

THE NY CITIZENS

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REAL MUSIC FOR REAL PEOPLE

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The following interview was done thru the mail with Robert Tierney, "Words & Action" man for the NY Citizens.

FOE The NY Citizens do a lot of self promotion. What have been your experiences promoting the band. Has all the promotion and work been worth it?

NYC There are many experiences that stick out, but they all have the same common outcomes. The clubs don't think we're worth the money and try to stiff us as much as possible. They think we're nobodies until we play. Then they're kissing our asses, or licking our boots, and asking us back. Yes, the work is always worth it.

FOE What is your relation with Moon Records? How have they helped the band?

NYC Moon is our record company, well, not our record company, but they trust us, and have been letting us do our own thing, and not pushing us to do the ska thing, but just be the NYC's (which is what we do best.)

FOE Why was the record called "On the Move" in the US and "Pounding the Pavement" on SKA Records in England?

NYC I was just trying to be cute, and funny, but still confusing - SKA Records wouldn't give us a colour album cover, scumbags! We're hiring an advocate through our distributor over in the UK "Pounding" is now, by law, out of print.

FOE How'd you hook up with SKA Records and how is the record selling?
NYC We've sold over 5,000 copies of "Pounding" out in the rest of the world, but we've also sold about that many here in the states alone with "On the Move". We hooked up with SKA Records through the devil himself or something like that.

FOE How did the recording of the live lp go at City Gardens in Trenton, NJ?

NYC The live lp was recorded in January, 1990 and contains some kick ass versions of "Sticky Situation", "D.A.N.C.E." and other songs, some of which have never been released. Also - "Lemon Jelly" (live) was added to "Stranger Things Have Happened" ep. Out in April, 1990.

FOE Why did you decide to put out a live lp? Do you think it will be a fair representation of the bands sound, both of previously unrecorded songs and older songs? How many new songs will be on it and who's putting it out?

NYC A live lp would be the fairest representation of them all. We're a much better band than our studio albums have given us credit for, and there will be two or three new songs on it - "The Boston Tea Party", and "Getting Away With Murder" are the ones I can think of at the present. We still have to make some selections, but I figure about 10 songs in all. Moon has been asking about it, but I think not, until the end of summer will it be released. It'll be called "the NYC's are the Most Rockin'est Band." We kinda dig that kind of cockiness - Its quite a release!



FOE What are your plans for the new songs I've heard, "Helltown" and "Boxer Shorts"?

NYC The two songs you've mentioned will be out in April on "Stranger Things".

"Boxer Shorts" is also on a compilation from Beechwood Music (UK records). The same company that released "Rude Girls" worldwide on their "Rude Awakening" comp. (1989) A very reputable company. Unlike our American release of "Rude Girls" -we've been getting record sales sheets as well as payment.

FOE Do you find it tough to keep such a large group together?

NYC Yes!! We've replaced saxes on the record. Our new sax player is on half of the songs, and our old saxman is on the other half. It was a very smooth transitional period in mid-Jan., 1990. We need people willing to tour, and we've got them and touring we'll be doing. Including June dates in Cali-Phoenix, Las Vegas. After that we'll come back to NYC to mix the live record. BIG FUN. You just have to enjoy the music and we do. Because we mean everything we say. We live it.

FOE Do you think ska will be embraced ever again like it was when Madness/Specials/Beat etc... were big? If so, do you think it needs to crack the video thang, MTV etc.. to do this?

NYC I sure hope not - every shit headed ska band shouldn't be embraced - good bands should - the better bands will survive and the followers will drown. I don't mind, cuz I feel that we're more important than ska itself. I'd rather not hear any ska bands at all, rather than bad ones - when the fad is over, you'll still be hearing from the NYC's. The others will fade away. As for MTV, I think any band that wants to get their message across should find any source of medium possible.

FOE In your last letter to me and in this interview you mentioned about not being paid for your song on the "Mashing Up the Nation" comp. Have you been paid yet? How has that compared with your previous dealings with other compilation albums? How about any of the other bands on the comp, have you talked to any of them? Sorry for sounding like a lawyer. Has the song "Shifty Thing" become a reality?

NYC Its totally unheard of and insulting. No company until Razorbeat Records' unprofessionalism reared its ugly head. The record has been out for over a year now and - no cash, no statements...shit on a stick, perhaps. Embezzlement is their only problem. Totally keeping these bands in the dark, all the bands. We'll have another letter out this month (and please send them a copy of this interview). I don't mean to tarnish their reputation (or what reputation they may have) along with BimSkalaBim, one of their affiliates, but justice must prevail! I could only urge consumers to purchase the "Rude Awakening" comp. It's a much better record than "Mashing Up" anyway. As for "Shifty Thing", its not on tape yet, but the lines that appeal to me are: "Boys will be boys - just as men will be men, and they're bound to act their shoe size every now, and again - and I can't stand back stabbers who call you their friends - Nothing but a Shifty Thing"

Robert Tierney 1990

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