

SPUD In A Hot Tub



Inside a darkened room, underneath the winking pubic region of a K Road neon sex sign, *RIU* were conducting an interview with SPUD. Minus Lance, that is, who begged off saying he didn't want to sit around in a pool swimming with some old geezer's jism. For we were in the fantasy suite of a certain vulva coloured sauna joint, up one flight of purple coloured stairs, sitting around in a room furnished with black and gold flock wallpaper, a double bed, a mirror, a shower and a round red spa tub.

I'd been lured here to conduct an interview with the gruesome five piece (even though I only spoke to them a year ago) because they're about to release their second album, *Gnaw*. SPUD had arranged this sleazy afternoon rendezvous in order to coax some approving press out of me. Why else would they have invited me to a private suite in the city's most famous sex street, why else were they laying on the Vue, the joints, the vid (yes, Andy Moore was here to film us for *Yeah Bo*). Why else were they (gasp!) taking their clothes off and climbing into the tub — SPUD, the band without a sense of humour! And then this friend of the band called Barbie turned up and started pouring bubble bath into the water and Matthew climbed in and immersed his pale body in the suds so I parked my bathing suit clad butt on the edge of the tub (rock journalists come prepared for anything) and turned on the tape recorder and we started making small talk. Peter Buckton (bass), Glen Campbell (vocals), Matthew Heine (guitar), Barnaby Curnow (guitar), Barbie and me (Donna).

Donna: Is the cool, quiet facade of SPUD an act, are you guys trying to

create a mystique?

Matthew: We're quite extroverted really.

Donna: Barnaby, you're the son of an English professor, you should be able to give me an articulate answer.

Barnaby: It skips a generation.

Peter: The bubbles are going.

Barbie: Tell us about *Gnaw* — how does it differ from your first album?

Matthew: It's better.

Peter: It's got more songs.

Matthew: It's louder.

Barnaby: Heavier, it's got a more colourful cover.

Donna: Who did the cover this time?

Barnaby: Me.

Donna: Are you an artist as well?

Peter: As well as what?

Donna: As well as a poet, a musician and one of the tallest guitarists in the country.

Glen: Yeah, we're an art rock band.

Donna: Do SPUD play sport?

Matthew: No.

Barnaby: No.

Peter: No.

Glen: I don't like sport.

Donna: What do you like, Glen?

What are five things you couldn't live without?

Glen: Food, women, fast cars, cigars, talking dirty.

Donna: I think you're lying, I haven't heard any of that so far. Anyway, a year has passed since I last spoke to you. Has everything gone according to plan?

Matthew: Yeah, we've been overseas and recorded a new album.

Donna: Australia's not overseas, it's across the Tasman. Are you really going to go further afield?

Peter: There's talk of Hawaii.

Donna: Why?

Peter: John Rowles lives there.

Donna: Would there be an audience for SPUD in Hawaii?

Matthew: We're not actually going to Hawaii.

Donna: How did you manage to get this record sounding even heavier than the last one?

Barnaby: We turned our amps up.

Donna: Didn't you think you were heavy enough before?

Glen: You can never be heavy enough.

Matthew: It's a lot more powerful. 'Old Man' was a start, now we've moved on from there. We've done a song called 'DR Muthafucker'.

Donna: What exactly is your gripe with dear departed Dominic Roskrow?

Barnaby: Glen writes HATE songs about hating people who are fuckwits.

Donna: Was it something he did to

SPUD?

Matthew: No, it was to everyone.

Donna: So is Auckland a better place without Dominic in it?

Peter: This jacuzzi's a better place without Dominic in it.

Glen: There is the occasional love song.

Barnaby: Ballads and epics.

Donna: Who writes the love songs?

Matthew: Glen writes the words.

Donna: Glen, you devil, first you tell me you hate everything, now they tell me you're writing love songs.

Matthew: We lie, we're full of shit.

Donna: Have you improved your live show yet? Are you more aware of image now and how important it is to have a certain "look" on stage?

Matthew: What are you talking about? Image? Why are we sitting in a jacuzzi? What do we have to do to you people?

Glen: We don't make music that you jump around to, we don't have to, that's the thing, our music's enough.

Donna: Enough for what?

Glen: Enough for people.

Donna: Why does the world need SPUD in it?

Matthew: It doesn't, but sometimes when you're in a really fucked off bad mood, it's a good thing to put on the stereo really loud.

Donna: So it's angry music.

Matthew: No, it's not necessarily — you don't have to be angry to listen

to SPUD.

Barbie: It's not dance music.

Barnaby: It's not fun music, it's not nice.

Glen: It's like when you wanna be sick.

Matthew: It's not dance music but it's got better rhythms, not the same old boring shit.

Donna: So you're exposing the darker side of your nature?

Matthew: No.

Barbie: Let's get back to *Gnaw*.

Gnaw is more formulated than *Sour*, the songs fall into more trad song patterns, middle eights and all that shit.

Matthew: What's a middle eight?

Donna: You should know that.

Matthew, your father was a music teacher. The fathers of SPUD obviously had a great effect. What does your father do Glen?

Glen: He's an advertising executive and he used to play bass for the Raiders, they put a record out and went to Sydney.

Donna: Well Peter, your father must do something interesting too.

Peter: No he doesn't, he works in a warehouse.

Donna: So you're the only working class member of the band?

Peter: No, I'm unemployed.

Donna: Do you think SPUD are a cool band?

Matthew: What's cool?

Glen: We're sort of nerd cool.

Donna: But none of you wear glasses.

Glen: The people who come to see us do.

Barnaby: A lot of the people that come to see us are real fuckwits.

Donna: What do you mean by fuckwits? Do you have a fag audience?

Matthew: I don't know what to say to that.

Donna: Is SPUD a gay band?

Barnaby: I reckon we are a fag band, a large proportion of our audience are smokers.

Donna: But that doesn't mean they're gay.

Barbie: Are SPUD clean living?

Matthew: We're very clean at the moment, we're in a bath.

Donna: Does the album boast any lyrical themes?

Glen: Na, same old shit — hate, women, drinking, sex, cars.

Donna: So you ARE a boys band.

Barnaby: Yeah, ordinary guys from suburbia.

Barbie: Tell us about *Sniffman*.

Matthew: That's a Clinic plan.

Glen: It's a film we're making about a guy who has an obsession with smelling things.

Barnaby: He smells everything, flowers, shit, garbage.

Donna: Is this based on anyone you know? Yourselves, per chance?

Glen: Not really. I don't know how it came about. Matthew and I made it up when he was in Melbourne.

Sniffman cruises around, sniffs shit, sniffs everything, goes to this really bad nightclub, takes some bad drugs, flips out. Clinic are playing, he picks up this woman, the only words he can say are "you smell good for fuck". Grunts the rest of the time, takes her home, sniffs things, can't have sex with her.

Donna: Why not?

Matthew: 'Cos he can only sniff.

Glen: But she finds it quite —

Donna: Erotic?

Glen: — weird and fucked up so he ends up back in her garbage 'cos she rejects him.

Barbie: It's a tragedy.

Glen: It's a love story.

Donna: Who's Sniffman?

Glen: Everybody, heaps of us.

Donna: Who's the unfortunate woman who has to endure his attentions?

Matthew: ... that's why we haven't made it yet.

That's it. The beastly boys came clean, in all their bare chested glory. The bubbles have become slime.

The laughter and the hangover fade. We had a great time drinking hard, talking trash. Seek out *Gnaw*, or tease yourselves with imminent single 'Creep' (B side 'Recliner').

Better still, get your ass along to see SPUD live. An experience that won't make you dance but it's guaranteed to make you sick!

DONNA YUZWALK AND BARBIE

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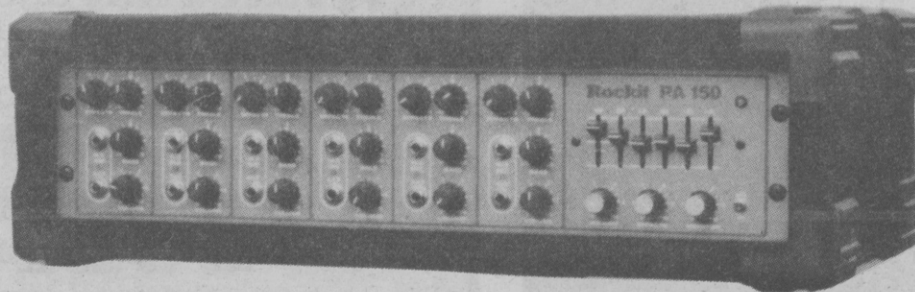
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