

Girls Against Boys

What started out as an experimental studio band in DC during the late 80's, the now NY-based Girls Against Boys seminal sound continues to evolve. Their lineup for the last three years teams ex-Soulside musicians Alexis Fleisig, Scott McCloud, and Johnny Temple with record engineer Eli Janney. The following interview with Johnny and Alexis transpired after their climactic set June 10 at JC Dobb's, Philadelphia, PA. (Conducted by Skate, edited by Frank)

J: (as he reveals his latest blister addition): This is the blister interview #32.

FOE: What happened with the technical difficulties?

A: Scott's amp is not working, as usual.

J: Scott's been using the same equipment since the Soulside days. Actually, Alexis and I also are both using Soulside equipment; however ours works better than Scott's.

A: Johnny's bass cabinet was just stolen.

J: We're plotting to destroy Scott's equipment and force him to buy new equipment.

FOE: How did you choose the name Girls Against Boys?

A: Eli had this relationship with this woman a long time ago and when they were sort of kids, she would always yell "It's Girls Against Boys. It's Girls Against Boys." She was a little bit crazy.

FOE: For the diehard fans, why did Soulside breakup?

J: Soulside broke up so we could all return to college. Then we all drifted in different directions. It was a year later that we regrouped as Little Baby and then G vs B. Bobby went on to form Seven League Boots. Now he is doing a project with his brother, Mark, former singer of Kingface.

FOE: Why did you move to NY?

J: For a change of pace. All of us had lived the majority of our lives in DC and we looked to broaden our horizons. We do not plan to stay in NY forever. In fact, we may return to DC at some point. We'll be in NY for at least 2 more years.

FOE: Who writes the lyrics?

A: Scott... Pretty much Scott.

FOE: Where is Scott?

J: Scott's at the bar drinking a margarita.

A: We heard they make really good Margarita's on South Street, so ...

FOE: Do you know what his inspiration is behind the lyrics?

A: It's everything. It's his environment. It's what he reads, what he listens to, it's pretty much everything. I guess you can say that for anyone. He has a definite sort of ... , I would not call it a fantasy world, but somewhere he would like to be, or something like that, or the way he'd like to be, or a place he liked to be, and that's sort of what he writes about. Really, he writes about fleeting moments... and moods and atmospheres.

J: A lot of his lyrics are phrases that he will hear, or phrases that he'll read, like maybe something he will see in an advertisement in a newspaper. That's where a lot of the lyrics come from. It's almost like plagiarizing. Because of that, sometimes, someone or one of us will say to Scott I saw this really weird thing today and he'll say "Oh, wow. That's really cool sounding." and he'll incorporate that into the lyrics. In that sense, he doesn't come up with everything, but he basically comes up with almost everything.

A: For a while, Scott and I were really into the idea of elevating the mundane to pure absurdity. Like, "Everything I do seems to cost me \$20" pretty much that happens to everyone. For us it's like a big

thing. Things like that, you know. Like, taking the HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lane, and singing about it or something. There is something that is so absurd about taking a really, really everyday thing and elevating it. You know, putting it on a little pedestal.

J: That's more reflected in the Tropic of Scorpio album.

A: This new one is more about sort of love.

J: Love and lust.

FOE: Why the steering wheel logo?

J: Cars and movement have been two major themes in Scott's lyrics. Music and landscape are inextricably bound. As with a changing landscape, we try to maintain a dynamic musical sensibility that never becomes static.

FOE: What is this infatuation with '72 Buick LeSabres?

J: For a brief period, Scott owned a majestic '72 Buick LeSabre. It faithfully transported us, as individuals and as a group, to a variety of desired locations. It never failed until mortally wounded by an adolescent drive-by terrorist in Arlington, Virginia.

FOE: Why did you switch to Touch and Go? Was it better distribution? Promotion?

J: They were interested in us and they are a great label. Jeff Nelson, who runs Adult Swim Records, was supportive of the idea.

A: It was really hard with Adult Swim because Jeff ran it. Like, with Soulside, we did everything ourselves but with this situation, Jeff was doing all the artwork and I was doing a lot of the idea stuff for the artwork and some of the creativity. We're all like really working overtime to try to make this thing happen and in the end, it's like you just need more help.

J: You need more resources.

A: I think we did a lot of work and in the end we did OK, but we could have had that extra boost which I think Touch and Go gives us.

J: We still work our asses off, but now there is a stronger support system behind us.

A: We have people at Touch and Go calling to make sure that there is, maybe, an interview there or some kind of promotion going on. Jeff just doesn't have the time for that. He has so much other stuff to do.

J: He owns Dischord, he just got married, he just bought a house. How did we end up talking about Jeff's personal life?

FOE: Is Adult Swim still in existence?

J: Yeah, they just released 9953, an old DC band.

FOE: Does Tropic of Scorpio parallel Henry Miller's Tropic of Cancer?

A: Yeah, we were really into Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn and everything at the time. And, also we're into this idea of, because we are living in New York and New York sort of sucks, living in the tropics or some other place that's really great.

J: Utopian environment.

A: This sort of sounds stupid, but, we sort of meant the Tropic of Scorpio to be sort of NY. Somehow ... in our own mind.

J: Well, I think that's true. I think a lot of times with Scott's whole fantasy world thing. He wants his fantasy world to be his world



even though it doesn't resemble it whatsoever. That seems kinda dynamic. Suddenly, palm trees will start growing in Brooklyn.

A: Right, or we'll just be sitting somewhere drinking cool drinks ... just really comfortable somewhere. It could be anywhere... on a roof or something. But of course it's never going to happen. The new album is from a Spanish novella that was being broadcast on TV in Barcelona. That's the Venus Luxure part. It was Venus Luxuria, I think. Sort of a really cool name. Also, it's sort of a weird amalgamation of things. Like, No. 1 Baby. The idea of having a baby that's number one. It's sort of absurd, you know. It's like having your favorite baby or something like that. It's weird.

J: In the past year, Scott's been pretty obsessed with babies.

FOE: Is he a father?

J: No, he's not.

A: He's planning on having a kid named Harry. But I guess that's not going to happen now. What was that other thing? For a while, we were really into the whole spaceship thing and planets and stuff like that. That's why Venus also appears in the title. It's the same thing in Tropic of Scorpio. All these things whose name conjures up really great images. In reality, I really don't want to go to Venus. But the name conjures up this weird place. For Ray Bradbury and all these really cool 1950's Science Fiction books and stuff like that.

FOE: What are the songs off the 7' about?

J: "Bulletproof Cupid" is about seizing the romantic moment and locating the appropriate neighborhood in the Tropic of Scorpio, using a favored vehicle as transport. "Sharkmeat" details the combustion wonders and visual stimulations of Monterey, Miami, and similar beach-strewn hotspots.

FOE: What about future plans?

J: In October we're going to do a full US tour and then we're going to do a European tour in early 1994. Before that time, we will be playing a bunch of shows. We're playing on the second stage of

Lollapalooza for the DC show. We opened up for a Scream reunion gig in DC in early July. And, hopefully, we are going to do a video, this summer.

FOE: Will the video be for Bulletproof Cupid?

J: We haven't really discussed it yet. We try not to make any decisions until right before we have to do something.

A: We prefer to do it after. Like, there is a point when planning really becomes necessary. Like you start planning and you go through the logical steps. We prefer to wait a couple of weeks after the point when you are supposed to start planning.

J: Once you are entering the emergency phase is when we prefer to start planning.

A: That's when we start kicking in, that's when we start. That's the way we work.

FOE: Did you ever work in video before?

A: A friend of ours was in film school and shot us live a lot and spliced together a lot of different stuff and made a video for the song Baby.

FOE: Will your new video be more artistic?

A: It'll probably just have a lot of babies in it.

J: We're going to try to fill a stadium with babies. We are going to pay every parent \$5 to bring their baby to the Meadowlands in NJ.

A: The parents aren't allowed in, only the babies. We're going to take a baby on tour with us also. I don't know where we are going to get one, but will find a way.

J: We are all young men so we could probably find a way to produce a baby.

A: That's possible.

FOE: Any closing comments?

A: I just wanted to say that whoever stole Johnny's bass cabinet is a dead motherfucker.