

All through 1981 I kept waiting for an album that would really turn me on. The 1979 Crawdaddys LP I found in February was real good and a couple of cuts from random albums were real interesting ("Pretty in Pink" and "Shadowline") but nothing that would hold real deep down-until the Gun Club album. Rip, pig, and panic is a good description of what these guys do to country blues. The Gun Club LP is dangerous, threatening, and strung throughout with high sexual tension. And death. Just what R&R needs today. Get it or eat shit.

Ted Gotfried and I drove to Atlanta last February to see the Gun Club at the 688 club. Freezing rain turned McDonalds and southern pine alike into icicles. Beautiful. Ted spotted the Gun Clubbers at Wax and Facts record store and we chatted. Nice guys, "sure we'll do an interview, come to the sound check at six." Interviewed at sound check, motel and before the show.

One word about the show. They played the majority of their upcoming second album as a demo for their new producer (see below) and the songs are even greater than the first LP's! Jeffrey Lee Pierce is the Gun Club's singer/songwriter. Guitarist Ward Dotson, bass player Rob Ritter, and drummer Terry Graham were out to dinner and came back later in the interview.

THE GUN CLUB

BY CHARLIE PICKETT

C.P.: You've been playing guitar how long now?

JLP: About 7 years now, the last two finger picking.

CP: What's your favorite open tunings?

JLP: A and D. Also we play in E cuz it's a stronger tuning and Spanish G tuning but I broke a lot of strings in it.

CP: Didn't you write for Slash?

JLP: Everybody in L.A. wrote for Slash. Even Johnny and Exene wrote for it. It was just a big local thing and everyone contributed. They didn't pay but I got in a lot of shows free, saved a lot of money going out, got records free. I was in bands before I wrote for Slash so it wasn't a journalist turns singer thing.

CP: Who did you play for?

JLP: I've been in bands since high school, Fast Freddie's Group, the Precisions, Top Jimmie's band, the Last- mostly as guitar player. This is the first band I've not played guitar in, just singing. I have no desire to get up on stage and prove my virtuosity. I'd rather not play live, though we're thinking of adding another guitar player when we get back to L.A., probably a girl to offset things.

CP: How long has the Gun Club been together?

JLP: Less than 2 years, about a year and a half.

CP: Let's go back to the things with Slash. Would you say that Slash was a force in bringing about a certain amount of excitement in the L.A. scene? Was it healthy for the scene?

JLP: Yeah, it had a way of rounding up everything. It was a way of becoming aware of what was happening in another part of town with new bands, etc. But it's all broken up into factions.

CP: Into what faction does the Gun Club fall? Do the Hunnington Beach punks go after it?

JLP: No Hunnington Beach punks is one scene I've completely turned my back on. The R&B scene- that's another scene I've completely turned my back on.

CP: Why is that?

JLP: Cause it's too much of a virtuosity thing... too much of a sixties attitude towards R&B... to try to see who can play the blues the best. That's not the point. (To play the blues the best) has never been the

point. The point of the blues is getting involved in the whole attitude and the mood and the feeling and the expression of the thing. Not how well you can play John Lee Hooker's guitar lick, but to play John Lee Hooker's guitar lick with the same conviction and reason that he played

it. Young people like Robert Johnson where as I think Tommy Johnson's a much better blues writer. But he was older and went through so much more and saw things differently. He was more like an Elliot as opposed to a Rimbaud. I mean everybody loves that Rimbaud shit cuz it's all so youthful. I actually think of that stuff as just being adolescent writing. The better writers are the older one's. They just see things more clearly and more clearly and more competantly.

CP: You partially covered the British blues of the sixties. Does anything from that era impress you?

JLP: There were people who were inovative. You can't say Jeff Beck was a derivatave guitar player cuz he took all he learned from blues records and completly blew it out of proportion, did all kinds of weird stuff with it thats wonderful. You can say a guy like Mick Taylor is derivative cuz he never added anything to it. It's like the rockabilly thing today. They are such fanatical fans that it's outragous to them to change anything about it. Blues is awonderful, pure, 100% true music, and it's easy to get sucked up into it that it becomes a way of life for you. Some people in L.A. if they went to bed with Marilyn Monroe, it wouldn't be as important to them as finding a Son House 78 on Paramount (laughs), I'd rather go to bed with Marilyn Monroe.

CP: You mention Marilyn Monroe in songs and conversation who else do you admire?

JLP: Marilyn Monroe, Rimbaud, T.S. Elliot... all that poetry stuff, they badge you to talk about it in New York. I like British literature: D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce it's just so psychedelic. I don't understand a lot of it. Samuel Beckett.

CP: Let me needle you a little bit. You follow the American folk artist, the blues and then go European for your literature.

JLP: Just British. No French, German. I like American literature.

CP: But it's not as close to your heart?

JLP: No it's just not as much fun. It's probably closer to my heart. Especially someone like Sherwood Anderson. American literature is after too frightening to Americans. It's usually the same type of thing as the blues; alcohol, death, frustrated sex, more death, being mad, lost, lonesome, cryin'....

CP: What about the next Gun Club album?



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THE GUN CLUB

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JLP: We're recording it in New York.

CP: Who's producing?

JLP: Chris Stein.

CP: When?

CP: Late spring.

CP: All originals?

JLP: Some covers: "Run Through the Jungle", "Fire of Love", "John Hardy" (at this point Ward and Tery returned from dinner)

CP: Do you all like touring?

JLP: No I despise it passionetly and I wish I was home.

WD: I like it.

RR: I like it.

TG: It's something you have to do.

JLP: I miss my mother and my girlfriend.

WD: The reason we came to Atlanta was to do a benefit for Wayne Williams cuz I used to date Wayne back in the sixties...

CP: Oh Christ!

DD: Too much fiberevidence.

TG: The whole case is like a bridge and it just crumbles until there's a reasonable doubt.

CP: Where have you been so far on this tour?

RR: New Orleans, saw the Mardi Gras... played with this band called Our Favorite Band (see the singles reviews-ED.) and they did a version

of "Ivy". Saw Alex Chilton.

CP: People compare you to Panther Burns.

TG: They're really straightlaced about the blues... they don't destroy it like we do.

JLP: They just can't play it very well and we're a closet glitter band and they're not.

WD: I like Alex Chilton.

CP: The Pirates?

JLP: Johnny Kidd's dead.

CP: You don't think Mick Green's good?

JLP: He's too heavy metal.

WD: The Cramps are the best American band.

JLP: They are not Wasted Youth is better. But my favorite performance is this guy in Hollywood who beats guitar and sings the "Happy Days" theme in front of Fonzie's star on Hollywood Blvd.

TG: Yeah L.A. like a big John Waters film.

CP: What are your thoughts on radio?

JLP: I never listen to it. The only step in the right direction I see is that the Blasters are really seriously gettin' airplay. That's good cuz they do it real.

CP: Favorite albums of last year?

DD: Earth, Wind, and Fire.

JLP: Koo Koo by Debbie Harry was best.

TG: Black Flag.

JLP: I wish there was a liquor store around here.