

► play originals without any stylistic boundaries. They knew they were going to be loud because they all listened to metal. Songs are crowded with riffs, rhythms and vocal blasts going off in a million directions at once — that's because the boys have a short attention span and must always be doing something different in every song. And because when they started out they were less a band than a bunch of noisy individuals all clamouring to get their own bits squashed into one song. Now they listen to each other better, but things are still changing with every song they write. Booga (whose mother is an opera singer) is learning to use his voice as an instrument in order to inject more melody into proceedings. There's no doubt that Head Like A Hole are high on energy and low on the old emotional content.

HIDEE: "That's just the way it's happened so far, like being possessed to write songs we can't really help, we haven't any say in what we do, it just happens."

Is your music violent?

HIDEE: "Not violent, but aggressive."

BOOGA: "In a full-on kind of way, not a violent kind of way, like music to inspire mass murderers or anything. Sometimes it reminds me of someone throttling someone else. Other songs are happy and bouncy, other ones are just funny for the sake of being funny. Some of them are really moody. Like we're playing live, and I imagine these two gigantic hands coming out from the stage and sucking people up by the head and going (here he imitates a loud crunching noise)."

Then there's the famous on-stage nudity which has cynics muttering 'oh yeah, Lubricated Goat revisited', but the boys say the difference is that they're not doing it to get attention, they're just doing it cos it feels good. Besides, it was their manager Gerald's idea (as an ex-member of punk shock merchants Flesh Device, he knows about this kind of thing).

He suggested Datehole play naked while HLAH were on the Shihad tour. Hidee (who is vegetarian and interested in things of a tribal / occult nature) soon followed in his birthday suit, decking himself out in body paint to psyche himself up for the stage. He couldn't give a shit about the boguns who come along to shows and complain that men's bodies are ugly and should be covered up and only women should dare appear naked in public. Besides, the nudity led to a great little article about the band in Australia's high-class *People* magazine, which also made much of the band's fascination with flatulence. Well, Booga's at least, who proceeds to tell us about his hero Mr Bugeau, a 17th century Frenchman with a "wicked talent" for sucking air up his bum and blowing it back out again to play tunes and blow out candles."

Yep, deep and meaningful Head Like A Hole are not. But various band members are interested in starting sideline projects where they can express their more deeper selves. Datehole and guitarist John Toogood from Shihad have formed a three-piece called SML. Hidee wants an outlet for his "dark, moody, serious" side and Booga says he wants to do something that sounds like Pavement.

"Jangly, but not typical New Zealand jangly. I'd like to do a song that was just sort of slapped together really slap-happy, but it sounds good, like the vocals haven't been dwelled on. But I don't think I could start up anything like that. If there was someone in Wellington that would play guitar how I'd like them to I would have met them by now."

Meanwhile, the philosophical tone is set by such HLAH anthems as 'Narcotics, Noise and Nakedness' and Booga's lyrical preoccupations continue along their famously unsavoury course.

"Have you heard the story of 'Peanut'? Me and Dave went out and got really drunk. We went back

to his mother's place and had a corned beef sandwich about an inch and a half thick and it was really gross, but we ate it anyway because we were really hungry. Then I started feeling really sick. I got up and vomited and then I went back into the loo and just blacked out. I woke up in the morning lying in the middle of the bathroom floor going 'where the hell am I?' still quite drunk. And then I looked around the room and it was like shit all over the walls and toilet and the carpet and I was going 'how the hell did that get here' and then I stood up and it was all over me as well. I'd had some sort of accident and went bonkers with it and sort of decided to hit it. So I wrote this song called 'Peanut' about that with the line 'I've got a peanut in my eye'. It's got nothing to do with peanuts as in the ones that you eat but that's what I sing about, sort of, as a bit of a twist to it."

How charming. Almost as appealing as the lines he's reciting about nose hairs. Booga certainly has a knack for attractive subject matter.

"I can't think of anything else to write about!" he protests. "I don't want to say 'I've got this feeling' you know, because how many other people say that? I was writing down some stuff last night about how I always get really sweaty palms."

"Everyday stuff that people take for granted put in a different context can be really funny because everyone associates with it whether they know it or not," explains Hidee.

By now it's time for the boys to leave for the airport and the Windy City they call home. We say our goodbyes in the RIU foyer, Gerald with mobile phone and briefcase hovering anxiously nearby. They'll have to boot the rental car to get to the airport on time. But Booga wants to go to the toilet. Gerald says firmly no he cannot, he can go on the plane. I breathed a sigh of relief, I can tell you.

DONNA YUZWALK

SHONA



Making a strong return to the scene with *New On Earth*, Shona Laing has weathered the frustrations of an American record contract that went sour and is once again looking forward to USA release for her album, in August, on her new label Sony.

Are political lyrics essential to your music?

"They come naturally to me, but at the same time there's 'The Mercy of Love' and 'Thief to Silver'.

"I don't know if it's politics. I write political songs but they're issues that kind of transcend party politics, they may be political issues but I don't think they're dealt with from a

central government perspective."

But they're not about "personal politics"?

"They are because they're my personal responses to those issues. I mean, the songs are every bit as spontaneous as if they're love songs."

Have you been pigeon holed because of the political content of your records?

"I've come to accept that people expect that of me. I did feel this album turned out to be quite shocking and I mentioned that to a couple of people and they said that it's quite heavy-weight, and people just say well, what else would we expect from you."

Your focus has been very international in the past. Does *New On Earth* centre more on living in New Zealand?

"Yeah, I think so, and I think it's kind of intentional for me but at the same time I think they're universal issues. I mean, say, 'Just Before It's Just Too Late'. But the whole frustration that people are feeling with governments is global."

You've sort of dedicated that song to Jenny Shipley haven't you?

"I haven't dedicated it to her, it was inspired by her. The idea of extremist action. It's quite complex because the actual song is a deliberation on personal freedom. It would be really nice to be able to do something like kidnap her but you'd actually have to use force and that's unacceptable."

Are you ever frightened by women who have achieved power and their contribution in the political field?

"It's ironic that they usually do tend to be fascists. Even people like Indira Gandhi who did a lot for India but she had to do go down the fascist road to achieve that, which is a bit upsetting. The reason this song is about Jenny Shipley is because she kind of fascinates me, she's kind of salvageable. It would take one little twist or a dream or something and she might come out the other side, using that power for the good, because she's very powerful, she has a personal power, it's quite strange."

Does David Lange's appearance on 'Banned' reflect your admiration for his vision or is he another two-faced politician?

"No, I used to think that he was infallible but I don't think that anymore. The song was written as a direct result of his 'out of ANZUS' ANZAC day speech when there was

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