



the Cardigans *Put 'Em On!*

The Cardigans are exploding in New Zealand. After two painfully gorgeous albums and countless drooling reviews, it's been commercial radio's punt on 'Lovefool' that has focussed all eyes on Sweden once more for pop heroics.

The Cardies (to fans) are the biggest (we're talking millions of albums here) of the holy quadogy of Swede-pop. The Wannadies, Whale and Grass Show (remember the name) all inhabit a similar world of ear tingling tunes and overtly sexual/miserable/vindictive lyrics, but the Cardigans race home with the popularity trophy every time. That's mainly because of the goddess-like woman I'm talking too, singer Nina Persson.

"There's always been a great scene, but it's only recently that the record companies have wanted to support bands other than Roxette, Ace of Base and Abba. They're realising there could be some commercial success and there's loads more to come as well."

So, what is it about Sweden? To the naked eye it's just a cold-looking place full of beautiful people that talk funny.

"Ah hum, that's what it is," she giggles.

But the country's psyche creates the desire for pop noir. Maybe being constantly surrounded by surface beauty, they're destined to delve into Ingmar Bergman-esque existential turmoil. Maybe they're just all miserable bastards. The songs Nina and her pals play may be sugar-coated, but there are chilled centipedes inside.

"That's something that I like. All the music I listen to has that. I think it's totally uninteresting if a song is all black or all white, it doesn't tell me anything. Nothing is that simple really. I don't find anything totally hopeless or completely happy either."

First Band on the Moon is a lot darker than *Life*. In every sense. Even though they're making truck loads of dolleros now.

"I think we all felt that *Life* was a bit too cheery. We were writing about things that were not coming from ourselves, we wrote little short stories. So, we felt we wanted to make a more personal album and this is what came out. Maybe we're simply just depressive people," she laughs.

There's something comforting about hearing an icy beauty like Nina floundering with the same emotional frailties as the rest of us. 'Lovefool's hopeful but hopeless disco away

the heartache bizzo, 'Step on Me's willingness to put up with heart tearing relationship problems — the focus is a bit unlucky in love. And it seems Nina carries the can alone.

"It feels unnecessary sometimes that there is more emphasis on me. Everyone else speaks as well as I do, everybody looks as good as I do"

Errrr.

"As a band we always try to emphasise there are five members, five instrumentalists, even though I only use my voice. We try and split up the interviews as much as we can."

The band are heading into their fifth year together. And though they split the interviews, it's Nina's story that's the most interesting. Well, seeing as she'd never even sung before.

"Not more than normal people do, in the shower sort of thing. I was asked to join the band because I was a friend. I just thought it would be fun to try, so I joined."

You must be pleased with all this then!

"Yes, now I am, because I've got wealthy without really having to struggle for it."

Can you walk down the streets of Sweden without being mobbed?

"Only very, very early in the morning," she laughs.

Not surprising after that soul watering 'Lovefool' video. But like a lot of Swedish movies, it made you wonder what the hell it was all about.

"There used to be a story, but it got cut away in the edit. The guy's a gangster and I force him to fall in love with me because I keep sending him these tapes with love messages on them. So, I stalk him."

What's with all the old people?

"Oh, I don't know, just accessories."

So, it's not the band looking at themselves, or some Swedish-into-old people thing?

"Ha, ha — well, I'm too much of a Swede to be able to talk about what Swedes are like."

Laziness creeps in.

So, have you got any wacky stories?

"Magnus bought a baby today."

What!

"Our bass player, he bought a little baby puppy."

Oh, right.

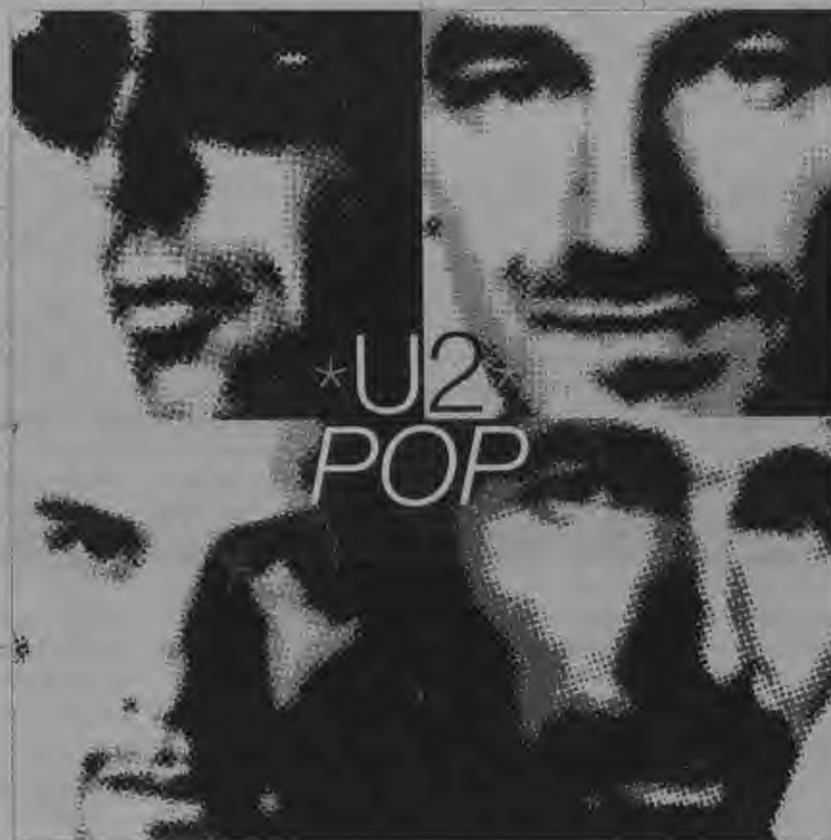
"At the moment he's sitting with the puppy on his lap, giving it cigarettes. Apart from that I can't think of anything."

Er, that'll do fine.

JOHN TAITE

* U2 *

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