



Interrogation by James Marshall

Rock'n'Roll Mongoloids on the Loose!

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Special thanks to Robert Mascaro.

"The Cramps are making all of us slightly elder bands experience pangs of tasteless jealousy as they are enlisted by every tastemaker as THE COOLEST band of the hour, but even though we all think WE deserve it more (you have to keep your "sanity") THEY ARE THE COOLEST, I LOVE THE CRAMPS." — Kristian Hoffman (Mumps) (*sorry pal* — JM)

Gee, it's real hard to write about a band like the Cramps (this is the first time I've ever taken more than one shot at writing about *anyone*) (true!). Sound-wise they're somewhere between Rockabilly and psychosis, attitude wise they're every demented Rock'n'Roll maniac who hunts through bargain bins for Seeds albums and buys three copies of every Ramones 45. You know the ones with Reg Presley posters on their walls, the ones who know that Rock Action was the coolest guy in the Stooges. Really the type of band we (you, me, everybody) needs.

Anyway, the first one I spoke to was Miriam Linna, the drummer. She's Finnish-Canadian and hates the Clash cuz they put down the U.S.A. (a real patriot) and has been compared favorably to Moe Tucker (pound/pound/pound/crash!).

New Order — Who do you hate?

Miriam Linna — I hate most people. hate a lot of people. I hate Lester Bangs, I really hate him now cuz he's got a band. When I was doing that Patti Smith thing for *Cream* he was such an asshole asking me if I read this poet and that poet. I wanted to have fun and he told us we couldn't have fun.

NO — Gimme some of your song titles.

ML — "Sunglasses Afterdark," "Teen-age Werewolf," "Don't Eat Off the Sidewalk," "I'm Cramped," "Love Me," R&D Krayola's "Hurricane Fighter Plane," the Sonics' "Strychnine."

NO — What are some of your influences?

ML — I dunno, what do you mean influences?

NO — I dunno, I ask everyone that and they start reeling off names while I think of another question. I don't have any notes for this. Who made you wanna become a Rockstar?

ML — I don't know. I came to New York to be a big journalist and I haven't written anything yet. Moutly! That's my biggest influence. If Moutly can drum with a hook then I can drum with both hands. I like Moe Tucker a lot.

NO — Didn't you ever prepare to be interviewed when you formed a band?

ML — No.

NO — Rock'n'Roll is the only form of art there is.

ML — Yeah, like how intellectual can jazz be if it's Negro music. (Racism, Naziism)

ML — I was twelve years old when I first saw a Negro, I was fascinated! I had heard all about these exotic people. (Patti Smith, clothing, more boring stuff)



NO — I gotta question, what kind of groupies do you get?

ML — Lux and Bryan get this really strange type of girl. Really normal type of girl, disco-type girls. Ivy's a crab, she doesn't talk to anybody and I'll talk to anybody — I don't care. Most of our fans are just really fun kids. Fun — they should be shot. (laughs)

NO — Fun, that's a great word.

ML — People are afraid to have fun anymore.

NO — I can't think of a question. I'm gonna ask a question that I asked Patti last issue. Ummmmmm . . . here's a good one. Do you ever hallucinate on-stage?

ML — Ha, ha. Yeah, I keep thinking I want all these things to happen to me. (discussion moves to her past, boring)

NO — You went to college?

ML — I graduated!

NO — Oh god, two college graduates interviewed. (discussion moves to Rock'n' Roll)

ML — Cyril Jordan is the most fashionable person in the world. (New York, money, fame)

ML — People are always saying "Isn't it fun to be in a cult band?" Well, we fucking hate it!

NO — Are your songs really fifteen seconds long?

ML — No, they're about twenty seconds. We do about ten songs in a twenty minute set. Except "Surfin' Bird," we do almost five minutes of "Surfin' Bird." When we do "Hurricane Fighter Plane" it goes on for a while cuz we don't know how to end it. Lux's favorite term for it is Rave-up. He's a Yardbirds fan.

(Next victim was Lux Interior — singer-lyricist-Yardbirds fan. He writes shit like "What color panties are you wearing? And how long have you been wearing them?" from "Subway and Desire.")

New Order — Describe your music.

Lux Interior — It's very violent, very simple, very crude, basic.

NO — Is your name short for Luxury Interior?

LI — I guess so, yeah, I guess it is.

NO — What's your message to the youth of America?

LI — (long silence) Such a heavy one! I don't know. I guess it would be to wipe out everything that's happened for the last ten years.

NO — Wipe out the Stooges?

LI — No, we won't wipe out the Stooges, let's wipe out Jethro Tull.

NO — Say something funny.

LI — (long silence) I can't.

NO — Who do you hate?

LI — Here's my chance to get even. I hate all the people on the New York rock scene who are treating us like we're some kinda shit. They know who they are.

NO — What's your first hit single gonna be?

LI — "I Was a Teenage Werewolf," that's autobiographical, that really happened to me.

NO — Say something about (cringe) "Punk Rock."

LI — My favorite Punk-Rock band is the Thirteenth Floor Elevators. No they were more psychedelic. The Shadows of Night are my favorite punk group. I also like the Sonics a lot. If there is such a thing as punk rock today then we're it. I wouldn't call us that. Anything that is simple Rock'n'Roll now gets called punk rock. We're punk in the sense that we never played instruments before this.

NO — How did you choose the instruments you were going to play when you formed a band? One-potato-two-potato?

LI — Well, Ivy always knew that she wanted to play guitar, Me and Ivy were the first ones to have the idea for the group so she got to play guitar. Then we went to Bryan and he wanted to play guitar too, we tried to talk him into playing bass but he wouldn't do that so we figured we'd have two guitars, then we needed a drummer and Miriam walked by and we said "Hey — she looks cool" and she said she'd always wanted to be a drummer. Me, I always wanted to throw myself around onstage and break mike-stands. Originally I was going to play guitar but I couldn't dance as much that way.

NO — Anything unusual about you guys we should know?

LI — Practically everything. We're a very original band. I'd say we have the intensity of the Stooges onstage. Without batting an eyelash I'd say that. We're a really violent band. We don't insinuate, we do it! We don't talk about Rock'n' Roll, we do it. The most Stooges-like thing about this group beyond the intensity is Bryan. He's from Detroit and has

Filthy lyrics,
sexy rhythm,
drinking and
lonely kids—
Does it all
lead to
secret sex
and disease?



seen the Stooges no less than 500 times. He has all of Iggy's moves down pat, he's beyond Iggy. He puts his legs in lotus position and runs around the stage on his knees. He does one hand stands with his legs locked like that, he runs around on his hands. On extra special occasions he will jump into the audience and bark like a dog but that's a special treat once in a while.

NO — Why do people in New York hate you?

LI — Some people in New York hate us because they feel we haven't paid our

dues, but we've paid a hell of a lot of dues. We haven't played guitars before but we've paid a lot of dues. I think they hate us because of our intensity. There is about 10% that hate us and about 90% that love us. So many people say that we're bad musicians and that is not true. I'd like to see that straight right now. If anyone tells me that to my face they're gonna be real sorry about it. Everytime we play people come up and say "All I've heard is that you're such bad musicians and you're so good!"

DOES

ROCK 'N' ROLL

BREED

VD?

ASK THE
CRAMPS



NO — If all the new bands died out do you think the Cramps will survive?

LI — Yes, we will survive.

(Next came Ivy Rorschach, a Rock-a-billy guitar player and the one who named the group).

NO — Who do you hate?

IR — I don't think I have the energy to hate anybody.

NO — Who do you like? What bands?

IR — Ramones, Suicide. I like a lot of bands. No, not alot of bands. I like New York bands.

NO — What are you going to do with your money when you're a star?

IR — I was just in this store and I found this rubber raincoat that feels like skin that I wish I had the money to buy. It's really thin rubber and it feels like skin. I always wondered why people had rubber fetishes.

NO — Where are you originally from?

IR — Northern California.

NO — What brought you to New York?

IR — I wanted to be in a band. To form a band.



Photo By: Richard Robinson

L to R: Miriam, Lux, Ivy and Bryan —

What Color Panties Are They Wearing?



Lux

(Next one was guitarist Bryan Gregory the one with tatoos and a preference for older women.)

New Order — Who do you hate?

Bryan Gregory — (begins growling like an animal) Ha, Ha. Hate is such a strong word. I guess I hate the man who invented Yellow Pages.

NO — What would you do if you had one day left to live?

BG — Find some way of getting a hold of ummmmmmm, Elizabeth Taylor.

NO — Who would you like to see dead?

BG — Dead? (growls). Joey Bishop! I don't mean that, that's just the first name that came into my head.

NO — What do you do when you're bored?

BG — Probably bite my nails.

NO — Say something funny off the top of your head.

BG — Off the top of my head? I can't remember if it's the top of my head. Hello? (growls), I want to say something funny. I can't.

NO — If an old lady dropped her purse with money in it would you keep the money or give it back?

BG — I'd give it back.

NO — Can you read books?

BG — Yes, I haven't read a book in a while, but I enjoy a good book.

NO — Okay, we'll wrap it up with this one. What was the nicest thing anyone has ever done for you?

BG — I guess my mother, she gave birth to me.

As I write this, the Cramps are preparing for the "Big Time". I can't tell ya anymore than that except by the time you read this you should start preparing yourself for a Rock'n'Roll Lobotomy - Cramps style!

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