



King Loser

Pulpy Friction

You know the film Pulp Fiction? Well, long before that soundtrack got popular with the types taking over Ponsonby, a tarnished treat of a band called King Loser were playing and listening to this sort of music, while the Ponsonby go-getters were still listening to, erm... whatever they listened to. I'm speculating wildly of course, but I just felt like going 'so there', on King Loser's behalf. So there.

King Loser consists of Celia, who writes, sings, plays bass and cheap organs from second hand shops, and possesses a wondrous set of lips; Lance Strickland, aka Tribal Thunder, 'the drummer'; and Chris Heazelwood, who writes, plays guitar, sings and gives out advice on sex in the latest issue of *Beau* magazine. (Eh?)

I present Celia and Chris with a photocopy of the said piece, entitled *Boys Bond With Timothy Giles*, which Chris appears in. Chris looks mildly repulsed. "I thought it was for a porno mag," he says.

There is a bit of friction over the comments Chris has made in said article: "That's rich coming from you," Celia exclaims. "You're a fucking

liar, a bullshit artist. That makes me sick," she continues. Celia looks cross. She eats her croissant sullenly. I giggle uncertainly, not knowing what I have or haven't done. I opt to pursue another avenue. My questions now look decidedly boring. I tell them so.

"Don't worry," soothes Celia. "I know, we'll fight and break up during the interview... that'll be the end of King Loser!"

I had noticed the King Loser press kit had the word 'cool' in there a lot, and mentioned this fact.

"That's the sort of stuff we can't stand," says Celia. "It makes me sick. I used to come up here and play in scummy Christchurch bands and people ignored us, and that's all right. Now I notice people that ignored me years ago are like: 'Oh hi, how's it going?' I'm still not cool, even though someone in a press kit said we were. It's pathetic. It's kinda sad 'cause the things we're doing happen to coincide with what's in now, but it'll be outta fashion soon and I can't wait for that."

"It's a real bummer," confirms Chris

King Loser recorded their previous album *Sonic*

Super Hi Fi themselves (it was originally put out by Belgian label Turbulence, but has since been re-released by Flying Nun), and are in the process of finishing off their next album (which they've also recorded themselves). This is the way they've always done things, and they're not about to change for the sake of 'professionalism' or to 'forward their career'. When we spoke they had just completed an extra three songs to add onto the new album, which will be a concoction of old and new songs.

"It was fuckin' fun," says Chris. It made me feel a bit better about playing music. There was no wanker trying to bounce me out the door after I've just finished playing."

"And having to say: 'Can I have a bit more reverb please? I'm sorry but can we have just a little bit more,'" says Celia. "Doing it yourself — it's really cheap. It only cost us \$40, and we mixed it and put it on DAT with the rest of our recordings."

"We heard a really horrible story," Chris continues, "about a band here that spend a thousand bucks or two thousand to record a song at York Street, and that guy Jaz Coleman had fucked with

it. I was like: 'What a nightmare. How'd you let that happen?' They were like: 'Well, it just happened.' I was: 'Oh fuck, you poor guys.' Here's this guy, fucked with their music and then charged them masses of money. All you have to do is set up the [recording] stuff, make sure nothing stays in the red for too long, and that's it."

"You don't need to make it complicated and expensive," says Celia. "You know our 'Surf Lost' video, that was just us at the Frisbee carpark. We were just recording a practice on an old tape that we'd used before, on an old 70s tape deck that records left to right, the sort you find in second hand shops for \$40. We were just recording our practice so we could tell what songs we played. On the cassette 'Surf Lost' was really good and we thought: 'Let's put that on the record,' and that's made it's way onto TV. Everyone always said: 'I really like that song,' and if they knew what it was..."

Do you think Auckland bands have a different attitude towards the recording process and 'the biz' in general?

"About three years ago I read something the Nixons said in the *New Zealand Herald*," recalls Chris. "The interviewer said something like: 'What does it take to be in a good rock band?' They said: 'To have good gear and be tight.' [Laughs] Fuck, we laughed for weeks over that."

Celia imagines: "Are we tight yet? No? Wooooops! It's pretty sad that bands wanna 'make it'. If you want to 'make it', don't play rock music!"

"Get a suit," says Chris. He puts on a namby voice: "Make it somewhere else please."

King Loser have been through lots of drummers. There are three different drummers on *Sonic Super Hi-Fi*. Has Tribal Thunder made a big difference the band?

"He knows the shit," Chris confirms. "Sometimes we've had drummers who've been big King Loser fans, and they'd go: 'I'd like to drum for you, it'd be really great.' That'd be the audition, and it'd end up like, we'd be thinking: 'This person's treating us like their pet project, they're trying to shape us!'"

"Lance is such a relief, and if he goes, we all go," Celia replies with conviction.

"And our numerology's really good," says Chris.

"I'm a three, Lance is a six and Chris is a nine — it's a triangle," Celia validates.

"The year Celia was born, in China the tradition is to kill all the women at birth," Chris mentions.

"Chris, kill me now," demands Celia.

"No sorry, you're dead already," Chris retorts matter of factly.

You should have seen King Loser at Dinosaur Jr., but if not, look out for them playing at the opening of the *Incredibly Strange Film Festival*, April 6. (That's how it's supposed to end — isn't it?)

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