

# Ivy

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Another "real American" of interest is poor old Ed Gein, made famous by Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Lux paid a visit to the Gein family home and brought back a piece of history.

"It was all burnt down ... but we have in our house a piece of the foundations, this huge rock that Lux dragged back from Ed Gein's house."

What an image: Lux Interior ("Six foot three with my feet on the floor / Hey babe what do you take me for?") with a huge hunk of murderer's rock dragging behind him. It would make a great EC comic cover.

"Ed's just died. He was in a mental institution making jewellery, which is a shame. I would like to have bought some, hand crafted, his jewellery made him famous, but not at the same time!"



Ivy, London 1980.

## Cornfed Dames

None of these things — wrestling, movies, murderers, etc — exist outside the Cramps' idea of rock and roll, but are integral parts. It's what makes them supreme masters of rock and roll, that ability to encapsulate all of the power of popular culture in a hard rockin' gem like the current *A Date With Elvis*. Now there's been a lot of shit written about this, an almost total culture shock on the part of many critics. Faced with songs like 'Cornfed Dames', with lyrics like:

*Now good girls can't pay*

*the rent these days*

*These cornfed dames*

*done found a way*

*Unzip that zipper ... snap that snap*

*Round up the cattle in the Cadillac*

*Whip that cream till the butter comes.*

tends to make a few critics cringe with sexist embarrassment. I mean it's downright offensive — it's just not the 80s thing to do! Darn right it's offensive, and it's sexual and it's violent.

Just like a Russ Meyer movie — as American as a *Playboy* bunny.

This is a rock and roll album like they used to make, a lot more rhythm and blues orientated than their earlier stuff. Listen to any 50s black R&B albums and you can hear the influences on the Cramps. Try Hank Ballard and the Midnighters' 'Open Up Your Back Door (I Want to Make a Little Cream)' and compare it to 'Cornfed Dames'. The album to me is also very romantic, with 'Hot Pool of Womanneed' being an ace beat ballad. *A Date With Elvis* is a burst of R&B romanticism and Ivy knows

it ...

"I do exactly, it's weird to hear somebody say that, because that's one of the things we listen to a lot. People always make a big deal about the sexual connotation. That's always been in rhythm and blues and rock and roll. And we are romantic people, extremely romantic. We were very inspired when we did that album, and it's in a way we weren't for any other record that we made — it was a very intense experience. I'm sure we are inspired by that old R&B thing, because we listen to it all the time. Those kind of records sound like another world to me, we listen to R&B a lot on the road, because it calms us down. Doo wop, old black harmony ... real dreamy, other world stuff."

The new album also sounds different, with a production that cuts as clean as a switchblade — brighter but not necessarily lighter. Before this new one, Ivy described the material on *Gravest Hits* as her favourite, but *Date* she describes as:

"It sounds to me like we woke up. It's produced better. I don't think some of our records were produced the way rock and roll should have been. Like Alex [Chilton] is a great producer, but I don't think he had the right thing for us ... I think we needed a more tear-your-ears-off sort of thing."

The album certainly does that, with Ivy's guitar in pride of place, the Link Wray touches intact but with a more rhythmic feel, like Bo Diddley, and the solos are more in keeping with the R&B raunch of Chuck Berry and Lowman Pauling of the Five Royales.

*A Date With Elvis* is a true

tribute to the great man, not just the acceptable side like the early Sun and RCA sides, but everything right through the films and on to Las Vegas. The cover tells all:

"Well it was inspired by Elvis, because all those books were what Elvis read to his date, this is a fact, and that was his favourite meal, fried peanut butter sandwiches ... which I ate afterwards ... they're great."

## Aloha from Hell

The Cramps perform 'Do the Clam' on stage, and not as a joke, but as part of Elvis's great career. Songs like their version of 'Do the Clam' and 'Aloha from Hell' ("I'll be dancin' thru the flames / Like a devil in disguise / You can hear me sing / But not by satellite") is as close to the Elvis mystique as you'll ever get.

Part of that allure is in all the movies he created (he was the auteur in those rather than the director Hal Wallis). Ivy picks *King Creole* as her favourite.

"Because he's so sexy in that ... he just mesmerises me. I love any movie he's in, because he's Elvis, he just hypnotizes me in anything. But *King Creole* it seems to me like he was playing himself ... and I also like Carolyn Jones. Seeing him making it with Carolyn Jones ... just great."

Ivy finds a lot of the criticism levelled at *Date* totally unfounded, especially over 'Kizmiat'.

"Well it is 'kiss my arse', but beyond all that it is also a love song, a love song that Lux and I wrote to each other and it stands as just that too. I've read ridiculous stuff ... I've read that it was making fun of Elvis's movies on a tropical island. And that

is one thing. We don't and we never make fun of Elvis."

The album was recorded at Hollywood United Studios, where Elvis did some work, and I wondered if they felt the spirit of Elvis helping them ...

"I don't know if we did from him specifically that much, but the studio was great ... we felt the spirit of Elvis in the Phillips studio in Memphis, actually we felt the spirit of Jerry Lee Lewis, because there were bullet holes in the ceiling and he said that was from Jerry Lee. It's amazing that he's still kicking ... I think he was quite glad when Elvis died, I think he always felt that Elvis was the one who had all the fun."

There's gonna be a lot of fun later this month, with the Cramps at the Galaxy with the new bassplayer Candy Del-Mar playing, "stuff off *Date With Elvis* and some surprises and a few old songs and stuff we haven't done at all ..." What I've heard of the English tour tapes is fantastic; with an opener like 'Heartbreak Hotel' totally Cramped up, how can you lose — it's gonna be nirvana.

Ivy and Lux have been "going around" for a while now, and I wondered when they were going to tie the knot ...

"I don't know, we're having a prolonged engagement right now, it's time for a honeymoon. We have periodic honeymoons anyway. I don't want to stop wearing this groovy engagement ring. I'm not sure where we'd get married, maybe in Las Vegas at the Imperial Palace — there's a chapel there — great!"

As the King said, "Viva Las Vegas!"

Kerry Buchanan

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## AMERICAN ALTERNATIVE

Circle Jerks : Wonderful

Dead Kennedys : Frankenchrist

Butthole Surfers : Brown Reason To Live

: Psychic & Powerless

: Cream Corn

: Rembrant Pussy Horse

Meat Puppets : First

: II

: Upon The Sun

: Out My Way

Husker Du : Flip Your Wig

: New Day Rising

: Zen Arcade

: Everything Falls Apart

Jungle Studs : S/T (Feat Members of Flipper & Dead Kennedys)

Love Dolls Superstar : Various (SST Soundtrack Feat. New tracks by Dead Kennedys, Meat Puppets, Black Flag, Sonic Youth & Others)

Saccharine Trust : We Became Snakes

Dag Nasty : Can I Say (Minor Threat Guitarist)

Let Them Eat Jellybeans : Various (Out of Print)

Sonic Youth : Evol

Alex Chilton : Lost Decade

: No Sex (New 12")

Screamin Jay Hawkins : Frenzy

& The Fuzztones : Live

Fuzztones : Lysergic Emanations

Stooges : First

: Funhouse

Tail Gators : Mumbo Jumbo (Texas Roots Rock n Roll)

Captain Beefheart : Safe As Milk

Return of the Living Dead : Soundtrack

## ALTERNATIVE FROM ELSEWHERE

Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel : Hole (Incl Bonus EP)

: Nail

Einsturzende Neubauten : Halber Mensch

: Drawings Of Ot (Incl Bonus EP)

## ENGLISH PUNK

Charged G.B.H. : Clay Years (Singles Comp)

Exploited : Dead Cities

: Live At The Whitehouse

Crass : Best Before 84 (2 LP Singles Comp)

Discharge : Grave New World

Conflict : Only Stupid Bastards Help EMI

Ramones : Too Tough Too Die

: Animal Boy

## ENGLISH ALTERNATIVE

That Petrol Emotion : Manic Pop Thrill

Durutti Column : Circuses & Bread

Felt : Let The Snake Crinkle

Sisterhood : Giving Ground (Ex Sisters of Mercy)

Fall : Living Too Late

Virgin Prunes : The Moon Looked Down & Laughed

Soviet France : Misfits Loony Tunes

Diamanda Galas : Divine Punishment

Uhutemas Archetypi : Various (Feat, SPK, Hunting Lodge, Lustmord, Laibach & Others)

Psychic TV : Godstar (12" Pic Disc & Double 7")

## UPCOMING TOURISTS

Residents : Meet The Residents

: Not Available

: Buster & Glen/Duck Stab

: George & James

: Residue

: Vileness Fats

: Tunes Of Two Cities

: The Census Taker

: Eskimo

: Live In Japan

: Third Reich & Roll

: Dis Como Goosebump

: Mark Of The Mole

: Part 4 Of The Mole Trilogy The Big Bubble

Cramps : Gravest Hits

: Off The Bone

: Songs The Lord Taught Us

: Smell of Female

: Whats Inside A Girl (7" & 12") : A Date With Elvis

: Kizmiat (7" & 12")

: Psychedelic Jungle

: Can Your Pussy Do The Dog (7", 10" & 12")

# ALL THE MUSIC THAT'S FIT TO HEAR