

SLEAZE NATION

PUBLICATION: SLEAZE NATION
COUNTRY: UK
DATE: APRIL 1997

DESCRIPTION: EARLY PROFILE OF TLS INCLUDING
INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS ALLEN



LIGHT SURGEONS ISSUE 7 STEVE 17-4-97

"People get sick of soundbyte culture. Everyone's bombarded with T.V. and video all the time. This has got kind of a - closeness." The Light Surgeons met "in a dirty camera shop in Camden". Their career path demonstrates the natural serendipity often gifted to the sincere, the NW1 incident being about the only fact gleanable from the vagaries that follow my enquiry into their origin. What is obvious is that they're now the darlings of London's 'alternative' club culture, and are finding themselves being drafted in to fill the imagination gap in a rapidly breeding number of nights. They're constantly bombarded with appearance requests ranging from notorious pop-house label tours to rosey product promotion booze-ups at The BlueNote. Far more entertaining however, are the tour with The Propellorheads, festivals in Sweden and Switzerland, and being "in discussion" with Ouija and Ninja Tune towards compiling promotional videos.

Chris, Chris and Andy talk on top of each other quite a lot and thus I won't bother to try and attribute each of their quotes individually. "Music's a big inspiration for what we do. How contemporary music's pasted together, people drawing their influences from film, old records and stuff. We just do the same thing visually - take elements and mash them up to create something new."

Despite the Surgeon's topicality and their position at clubland's vanguard, they also pay reverence to more nostalgic, classical inspirations. "There's a definite magic about old analogue stuff, and a lot of people who make hi-tech music are still really fascinated with that sound. With visuals, a lot of people, even in advertising, use very simple analogue lighting techniques and then put on this huge post-production." The Surgeon's sourcing sessions are just as earthy a process. "It's like... second hand shit, whatever's going round cheap. Digging in the crates and the bargain bins." Sample culture.

Like anyone with a modicum of ambition or intelligence, they're fully aware of the world beyond the dancefloor. "The actual club thing, which we've been born into and lived with... we're getting quite sick of it. We're getting old." Therefore, without making them sound more pretentious than they actually are, the Surgeons are branching out into projecting their work as art, rather than as a backdrop to a club night. "Take it out of the club environment - a specific installation, as a combined project with lots of other people. It's all well and good being in a club and projecting to a load of people who probably aren't even looking so we want to take it to more of a deliberate space, an art space, that's the natural place for it to go." This could mean anything from "putting film dialogue and soundtracks with the music so the whole thing's seamless" to their new semi-clandestine project in association with The BlueNote in the new BFI building opening next door.

"It's going to be around the idea of time and rhythm, 'cos a lot of the stuff we use is loops. We're going to try and get a lot of people together to work around the idea of the millennium, slowing down film, distorting time, and a bit of experimentation with language." There is a point. "It's about exploring media and how messages are created, it's the most powerful thing we're facing this century (I think they mean the rise of media). We've got no fucking say in politics and media controls all of that shit and if we get involved in it maybe we can say a bit more."

The Surgeon's artistic passions obviously run deep - but they remain consistently down-to-earth, proving that they haven't disappeared up the back end of their Super-8s just yet. "Someone came up to me at Ninja and went 'is visuals the graffiti of the nineties?' and I was like, just fuck off, that's the last thing I want to happen, for it to become some flash coffee table book with photographs of us, Hex and Vegetable Vision... it's not about that. I was influenced by stuff like spraycan art, and the fact that it was made into a book and distributed worldwide, it spread it culturally - but the danger is that it becomes an institution. People read the wrong things into it, y' know.? The only message I want to put across is for people to go out and do it." The D.I.Y. ethic is strong within them, then. "With Apple Macs your designers can be film-makers, photographers... everyone's role is shifting."

Despite all their down-to-earth reservations, they find it hard to contain an edge of excitement about any instigatory innovations they may be responsible for. "The price of projectors is gonna be ridiculous. If anyone wants to buy any projectors, we've got a few for sale. Signed ones." Enterprise culture, eh lads.



LC-EH

DA-CA

LC-GF

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X-RAY TO OPERATE SIMULTANEOUSLY

BW78

UA-LE

LC-EH

UA-KC

UA-LE

ATTENTION

OBSERVE PRECAUTIONS FOR HANDLING ELECTROSTATIC SENSITIVE DEVICES

UA-KC

DA-CA

FETS

DA-ND

UA-KC



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