

DEATH RAY CAFE



Death Ray Cafe is picked by many as the next up and coming alternative band from Dunedin. Or so BFM says. Hailed as New Zealand's answer to the Housemartins by the *NZ Herald*. True, their single 'I Love The News' is number fifty one on the charts and they have an album hard on its heels, but Death Ray Cafe see themselves as just regular guys. We sat and had a chat while the four piece munched out at Cafe Cezanne before their guest gig at the Gluepot.

Mark Brooke (electric acoustic guitar): I think we're a good band but we try not to be arrogant like some New Zealand bands. I see some bands looking down their noses at the audience.

Nathan McConnell (drums): How do you know they're not shy?

Mark: Okay, maybe you're right, but I don't want to get into an ego trip. We talk to the audience. I consider us extroverts.

Nathan: Now we're playing Auckland, I can't believe it. Peter Bell (bass): And we've practised everything.

Mark: I had this preconception that Auckland was this urban concrete jungle. When I got up here I found it wasn't true. Auckland's a nice place

and the people are okay.

Nathan: Mind you, you had nice things to do.

Mark: Yeah, I beat you at mini-golf.

Being a part of a rock band isn't easy and each member has to make some sacrifices. The most expensive was made by David Pine (guitar).

Nathan: When we went up to Christchurch to play two cars went up —

Mark: — but only one of them made it back. David drove this six cylinder Holden and on the way back it started smoking at Timaru.

Nathan: We pulled into a garage, jumped out. We said get out David, get out but the engine kept smoking when we turned it off.

Peter: David's got a Japanese car now.

Nathan: We all tease him about the size of his car.

Over Easter, Dunedin witnessed another rare event. Sharing a gig with Dribbling Darts of Love saw a spontaneous reunion of Sneaky Feelings.

David: I never said I wouldn't play in Sneaky Feelings again. As far as I can remember, we said we're living in different cities and it's not practical. If we got a chance to play sure. I had a lot of fun.

Peter: It was really different playing before Matthew. There was a huge

crowd and we were playing in the weeny Crown.

Nathan: It was a great gig.

Peter: Alan from Dribbling Darts fitted in like he was part of Sneakies all along.

Being regular guys, Death Ray Cafe relax like other ordinary blokes.

Mark: Me and Pete play soccer together. We're in the mother of soccer teams. It's not as violent as it sounds. We play to lose!

Nathan: I can't think what I do to relax. Practise. In fact our practises are just an excuse to get together ...

Mark: To talk about women and rugby.

I pause to wonder is this guy serious?

Nathan: We have these amazing political discussions at band practices.

Mark: It's amazing to think politically New Zealand has gone down the drain.

Nathan: We're the first country in the world to legally give away the unions' right to exist.

Mark: Yeah, and the unemployment contract bill sucks.

Peter: We're losing sovereignty in Parliament.

Mark: And don't get me started on new ageism.

Nathan: At least we steered away from rugby this time.

And how do these extroverts spend their days?

Nathan: Honours political studies. I want to go on to make poignant political documentaries on TV.

Peter: I manage a radio station.

Nathan: One often wonders what the manager of Radio One does when you go up there.

Peter: Makes cups of tea.

Nathan: Mark's a househusband.

Peter: He's a writer.

Mark: I'm a loving partner and I own a cat, her name is Molly and I like her more than I like kids. I'm a ... an apprentice writer.

Mark's humility hides the fact he's published a short story in Wellington's literary magazine *Sport* and it will soon air on Radio New Zealand.

David: Law and politics. Good solid subjects, not like ephemeral music.

Listening to the B side of 'I Love The News' it seems to be full of people going to the looney bin.

Mark: 'All Gone Crazy' was based on an actual party I went to in Melbourne. I had this feeling I couldn't communicate with my friends.

Nathan: You were an island.

Mark: The song isn't about going nuts. It was based on that one incident. 'I Love The News' was never meant to be a song you pulled out of your album collection in ten years time to remember it marked an important part of your life.

Nathan: We thought *Rip It Up* gave it a fair review. It wasn't intended to make some comment on life.

Peter: It worked well. We recorded it at Radio One in the weekends and evenings.

Nathan: We're weekend musicians.

Mark: That doesn't mean we don't take our music seriously.

David: I wouldn't say I was a weekend musician, more five to

seven week nights.

Peter: We spent time with a lot of extra musicians when we recorded the single. Graeme Downes helped us out with a few instrumentals.

Mark: He's brilliant.

Peter: Peter Kesha is really good.

Mark: When we did Orientation in Christchurch, we took Peter with us.

Nathan: He got a big cheer when he went on stage. He was the only one wearing shades and he looked so cool behind them.

Mark: Aren't you going to ask where we want to take the band?

Slightly taken aback I ask, okay, what are you going to do?

Mark: Tour Aussie definitely. At the end of the year.

Peter: Yeah.

Nathan: I'd be keen.

Mark: Visit Sydney, Melbourne. I want to visit my friends over there.

Nathan: We're releasing an album soon.

Peter: We're hoping to tour.

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