



DIAMONDS OUTSIDE THE ROUGH

Many adjectives have been used to describe the music made by Fred and Toody Cole, and Andrew Loomis — the Portland, Oregon trio who formed in 1987, and called themselves Dead Moon. Most start with P. Primitive, Passionate, Psychedelic, Punk.

When Dead Moon toured New Zealand for the first time in 1992, it was the year after *Nevermind*, and people were saying that this band — who from their inception had fiercely refused to compromise their independence — were about to benefit from the major record labels sudden interest in noisy guitar music, and would soon be on the road to stardom and riches. Toody heard the stories also, but refused to have a bar of it.

"A lot of people get that impression of us and that's great, it's very complimentary, but we were not, and are not, willing to sign to a major label, and in the States, unless you do that, that kind of commercial success is something that you're never going to achieve. You can reach a certain level on smaller independents, but here in the States, we're a very corporate country, and the major labels have things pretty well tied up."

But not quite. From their inception Dead Moon have done it their way. The band record (only in Mono!) and release albums on their own label Tombstone, organise and promote Dead Moon tours themselves, and generally keep a distance from the corrupt world of the corporates. Though Toody does warn that Dead Moon's wouldn't of operating won't come easy to a band just starting out.

"We're lucky in one respect that we've got the age, the experience, and the finances to do it ourselves, a lot of bands don't have that option, so we're in unique position. If we were a band of 25 year olds I don't think we'd be able to do what we were doing. Ultimately you need to be able to do things the way you want, and feel happy about it. There's always a lot more to any musician or any band than the fame you acquire and whatever money you make. Those are really not the two main reasons you're doing it, that's kind of a by-product down the line if you're lucky. But most bands would play because they need to have their music heard and to be on stage in front of people."

"Musicians by nature usually don't have the money to do diddy by themselves, they're pretty much strapped with having to rely on somebody else. Most of them have absolutely no business sense, and they couldn't deal with it unless somebody else was taking care of everything and doling out an allowance. You're not actually making any money unless you have a huge mega-hit, and most musician just want to play, live the life and be on the road, and when it's over usually there's nothing left."

Dead Moon released their eleventh album, *Nervous Sooner Changes*, late last year. They record each song in just one or two takes, and Toody says the trio are still attempting to make the ultimate Dead Moon record. "We haven't got it exactly right just yet, but we're getting closer all the time". She also adds there is still plenty of time left. "If I was in a band in a situation where you were constantly changing members, and there were internal problems, I would consider saying, 'Well I have a million other things I want to do in my lifetime', but this isn't like that, it's really got a family feel to it. We've been together, the three of us, since the beginning, and it still feels good to be on stage, and it still means a lot to see each other. Until that changes, or any one of us wants to do something else, I think we'll still be doing it for quite a long time."

JOHN RUSSELL

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