

**Record reviews: MARK PIGGOTT goes potty over the Flower Pot Men and friends**

Van Morrison they are not. Or, for that matter, Stiff Little Fingers. Or even Andy White. But if it's pure anger you're after, look no further than Belfast bands Toxic Waste, Asylum and Stalag 17. Forget Channel 4 documentaries, their *We Will Be Free* LP (Warzone Records) is a far more accurate testament to the feelings of Northern Ireland's youth; a generation that's had enough of the troubles, sectarianism, and patriotism. There's no ambiguous, angst-ridden poetry on this album. It's a genuine shout of defiance and despair from young people who've simply had enough. And if blistering guitars and drilling drums delivered at breakneck speed camouflage the lyrics, they're written on an enclosed booklet, cartoons and all. Even if you'd rather dance to The Age of Chance or groove with Prince or Madonna, buy this album as all proceeds go towards a new youth centre in Belfast. There are no photographs of these bands. Super stardom isn't their business. What is their business? Read the lyrics and see for yourself.



A very different flavour of music comes from the Flower Pot Men. Ben (Watkins) sings, although there's no evidence of Bill. This band are veterans, having recorded their debut single as long ago as 1984, which was produced by no less than Steve (Siouxsie) Severin. Combining raunchy electro-rhythms with heavy bass and drums, they've just completed a month-long tour of Britain, and are now in America. Their visit coincides with their first US release, a four-track EP combining the first two singles. On their return from the States, they have plans to release their debut album with Yello's Boris Blank, on their own Compost label. Also watch out for some European Greenpeace benefit gigs in the Autumn. "Flabador", as they say.

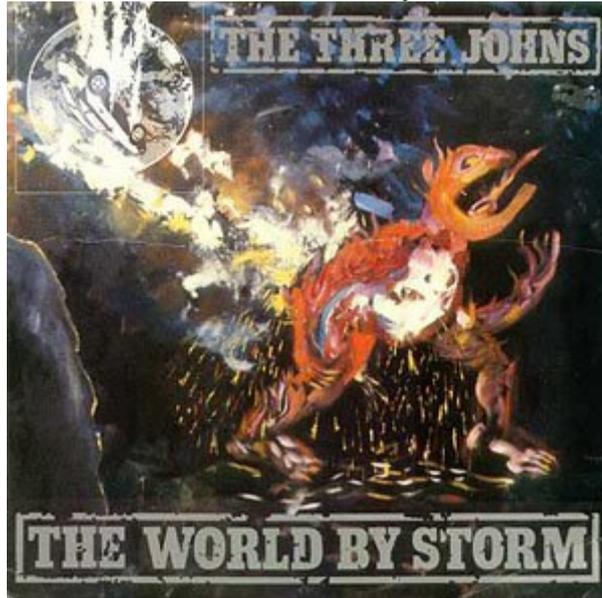
The Cornish resort of Falmouth proves it's not the last resort with the wondrously named Latimer House and the Love Grange. An enjoyable sound, complete with catchy vocals reminiscent of early Psychedelic Furs, is created on their eight-track cassette *Shake*. The multi-talented Joe Cook, singer, guitarist and bass drum machine operator, writes all the songs and produces a magazine, *Black and White*.

Nick Reynolds *Defies Gravity* isn't exactly music, but it is a cassette which you can play on your music centre, so it's close enough. And it's pretty funny, with lots of post-AIDS jokes, Billy Bragg piss-takes and why I hate the Tories monologues. The hypothermia joke is a bit old in these sweaty June days, but it's rather like the whole

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tape - ideological. This sort of humour is okay, but there's a thin line between being right-on and trendy-left. If you happen to live in South Yorkshire, Nick can be heard on ROTT Radio, Sheffield. Finally, back to music. If you haven't heard of the Band of Holy Joy, you must be an eight-foot bird that can't fly. June sees the release of a new single from their debut album More Tales From The City (Flim Flam) and they are currently on tour. Hot on the heels of the excellent, intricate sound of Rosemary Smith, their full potential has yet to be realised; lyrically bleak and musically sparse, live they are scorchers. Go and see for yourself. Hopefully, they'll survive being NME's last month's thing. To prove we don't give a toss about being trendy, we're going to interview them next month. See you then.

### THE THREE JOHNS: World By Storm (Abstract)



I couldn't wait to play this album. For weeks it floated around the office, an ethereal dream which I would grasp and then lose, a coloured cloud of smoke rising from the ashes of a skeletal burnt out car (just like the one in 'Sold Down the River').

Over the top: Yes alright. I'd heard a lot about The Three Johns and I wanted to hear their new album. I expected 'alternative' jangly guitars and soulful ballads of love and war; I was almost wrong.

At first listen the album sounds pretty dodgy. The subtle lyrics are OK; although in places vague would be a better word. Unfortunately, the tunes were another matter; they were all the same speed, slow to middling, and very weird.

And at second listen?

I was totally wrong. 'Sold Down the River' sounds like early Adam Ant in places (the start, the middle and the end). 'King Car' starts with antified 'Beep Beep!' but develops into quite a decent tune ending with the obligatory talk-over and a final 'Vroom!' in the wrong gear.

'Johnny the Perfect Son', has a slower tempo but is just as powerful; I think it's about drugs. 'Torches of Liberty', however goes on forever. I quite enjoyed the verses but hated the chorus, images of sixties Merseyside football fans, chanting in unison.

Side two woke me up with an Atom Drum Bop'. Another surprise; I expected a stomping, rousing blast of sound, and got a tricky little tune with matching lyrics. 'Death of the European' is the best song on this album, catchier than the common cold. Especially the whistling bit. 'The Ship That Died Of Shame' has a familiar tune but unfamiliar words. I

loved it.

And the title track, 'World by Storm'?

A microcosm of the whole album. Not bad. In fact, I liked it. But then, I I'm just a failed musician.

**Ends**