



Safe On All Bases

Tipped by those who know as the next big thing, the mid-fi Sebadoh are finally making it to New Zealand, eight years and six albums since they began. Drummer Bob Fay is at home preparing himself for the Australasian tour. I decide to get my *Smash Hits* 'Where did you get your name?' question over and done with.

"Awl, it is kinda a *Smash Hits* question isn't it? My favourite colour is green," he drawls in a friendly American accent. "Sebadoh is just a made up word. Made up by Lou. It almost means Saturday in Spanish, Sabado, but it doesn't mean anything I know of."

Oh well, if I'm going to ask *Smash Hits* questions, I may as well keep going. What kind of music are you listening to at the moment, Bob?

"Well, I've been listening to a lot of avant garde, twentieth century classical weirdness. It mellows me out when I'm hanging out at home. I mostly put that kind of stuff out on tapes I've done myself that I haven't even thought of offering to the band, although when I do give them strange things they really dig it. I also listen to 60s punk rock, and Stereolab, and New

Zealand bands like the Dead C, the Double Happys, the Tall Dwarfs, This Kind of Punishment, the Chills, the Clean, all that stuff — the Verlaines."

Pavement also have more than a passing interest in New Zealand music, and when they toured here they specifically requested the Tall Dwarfs for support. Are you guys choosing your support act when you play here?

"It's just been so hectic on tour, we hadn't really figured out who we wanted to play with us. Now it's too late, so it's just going to be whoever they set us up with. There's been talk of Smudge, but I'm just not really sure."

The band has had a complicated history, even though there has only ever been four people in it. Eric Gaffney used to be the main songwriter and guitarist for Sebadoh, but he regularly quit the band. This meant Bob would come in on drums, Lou Barlow would move from bass to guitar, and Jason Loewenstein from drums to bass. What was it like being asked to leave the band three times?

"It was never really that bad because I had other stuff going on," says Bob, in a relaxed

manner. "It was always these little sabbaticals that he would go on. I really like what Eric brought to the band. It was never that big a deal when I wasn't in the band, because they were strong and they were a different band. It's not a competitive thing — I barely even know Eric."

So, are you safe in the band now?

"Oh yeah," Bob emphasises. "Eric is doing his own solo thing over here now."

Lou Barlow then became the main attraction of Sebadoh. Previous to that he was bass player for Dinosaur Jr., until a personal fight between him and J Mascis saw him kicked out of the band in 1989. Lou then began attacking J, both in the media and in song lyrics.

"I met Lou right after he got kicked out of the band. It was really intense for two or three years, but it doesn't seem like he really cares about it too much at this point. We're actually able to do a cover of 'Repulsion' if we have to do it — if some people are just dying to hear DJ, we'll whip that one out. The best Dinosaur Jr. records were made when Lou was in the band, then J really lost the track or something.

They sorta had this massive sound that was going to something, and now everything has sort of flattened out, and it's flattened out so much I can't even be bothered to hear it."

Sebadoh already have another 15 songs which they'll record after touring New Zealand. First a label must be found (no doubt Flying Nun are interested), and then a studio. In their early Sentridoh days there were no studios, the albums were done straight to tape in Lou's house. Quite naturally, they were labelled lo-fi.

"Whenever something came out, whoever did it was completely happy with the way it sounded. The early stuff is supposed to be recorded really horrendously, yet there's something really captivating about it. In a way that's some of my favourite Sebadoh stuff."

"Our records for the last three years have been made in studios. We don't really think about the way it's recorded just the song itself. It's just sort of weird being lumped into a scene where the recording process is more important than the song itself."

DARREN HAWKES



Superette Punch & Jelly

"It's like anything when you've done it for a length of time: you get bored with the way things work, you get into habits, you have fallings out, and it becomes much easier to make a clean break and try and do it again."

Words of wisdom from David Mulcahy, previously of JPSE, and presently one third of Auckland pop group Superette. When Mulcahy decided to leave the JPS Experience late in 1993 after eight years service, he wasted no time in getting back to the practise room. Hooking up with ex-Blue Marbles drummer Greta Anderson, and borrowing Ross Williams of the Tufnells to play bass, the trio performed a handful of gigs around town under the moniker Monster. When Williams departed, Ben Howe, the other half of the Blue Marbles rhythm section, was absorbed into the line-up and Superette was born. From the outset, there's one thing Mulcahy has endeavoured to make clear.

"This is not Dave Mulcahy's new band. We are a unit and we work as a unit. It's a band of three people."

Late last month the trio released their first recording on Flying Nun, the five-track EP *Rosepig*. Made at York Street Studios, *Rosepig* is not dissimilar in style to Mulcahy's contributions to JPSE in that it breathes his trademark, spacious, sweet-as-a-honey-bee melodies.

Although Mulcahy says he finds it difficult at such an early stage to look objectively for differences between the two groups, Howe offers that Superette pack more of a punch.

"I think *Rosepig* is a bit more raw. It's pretty different at least from Dave's songs on *Bleeding Star*. It has a bit more of a raw, rocky sound to it."

'Killer Clown', the first single from the EP, comes accompanied by an exceptional video that was shot in the flat of director Stuart Page. Surrounded by, and dressed in, all the colours of a trip, participants at the last supper from hell huddle round a table and attempt to swallow whole huge sponge trifles and plates of jelly, before redecorating the floor, the walls and themselves with the leftover desserts.

Mulcahy is the second member of JPSE to make a record with another band since the split — Solid Gold Hell, featuring drummer Gary Sullivan, released *Swingin' Hot Murder* earlier this year. Far from seeing it as a return to square one, he's relishing the new opportunity, and is hopeful for the future of Superette.

"I think it's quite exciting being in a new band. It's too much fun to be a hard slog and I'm just happy that we can put a record out. We plan to record an album in 1996, and hopefully it will get picked up overseas. That's the only future I see really."

JOHN RUSSELL

Semi Lemon Kola

otherwise

new three-track single out now

on tour throughout july

chronic

BMG