



TULI TAKES IN A (true!) AMAZONIAN FISH STORY...

with the impressive pricelist to sell me some of their more potent wares. Minutes later I left with two guilders 50 credit and thrilled to Barbara Manning's solo set.

Then it hit me and by the time Sebadoh came on to do a totally "rockin" set I was unable to see single, had lost all sense of the geography of my immediate surroundings and was wildly hallucinating at the periphery of my woeful vision. I had exactly *no fun* for about quarter of an hour before things started to settle back into their rightful places. My pillars of sanity were Messrs Bathgate and Shepherd... yes, so destroyed was I that Roger seemed like a haven of normalcy! I think the Sebs were great (Lou had done a magnificent solo set earlier). Meanwhile gasp... Peter's grin was threatening to bifurcate his head. Sheppo and us were *the last* to leave... at about 6am. It took me that long to get back to pure drunkenness.

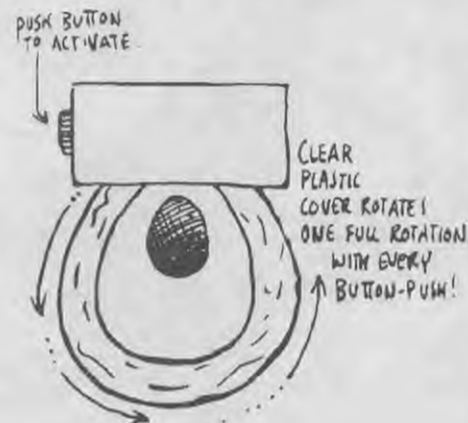
Next morning (at 2pm) we said our good-byes to Frank, Peter... gasp... J's thanks were *particularly* effusive and I could swear that the top half of his head did indeed levitate above the lower half for a few seconds.

On to Amsterdam with driver/mixer/moneyman Willem and the ubiquitous Mr Shepherd. Such was the soft pulpy condition our skulls were in that the only topics of conversation on the drive were bowel movements and the very nature of our low-order-primate cerebration.

More Smog (who had a slightly off night), the abridged History from Tuli to a totally disbelieving Amsterdam audience and we started off great but our loops (now digitally stored on

Traded unlikely stories of the animal kingdom with Tuli back in our hotel room but eventually had to boot the old dear out. Then drove to Paris. I guess we slept somewhere in there but... surprisingly, the Club Arapaho in the shopping centre of Paris gave us our wildest audience and overall our best European reception. They were truly overjoyed to see us and there were twice as many people as our Parisian promoters expected so an exceptional night was had by all.

Our Parisian "day off" lasted till midday and recommenced at 10.30pm. Instores, live-to-



BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF ELECTRIC TOILET SEAT =

airs and interminable interviews. But all good fun and we went to Jim's cemetery and avoided his grave but saw the section devoted to victims of the Holocaust and felt quietly shattered. After "doing" Notre Dame and the Eiffel fucking Tower... it is ENORMOUS, *don't* be an antitourist prat and miss it, we left for Belgium where we played our last gig with the insinuous Smog at Democracy in Gent. A lovely town, full of faces that are straight out of the less commercial end of Belgian comics, all chinless and squinting, spudlike and spineless, wonderful. Smog were back in good form and Bill even did a solo song. We did our fond farewells to them and to Frank who'd wandered over from nearby Holland to have a last perve. (I should at this juncture say that Roger had gone back to London after the Paris gig and yes, we did rather miss him and his obtuse but cosy sense of humour). I get to tour solo with Smog in the US in August and I can hardly wait.

Into Germany for the last leg of our blitzkrieg. Koln welcomed us warmly and again provided twice as many locals as the promoters had dared hope. A good CD player ensured



recordable CD) wouldn't play proper so we went a bit limp near the end but still managed to mercilessly slag the trendy pretensions and studied cool of yer average Amsterpunter in a rather fine version of 'Woman' (you shoulda heard what Alec was doing to his poor guitar!).



that all went flowingly and we finished with a 'Woman' that became dark and twisted. One woman who'd been upfront throughout couldn't hack it and left. I found her later, she hit me, then laughed and told me her boyfriend had told her how we'd turned the song round by the end and that she understood our (well... my) approach. Later we spent the better part of an hour chatting with the wonderful Wreckless Eric who'd dropped in on the off-chance and thought we were great. A right tasteful little gent and his partner, Ina, was likewise rather lovely.

Our hotel that night had an electric toilet seat cover!

I'd missed seeing Koln's amazing cathedral in 89 with the Clean so I made sure we saw it on the way out next morning. It was worth the wait, made Notre Dame seem quite clunky and bland by comparison.

To Enger (a tiny town with a great club, the Forum) where, by some fuckup, we're supported by Warners-sanctioned, large roadcrewed, tired-as-fuck, next-big-thing Green Days. These guys are gonna be huge because it's their turn and they've got large dollars behind 'em, but they're like a Buzzcocks covers band starring Stiv Bators played by David Byrne and they hafta leave immediately after their set to *drive* to London, play, then back to Belgium. Ha! They're getting stiffed at every



turn and little 'ol kiwi Dwarves are having a good time. We choose to bask in the delicious irony.

If this is Saturday it must be Bremen and we play with two German bands, one of whom is forgettable (except for the drummer playing from an armchair) and the other Kinky Garlic who are a couple buskers who've (slightly) electrified and sound like the natural successors to Trio's gloriously minimalist throne.

We do a nice loose (god, almost funky!) set then retire to our sumptuous rooms in our private hotel. Ya shoulda seen Alec's! Stylish to the max, right down to a bed under a skylit pyramid and *my* room had *original* Picasso prints on the wall! Such trust.

And then Hamburg. And the amazing Fabrik, a converted munitions factory with a lot of the original machinery hanging from vast cathedralic oak rafters. Our sole support gig so we could relax and leave the real work to the Supersuckers, a third generation SubPop band who came on like the Johnnies (yeah, boots and hats) but without the sense of humour. Scary! And one of their entourage was an ex-Wellingtonian who used to be in the Dwarves...

Rather than watch them we left Willem to count the money and accepted a desperate invitation to play at a private cafe. It turned out to be a hastily converted livingroom with a bar. We played, virtually unplugged, for an hour or two, during which charming set Mr Bathgate actually inhaled something serious and proceeded (it was his first time) to make lots of mistakes and then some glorious sounds. We received 50 deutschmarks and ecstatic club owner's little plastic, handheld basketball game toy thing. Ahhhhh.

And that was it. The next day we went to the best shop in the world, got mildly drunk and spoke important words to each other. Y'know, like warmly, mildly drunk human males do at the tail-end of a prolonged bonding ritual...

And the whole thing worked, we played, ate, slept and shat well. Audiences left wanting more, they bought 175 of our CDs (we ran out with three gigs left), interviewers laughed at our jokes, we got broadcast on Dutch TV and national radio and we came home with a lot more money than we left with. But mainly, it was a well organised and very friendly three weeks. You all should do it.

CHRIS KNOX



THE BRIGHT YOUNG MEN RETURN... FULL OF ZEST & VIGOUR!!