan along with Go-Betweens & Laughing Clowns & Jonathan Richman but find it hard & ultimately pointless to compare say the first single with the third.

Steven: Dunno, most probably better than I could ever imagine.

DOPEY QUESTIONS:

What's your favourite colour?

Astrid: I like most colours- but nearly all my clothes are blue. Peter: Foster's lager. Stephen: Turquoiseish/Blue. Steven: Green, red, blue or orange.

Favourite record?

Astrid: this is hard. at this very second I like every breath she takes- by the police- and I'm glad sting is not married anymore- (at the moment).

Peter: Any Kraftwerk record.

Stephen: People Say by the Go-Betweens & Don't let him come back, on the other side . & "Two Shoes" by Leslie Ugums.

Steven: Big Noise (an old song)

Favourite place?

Astrid: I like these questions- on the fire escape in the morning at the moment. Peter: BED . Stephen: With lots of friends and a good band. Steven: New York.

Favourite Particles Song:

Astrid: Half a heart Stephen: Observations

Peter: Driving Me Steven: Observations

Birthday

Astrid: 9th of September Stephen: 15th of Jan.

Peter: 15th June Steven: 9th Oct.

What would you like to be reincarnated as?

Astrid: never thought about it much but I think a tropical bird that can fly long distances and goes to cities. Peter: I don't want to be reincarnated as anything but everything. Stephen: A tree in the country. Steven: It's a toss up between a seagull or Albert Einstein.

What's your favourite t.v. show ?

Astrid: Entertainment this week or- good late night movies - eg paton place. Peter:M.A.S.H. Stephen: Fawlty Towers- Now Tales of the Unexpected/ People's Court. Steven:People's Court.

Favourite radio station

Astrid: all at different times- I like 2BC on friday mornings -pet advice. Peter:JJJ Stephen: 2XX in Canberra. Steven: 2SER, -on Sat mornings they some-times play lots of blues or something jazzy. I think JJJ still can have its moments but is usually boring. I often switch around- as long as there are no ads- this means I usually end up on ABC or MBS or

something.



END

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