



On the Road with the 3Ds

For most, the day after the day of *The Big Day Out* was one of rest. But not for the 3Ds. Being the only New Zealand band invited to play at all the shows meant they were strapped into a plane bound for Australia. Guitarist David Mitchell kept a diary, but only so he'd know what day it was.

Saturday January 21

A couple of hours sleep and David, Dom and Tex arrive, but we're all in grave danger of missing the plane. Pack up all the broken blood vessels and place the throbbing brain back in its skull and away we go. The International Airport is a disaster — every band is in a queue waiting to board the flight. Sunglasses and guitars everywhere. Flight is fast and curious. Drive around Melbourne madly trying to find a genius who can fix an old orange amp. Failed. Play a few hours later with Luscious Jackson at the Prince of Wales and witnessed one of the best bands I've ever seen! The Dirty Three crawl around Melbourne — a drummer, a guitar and a wild gypsy kind of violinist in charge of a wall of the most haunting melodies and screeching fucked up feedback. A very frightening show — song after song dissolving under a tidal wave of feedback and screaming vocals (?) — amazing! Back to the hotel for some beer and some blather.

Sunday January 22

Wake up with the Weiner Fassbinder look. The show was easy to find, but hard to enter. Get directions from Nick Cave who leads us to a tall wire fence which we have to vault over with guitars etc, then we finally find our stage. The Dirty Three are playing a couple of hours before us — again, a demolishing performance, with Nick Cave joining them for a version of *Tupelo* and an old *Boys Next Door* song. Nothing can top this — Hungarian folk music

collapsing into the Stooges ('LA Blues' style) — a beautiful interlude during the *Big Blow Off*.

Monday January 23

David's surfing and we're shopping. I meet my brother, his wife and their child Lawrence — nice to see some human life forms without sunglasses and guitars. Went to a science fiction exhibition and then sat under a tree by the Yarra River. A beautiful day ends in a glutinous feast of wine at a restaurant around the corner from the hotel. Try to continue drinking at a late night pub, but the none too friendly bouncer won't allow Tex (the jandal wielding maniac) in so we drink my brother's vino instead.

Tuesday January 24

Brain fuzzy from winey feast last night. Long day ahead on the *Deadly Hume* — a brief break made me realise that the food stops are the Humes' killers. Kangaroo, crocodile and emu pies — very easy to pass on these regional delights. Things improve when we hit Sydney — a quick trip to our favourite Thai restaurant, the Ladda, then off to the Coogee Bay Hotel.

Wednesday January 25

Vacant day — stumble around getting passes and assorted paraphernalia for tomorrow's *Big Day Out*. Go to a late night film (*Pulp Fiction*) for a violent escape from musical chores.

Thursday January 26

Massive audience in Sydney showgrounds. We play okay, through a series of power failures. Beer for breakfast — brains boiling in the hot Sydney sun. In the middle of the blur *Supergroove* play an amazing set to a very

enthusiastic crowd. See *Tumbleweed* on the same stage, who have fun. Drinking, drinking, DRUNK, stumbling in a sandy fog on an empty Coogee Beach. Ummmm?

Friday January 27

Advertise room to let in the vacant lot between my ears. Nothing moves in.

Saturday January 28

Fly to the Gold Coast. Strange erections poke up into the sky (buildings?). A blinding, tourist's black hole, hiding a nice apartment for the 3Ds to plan the destruction of their world from.

Sunday January 29

Still playing between two completely unlovable bands — the *Furballs* (some very stray cats) and *Allegiance* (a long double kick drum laxative). Both bands enjoy getting up at dawn and screaming. Denise and I feel like joining them, then escape early.

Monday January 30

Our Australian mentor, Speedy, offers to drive us to Byron Bay (a good idea), a beautiful place with wildlife in abundance. After swims we end the day at his parents caravan park for a barbecue and beer. Thanks!

Tuesday January 31

Travel to an ancient rainforest. Denise meets a lizard. Find a waterhole to cool down in and then indulge in some beautiful fish, barbecued on the roof of our hotel.

Wednesday February 1

A man resembling a beardless Spike Milligan

fixes my orange amp. We stand in the heart of *Surfers Parasite*. We leave.

Thursday February 2

Adelaide. After a nibble we (Denise, David and I) go to the Synagogue to see *Luscious Jackson* and the *Dirty Three*. Tonight the audience stand well clear of the stage — the violinist keeps gobbling and hurling monitors, mic stands and vodka all over the place. Another grandiose show!! *Luscious Jackson* are a lot more fun in a small club — a great night for the ears.

Friday February 3

More dawn performances for the 3Ds. Had some fun on the rides — hard to keep the rider down. Kim Salmon have some amazing songs. Watch as the day dissolves into night and the *Dirty Three* take the stage at 8:40 — another grand performance. Later we try and talk them into touring New Zealand with *King Loser*. Denise, Tex and I chew the fat at a late night bar until the bouncer decides that Tex needs to stop drinking, by throwing his beer away. Leave.

Saturday February 4

Flying to Perth. Soon we are standing looking at the Indian Ocean. Soon we are looking up at the ceiling of our hotel room.

Sunday February 5

Play at 11:30 today. My speakers blow up. Evan Dando drops in to give us some of his theories on life and to teach us his ABC of heavy metal singing. More rides, more riders, until the body finally curls up into the foetal position for a final sleep. Tomorrow we fly home.

DAVID L MITCHELL



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