

2 CONVICTS

ESCAPE

From jail and then they find a typewriter.



ART BY JAD FAIR

# BOSTON BAND GUIDE

by Michael Koenig

In between sets at Boston's premier nightclub, the self-proclaimed "subterranean cavern of lurid vice and glamour," the "Rat," band members and chums alike jovially head over to nearby Hagen Daz for cones and milkshakes. That's how sick Boston musicians are.

Alcohol, pills, acid, smack--or even whores or screw magazines? Nada. Just text books, mom's homebaked chocolate chips, designer jeans and Boston Crock. You can't even say "cunt" without a zillion beats, appraising eyes hammering you against the wall. Cock, wang, prick, one-eyed snake or helmet? Forget it; in Boston it's (ssshhh), "Penis."

"Banned in Boston" is no joke.

Only a dumb sticky gumball would have you believe that the "underground" music here is none the worse for its moral proclivity. The sounds, in the last U. S. metropolis with blue laws and safe streets, suffer dearly for its throngs of wide-eyed blondes, who roam dormitory after dormitory, with gaped teeth, ruby cheeks, virgin ears and ebony lipstick, incessantly babbling "I'm graduating! I'm graduating, I gotta find a husband, NOW!!!!" and the hordes of anxious men who mace gleefully after these twits like baboons after bananas.

Boston is the nation's proverbial college town; living and dying between September and May. For this, they have never been able to sustain any purposeful, concerted musical direction. For better or worse, they are doomed as a transient college wasteland, blighted with transient college taste.

Everything has this temporal flakiness where

thoughts, sounds and vision implode inside a monolithic force field; each classroom a jungle of phlorescent lights, stripping independent thought and action, creating a tribe of bloodless zombies. Students willfully committing prenatal suicide at the strike of a class bell. Only permanent music-minded denizens are members of garage bands, outcast from popular transient taste (currently--Duran Duran, Flock of Beagles, Culture Club, ABC, Police.)

Clubs revolve in a self destructive, opportunistic cycle, milking bands and fans on the latest fad, without nurturing a stronger, enduring scene. Problem is compounded further by an absolute void of record stores: closest alternative record store in or out of Boston is a 45 minute drive, Rockit Records in Saugus. This leaves town hostage to unambitious radio programming.

## OR BEANTOWN VITRIOL

Ironically, the hard swallowing truth is that most Bostonians revel a monstrosously deluded fantasia: Home is the hub of musical enlightenment that rivals, at least, N. Y. or California no sweat. Furthermore, the perpetration of this myth by sheer force of positive thinking, has somehow established a national reputation that supports this notion. Uh huh, and would you believe Kenmore Square's Citgo sign's electricity is powered by Haywood Sullivan and Buddy LeReoux's flatuations?

At the onset let's examine Boston's current status by going back to their most prolific period, the roots of 1976 and tracing forward. From '76-'79 Boston was bristling with excitement. Their now famous college radio stations were burgeoning untapped horizons as MIT's WMBR led the way out of the dark ages. Among others, their D. J.'s Oedipus and Blowfish produced and played a wide variety of new music, supporting the local scene; The Real Kids, D.M.Z., Marc Thor, Babys Arm, Bonjour Aviators, Nervous Eaters, Willie



MONO MANN OF THE LYRES

Alexander, Thundertrain, Richard Nolan and Third Rail, the Infliktors, Mission of Burma, the Atlantics, Pastiche, Tracks, the Girls, the Bimbos, Reddy Teddy, Bloody Virgins and more were all in their hey day and raving up singles at a dizzying rate. Fanzines like Frenzy, Boston Groupie News, Subway News, Miscarriage and Hardcore carried the momentum beyond the clubs. Seering times.

All good things end, time passed, and the worst of these bands, the Cars cut a major label record that whacked the blubber out of Billboard and instantly legitimized the entire "punk" scene. Exploitation laps at the entails of success; Oedipus was hired at the giant commercial station, WBCN; major labels courted the bands they had rejected demo tapes from just a few months earlier. Absolutely the crappiest of bands were signed: the Rings, Human Sexual Response, the Elevators, etc. From all corners of the country, Florida, California, D.C., etc., bands flocked to Boston faster than they could write songs, drawn by the smell of money and the rationale that Boston was easier and less frightening to break into than the big-bad apple was.

More time flies and the clubs succumb to this shit and slam the brakes on booking "risky" groups. "Safe" corrupt clubs opened, like the Channel, and small but cherished dives opened, like the Underground, to collect misfit and out-cast bands; the Rat hired Thrills "vocalist" Barb Kitson to book bands, the club has yet to recover save for 50% of the shows booked by Julie Farman.

While this transpired, luminary radio personalities from WMBR rode the wave of popularity and found paying D. J. positions; MBR weened Crass the town groupie, became program director and instantly ruined commercially funded WLYN; MBR's Greg Reibman took over the awe inspiring reins of editorship at Boston Crock magazine. And which was then hailed as the most important development of all, Oedipus was promoted to music director at WBCN. His promotion started an avalanche of rodent D. J.'s impoverishing the radio, on both commercial and college stations.

If the shit hadn't hit the fan by then, the crap rolled like dice now. Boston's only cutting edge club, the Underground, closed. Streets, another good club, opened down the "street" and shut doors soon thereafter. Rebob, the cities only responsible independent record store, closed for good. Doug Simmons came to regurgitate weekly in the towns only regular music column. Other college stations gained listeners; WZBC (Boston College) became powerful playing the worst brand of syntho-swill imaginable. Mike Dreese and Newbury Comics capitalized at the expense of the young punkette "BIB" club members. And most disappointing, Oedipus, a gutless diarrhea turd who still to this day colors his hair blue, announced to his blind and eager brown nosed followers who volunteered at his station "EVOLUTION NOT REVOLUTION," a fuckless sellout excuse, delaying any positive change on the air. This proved not to be a procrastinating slogan, but a sly, vulgar camouflage for an out of touch aging poseur intending to keep his job by playing a lame demented catch up game to the country's #1 rated, dung flinging dinosaur rock of WCOZ.

That's how things stand now. To this day the only golden boy from MBR to keep his integrity is Albert Oram. Currently, Albert has a regular spot on BCN and tries to squeeze in as many Boston bands into the format as possible.

Who are Boston's current bands? By virtue of their cliqueish nature and sheep mentality they've herded themselves into three easily distinguishable groups and two others that keep away from the rest. They are: 1) The Modern Method/WMBR powerpap contingent 2) the Propeller Records/Allston art band collective 3) the highschool hardcore gang. And keeping their distance: 4) the turned off and turned on garage bands and 5) Non-aligned groups.

#### MODERN METHOD/MBR POWER PAP

(With this incestuous group we find MBR supplying D. J.'s, Newbury Comics hiring them and all conspiring to sell what they play. Problem here is what sells sucks coupled with D. J.'s Reynolds Wrap ear drums.)

GOOD--None.

ALRIGHT--Someone and the Somebodies...Bass heavy group not unlike the Grateful Dead on reds...Tris Lozaw, bass extraordinaire, pens Take It! Magazine local column...bands moment came while touring with U2.

FUCKIN' TERRIBLE--The Dark...Considered by most as Boston's worst band...every member would give their left testicle to be John Travolta clones...stay clear of all records and they're worse live. Primitive Romance...A native FLA band that moved to Beantown to capture "wealth" and success unattainable in FLA; that was their first mistake. Peter Dayton...Formerly of Boston's late, great '77 band La Peste...solo effort is blatant sell out...might've broken up if their manager has squandered her \$6 million inheritance yet...band owns lotsa pairs of pointy toe shoes. Boys Life...Young cockless brats, stupid and sassy...lots of flugelhorn.

Outlets...Same, though not bad when more garage than glitz.

Till Tuesday...Winner of this years Battle of the "Bands," that oughta tell ya something...like Kate Bush singing lead for Duran Duran...with former Dark members, Amy Mann apparently clinched "Battle" title when her "boob" popped out of her A-cup.

November Group...Gay disco too bad to be called trash...Recently signed with MCA; Gerard Cosloy tells how Rick Harte warned MCA not to sign "because their singer and manager (Joan 'Irish Setter' Martin) are gay and what if they have a fight?"

#### PROPELLER/ALLSTON ART BANDS

(The best Propeller had, left for Ace of Hearts Records. In sum, much integrity here, but little else.)

GOOD--Christmas...A modern day "Girls"...since booting synth "player" and adding bassist Dan Salzman this eclectic foursome is one of Boston's best bands...everything is uphill from name on, and they've a single out and a cut on a Propeller sampler...sounds like the Cramps led by Sumner Crane.

Dangerous Birds...recently split up as singer/guitarist Thalia quit...Thalia Zedek is best female musician in town...manic, rambling guitar backed by traditional new wave snore-rhythm...on various Propeller product.

ALRIGHT--Wild Stares...When sick and sloppy they are King G-od, when not, just another Clash clone.

FUCKIN' TERRIBLE--Salem 66...Led by Persian Catwoman Judy Grunwald, her heart arresting set of knockers would've made band popular if sound wasn't so anemic.

Native Tongue...Mission of Burma clones with records.

New Models...more Allston than Propeller...started at Underground, but spread cheeks wide enough and now the pet of Ric Ocasek.

V...not a bad art band, spawned at Underground...Broke up recently.

#### GENERIC HARDCORE BARBANDS

(Boston's most overrated jive. These knights in black stains, while dressing alike and taking straight edge vows, regally posit that D. C. went straight edge and L. A. donned combat boots following their example.)

GOOD--S.S. Decontrol...Led by Lethal (guitar) and Springa (voice,) they're Boston's only h. core band with an ounce of integrity or brains...Two albums out and maybe they'll lean more on their original durge-sound than the slam dance shtick...Debuted only 2 years ago at a Take It! Magazine wrestling extravaganza, marking the first local h. core show ever...should tour West Coast soon, good catch.

ALRIGHT--Uncalled Four...Funny as hell, cover "Girl from Ipanema"...never accepted as part of the gang (good).

FUCKIN' TERRIBLE--Proletariat...gotta hand it to 'em, they pulled the wool over the eyes of Bostons h.c. clique-they're commies!! The skin heads

would flip out! if they only understood the lyrics!!!...band preys to Gang of Four posters when not masturbating, but still find it within their Marxist hearts to accept money for gigs. F.U.'s...2nd most popular h.c. band next to S.S.D. ...funny at times, but mostly humor escapes me... 2nd L.P. coming soon.  
Gang Green...broke up, thank G-od.  
Negative FX...broke up, thank satan.  
Jerry's Kids...on stage their hypnotizing.  
Lou Miami...hardcore for fags...slam butt fucking at gigs (wool!)...since AIDS scare. they hand out rubbers with each paid admission.

#### GARAGE BANDS

(Only group that includes refugees from '77. Bands are generally hot shit but only a few are new; mostclub goers shun garage groups (too loud) in favor of less ambitious ass squatting music. Cantones (old bar) gave birth and supported most of these bands for 6 years up till it closed a few months ago.)  
UNFUCKIN' REAL!--The Lyres...#1 Boston band period...evolved from Mono Man's '76 DMZ... they've a new single on Boston's hands down best record label, Ace of Hearts, and lots of other vinyl including a soon to be released LP... Greatest dance band I've seen anywhere--anytime; lots of obscure nuggets primarily from '60's N. Western punk (Sonics, Wailers.)  
Classic Ruins--Evolved from Baby's Arm...wish Frank Rowe still sang "I'm a Wimp"...one rec out.  
Hoplessly Obscure...Ken 'Gizmo' Highland's new one...a ton of originals and covers, they do over 600 songs; catch 'em when they come to town, will play forever if permitted.  
Willie Alexander...The 'King' of Boston RnR...has great nights and so so ones these days.  
Kil Slug...Nosiest stuff in city...I used to manage them, but have lost touch...excellent tape out  
Mission of Burma...Classic band, great to the end, broke up 6 months ago...live EP expected though.  
Mighty Ions...Broke up too, but were a hefty 1-2 punch when billed with the Lyres; guitarist Danny McCormick now plays for Lyres with rest of DMZ... heavy Dictators and pro wrestling influence.  
Customs...Legendary street bum, Bill Tupper, leads Lyres rhythm section, with Mono on drums...gag band better than 99% of towns serious ones.  
Motherfuckinshithheads...My band with Kenne Highland (what's point of writing for no \$ if ya can't toot yr own horn?)...broke up when I moved but recorded original studio material to be released one day... "Edgeway of Fizz" destined to replace "Freebird" at dorm parties...acheived nonpareil success, as John Martin of Boston Rock said "Most of our 30,000 readers have seen your band."  
Real Kids...Primal Boston band...John Felice and Alpo the dog rave on.  
Jonathan Richman...Used to play with Felice and has recently moved to California cause he was sick of the butterflies and ice cream at Fenway Park.  
Blind Orphans...only for cornersewers of noise... Depraved Dave's horror aesthetic.  
ALRIGHT--Neats...Used to be one of the best, but have grown sickeningly slick...if you catch them on tour and tired, they're likely to be sloppy and that's likely to prove matchless...Ace of Hearts LP in the can.  
Last Ones...D.M.Z. offshoot...Cantones favorite.  
The Odds...same as above.  
Billy Goons...everybody in town on stage; sort of extension of Mighty Ions.  
Del Fuegos...when on, their ON; when off just wait'll next time...a mono single on Ace of Hearts is expected.  
Eric Lindgren/Birdsongsof the Mesozoic...wax now out on Ace of Hearts...experimental microchip meanderings; alter ego of Roger Miller.  
FUCKIN' TERRIBLE--Neighborhoods...forget what you've read before, as Willie A's back-up band they cut the mustard, now they squirt it.  
007...replaced Dee Rail with another black bassist; how're ya gonna do that?...Motown pop is vunderbar; the rests not.  
Future Dads...broke up...Richie Parsons third band, I hear, is his worst.

MIA's...right idea, but synthesized stuff comes off like beer farts.

#### NON ALIGNED BANDS

(Time to time a band comes out of the blue with a terrible record; never playing out, nor are they heard from again. They value their independence and are smugly insensitive to all music, which shows, and who'd certainly be better equipt to play if they learned to steal licks. The best of the unattached bands are from the suburbs or Rhode Island. Fanzine dilettente, Gerard Cosloy, whom I'm indebted to for the up to the minute details herein, claims two brand spankin' new bands, with horrible names, "Sorry" and "Moving Targets" are the future rage.)

GOOD--G.G. Allin...A ton of singles...an animal who is banned from every club in town...on stage at a Take It! show he winged a beer bottle and smashed some kid in the forehead at the back of the club...music's every bit as violent.  
Plan 9...Ten hillbillies from Providence churn out garage classics...get any record and walk a mile for a show.

Foreign Objects...From Amherst, with a single... If they moved to Boston they'd catch on, but as is sheepish dj's stay clear of their excellent garage/wrestling stuff.

ALRIGHT--Rubber Rodeo...You'll get to hear this twisted country mulch on their forthcoming Polygram rec...time has eroded much of their original humor.

Men & Volts...Destined for obscurity (unfairly) as a Beefheart deranged crew...look for their LP.  
Red...Nimble fingered guitarist, Ottmar, comes from Germany, they do avanté different there.  
Shutup...If they only played out or put out records they might become Boston's finest...weird offshoot of Robin Amos, from the Girls.

FUCKIN' AWFUL--The Angry Young Bees...Queer pop... bands day came when dj tounge-tied them the Angry Sams.

Trademarks...Stupid, unethical uniformed popsters.  
Digney Fignus...Like his name.

Eddie Walker...If he didn't evoke shades of Elvis Costello he'd be okay.

DYS...A hardcore joke band of Boston College dj's who hyped themselves to obscure fame, canned their dreams at graduation, then moved back to Ma and Pa's country homes to become principals, ministers, and all-round goo samaritans.

And that's how it goes in Boston: Bogus hype, obscure fame, and graduation to greener pastures. But hey, don't get me wrong, while you're here, you can have lots of fun. As my pal Tina Borotto says, "We had the best time that you can have in Boston without being out of town."

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Dangerous Birds