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GIST PROMOTIONS ARE AFTER MORE BANDS FOR GIGS AND FANZINE REVIEWS. PLEASE SEND DEMOS AND DETAILS TO

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UNITED WORLD UNDERGROUND: REPORT 2000

Greetings...

As I may have mentioned once or twice, my ambition here is to see the creation of a completely independent underground system, on a global basis. I want to see a system whereby bands have everything they need at their disposal; adequate zines to review and publicise their music, radio shows willing to play it (rather than leave it in their "John Peel selection boxes" to gather dust), both cassette and TRULY independent record labels who are willing and able to give the lesser commercial bands a bit of backing, more distros who are willing to adapt and change their aeons old habits so they can better accommodate the needs of today's glut of underground bands and an overall recognition from the music business lot that we are not "unsigned acts" who are "making demos", but a genuine third tier in the world of music!

The vision goes:-

i) the majors...love 'em or hate 'em, they are the big players, but that doesn't mean we have to swap spit in the shower with them. Their function is to cater for the masses, their priority is to make money for themselves and their shareholders. Make no mistake, they are not criminals, they are businesses (though I sometimes wonder about the distinction!) and the way they mould and create "bands" and "artistes" is not aimed at destroying them (though that does seem to be a frequent side-effect), but EXPLOITING them. Therefore, the only bands that should be courting the majors are those willing to do ANYTHING for the sake of commercial success. Naturally, I think that would exclude 99.9% of you! The musical ethic here is to play the material you believe the most members of the public would want to spend their money on.

ii) the indies...well, I guess this became a bit of a non-phrase after Stock, Aitken & Waterman's label took Kylie Minogue to no.1 on the "indie charts"! But okay, there is a bit of a difference. This sector (and I refer to genuine indie labels, not the "little labels" that are actually owned by massive multi-nationals) is not quite so commercially driven, they don't target planet Earth's population as a whole, rather a particular market. So you could call it commercialism on a smaller scale (though to some extent, ALL systems require the selling of music!), but more fashion based. Nevertheless, they can't afford to take large risks on bands either. If they are uncertain about your chances of making them money, it is very doubtful they would give you a chance. Therefore, the only bands who should be courting the indies are those willing to work hard at it, perform live and be willing to compromise on music, image etc. The musical ethic here is to play the material you enjoy, but be willing to adapt it to the target market of the independent label.

iii) the underground...there are some independent labels who would tag themselves "underground", rather than "indie". It's rather a question of the ethos you run on. Underground labels would, on the whole, be unlikely to have distribution deals, though I accept this is debateable. They are also far more likely to be musically specialised where record labels are concerned. Same applies to tape labels too, though obviously to a lesser extent as the financial risk is not present. So the underground is there for everybody who is not willing to be exploited, for everybody who is not willing to compromise, for people who want to play the music they want to play, because it's there! Therefore, the only bands courting the underground are those not specifically seeking fame and fortune, those who make music they believe in, not what they think will sell. I would say there are plenty of bands in the underground who would rather be with the indies, I wouldn't put them down for that and I think there is room for them here in the underground. It is only the manipulative and overtly commercial that we should seek to avoid. The majors have little time for us, I see no reason we should have any more for them. The musical ethic here is exactly that, a MUSICAL ethic!

So much for the basic philosophical differences, what I am really trying to show here is that the underground is not "division 3", it is not just a gathering of bands that are desperate to "make it". I draw a firm dividing line between a "demo" and an "independent underground release", as should you all. Likewise, a band cannot be categorised as "unsigned" if it does not seek to be signed! Why people insist on calling a CD "an album" while the cassette version of the same is "a demo", (believe me, we had that a lot with cassette promos of our "Creavolution" CD!) well, it is quite beyond me, honestly. The phrase "demo" is purely a shortform of "demonstration disc", although they tend to be cassettes nowadays. I was not aware that an independent underground cassette album was intended to demonstrate anything! Semantics are important in underground participants, and the system as a whole, getting the respect it is long overdue. Leave terms like "demo" and "unsigned" to those that it matters to, for the chances of failure are only high for those whose ambitions are not grounded in reality.

SO WHAT SHOULD A BAND'S EXPECTATIONS BE?

And there lies the \$64 question, though the answer is quite obvious when you think about it. Underground muzos and writers etc, they have the same basic needs as everybody else, the need to eat, put clothes on their backs and a roof over their head. So it comes to money, that horrible stuff without which bugger all can really happen. Amplifiers cost money, as do musical instruments, recording sessions/equipment, servicing and repairs, transport etc etc. Groan!

Ultimately, the underground needs to be able to provide for these needs. I don't think it would be realistic for all underground bands to think they can make a living from it, but I honestly believe it possible that many could. What I think we need to aim at is a situation that would allow those bands able to make a living to actually do so, whilst the remainder could, at worst, regard it as a paying hobby. To be able to do this, bands will need to maximise their opportunities and make the most of every one they get. It needs a far more positive outlook than a lot of musicians generally tend to have. We all need to look for solutions, NOT problems. There is no point in thinking "how can we do gigs when we can't afford a P.A. coz we're unemployed?" Look for the solution, think the unthinkable...get a job! Okay, I'm being sarcastic, I admit it, but I am trying to make the point here that there is no such thing as a free lunch. If music is what you really want to do, surely it is worth the effort to get yourself in a position where you can actually continue doing it? If we all work together and co-operate, "United World Underground" could become more than a catchy slogan. To paraphrase JFK; don't just ask what the underground can do for you, ask what YOU can do for the UNDERGROUND! The stronger the institution becomes, the stronger all of its constituent parts become. What you do on behalf of the underground is subsequently of benefit to you. Any apathy, on the other hand, serves only to undermine the very system that could become your salvation. Purely selfish actions take it one step further, they make the whole thing look like utter hypocrisy, and be not in doubt, there are pretenders amongst us! There are those who claim to believe in the underground ethos, while their behaviour seems to indicate a more selfish goal. Personally, I think it is time to declare war on those that would burn down all that we have created over the years. Time to take a stand, declare yourselves to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Time to weed out the negative, the selfish. Time to realise you can be your own worst enemy, or your own best friend. Choose! Tough call, huh?

It takes basic change in attitude and a little more attention to detail. You've all answered the M&E Band Questionnaire, and it proved invaluable, so I will be using that as a basis for this report, a common frame of reference, as it were. Reading all you had to say has taught me an enormous amount, provided many answers, raised many questions, thus the analysis of it to come should prove a worthwhile forum and, hopefully, get some serious debate going on the state of the underground and how best to proceed.

If you really want to be able to make a living from it, make a paying hobby of it or at least make it pay for itself, you need to treat it like any other job and take it seriously. Our questionnaires were your chance to tell us how and where you wanted us to help you...BUT...many treated them as a chore, an unwilling labour, the kind of attitude that would get you fired from most jobs. You see where I'm going with this?

For example; only 27% of respondents had filled them in correctly and completely. Many hadn't read the questions properly (foreigners excused here, natch), like after being asked about your latest cassette and CD or vinyl releases, it asked if you had issued recordings on OTHER media...so many answered "yes, CD and vinyl"! Ho HUM! Another popular one was not including any details of recommended contacts. Goes like this;

Q: Are there any zines you would recommend to other M&E band?
A: Yes.

Well, thanks for that, so long as we know, huh? Lot of question-ducking too...particularly "do you ever buy M&E tapes"...we know the answer anyway! It was an attitude test, obv! It showed up some horrendous ones too; quote - "I spend a lot of time and money on my own music and would prefer people to pay me for that instead of shelling out." And to think I work on behalf of bands who think that way! Another - "We are not interested to buy M&E cassettes." Honest, granted, lucky everyone else doesn't feel that way about THEIR M&E cassette though, isn't it? One band sent their completed questionnaire back in an unstamped package, cost me 84p. Fortunately for them, the package contained two blocks of marzipan!

And the most telling statistic, the questionnaire was meant to be returned to us within a month...30 (Of 102) bands failed to complete and return it WITHIN ONE YEAR! Obviously, you are not one of those bands, but this is what we are ALL up against. And I should point out that only 37 bands made the one month target. Please remember, we are here for you, be there for us! A thousand people make much more noise than one, huh?

M&E DISTRO DIRECT

Pleasing news is that more than half of all M&E bands now have releases on CD, CDR or vinyl. The former and latter, at least, can be considered progress. At the time of collation, 48.6% of M&E bands were using the distro direct service with only 4.1% refraining. In a couple of cases, this was because of the releasing label failing to co-operate (like we're not on the same side or something?), but there were one or two that just regarded us as "competition". While I can understand that viewpoint, to refuse us on those grounds is to deliberately deny us income. It also misses the main point of the distro service, which is that it enables our supporters to order from a number of sources via one action. So not just are you denying us a cut, but you are effectively making your fans sit up and beg for a copy of your album. It's what they call "biting the hand that feeds you", not exactly the spirit of the underground, is it? Again, it is a question of looking at the bigger picture, not just your own interests. We need to be able to pay for all the services we provide, your supporters deserve for you to have their interests at heart.

It's also worth mentioning the one or two problems we have come up against with the DD service. As you know, orders are referred to bands/suppliers via postcard. To date, we've had three instances where bands have failed to supply the item. It was a typing error, I can spell "failed", promise. We've followed up with chasers, no reply in each case. The strange thing is, one of these we actually KNOW is at the same address...they don't WANT orders or what??? So, although it's obviously not the sole hiccup, do remember to let us know...

- a) when you change address, and
b) when any distro item is out of stock.

NB: the term "project" is used to represent a band, a solo artiste, collaborations etc. E.g. when recordings are issued under different names. Not used for individual albums.

HAVE YOU PRODUCED RECORDINGS ON OTHER MEDIA?

Surprisingly, very few of you had, actual numbers of bands follow...

Video - 5
Mini Disc - 4
DAT - 1
Internet - 1
MP3 - 1
Film soundtrack - 1
Toilet Rolls - 1

It is a surprise that only a handful have ever made videos, recommend more of you do! A good video can really change your perception of a band, make the difference between like and idolise. Mini Disc is not a format I'm familiar with, so no comment. DAT...well, a DAT machine is indeed on our shopping list, but mainly with masters in mind, rather than regular album releases. I wouldn't have thought enough people owned DAT players to make it worthwhile? Internet/MP3, this is a world we are only just starting to explore, been online here for around a month only. Already, I have seen some excellent opportunities for the underground, it being the sole medium in which we can compete with the likes of Sony and Polygram on a level playing field. The first thing I plan is an online-only version of the M&E News, covering purely online matters, websites etc, along with a list of e-mail contacts. This will be e-mailed direct to all of you who have provided us with an e-mail address. The next step will be the development of an online magazine, probably using the "United World Underground" title. I can't really see the point of just doing an M&E website (Maaike's is quite nice in any event), seems so myopic. If I get all the M&E catalogue on to the computer, I could simply e-mail it to anyone else with a computer, so why put it on a website and waste their phone bills? Plus, with an online magazine (think we have 15mb available through Freeserve), we can cover a lot of stuff about the underground in general, rather than purely singing our own praises.

Anyway, first up, I have to learn all about using PCs, and I'm not that far into me IT course yet! We're currently looking into opportunities like the Peoplesound.Com thing, a report on that will follow in due course (in print also). In brief, this is a website looking to promote bands who are not under any existing contracts. Write to:
The A&R Team, Peoplesound.Com, 20 Orange Street, London, WC2H 7ED.

They will provide you with the new artistes sign-up form you'll need to fill out. If accepted, you get a bit of space on their website, people can have an online sample of your music, order a CD of it (which you'll be paid a royalty on) and they are obviously confident of their ability to get orders...they offer bands £100 up front. Advance! Seriously! They check out as a legitimate company, there's an article about them in the current Music Business International mag. Copyright remains with the band. I've had a thorough read of the agreement and cannot find any obvious downside. Two of our lot have signed up already, Steve Andrews and The Conspiracy, so we shall be keeping tabs on their progress.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED RECORDING MEDIUM?

You were given more than one choice here, so percentages will not add up to 100, obviously. Each indicates the proportion of bands that liked the particular medium...

- 1: compact disc - 88.8%
2: musicassette - 43.05%
3: vinyl - 34.7%
4: DAT - 13.8%
5: mini disc - 5.5%
6: video/MP3 - 2.7%
8: DCC/Real Audio - 1.3%

I guess the no.1 spot is the least surprising, huh? CDs are taking over fast. BUT...it was great to see the trusty old cassette in second place, albeit with less than half the vote. Still a lot of vinyl diehards around too, and I can't say I blame them, vinyl albums are so nice and big, aren't they? What will be interesting for me is to conduct the same poll with our supporters (the people who buy the music) and find out what they want. Will it agree with the verdict of the bands? Hey...film at eleven...

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE QUALITY OF M&E'S CHROME CASSETTES?

- Yes - 68.2% ...we could do better then, duly noted.
They're okay - 6.3% ...we could do a fair bit better then.
No - 1.5% ...you appear to be alone, my friend.
Don't know - 23.8% ...well you bloodywell should know!

SHOULD M&E RELEASE MUSIC ON OTHER FORMATS?

- Yes - 70.3%
No - 29.7%

IF YES, ON WHICH FORMATS?

- 1 - compact disc - 68.4%...you win, we're looking into it.
2 - videos - 18.4% ...not sure this is really worth it?
3 - vinyl - 15.7% ...now you're just being nostalgic!
4 - mini disc - 5.2% ...let's see how many supporters do?
5 - MP3 - 2.6% ...let's not run before we can walk.
- books - 2.6% ...have trouble with English, do you?
- implanted microchip - 2.6%...okay, I'm listening!!!!?

WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE REGARDING RECORDING CONTRACTS?

- Desperate, would sign for any label - 6.0%
Keen, would sign for any half decent label - 18.0%
So so, we'd only sign if we could find the right label - 31.3%
Not keen, but would consider any offers we got - 21.6%
No interest whatsoever, happy without - 3.6%
We are already under contract - 19.2%

Sadly, I know that most of those who claimed desperation for a deal were not joking, you really want your heads looked at! If that's the truth, do you really think the underground is the right place for you? And if you are so desperate, why don't you record designer pop music instead? You honestly cannot have it both ways. Likewise, the keens are not doing themselves any favours, half decent labels are also half indecant, forget you not! If you are going to look for a recording contract, it's the so-so's and not keens that have the most sensible attitude, in that it is worth considering offers and making sure the label is right for you.

I think I was maybe a little disappointed to find that only a quarter of underground bands weren't particularly on the lookout for a deal. The news that as many would sell their mother's soul for one...well, what can I say? Your ambition is, of course, your own choice. From M&E's viewpoint, I must point out that we are a free service and, therefore, are not really in a position to provide commercially valuable A&R information for nothing. That kind of information takes costly research, check the prices of some A&R info publications and you'll see just what I mean. It may seem as though I'm wilfully depriving you of something you want, but I believe it to be fair. You currently get all the info for free because the best you are likely to get from it is a living subsidy, it wouldn't be fair to charge for information when your goals are so reasonable. If, however, a band seeks serious wealth, I don't think you're unjustified in charging for the information that can help them achieve it.

A couple of good sources of A&R info at affordable prices are (see front cover also)...

TMR Productions, Marc Bell, P.O.Box 3775, London, SE18 3QR, UK.
Bandit, John Waterman, P.O.Box 22, Newport, I.O.W., PO30 1LZ, UK.

Anyway, this does rather raise a question; if you would like us to provide commercial A&R information, would you be willing to pay for such a service? And if so, what would you consider a fair price?

Please do let us know your answers to these questions if it is something that interests you, and regardless of whether it does or not, any views or comments would be most welcome. Same applies to any of the issues raised in the whole of this report type thing, I don't have all the answers, so if this can be the catalyst for debate, I won't have wasted the last month!

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE YOU SEEKING FROM THE MUSIC BIZ?

Recording contract - 47.2%
 Licencing deal - 38.8%
 Publishing contract - 34.7%
 Distribution - 59.7%
 Management - 26.3%
 Others - (totalling) - 11.1%
 agents
 film soundtrack work
 television music work
 sponsorship
 producers
 sex (?)

Although the "recording" figure doesn't quite tally with the stats on the last page, I think it gives a more accurate reflection overall. Stunned to find nearly 40% of you keen to get a licencing deal when much fewer of you actually issue your own recordings on a distributable (CD or vinyl) format.

The "publishing"

interest was a curiosity too. The job of a music publisher is to exploit songs, basically. Though naturally, they can also prove instrumental in securing a recording deal too. Be keen to hear from any of you who are seeking publishing deals as to exactly what you hoped to gain from them?

"Distribution" came as top priority, no surprise there whatsoever. We do our own distro service, and to be honest, we have little more luck finding good and reliable distros than the rest of you. We have all the same problems, distros asking for loads more copies than they can sell, long battles trying to get your money and/or unsold copies returned etc etc etc. So I'll tell you the ones that have come through for us, e.g. have either sold some and paid (P) for them, or sent goods in exchange (X), which is a useful option if you run a distro too.

A.O.N., Ivailo Tonchev, kv. "M.Stanev", 16-G-115, Stara Zagora 6010, Bulgaria. (X)

Christ Forum, Chrysostomidis Chrysostomos, P.O.Box 9, 50200 Ptolemaida, Greece. (P)

Compact Disc Services, Andy Garibaldi, P.O.Box 6921, Dundee, DD4 8YN, Scotland - UK.

Crown Chakra, Doug Shaver, P.O.Box 32071, Kansas City, MO 64171 -5071, U.S.A. (P)

Delerium Records, Richard Allen, P.O.Box 1288, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 9YE, England - UK. (P)

Elefant Records, Tito Pintado, P.O.Box 331, Las Rozas, 28230 Madrid, Spain. (X)

Hiddinkulturz, Ken MacKenzie, 174 Deeside Gardens, Mannofield, Aberdeen, AB15 7PX, Scotland - UK. (P)

My Way, Uli Gernand, Finkenstr. 8, 59192 Bergkamen, Germany. (P)

Nightbreed Recordings, Richard & Trev, 2nd Floor, 177 Wollaton Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GE, England - UK. (P)

Peace Of Mind Records, Henrik Hallgren, Stapelvagen 5, 856 34 Sundsvall, Sweden. (P)

Synth Music Direct, David Law, P.O.Box 592, Sheffield, S35 0FE, England - UK. (P)

That lot have proved solid gold to us and I would happily vouch for any of them. Do be sensible though, make contact first to check they are interested, please don't just send unsolicited demos, you will waste a lot of your own money.

I know that is not a huge list, so you see what I mean when I say we have all the same problems! ARGH! Of course, to date, I've only had the one distributable item, the MMATT CD (don't really count that horrid 7"er we did many years ago with Sons Of Selina etc). BUT...we have another CD out this Spring, an M&E compilation, so I hope to discover many more.

CAUTION:-

The following are other distros we have used that don't seem quite so efficient or reliable. Don't get me wrong, I am most certainly NOT implying these people are in any way dodgy. It is simply a case that we have unfinished business with them currently and I would recommend you check the current state of affairs with us before dealing with them;

Fraction Studio (France)...run by our own M.Nomized, Michael has already paid us for half the stock he took, but has not responded to a request for return/payment/exchange goods we made last October.

Snowdonia (Italy)...Cinzia's English is very poor, which doesn't make dealing with them any easier, unfortunately. I wrote last August offering to accept Maisie CDs in exchange for those we'd sent. No reply as yet.

Floodland Distribution (Israel)...this lot agreed to a small exchange deal to which we kept our side in July 1998. In spite of a chaser last August, we have still received nothing from them in return.

Twink Records (England)...Twink has already paid for some of the stock he had from us, but has so far failed to respond for a request for payment/return/exchange goods we made last August.

Akasha Inc. (England)...we requested return/payment on stock provided last May, sent a chaser note in August, then got a note from Siobhan in October returning some unsold copies and asking us to invoice her

for the balance, which we did. Still waiting for payment. Black Widow Records (Italy)...we'd already done a sizeable exchange deal (CDs for CDs) with Massimo, so I didn't bat an eyelid when he put in an order for a number of M&E cassettes on a further exchange. Problem being he then sent me a great big pile of assorted CDs that I didn't want and couldn't use for resale via M&E. So I explained the situation, returned the unwanted CDs (at my own expense) and gave a list of what I would like from his catalogue. Been chasing that lot since last September, no reply.

The Rock Box (Camberley!)...local record shop with a mailorder section, and me and Ken go back a long way, he was selling MMATT stuff in there in the Spring of 1987! So, having left some copies of the MMATT CD with him for three years, I sent in a request for return/payment last August. Still waiting.

You see my point??? It all totals up to us being due 33 CD's worth of returned goods, money or exchange stock. That's a retail value of nearly £265.00, even at our underground level prices. I could get a reasonably decent DAT player for M&E with that money. And we keep wasting more money sending them chasers because they didn't reply last time. Again, not quite the spirit of the underground, huh? And yes, I do accept there could be perfectly reasonable explanations. In which case, I look forward to hearing them.

Around a quarter of you seeking management surprised me greatly! I hope sincerely this is not simply laziness though, you know...somebody else to do all the work while you sit on your backsides pretending to be rock stars!? No? Pleased to hear it! My advice here would be simple; if whoever you have in mind is not an already experienced manager, don't sign any agreements until they've proved their worth. And NEVER sign a contract without first seeking legal advice. If you are not seeking heavy commercial success, keep it on a friendly basis where possible. Remember: an agreement is an obligation on your part as well as the manager's, be sure that IS what you want before entering into one!

NEVER employ a manager because you don't want to answer mail yourself, you are throwing away money you cannot afford. Get organised, it's cheaper.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE YOU SEEKING FROM THE UNDERGROUND?

cassette album releases - 48.6%
 mailorder distros & shops - 48.6%
 CD/vinyl album releases - 56.9%
 cassette compilation appearances - 52.7%
 CD/vinyl compilation appearances - 70.8%
 pay-to-play CD/vinyl compilation appearances - 11.1%
 zine reviews - 73.6%
 radio plays - 81.9%
 others (1 to 4%);

TV exposure...from the underground???
 film soundtrack work...bit more chance of that.
 festivals...try the F.I.N. network for this info.
 Internet radio...it's on the "find out about" list.
 commissions...don't hold your breath!
 animators...anybody know any?
 tour childminder...fuck me, we're babysitters now???
 girls in bondage...I can understand that request!

ON DISTRIBUTION DEALS (MUSIC INDUSTRY PROPER)...

Just occurred to me that I wrote all of that on underground distros in answer to requests for "a distribution deal", which is, of course, a "music biz" thing! What can I say? Oops? It's just that 60% requesting distribution didn't register with me as "underground" because it only applies to labels, and 60% of you don't have your own labels, so I'm starting to wonder if you actually knew WHAT you wanted when answering those "music biz" questions!!!! I can't help but get the feeling that when it comes to wants, some people will just tick anything and everything!?

For those that do have their own labels, I would still say a distribution deal is hardly worth the paper it is printed on. Even if a distributor accepts it (and some will accept ANYTHING, so long as you understand they don't have to make any effort to promote it whatsoever), what makes you think any records shops will request copies to stock? We paid TMR to do a big mailout, promoting our CD release to record shops. I asked for a promo copy, 0 copies sold via Else Distribution in three years. Trust me, you will not get a good distribution deal unless you have quite a few saleable items to offer, only mickey mouse distributors will be interested, and it is not worth your time and effort to deal with them. Flog your stuff at your own gigs, then you get to keep ALL the money! Sorted.

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR AMBITIONS IN MUSIC?

We want commercial success and to be rich and famous - 11.2%
We would like to achieve a sensible level of success - 20.2%
We would be happy just to make a living at it really - 41.5%
We would be happy for it to be a paying hobby really - 6.7%
We have absolutely no ambition at all, it's just fun - 4.4%
We couldn't give a shit, we're doing it anyway! Hah! - 15.7%

Hmmmm...I'd say 11.2% of you want a good slap round the head! I've always been suspicious of people who seek fame. Like... why??? Same with power. I think people who seek power are the last people on Earth we should allow to have it! Well, if you really have the ambition to drown in your own vomit, go for it!

20.2% of you...well, I don't think many of us can deny that we wouldn't say no to a "sensible level" of success! But I think some of you would be shocked to realise some of the bands who achieve this probably only make the amount you thought I meant on the third answer!

Largely speaking, I think these answers represent a fairly realistic and intelligent outlook. But don't forget, we all need to get that little bit better organised and more efficient. The world does not owe us a living, we have to work for it. Shit, I'm starting to sound like your dad now!

IN BRIEF, WHY DO YOU MAKE MUSIC?

Fuck, you lot are paranoid! It wasn't a trick question, I was genuinely interested in what motivated you! Popular with question-duckers, this one. Coz I studied psychology, I'm interested in the differences between undergrounders and mainstreamers, that's all it is, promise. I will not be selling the answers you've given to Acme Market Research International PLC, pretty promise. Trust me...

ON THE SUBJECT OF LIVE WORK...

Rather you than me, it's bloody hard work, innit? Anyway, first, the straight poll as to whether or not you are a gigging unit...

Gigging - 54.9%
Planning to - 12.6%
Not gigging - 32.3%

As a member of a "band" that hasn't been a working unit for quite some years, I know that it makes promotion of albums MUCH more difficult. Playing live is a great opportunity to build a following (not pay-to-plays, I see no point in touring the world and playing to the same coachload of fans from your local town), flog some of your music (and t-shirts and posters if you wanna be a REAL dyed in the wool capitalist!) and it is good practise too. In other words, the third of you who qualify as bedroom superstars are really not doing yourselves any favours if you have ambitions to take it any further. Admittedly, Richard Branson might just walk under your bedroom window when you're rehearsing one day, but maybe you shouldn't spend your £500,000 advance just yet?

The second part of the question was whether or not you'd like to do gigs with other M&E bands, maybe on an exchange basis, whatever...

Yes - 73%
No - 27%

And more than a quarter of you refused to work with each other...oh dear, another hiccup in the spirit of the underground. This is not a good way of showing the mutual respect and understanding the underground was founded on, huh? It is best here to point out the obvious; if you don't help others, they will soon get wise and not help you either. I would like to see a LOT more friendly and constructive contact between M&E bands, you are all part of the same thing, you all have the same problems, you all have something in common, therefore, you are all a potential goldmine of aid and advice for each other. Be nice, yeah?

RECOMMENDATIONS ON VENUES, PROMOTERS, ZINES, INFORMATION PUBLICATIONS, LABELS, DISTROS, RECORD SHOPS, RADIOSHOWS, TV SHOWS, RECORDING STUDIOS & CD OR VINYL MANUFACTURERS...

Sorry to be so downbeat here, but this was the most utterly disappointing section of all. I'm referring here to the vast amounts of "no recommendations" that came in. I mean, you are all creative artistes, but you come into no contact with any decent examples of the above at all??? I don't know quite what the problem is here. Maybe laziness, it was a lot of stuff to write out, huh? Take a look at all the M&E zines and other publications, I do them all, hand typed, pens and rules to do the lining, Letraset for the block lettering, scissors and double-sided tape for the clipping, nuff said? Good. Then maybe you are reluctant to share information with other bands? No, that can't be possible, because the pooling of information is what the whole project is based on, right? Pooling info is of enormous benefit to all of you, obviously, so only the very myopic would withhold it, believing that to be to their own advantage. Lord Litter has suggested that provision of info and shared recommendations become a prerequisite for M&E project membership, a policy he describes as "a good kick in the ass"! I rather hope it won't come to that, I like the idea of it all being voluntary. But nothing in = nothing out, natch.

i) live venues & gig promoters

involved with one or the other - 12.5%...see band index.
offered no recommendations - 80.5%...oh dear!

ii) zines and newsletters

produce one yourself - 12.5%...this is a good figure.
write for one - 13.8%...ditto.
do your own band newsletter - 8.3%...you should ALL do one!
offered no recommendations - 58.3%...never get reviews, eh?

iii) information publications

produce one yourself - 11.1%...surprisingly high number.
offered no recommendations - 83.3%...this one wasn't.

iv) tape/record labels

run one yourself - 31.9%...excellent, good to see.
involved with one - 1.3%...and?
offered no recommendations - 66.6%...never had releases, eh?

v) mailorder distros and shops

run a distro yourself - 13.8%...good, but like to see more
involved with one - 1.3%...and?
offered no recommendations - 81.9%...yet half of you do CDs?

vi) radioshow or television

do a radioshow yourself - 11.1%...excellent, good to see.
offered no recommendations - 84.7%...never had airplay, eh?

vii) recording studios

run your own studio - 9.7%...excellent, good to see.
offered no recommendations - 72.2%...never made recordings, eh?

viii) CD/vinyl manufacturers

offered no recommendations - 87.5%...where were your CDs made then???

LIVE VENUES/GIG PROMOTERS

Not doing live work myself, I'm afraid I can't be of a lot of help with this one. I can understand that many bands won't recommend venues because so few are genuinely worthy of it! I do remember, trust me! The total "list" we got this time is barely worth printing.

Any bands involved with a venue or promoter themselves will be marked in the band index, as will all gigging bands, so do make contact and take advantage of each other's local knowledge etc. If ANY other M&E band ignores you, we want to know about it!

What I need to build up a worthwhile "good gig guide" is your co-operation. When you play at a venue, make a note of its name and address, a contact name, phone number, e-mail etc. Give it a rating as to how you were treated, if you feel you were paid well or poorly, anything relevant. Same with any promoters you should work for. Doesn't matter what country you are in, the info is always useful.

NB: as soon as a get the online magazine going, I will be able to include "upcoming gig lists" for M&E bands, watch for the announcement in due course.

ZINES & NEWSLETTERS

How is it that nearly 60% of you "couldn't" recommend a solitary zine? That one puzzles me, reviews being the life-blood of the underground and all. Nevertheless, we did get a fair list, though quite a few of those were provided with no contact details whatsoever, thus are effectively useless. I will be getting in touch with those that DID come with an address at some point this year, those that pan out will, of course, be featured in the customary way in our regular zine type things. Obviously, there are a couple of prerequisites when we deal with zines, like they have to print a mailorder address (and not all of them will), for example. Generally though, all reviews are welcome...apart from "slate-rags", naturally, I don't think they have any place in an alternative system. Negativity is counter-productive (look at what constant mutual criticism and insults have done to the reputation of politicians!), positivity is contagious. I would never suggest that all zines should start saying any pile of old shite is "a truly wonderful album", better just to ignore it and don't waste space on it. Though where would that leave the poor old Thamesmead Rollers, eh?

Another issue here is what WE can do for the zines. As I keep saying, underground relationships really need to be reciprocal. A lot of zine writers we know struggle, reviewing for and writing zines is a very time-consuming business, plus you would not call it "financially beneficial", huh? Printing or xeroxing is relatively costly, postage adds up a bit too. When a zine has kindly reviewed their material, I note that a number of bands will expect a free copy of the zine too. Well, I think it is important here to remember who is doing who the favour. Bands need zines. Zines, in contrast, will never be short of bands to write about. Be nice, offer to buy a copy, or send a SAE/IRC just for a xerox of the review. (continued...)

ZINES...(continued)

I think that probably what zines could do with are a few other ways to generate some income. Over the years, I've seen so many fold because they couldn't afford to keep going, which is a damned shame. Bands taking on a more responsible and supportive attitude will certainly help, but I can't see it doing the whole job. A couple of suggestions zines might like to consider...you could put together cassette compilations featuring tracks from the pick of the albums you review, then offer them for sale to help support your project. If you wanted to be a bit more ambitious, you could offer items reviewed in your zine for sale via it, kind of like our "distro direct" system (one I would like to see MANY more people adopt out there), a potentially greater source of income, though you have to trust yourself to look after other peoples money! Advertising often get mentioned, but I can't see that working for zines who really need it, only for the bigger and more widely sold titles that don't!

We always try to keep the support mutual here, so when zines do reviews and plugs for us, we reprint them in our own publications and give them a promotional write up too, which brings me on to the subject of band newsletters. Less than 10% of you produce one, whereas 100% of you SHOULD. Even if it's just one sheet of A4 a couple of times a year, they are a valuable tool for communication. They are also a good chance to say thank you to all those who support your band, to give plugs to the zines that review you (nicely, obv!), thus encouraging your fans to read the zines that like your music and strengthening the circle, as it were. It's also nice to plug labels that release your stuff, radioshow that give you airplay, distros that sell it etc etc. So a band newsletter, which is so easy to produce, is not just a great way to further promote your band, it is also an opportunity to give something back to the underground as a whole.

INFORMATION PUBLICATIONS

We don't know nearly enough of these, so an 83.3% "no recommendations" figure was a bit sad! If you should come across good sources of info (A&R stuff, venues, facilities, equipment, whatever), do let us know about them so we can tell everybody else. Meanwhile, TMR (see front cover) are the best source we know.

TAPE & RECORD LABELS

There really don't seem to be so many tape labels around these days, nothing like the amount that were around in the early 90s anyway. The questionnaire pulled in very few that we didn't already know about, so I figure it's about time we tried to give other labels out there some extra support. From now on, M&E will be open to labels in the same way it is to bands. E.g. we'll release sampler compilation cassettes for those labels releases to help promote them and the labels will get the same information service that the bands are entitled to. I think it important in the underground that we do not consider other labels as "competition" or "rivals", so I'd like to advertise as many other labels as possible in this way through M&E, maybe even arrange an extended distro direct arrangement? Something to think about at least. Really, I need to talk to some other labels, do a bit of research and find out what kind of help they would like from us. Any bands running labels (I know there are quite a few of you) should get in touch and we can have a natter about it. I don't think it needs to be specifically a label actually...a co-operative or other promotional project even? Basically...if you are putting out the music of a number of different bands, I figure we can offer our support.

MAILORDER DISTROS & SHOPS

Again, very few came in that we didn't already know about. I've already covered distros quite thoroughly a couple of pages back, hope to come up with a lot more once we get the next M&E CD out.

I would love to see a lot more mailorder distros operating a low risk system like our "distro direct". The way the system works at the moment is nightmarish, so much time and money is wasted, and undergrounders don't tend to be overflowing in either of those departments. It's always nice to find distros that are willing to order a few copies and pay up front, but this is obviously a risk for them and they are unlikely to do it for you if they're not sure they can sell your stuff. I've never been keen on "sale or return" deals, they've always struck me as pointless. Most distros seem to ask for too many copies, so you have to shell out to post them. Then, a couple of years down the line, you have to shell out again to get the distro to mail back all the unsold ones! With any you have sold, it's doubtful you'll ever find out who bought them or get the chance to send them any further information.

The "distro direct" system takes all of these problems into account and eliminates them. The risk to the band is a solitary copy, and you'd have to send a sample/review copy anyway, so no loss there. Orders are then bounced back to the

band to supply direct, thus giving the supplier access to the buyer. Distros should not think of this as giving customers away by letting suppliers deal directly. We've been doing it for a few years and nobody has "stolen our supporters"! In general, supporters like this arrangement as it means they can order from one source with one payment what USED to require a dozen separate orders in four or five currencies. Plus they get to "meet" the band, which is nice. One supporter, to back this up a little, has bought three albums (separate occasions) by the same band, all via M&E Distro Direct. That rather proves that the bands aren't sneakily saying "fuck Magic, buy 'em from us" behind our backs, don't it? Bear in mind, that competitive paranoia belongs to "the music biz", it is not something we need in the underground. So check your attitudes, make sure you are being fair and even-handed when dealing with other undergrounders. Ultimately, we are all on the same side. Though you wouldn't always know it! I mentioned earlier a band who wouldn't give us a CD for our distro direct service because they felt they were in direct competition with us. In other words, they want the sales instead of letting us have a share! A couple of years, I recall the same band being a bit unhappy when I wouldn't give them names and addresses of folks who'd bought their M&E tape releases! And I wasn't deliberately withholding, it's just that I don't keep that information, we index by supporters, not by albums. Secondly, our supporters have never given their consent for me to pass on their details to other people, and doing it without their consent smacks more of Readers Digest than Music & Elsewhere, don't it? So when you look it over, it's a lovely example of a band being selfish without even thinking about it, they expected to be able to share our supporters but were unwilling to share their sales. Like I said, check your attitudes, let's keep it mutually beneficial in all cases.

So really, the whole thing works well from the distros point of view, in spite of that "risk" of "losing customers". The thing I love about it is not having to keep stock copies here, so no worries about finding additional storage space! The only thing you really need to plan is what to do with all the money you are holding for the suppliers. Smile at Sammi, that's what I do. And it works well from a band's viewpoint, no huge postage bills, no dead stock and a chance to "meet the fans".

Shops are a different matter. I guess the main problem is that the underground is a global thing, whereas shops sit in one place. In general, it is not worth having your albums in shops unless you're well known and it is not adequately promoted, and underground bands don't tend to be well known or adequately promoted. There are some really good specialist record shops out there though, ones that attract a curious clientele that really do want to explore music, and these are the kind of shops we look for. When dealing with shops though, it's gonna be "sale or return", so grin and bear it, huh?

One thing does need to be asked of distros though... please pay bands promptly! When one of our bands puts in a request for payment on their distro direct sales, they can expect to receive it within the week. I, on the other hand, am still owed money from 1992! Same thing I said to bands applies to distros, check your attitudes, be fair and even-handed. If any distro is less than scrupulous in dealing with you, we want to know about it.

RADIOSHOWS & TELEVISION

Underground radioshow are getting to be a bit of a rarity, at least according to the 84.7% of you who offered "no recommendations". Those recommendations that came with a contact address will be followed up and reported on in the usual manner, natch. All we ever ask of radioshow is that they produce playlists, and if those playlists should include contact addresses for whoever supplied them with the music, all the better. Do bear in mind, bands generally get no feedback whatsoever from radioplay unless there are contacts on the playlist, so please, let's keep the support mutual.

On the "underground television" front...oh dear, still the wall of silence. The only one we know about is The Psychic Shopping Club, broadcast on cable in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. This one is run by Malcom Ryder, former main man with Sosumi and brain behind Synthetic. Send your videos to Malcom (yes, that IS the way he spells it!) at; P.O.Box 609478, Cleveland, OH 44109, U.S.A. Preferably, NTSC (the American standard) format, though he can convert from PAL (the Euro norm). Format seems to be less of a problem these days anyway. Born To Go (cool American spacerock band) sent me a copy of their NTSC video and it plays fine on my PAL VCR machine, which was a pleasant surprise.

Back to radioshow a moment, it occurs to me that I've seen a few of them fold over the years too, probably because they cost to do and you don't get paid for them (unless you're Chris Evans). So, DJs, don't be afraid to sell tapes/videos of your shows to raise some money for your projects. It also means people who live out of broadcast range can get to hear or see them too. Maybe we should offer you M&E releases also?

RECORDING STUDIOS

I was hoping to get many more leads in than we did here, 72.2% gave no recommendations at all. It is worth noting that 9.7% of our bands have their own facilities though, so do take a look at the band index section for details of those. We recorded the MMATT CD at Braindead in London, you'll find the details on the front cover. This is something I would like to build a good list of, so if you work somewhere and they look after you well, get a good result and charge you reasonably, do let us know, wherever in the world you are.

CD/VINYL MANUFACTURERS

Worse still here, 87.5% offered absolutely nothing...which is strange when you consider more than 50% of you have CD or vinyl releases available, no? Anyway, I'm quite happy to tell you that we use Sounds Good for CDs and think they are quite wonderful, so I'll stick a card in below to give you all the details. They also print and supply our cassettes.



Manufacturers of:

Audio Cassettes
Audio & Digital CDs
Audio & Digital CD-Rs

also:

Mastering & Editing
Print & Design
Scanning & Repro

Alison Marshall

Client Manager

www.sounds-good.co.uk

12 Chiltern Enterprise Centre, Station Road, Theale, Berkshire, RG7 4AA
Tel: 0118 930 2600, Fax: 0118 930 3181, email: alison@sounds-good.co.uk

It's worth noting that some of our bands have their own CD burners and will offer a duplicating service, see the band index for that one. A CD burner is on our shopping list too, so keep your eyes peeled for announcements in the not too far distant future.

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE SERVICE M&E PROVIDES YOU WITH?

Very happy - 56.1%

Quite happy - 28.7%

It's okay - 12.3%

Not very happy - 1 band (thanks, Solanaceae Tau!)

Very unhappy - 1 band (The Thamesmead Rollers are wankers!!!)

Well, I'm pretty satisfied with 85% of you in the "happy arena", thanks, nice to know we're appreciated. What puzzles me is how anybody could NOT be happy with it!!!! I mean, regular M&E publications cover labels, distros, radioshow, zines etc, plus we do our best to provide you individually with whatever you ask for. So where exactly are we letting you down? Tell us, we need to know these things. The Thamesmead Rollers were just joking (but I wasn't, they ARE wankers!), but Solanaceae Tau were not...and the baffling thing is, I cannot think of any occasion where they've actually asked us for information or advice of any kind? The only complaint I recall them making was that they felt they should get a free copy of a compilation we had included them on. Why? As I have said earlier, check your attitudes, remember who is doing you the favour. I can think of no good reason why I should pay for the privilege of promoting your music. If anybody is good enough to include you on a compilation, don't scrounge freebies from them, be nice! If you just want something for your souvenir shelf, do what I do, just ask for a copy of the inlay, thenfold it and put it inside an empty cassette case. Et voila, one souvenir for display. If you actually want a copy of the cassette, offer to pay for one. If we had to give away a free tape to every band we included on it, then it would hardly be worthwhile producing them. The same undoubtedly applies to everybody else who does compilations, so if you want them to keep going and continue promoting your music, don't be a drain on their resources!

I would never refuse a band a sample copy of their own M&E releases, obviously. They may want to check the quality, for example. However, there are some bands who like souvenir copies of everything they have released, so they ask for a free sample copy of all their M&E tape releases, which gets to be a pain. Again, if it is purely a souvenir, ask for an inlay to put into an empty case. I know our printed cassettes are rather nice, but you don't honestly need more than one of them for a souvenir, do you? And it's not as if you haven't got the music already, is it? So a big please to all M&E bands, understand that we like every free cassette to achieve something and not just sit on somebody's trophy shelf gathering dust...and don't ask for one out of vanity, thank you! Remember, we exist to promote your music, not to pander to your ego.

Oh, and while we're on the subject of freebie cadging, there have been bands who send a letter with their master asking for umpteen "promotional copies". If you wanted copies, why didn't you make them BEFORE you sent us the master? Every tape we send a band is one that will not promote any music.

HOW MUCH USE DO YOU MAKE OF THE INFORMATION WE SEND YOU?

A lot of use - 11.5%

Quite a bit - 28.9%

A fair amount - 23.1%

Hardly any use - 27.5%

No use at all - 8.6%

Well, there's certainly 8.6% of you who need that kick up the arse Lord Litter was talking about, isn't there? Generally, I would have liked to see all of our bands falling only into the first three categories and none in the

last two. But around a third of you are barely using the info, if at all, which is madness! Believe me, you are merely one band amongst thousands, there is little chance that zines and labels are going to approach you, however wonderful our reviews of your work are! By not making contact with the many friends we have in the underground, you are depriving yourselves of all kinds of opportunities. Okay, you may sometimes find you get nothing from a particular contact when you write. But, you will definitely get nothing if you don't.

My advice is to make contact with everybody who sounds like they would be into your kind of music. Sending review copies to zines is very worthwhile, it may well get you a few orders and a few new friends, but don't send your music to zines that don't like it, obviously. Do contact appropriate tape labels too, it is to your advantage to get your music released and circulated via as many sources as possible. Same advice for record labels, sometimes you may get offered much more than you expected. I'm talking underground independents here, naturally, I wouldn't waste tuppence sending unsolicited demos to Polygram International! In general, make an effort to involve yourself in the network more, every new friend is a potential source of advancement. Whatever it is you are seeking from your music, the more people that hear it, the more chance that the RIGHT person will hear it.

Some general advice when dealing with undergrounders; the system normally works with all the speed of slugs on barbituates, so get with it a bit more. When people write (and this includes ME!) and ask you for anything, reply promptly and completely. For too long, the underground's "standard opening gambit" has been;

"Sorry about the delay in getting back to you, but..."

...and it really is overdue that we all made an effort to change that. A bit of efficiency and good organisation/time management would be of great benefit to us all, trust me. Bear in mind it has taken me nearly three years to organise the co-operatively financed M&E compilation CD. Every delay has been down to people not answering mail promptly (sometimes not answering it at all) or just generally being disorganised. There was one band who had said yes to the project, then withdrew when they were asked for the money some 18 months later because they couldn't afford it. As I pointed out, if they had sent us £10 a month from when they said yes, they would have paid in full ages earlier. It does get frustrating when you're trying to get something organised, I bet you've all experienced that feeling when you get pissed off with waiting for something to happen, yeah? So at least do your best not to contribute to delays, be efficient, be systematic, get yourself into good habits. I've found that being well organised means I have to do less work overall. I add that just in case you need motivation!

HOW DO YOU RATE THE RESULTS YOU GET FROM M&E PROVIDED INFO?

Excellent - 24%

Pretty good - 36%

Worthwhile - 30%

Barely worth it - 8%

Useless - 2%

Hmmm, I think I'm quite pleased with that, 90% of you find the results worthwhile or better. A bit sad that 10% of you don't, perhaps you can let me know why? Give me some examples, maybe we can work with you to help you achieve better results in the future. We're here for you, remember?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE UNDERGROUNDERS YOU CONTACT?

they are friendly - 52.7%

they are helpful - 31.9%

they are enthusiastic - 30.5%

they are resourceful - 12.5%

they are open minded - 31.9%

they are genuinely interested - 25.0%

they are users, out for their own gain - 5.55%

they are disorganised twats - 6.9%

they are a complete waste of space - 4.1%

It's interesting, isn't it, to see how other perceive the underground network. It's nice to see the negative views got rather small responses, but not so nice to see a very low amount thought undergrounders to be resourceful, because we SHOULD be! Personally, I would have liked to see nearer 100% for "friendly" and "helpful". I know it's rather tough keeping your enthusiasm up at all times, we all get days where we feel like throwing in the towel, huh? I still think there is a LOT of untapped potential in the underground network, it is just a case of working together to release and utilise it. It could be so very much more than it is now, I'm 100% certain of that.

DOES M&E STEER YOU TOWARDS THE "RIGHT SORT" OF CONTACTS?

Always - 22.8% I have to be honest, I'm not too sure
 Mostly - 31.5% how to interpret these answers, the
 Half & half - 38.5% question was a little ambiguous, I
 Rarely - 7.0% fear. The largest chunk of you found
 Never - 0.0% (thanks!) a little "hit & miss" in steering

you right, but does that mean my steering (or advice) was misleading, or that we're simply not in touch with "the right sort of contacts"? I could do with some feedback on this really.

In general, I work on the assumption that you all have music which you want to spread one way or another, so I can't really see how I could be wrong here? It seems obvious that the spread of the vote here implies different perceptions amongst you. And a stranger point would be that no band has ever complained about the type of contacts prior to this last questionnaire! So please, if you want things, you have to ask, I don't have a crystal ball. Er...that's a blatant lie actually, I do have a crystal ball.

HOW MANY UNDERGROUND CONTACTS DO YOU HAVE, APPROXIMATELY?

None at all - 8.4% Quite a spread, isn't it? Very
 A handful - 27.1% sad to see more than 40% of you
 Around ten - 8.4% with 10 or fewer underground
 Around twenty - 8.4% buddies! I would have expected
 Thirty to fifty - 8.4% the largest answer to be around
 Fifty to one hundred - 10.1% the 50 mark, the remainder
 Two hundred or more - 28.8% split between the dozen or so
 and the compulsive networker

200+ division. But what do I know, eh? It strikes me that many bands are still very insular and that is a very unproductive attitude, especially where a large network is concerned. Be nice, make friends, take an interest on what is going on beyond your own projects, communicate and grow! Remember, the underground is much greater than the sum of all its constituent parts!

AND HOW MANY OF THEM HAVE YOU "MET" VIA M&E?

None at all - 6.2% As with the first question, this seems
 One per cent - 20.8% to indicate an "all or nothing"
 Ten per cent - 18.7% mentality, don't you think so? The
 A quarter - 14.5% concentration areas in the first part of
 A half - 4.1% the question were "a handful" and "two
 Most of them - 6.2% hundred or more", then in this second
 All of them - 29.1% part, they are "one/ten per cent" and
 "all of them". Interesting, innit? So we

seem to have two predominant types of underground, one type obsessive and compulsive, the other type lazy, disorganised and masters in the art of procrastination! There's a psychology paper in this somewhere! Ha ha!

On average, an M&E band has 79 underground contacts, 33 of which would be credited to us.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW OF THE UNDERGROUND NETWORK?

- 1: "an extremely important movement and a significant sociological phenomenon, invaluable" 35.2%
- 2: "it definately matters, being the only system for free artistic expression around" 40.0%
- 3: "it's okay, I guess, enjoyable, but I'm not sure it's ever really going anywhere" 16.4%
- 4: "it's run by hobbyists, deluding themselves that they are doing something significant" 5.8%
- 5: "it's a haven for losers and a soft option for bands who aren't good enough really" 2.3%

Ah, but it seems we have some cynics amongst us! Well, let's just ignore that bottom 8.1%. I mean, if they TRULY thought that way, why would they be involved? I was very pleased to see that 75% of you have a positive outlook. The 16.4% in the middle, some might call them cynics, but a cynic is what an idealist calls a realist! I can understand that viewpoint, of course. I can't say I'm always THAT sure it's leading anywhere myself! I'd like to think so, but it can only happen if the large majority of networkers really co-operate, think positively and get into the notions of efficiency and good time-management, it would be hard work otherwise, and who the hell wants to do unnecessary hard work???

Personally, I think the first answer is the most valid, even though only a third of you agree. It is most certainly a significant sociological phenomenon, it just built up on its own, nobody really created it as such, rather it inspired them to participate. It certainly qualifies as an extremely important movement too. All it really seems to lack is cohesion and a universal sense of purpose, and I am rather hoping this report will get you all thinking and talking about everything that it has been, is and could be.

DO YOU EVER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR DISCOUNT AND BUY M&E TAPES?

Regularly - 6.9% Yes, that leaves 11.4% of you who
 Occasionally - 15.2% ducked the question rather craftily!
 Rarely - 27.7% But then your silence speaks volumes...
 Never - 38.8% cheapskates! Well, what can I say? This

is disappointing, the percentage gets larger in the "less interest" area, insularity reigns. I've always found it helpful and constructive to be aware of other music that is being produced in the underground. It helps provide a more informed overview, and it has to be difficult being part of a movement of which you know so little, surely? I've always found that buying a sampler tape from a label is the best way to see if your music would work on it.

Those of you that run labels, produce zines etc, well... you're all in the same position as me, you get sent plenty of stuff, so you don't need to buy samplers to know what's going on out there. It's a particular sector of bands that are losing out, those whose only project is their own band and who take no interest whatsoever in what everybody else is doing. And sadly, there are quite a few bands that fit that description. It's a very myopic and misguided view that singlemindedness will reap benefits. I've found the opposite, we sold vastly more MMATT albums AFTER we opened up M&E to other bands on a global scale. That's not why we did it, I didn't know it would happen, obviously not, how could I? The words of that song echo in my ears; "you're gonna reap just what you saw". You tell 'em, Lou, and ain't it the truth!

Personally, I would love it if every M&E band took out a subscription. We are only talking £10 a year (20 pence a week), I know, but the income would still make a significant difference to M&E coffers and, therefore, the kind of service we can provide. It would also net bands 3 x 90 minute cassette compilations every year and each M&E News (and all other material) as published, e.g. the full monty, you'd miss now! As I've said a number of times in this report already, check your attitudes, be supportive of the system as a whole, it works, trust me.

M&E NEWS >>>

Next up, I'd like to run through the M&E Newsletter and deal with a few queries, comments and suggestions I've received from bands during the course of doing the questionnaires.

THE CHARTS...

Okay, I admit it, they are not straightforward! We issue best sellers charts three times a year, on the first day of January, May and September (though they won't actually be published that same day, natch). Each chart reflects sales for the previous one year, not just the four months between them. I think this makes them more valid, they become a kind of "current period" charts instead of just a "kick and rush" job, reflecting a more accurate view of what is popular with M&E supporters generally, rather than just working off the latest new release list. Also, it helps steady sellers get the chart place they deserve, we've had occasions in the past where an album made the "best of year" chart without ever having placed in the then quarterly charts! So now everything gets the showing it deserves, which has to be better.

The charts are based on sales alone, but there is a handicap system that allows CDs and vinyl LPs to compete evenly with cassette releases. For every distro album (CD/LP) we sell, we'll sell 16.65 cassette albums (approximately!), so CD/LP sales get multiplied by 16.65 to even the playing field. The figures change every four months according to the changing sales ratio, naturally. In the event of a tie, the title that has earned the most money (what price capitalism?) goes in front. Oh, I should hasten to point out the MMATT CD gets no such advantage, pretty promise with little pink ribbons on!

ON AVERAGE, EACH 100 ITEMS WE SELL COMPRISES OF...

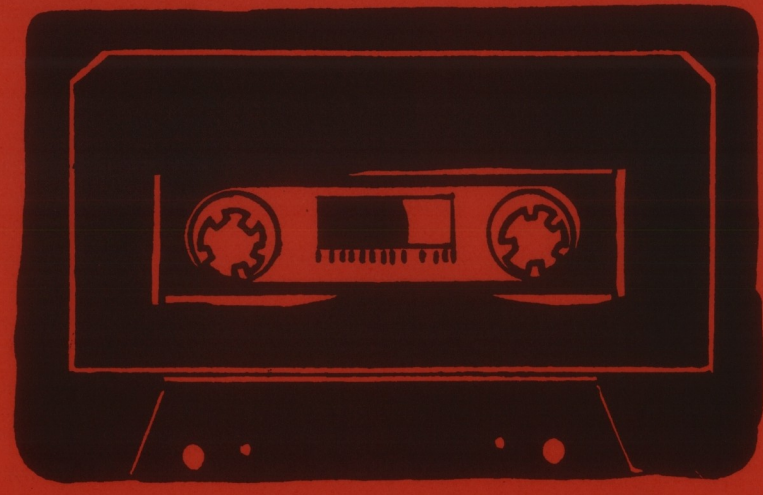
Cassettes	88.34.....all cassettes - 88.34 per 100
MMATT CD 1s	4.68.....
CD albums/EPs	3.83.....all CDs/CDRs - 9.35 per 100
CDR albums/EPs	0.84.....
Vinyl albums	0.60.....all vinyl - 1.13 per 100
Vinyl singles/EPs	0.53.....

I thought those statistics would be of interest to the "cassettes are dead" brigade. Oh really? As you can see, MCs outsell CDs 9½ times over! To put this into some kind of perspective, it helps to note that only 47.58% of the items we release/distribute are cassettes, yet they account for nearly 90% of sales. CDs, in contrast, make up 45.56% of releases, yet only slightly less than 10% of sales. Incredibly, in only three years of running the Distro Direct service, we now put out more recordings through it than we actually release on the M&E tape label! The danger here is that cassettes are our main source of income so we do need them, we'll come back to that.

ON REVIEWS...

It has been suggested a few times that I let other people do some of the reviews of M&E releases and distro items. I've given it some thought and agree that an infusion of different opinions would be beneficial, though do see certain potential problems if I don't review everything myself. My personally reviewing everything gives a consistent standard for all abums, so no band is overly praised by an arse-licker and no band is brutally slain by a nihilistic dipshit (unless they are called The Thamesmead Rollers, of course), all things are even. Also, my reviewing everything gives a constant standard for quality. I really do need to review everything to check the master is okay, that kind of thing.

Thus, a compromise seems in order. I'll carry on as I do and review everything myself, but allow bands to send in other reviews they've got for the album for me to reprint in the M&E Newsletters, okay?



THE GREAT CASSETTE vs. COMPACT DISC DEBATE...

Okay, I don't think there's much argument here quality wise, and thus little question as to why bands would rather issue their music on CD or vinyl. The problem here is one of economics. Cassette sales from M&E releases are the life-blood of the whole project, they pay for everything. So, if we get deprived of cassettes, we are also being deprived of necessary income. It's already got to the point where distro items have exceeded M&E cassette releases. In our last issue of the M&E News (Fall '99), they outnumbered M&E cassette albums by 4 to 1. If distro item sales were keeping pace, I wouldn't be worried. BUT...the sad truth is, as you know, they are not.

While it has become increasingly more obvious that bands want their music on CD, our supporters would much rather it was on cassette. We have to be aware that a "household name" in the underground doesn't mean anyone much has heard of our bands, does it? Cassettes are a reasonable price, so a more affordable risk to supporters checking out your music for the first time. Since none of us would survive for long without people buying our music, we obviously have to look after their interests. But, at the same time, I don't want to deprive bands of the fidelity they would like.

I will look into the prices of CD burners in the near future, maybe it is time to take M&E a step further and begin to issue CDRs as well as cassettes. But again, compromise will be needed. If we issue our own CDRs, we will NOT be able to accept them as distro items anymore. The distro service is purely there for formats we DON'T produce ourselves. I know in America you can get boxes of 50 gold CDR blanks from CompUSA for \$30 (about 35p each), but I don't think the prices have hit that kind of a low in Europe or the UK as yet. Either way, it is doubtful that blank CDRs would cost much more than blank tapes seem to, so I guess they are a viable alternative now. I am certainly willing to experiment.

As is obvious from sales figures on the previous page, financing the M&E/UWU project will become much harder if we're trying to raise 90% of our income from less than half of our output. At the same time, I do recognise that bands would like to make a few dollars from their efforts too, hence why we started the distro service in the first place. Compromise time again, methinks? Perhaps I can put forward a few suggestions and see what kind of feedback you want to give...

- 1) Once a CD has been on the distro service for a good period of time (say a year or so?), or maybe once you have issued a follow-up CD, how about letting us then put out a cassette version on M&E? This doesn't mean that the CD would then be withdrawn, of course, we could leave it available simultaneously as we do with a number of albums now.

- 2) Perhaps you could think about doing the odd live cassette for M&E release also?

Actually, that's the only two things I can think of! And to think I'm supposed to be clever! Hah! Anyway, the first of those two suggestions is doubtful to lose you any distro sales, so long as we get that initial period of time right. I've just had a look through the distro index cards and could find only three albums whose sales spanned a period greater than one year, and I think we have over 100 on the list. Only one's sales span more than two years. So I would think a year would be fine as a kind of ball-park figure, there doesn't need to be any hard and fast rule. And obviously, it depends on wether or not the copyright of the album is yours to do with as you wish. The second suggestion is one that a few of you have done anyway, and live albums (if well recorded) are normally pretty popular with our supporters. So please give it some thought and let us know what you come up with, all your ideas and opinions will be most welcome.

DISTRO DIRECT PRICING...

While we are at it, if you would like us to sell your CDs, then how about giving us a REAL chance to sell more by pricing them a little more reasonably? What made me think about this is i) that we have had a couple of complaints about some of the prices, and ii) I've just sent off a £60 cheque to one of our bands, it was for seven CDs we'd sold, which works out to a "dealer price" of £8.57 each! Trade price of our own MMATT CDs is only £5.00 each, £4.50 for multiple orders. If you have a look in Music Week, you'll find the "dealer price" of most new albums is only around the £7 to £7.50 mark. If a dealer can get the latest Oasis album for £7.50, he's hardly likely to think twice about a Magic Moments album at £8.57, is he? A CD album only costs around £2.50 per unit to produce, so I think some of the prices you are coming in with are quite unjustifiable.

While the RRP of CDs in the UK remains high, I think £14.99 is the norm (?), many places sell them much cheaper. I got the Geri Halliwell album (for my little nephew!) from Asda for £9.99. That's major, that is mainstream pricing, I've always felt the underground should be cheaper!

There's some wild variation on our Fall '99 Distro Direct price list. Let's take CD albums...

- from £2.00 (Various - "SMD Compilation Disc 1")
- to £13.85 (Er...two other SMD releases...maybe that was a bad example, I'll try again...)

- from £5.10 (Barking Dogma, cheapest fully packaged album)
- to £13.85 (latest releases on SMD's Neu Harmony label)

Of M&E bands, the most expensive is Venus Fly Trap at £13.00. Let's try CDR albums...

- from £3.31 (Eye/Aya's "Aphasia" & Blatant Propaganda comp)
- to £13.32 (Solanaceae Tau's "Crowley, Bakunist etc")

Now, while I know German postal rates are nightmarish (hence why I'll not go into 12" vinyl LP prices here), I don't see how anybody can justify £13.32 for a CDR! What baffles me more is that we've had orders for it! Sure, it's a good album, but the price is horrific.

A while back, a band asked me how many copies of the MMATT CD we'd sold and how much money we'd made on it. I think it was about 1,000 copies at the time, and probably around the same number in pounds profit-wise (e.g. not enough to record and manufacture another one...sob). They laughed and told me they'd made that much out of 350 CDs. Strange attitude. I mean, we both had £1,000, but 1,000 people had our CD and only 350 people had theirs. I knew which band I'd rather be in!

Have a good think about what you're charging for CDs and that through M&E, I'm sure you would sell many more copies if the prices were reasonable to cheap. Let's at least beat the arse off HMV and Virgin megastores, huh? You will get another chance in the coming months, we'll be doing new Distro Direct forms (having realised we forgot "minor" details...like who to make cheques payable to...ahem!), be nice, your supporters deserve the best value you can offer them. Let's be better than "the music industry", let's make the underground stand for fair pricing and good value!

HOW TOUGH IS IT TO GET ON THE M&E LABEL?

I wasn't sure myself, so I actually kept a demo logbook last year (1999), just out of curiosity. Of 220 demos received, we showed further interest in 68 of them, 30.9%. Of this 68, 30 have/will have M&E album releases, 5 are in the "pending" file, 33 are definately not getting M&E releases. So, assuming those in the "pending" file and up on M&E, as expected, that would make 35 out of 220, or an acceptance rate of 15.9%. In other words, a band sending us a demo has a 1 in 6 1/4 chance of getting on M&E. Not as easy as you thought, eh? Remember these figures next time somebody does the "tape labels will release any old bollocks" argument on ya!

The Radical Presses Register

are compiling a register of
Underground Rock Releases

For More Information

**B.M BETELGUISE,
LONDON
WC1 3XX**

Financed through advertising.

R.P.R. Distribution: Books and CDs.

B.M. BETELGUISE, LONDON, WC1N 3XX.

Dear Distribution Collective,

We are trying to compile a comprehensive listing of underground rock bands, their labels and distributors, for inclusion in a regular listing (Free Music F.I.N.). Please see the enclosed forms. I also enclose a couple of spare forms, in case you should know of any bands etc., who may be interested in being included in our listing. If you could get back to us with details, please include details of the sort of music you are interested in distributing, the price reduction you ask for, and any other details...

The R.P.R. and Free Music F.I.N. are hoping to release a benefit CD of underground bands who have been included in our listing, and we were wondering if you would be interested in buying copies from us, in the name of raising funds for a constantly updated register of underground music, updated every three months?

We are planning to advertise our free listing every two months or so in the anarchist press. Thankyou for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

Tim Telsa. BREW CREW U.K.

Band it

A & R NEWSLETTER

*** MUSIC & ELSEWHERE is a non-profit underground music promotional thing run for the last thirteen years by Mick Magic. M&E have built up an extensive global network of distros and mail order which handles the releases of up to 100 bands and small labels.

The network is dedicated to helping bands, which play the music they like rather than outright commercial stuff, distribute their material. The music areas most appropriate to this set up is stuff like Psychedelic, Space Rock, Gothic, Electronic, Avant Garde, Pagan, Alternative and anything outside the main commercial stream.

Mick is just switching onto the Net so I'm sure his enterprise is on the brink of another leap forward. If you have a product in this area - cassette, vinyl or CD or have some masters ready to release give Mick a call.

Mick Magic, MUSIC & ELSEWHERE, 6 Farm Court, FRIMLEY, GU16 5TJ, Tel 01276 502706, magic@uwunderground.fsnet.co.uk www.music-elsewhere.hypermart.net

The above clipping should give you an idea of the style and content of the Bandit A&R Newsletter (see page III for contact details), and John doesn't normally get website addresses wrong, promise! The above is from the March 2000 issue no.146 (yup, well established). Issues are 4 sides of A4, approximately two dozen profiles (as ours) featured in each, price varies from £4 to £10, depending on method of payment, method of delivery and duration of subscription. If this sounds expensive, I'm afraid it is not, music business info ALWAYS costs!

LOST BANDS '99!

Right, time to start begging for your help. I dunno, I spend 9 pages telling you off, then I have the barefaced cheek to ask for help, ha! Ah, but I only do it because I care what happens to you all (except Cheapo Card Company), promise. If I can inspire everyone to pull their weight a little more, we could get something really amazing going here. First, I have to inspire you all to answer a simple questionnaire every couple of years...

As we entered the year 2000, the following M&E Bands had not returned their questionnaires and been out of contact for quite some time. If any of you know their whereabouts, please ask them to get in touch or let us know where we can find them, muchas gracias. Here goes...

United Kingdom: Alphane Moon, Equinox Revolution (French, but last known living in London), Kava Kava, Mlehst (Bandaged Hand Produce), The Original Mind, Sons Of Selina, The Witches (Polish, but last known living in London), This Window (M4TR), The Jelicons, Wine Dark Sea, The Now, Space Cadet, Gurus Of The New Millenium.

United States Of America: Alien Planetscapes, L.G. Mair Jr., Dave Munkhoff, Qubais Reed Ghazala, Star Period Star.

Spain: Anima Mundi.

Austria: B.D.F. (Bild Der Frau).

Norway: Chateau De Fleurs, Esperanza, Oberon.

France: M. Nomized (Fraction Studio).

Brazil: Alex Sciavi (last known living in Sao Paulo, though could be in Italy. Oops, surname is "Schiavi" actually!

Lithuania: Siela.

Sweden: Dark Side Cowboys (Wanted zine, Moriensis Productions).

Germany: Sweet William (Psychedelic Dancefloor).

Australia: Troll (T.O.A.N. - Tales Of A Nomad).

Finland: Mother Goose.

We don't particularly want to lose any of you (except Cheapo Card Company, but they ALWAYS bloody reply!), so please always inform us of changes of address as soon as possible, thanks.

TRANSLATE 'U.W.U'!

This request is still an ongoing thing at the time of writing, I still need to translate the phrase "United World Underground" into as many languages as possible. As you'll know, we're using this name as an umbrella title for the project these days, and will be developing it into an online zine etc etc in the near future. Apparently, I couldn't have picked a more awkward phrase to use! I thought long and hard about it and decided UNITED WORLD UNDERGROUND sounded cool as fuck...in English!

Verily, we've had the foreign contingent mortified by something they claim don't translate so easily at all. Oops. Okay, let me see if I can simplify the matter by saying it doesn't need to be a literal word-for-word translation, but rather the nearest equivalent, and one that conveys the same meaning. To me, UWU is a name that represents my own vision of what I'm trying to do with M&E etc. M&E is not just a tape label, that was never what I intended, just a means to finance it, M&E is an underground promotional project, this is underground. It's global, no barriers exist (that I've put there), people from all the nations of the Earth are welcome to join us, thus this is world underground. Then ultimately, I want M&E etc to be a focus of many various underground projects from all over the place, thus forming a united world underground. So that's what I want the translations to say to people of all cultures, that this project is a United World Underground project. Et voila. Your help will be invaluable, and you'll find "state of play" reports on this subject in the M&E Newsletters.

Also still after those nice touristy cassettes of ethnic and traditional music from all over the place. Again, consider this an ongoing scrounge! They'll have titles like "Muzika Traditionale Bulgareski" or "Haggis, Neeps & Ceilidh", you know the kind of things, huh? Much appreciated, starting to build a really fascinating library of these tourist cassettes, so please check your local Woolco for us, thanks!

Right, this is where Mr.Computer takes over, the "band index" section itself, which one is developing as a textdocument (I say, how la-de-bloody-da of me!) on one's PC. Those of you wot are online will have received this electronically, so this'll be the end. Those not online still have more pages to read.

Hope you will find all of this useful, productive and food for thought. All the best, Mick Magic.

"electronic", ambient experimental soundscapes - Blaine has now left to go solo, but Jason says he will keep the CU name going. Having said that, they haven't done an album since 1994, so perhaps classify as semi-active?

CONSPIRACY, THE - Duncan Pope, 47 Yealm Park, Yealmpton, Plymouth, Devon, PL8 2NR, UK. (VLP/CD)

"English / pop / electrophrenic" - under non exclusive contract to Pink Lemon Records (Germany).

CORE - umbrella title and distro for output of (and see) "Trash Tapes" and "Phantomnoise Records".

COSMIC DANCE SOCIETY - Rasmi & Caroline, Gerhardstr. 12, 27576 Bremerhaven, Germany.

electro based, stylish female vocals - other projects include: Feces Connoisseurs, Folterchrist IV and Crimson Revelation).

CRIMSON REVELATION - side project of (and see) "Cosmic Dance Society".

CYBERDELIA RECORDS - new label run by Mike Pougounas, nothing known as yet, see "Flowers Of Romance, The".

DAGGER TAPES - label run by Keith Donaldson, covering punk, 60s garage, specially female fronted, see "Sanity Assassins".

DARK STAR - Wolfgang Reffert, Kartausenstr. 35, 79102 Freiburg, Germany. (CD)

"psychedelic electronic rock", instrumental - Wolfgang does the Pleasuredome radioshow on Radio Dreyeckland, has own label called Failsafe Productions.

DOCTOR BROWN - Kev Ellis, 52 Esslemont Road, Southsea, Hampshire, PO4 0ET, UK. (VLP/CD)

"bearded psyche mayhem" - sadly, this classic band has now split up, though a new band is on the way, we are told. DB recordings issued through Beard Records are unlikely to be available for a few years. The side project, The Sonic Arcana, could be ongoing. Kev produces an online e-zine (allegedly!) called The Magic Cat.

DREAMING ELECTRIC - radioshow hosted by Thomas K. Bollinger, covers experimental, electronica, eccentric and eclectic music, see "Stinking Badger Of Java, The".

DYMOND, KEVYN - P.O. Box 35, Arcata, CA 95518-0035, USA.

various musical styles, from humouresque west coast rock to classical guitar and beyond - occasional live work #? - the man behind Guaranteed Cleveland Records, produced recordings with / under the name of: The Folkoffs, ... & Mark Shafer, Barking Dogma and Cynde Gehman. Writes an occasional zine called Anemic Billfold. Crap at chess :-)

EARTH - Wolfgang Erdmann, Ludwigstr. 49, 63263 Neu Isenburg, Germany. (CDR)

"spaceartrock", earlier work instrumental, added vocals to recent stuff - Wolfgang also plays guitar with Die Traktor.

ED - managed by Karen Rasmussen, 798 S. Cooper Street, Memphis, TN 38104, USA. (CD)

psyche underground rock - live # - work under the name of "Edipal Productions".

EDIPAL PRODUCTIONS - "own material" label and promotion, see "Ed".

EDITION GRUNDMANN & NEUBERT - former working name of "Edition Neumann".

EDITION NEUMANN - Siegfried Grundmann-Neubert, Gruner Hang 26, 48151 Munster, Germany. (CDR)

various electronic styles - runs CDR label of same name, does instrumental electronic and guitar music

ELECTROSHOCK - record label and television programme, electronic/experimental styles, see "Artemiev, Artemiy".

ENDYMION - Barbarella S. Buchner, 21a Dames Road, London, E7 0DS, UK.

"dark sensual haunting kitschy goth pop" - has own 8 track recording studio, would suit solo artistes.

EXPRIMENTAL - Vincent Bondet, 5 Chemin Pierre Vincent, 13220 Chateaufort-Les-Martigues, France.

"experimental / industrial / ambient" - live - known as "Kelektrik" until fairly recently, Vincent also publishes a zine called Notions and a label called OIW.

EYE - Ryan J. Citizen, P.O. Box 1327, Woden, ACT 2606, Australia. (CDR)

"industrial electronica propaganda" - live # - produces a zine called Blatant Propaganda, runs a CDR label of the same name.

Ryan also does radioshows called Know Your Product and Beatside. Other musical project: Aya (more instrumental).

FAILSAFE PRODUCTIONS - own material record and tape label, see "Dark Star".

FECES CONNOISSEURS - side project of (and see) "Cosmic Dance Society".

FLOWERS OF ROMANCE, THE - Mike Pougounas, P.O. Box 80508, 18510 Piraeus, Greece. (VLP/CD)

"gothic rock" - live (with new band) # - sadly, another band that has now split up, though Mike is involved in a dancey type band called Nexus. Under contract to FM Records (Greece). Latest news from Mike is that he has started a label called Cyberdelia Records.

FOLKOFFS, THE - former band of (and see) "Dymond, Kevyn", now defunct.

FOLTERCHRIST IV - side project of (and see) "Cosmic Dance Society".

FREAKY FUNGI - own material record label of (and see) "Mr.Quimby's Beard".

FREIE ORCHESTER, DAS - former band of (and see) "Lord Litter", now defunct.

GEHMAN, CYNDE - folk singer, worked with (and see) "Dymond, Kevyn".

GONG STUDIO - studio run by Luca Merlin, digital hard disc recording and mastering. See "Zero Branco".

GOTHICA - Roberto Del Vecchio, Via A. De Gasperi 36, 66054 Vasto (CH), Italy.

arty dark operatic gothic.

GRASS HARP - Robert Hohn, Friedrich-Wilhelm-Str. 26, 38100 Braunschweig, Germany. (CD)

"glowing psychedelic rock" - live # - run Moonbean Records label.

GROVER - Simon Fox, 65 Institute Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7EY, UK. (CD)

crunchy underground rock fusion - live #?

GUARANTEED CLEVELAND RECORDS - in the main, an own material and related projects tape label for (and see) "Dymond, Kevyn", though does occasional compilations of various styles, mainly tuneful and with vocals.

GURUS OF THE NEW MILLENIUM - Glenn Barnes, 26 Charter Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1NG, UK. (CD)

progressive / psychedelic harmonic rock - live.

HARD DISC - record label, various underground styles of interest, run by (and see) "Hiraoka, Toshiyuki".

HARSH REALITY MUSIC - Chris Phinney, P.O. Box 241661, Memphis, TN 38124-1661, U.S.A.

Label: variety of styles, a lot of spacey experimental material, home to Viktimized Karcass etc.

HHETHH - own material record label, but open distro, see "Brusaschetto, Daniele".

HIRAOKA, TOSHIYUKI - 3-77-8 Nisshin, Omiya, Saitama, 331-0044 Japan. (CD)

"Japanese dark electro" - live # - runs the Hard Disc record label and online distro.

IDIOM - Rachel Trimmer, 298 Vicarage Road, Longwood, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD3 4HJ, UK. (CDR)

"fairy tales for those who never came down", progressive psychedelia(ish) - live #

INNER CITY UNIT - Judge Trev, 48 Barbauld Road, Stoke Newington, London, N16 0ST, UK. (CD)

"psychedelic punk", come on, you know who they are! - live # - have own Judgement Records label.

INTERNAL AUTONOMY (VLP) - "experimental punk whatever" - former band of Al Cable, now defunct. See "X, Al"

INTO THE ABYSS - Janis Kalifatidis, Marathonos 5a, 15235 Vrilissia, Athens, Greece. (CD)

progressive psychedelic gothic rock - planning live work again in near future #? - used to publish the Fight Amnesia zine, under contract to "In Wonderland" (Germany)

INTROIT - former band of Jerome Soudan, now defunct, see "Mimetic..."

INVISIBLE UNIVERSE - Pasi Nyronen, Keskipanulantie 1 B 1, 61800 Kauhajoki, Finland.

electronic music - though supposedly still active, has not issued an album through us since 1993, so not 100% sure?

IN YER FACE RECORDS - record label, rock mainly, AOR / metal range, though some surprises on compilations. See "Blade".

IR VISA TAI KAS YRA GRAZU YRA GRAZU - Arturas Slipavicius, 22-1 Seimyniskiu Str., 2005 Vilnius, Lithuania. (CD)

Managed by Vidmantas Laurinavicius, A.D. 2315, Vilnius 2051, Lithuania.

totally off the wall Eastern European avant garde - live #

I.S.V.N. - Chris France, 20 Lakeside Gardens, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, CF48 1EN, UK. (CDR)

"experimental electronic futurist" - formerly known as THX:// - Chris runs the BZ Recordings label and is also producing a zine called Soul Catcher.

JAWS OF THE FLYING CARPET - David Bohatyretz, 6397 Glen Knolls Drive, Orleans, Ontario, K1C 2W9, Canada.

"interdimensional ethnic improvisation" - live #? - have own recording studio called The Outdoor Planet, David is also behind the Rotton Kidz "band".

JUDGEMENT RECORDS - own material record label run by Judge Trev, see "Inner City Unit".

KELEKTRIK - former name of (and see) "Exprimental".

KLANGWART - Markus Detmer, Zulpicher Str. 251, 50937 Köln, Germany. (CD/VLP)

electro experimentalists - live - Markus also runs the Klangstelle label, seems to be for own material and related projects, plus the Staubgold distro, which covers an extensive range of underground and independent music, bands both known and otherwise. Originally in a band called Amrol in the early 90s.

KNOW YOUR PRODUCT - Australian bands radioshow, hosted by Ryan J. Citizen, see "Eye".

KRANKHEIT DER JUGEND - Tim Siebert, Hauptstr. 75, 74206 Bad Wimpfen, Germany. (CD)

"art rock / avant garde", blend of - live #? - publish a zine called Betonbruch and run a label called KrankeKunstVerlag.

KRANKEKUNSTVERLAG - label run by Tim Siebert, for own material and related projects, see "Krankheit Der Jugend".

LEGENDARY POPTONES, THE - Ivo Vladimirov, 91-6-104, 1797 Mladost 1, Sofia, Bulgaria.

avant garde experimentalists, have done a lot of collaborative work with M.Nomized.

LONELY WHISTLE MUSIC - tape label, very into real "hometaper" music, see "Campau, Don".

LORD LITTER - Jorg Dittmar, Pariser Str. 63, 10719 Berlin, Germany.

"roots music", a great variety of styles over the years - live # - used to run the Out Of The Blue and KFR Germany tape labels, also former member of Das Freie Orchester, still produces the long running Lord Litter's (Tapedepartment) Radioshow for Radio Marabu and other stations, English and German language versions. An underground stalwart.

LORD LITTER'S RADIOSHOW - obvious really, innit? All styles of real independent and underground music.

LOVE IN A PLAGUE - Dave Beckley, 16 High Street, Wollaston, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4NH, UK.

Managed by Tim Cook, 48 Billingsbaw Drive, Bramley, Leeds, LS13 4RX, UK.

"ambient triphop jazzy".

MAGIC CAT, THE - online e-zine, covers psychedelia mainly, see "Doctor Brown".

MAGIC MOMENTS AT TWILIGHT TIME - Mick Magic, 6 Farm Court, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 5TJ, UK. (CD)

"psychospace art rock" - currently inactive, I have no plans to reform the band whatsoever, I am much more interested in building the United World Underground project up nowadays and really don't have time for both. May possibly do something solo in the future, but meanwhile, the UWU is a real opportunity to make a difference, therefore much more important.

MICHAEL, DOUG, & THE OUTER DARKNESS - P.O. Box 3166, Antioch, CA 94531-3166, USA. (CDR)

"instrumental industrial jazz / rock" - runs a label called Angular Momentum.

MIMETIC (BIRTH / FIELD / KINO) - Jerome Soudan, Lowestr. 5, 10249 Berlin, Germany. (CD)

"techno orchestral industrial" - live - also plays drums with Von Magnet, formerly with Introit. Under non exclusive contracts to Moloko + (Germany) and Fario (France).

THE MIND STEP RECORDS - Christian, P.O. Box 3465, Hermit Park, Queensland 4812, Australia.

Label: "subversive techno" - there's also a zine of the same name, though it's been a while since last issue.

MOONBEAN RECORDS - own material record label, see "Grass Harp".

MOTION CONTROL - Jamie Ballinger, 4 Ashfield Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 0QD, UK.

"cinematic noisy soundscapes" - live work a possibility, uncertain.

MOTO, MR. - Matthias Lang, Barendellstr. 35, 66862 Kindsbach, Germany.

Germanic avant garde - Matthias ran Irre Tapes for many years, an underground stalwart, still does some writing for My Way.

MR. QUIMBY'S BEARD - Hardy, 3 Sussex Street, Silksworth, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, SR3 1BY, UK. (CD)

"spacerock" - plan to go live very soon - run the Freaky Fungi label, in connection with Stone Premonitions.

MUGWUMP - Dave Burton Management, 126 Rocky Lane, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 1QF, UK. (CDR)

"innovative / new / interesting", sound like The Doors a bit - live #

NEO - Brian Doran, 8 Smiths Lane, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5PD, UK. (CDR)

operatic lead (baritone) progressive rock - live work is a maybe, have performed previously as "Operattack".

NO PIGEONHOLES - radioshow, very eclectic coverage, just about any style, see "Campau, Don".

NOTIONS - zine published by Vincent Bondet, experimental / industrial / ambient / dark, see "Exprimental".

NOVA GALAXIE ROBOTNIK - "dark electronic" - alter ego band of (and see) "Venus Fly Trap, The".

NUDE - "big beat/drum 'n' bass" - side project of (and see) "Sabotage".

NUMEROZERO - zine produced by Luca Merlin, covers music, literature and art. See "Zero Branco".

O'BRIEN, ROBIN - "soaring spacey soprano", we call her "The Voice" - see (and married to) "Campau, Don".

O.I.W. - own material tape label and distro run by Oliver Bondet, see "Exprimental".

OPERATTACK - former name of (and see) "Neo".

ORIGINAL MIND (BAND), THE - earlier incarnation of (and see) "Uncle Id".

OTHERWORLD - Clare Durrant, 15 Reilly Street, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5NB, UK.

imaginative worldly and rhythmic, wispy female vocals - hoping to start live work soon.

OUTDOOR PLANET, THE - recording studio, run by David Bohatyretz, see "Jaws Of The Flying Carpet".

PHANTOMNOISE RECORDS - the vinyl section of (and see) "Trash Tapes".

PLEASURESDOME - radioshow, covers electronic / spacey / psychedelic music, see "Dark Star".

POLYGRAPH RECORDS - own material record label and umbrella title for interests of (and see) "Unlimbo".

PORNORPHANS - Jytt Valkeinen, Hameenkatu 17 A 3, 33200 Tampere, Finland. (CD)

"pornophanic", melodic rock, female vocal lead - live # - expecting debut CD on Org Records (UK) soon.

PSEUDO SUN - Juba Nurmenniemi, c/o Ekman, Fregattv. 16 2tr., S-181 37 Lidingo, Sweden. (CD)

"spacey synth landscapes", progressive spacerock - live # - side project: Captain's Log.

QUICKSILVER - record label (CDRs) run by (and see) "This Elegant Chaos". Compilations and albums, many indie styles plus.

RABBIT'S HAT, THE (CD) - "psychedelic pop rock prog" - member band of (and see) "Stone Premonitions".

RAINFALL RECORDS - own material record label of (and see) "Stormclouds".

RAS.AL.GHUL - Fernando Cerqueira, R.S. Marcal 75 R/C, 1200-419 Lisboa, Portugal. (CDR)

"ambient electronic exotic" - planning live work soon - Fernando used to run the SPH tape label some years ago.

RAVEN STUDIO - small home studio run by Al Cable, see "X, Al".

ROTTON KIDZ - multinational co-operative "band", co-ordinated by David Bohatyretz, see "Jaws Of The Flying Carpet".

SABOCON - umbrella title for business interests of (and see) "Sabotage".

