



CHAPTER 13

Wagging Tungs

So we started rehearsing with the additional sounds supplied by Ichiko and Antonio. All was sounding great. Sometimes Antonio would come to rehearsal with a violin, sometimes saxophone. Either way with Ichiko on keyboards too, it sounded fabulous and added yet another dimension to the Clinker sound.

With this new line-up, we played our first gig at The Purple Turtle in Camden, London. We were asked to play by our myspace friends Parasite from Norwich, who were also on the bill. Overall, despite shit sound, it worked a treat. On the night Antonio decided to play violin.

It was this night that we severed all ties with “The Champions of the Empire”. Spider came to see us and we talked and decided it was best if we wasn’t involved anymore.

Over the last month or so, I had been compiling a new EP to giveaway. Sean had been up to visit with some song ideas and we managed to get three new tunes recorded and Sean put extra guitar on a tune we’d been working on called “Snap Your Back”. I decided to call the EP “Pizzo Tung”, which was the working title for “Painted Red” and decided to open the EP with that very tune. The idea was to make it a very Sean based EP (Sean being the co-writer of “Painted Red” too) and the overall feel of it was quite laid back and acoustic. Only the last track, the previously mentioned “Snap Your Back”, rocked out. Sean co-wrote four out of six of the tunes.

We uploaded it and made it available for FREE download again. The feedback was very good, some saying it was the best stuff we’d ever done.



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“Maybe it's just me but time seems to stop when you listen to certain bands. Bands like Clinker for example. They're from London apparently but sound like the spawn of the Strawberry Alarm Clock after a prolonged encounter with Gong touring the students' unions of this fine country way back in the early seventies.

Yes, it's a near horizontal hippy groove we have here. Peter Jordan sings - and intones (that's a sort of proto rap, by the way) - like a man viewing the world through a haze of sweet smelling smoke. Do not be deterred by that description though, as the songs themselves are melodic affairs that float around nicely inside your headphones. Except for "Snap Your Back" as that one has a lot of inbuilt hostility issues to work out.

Interesting and quirky in that curious way that only British bands can be.”

I really don't get the Gong and Strawberry Alarm Clock references, but...a nice review nonetheless.

Around this time, Kert Semm posted an interview he did with me a couple of months before.

THE INTERVIEW:

KS: Good day, Peter!

At first, I would like to know how advanced is the recording of the new Clinker album at the moment?

PJ: The recording is practically finished, but I do keep tweaking it here and there. We're getting it properly mastered for the first time too. I can't wait for people to hear it, but we want to up our profile a bit first to give it a better chance before putting it out.

KS: What can we expect from the new album?



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PJ: It's quite different. It's got some of the loudest tunes we've ever done and some of the softest. There's a fair bit of repetition going on, ya know like getting in a groove, which is where the dance element comes in. As far as we're concerned, it really does feel like the best we've ever done. We decided we weren't gonna stop until it was. We just hope that other people are going to feel the same and love it as much as we do. There's a lot of layered vocals on there as well, so live we're using extra backing singers to bring that side of it out.

KS: How have you dealt with the promotion for the Clinker single/EP "Hallucination Generation"? Have you received any kind of feedback from any bigshots?

PJ: We decided to release "Hallucination Generation" as a CD single primarily as something to give away at gigs. Response has been good, but we haven't had any feedback from bigshots yet.

KS: You have mainly been involved with 2 music projects - Clinker and Opera Dog. What do you think is the obvious difference between Opera Dog and Clinker?

PJ: Over the years the difference has become a bit hazy. I'd probably say generally Clinker is a songs based project and Opera Dog is more organic dance, but there's more of a dance element to our new album "Thru' the Fly Machine", though nothing direct. It's just an instinctive thing. When Tomoko started "Searching for a New World" from the new album, she thought it was going to be an Opera Dog tune, but it quickly became clear to me that it was Clinker.

KS: By the way, do you make music every day?

PJ: We do make music everyday. We just can't stop! It's in our blood, in our DNA. We try to reign it in and do the necessary promotion, but if ideas come into your head, you have to get them down. Tomoko is recording now actually. A cover of Banjo or Freakouts "Upside Down".

KS: You and Tomoko have been involved in Clinker related acts for nearly 8 years now. How anfractuous is it to make aesthetical decisions together? Do you think you belong to those clan of musicians who nevertheless manage to mash up all recent ideas on the day, or are



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you very choosey in preference of a certain detail?

PJ: It's surprisingly easy. We don't have heated debates or anything. I trust Tomoko's vision and she trusts mine. We seem to naturally follow the same path anyway. We listen to a wide variety of music, mash it all up and make our own Clinker sound. Nothing is sacred, which is probably why each album is different. This album I would say is strongly influenced by Tomoko discovering different things she hadn't appreciated before. June 20th last year was one such point, when Tomoko saw My Bloody Valentine play. Things have not been the same since, haha. It's not that noticeable on the album, but trust me it's there.

KS: You have also written the music for the theatre productions "Charlie and Henry" and "Quinto Quarto" (both directed by Jason Lawson). Is there any difference or difficulties for you, between creating music in ordinary way and creating music for a script?

PJ: There is a difference, definitely. With Clinker it's whatever comes naturally. I don't sit down and say "I'm gonna write this or that kind of song today", it's just whatever comes out. With the play "Charlie and Henry", I read the script and tried to feel what was needed. Over the course of a week I came up with 30 minutes of music, which was way too much for a Theatre production. I went into film soundtrack mode I guess. "Quinto Quarto" was different altogether. It was a theatre production that was being turned into a film. I didn't actually write any new material for it. It was a mixture of what the writer Nick Brown wanted to use and what I thought would fit from music I'd already recorded. Sadly the film has struggled to get the finance needed and hasn't yet been made. I suppose with music for theatre or film I'm writing for someone else, whereas first and foremost when writing for Clinker I'm writing for myself.

KS: Recently, as Clinker, you have given some old tracks new life. Why did you decide to do that?

PJ: The only reason that happened was because we decided to play them live. I wanted people to be able to hear the recorded versions, but as you know those versions were rough and mono. So I set about re-recording them and some ended up on the "Clinker" album and EPs around that time. We have quite a few left over that haven't been released. Satellite, Sega and What Yr Thinking for example.

KS: I have a feeling you have written much more than what's been made available to date.



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How many tracks do you have roughly left on the shelf?

PJ: Yeah we've loads of tunes that haven't come out. For the new album there's about 10 that didn't make the final cut. We've done a lot of cover versions for fun too. Some come out on EPs, the others remain unreleased. I'd guess there must be over 30 unreleased tracks in all. Some of them I really like, so i'm sure they'll come out on other EPs or something. I recorded three new ones the other week with sometime collaborator Sean Stevens.

KS: By the way, I myself discovered Clinker through the last fm site. In addition you are promoting your music through other websites like Myspace, ReverbNation and your own site, clinker.org.uk. The virtual possibilities to get your music out there to an audience and spare your time plus thousands of bucks is good, but is it good enough?

PJ: There's always more you could do. We do as much as we can trying to spread the word. It's tough. I haven't got into the Twitter thing yet. It seems a bit too ego driven for me. I'm sure it will happen, but nah...i'm still slowly being weened onto Facebook. Myspace is still my main thing.

KS: Let's continue talking about music business stuff. Listening to Clinker I have often wondered to myself, why haven't Clinker or Opera Dog been signed to a label in the 10 years they have been creating music? You have been creating pop music with good taste, you live in London, one of the central places for pop music in the world and you have a lot of contacts. How is that possible?

PJ: Hmm, it's a mixture of things. My way of working is a factor. I've found it difficult to stop the creative process long enough to actually push it. We did nearly get signed after "Porno". Some bigshots...to use your phrase... loved it and told us they wanted to put it out, then didn't. More recently we've had problems with different band members leaving and holding things up, which led to the new album being written and recorded, so now's our time hopefully and we're going to give it our best shot. I feel we're at our strongest now, so the delay has been good. Every minor battle makes us stronger and more positive. So far, this year has exceeded our expectations before we've even had a chance to properly show people what we're about. Being in London though is a blessing and a curse. You're up against 1000's of bands fighting to get heard, but yes you're in the right place.



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KS: It is impossible to overlook Alan McGee`s appreciation toward your music? Was he actually interested in recruiting any of your acts? It has to be said though, the roster of Poptones doesn`t actually include any great names of indie music.

PJ: He only knows about Clinker, as far as I know, but hasn`t really been involved in signing any bands for years. He was managing bands, but I believe he`s left the music business for good now. Your point about Poptones though is valid and most of what he recommends these days is meat and potatoes rubbish, with the possible exception of Glasvegas. I think he has lost his touch, haha. I also don`t like that nowadays he goes around saying that he signed My Bloody Valentine as a joke, to prove he could sell any old shit, yet in his book he describes Kevin Shields (MBV leader) as a “total genius” and the greatest artist he has ever worked with. He didn`t like me pointing this out to him either, haha. Read into that what you will.

KS: What do you think are the best circumstances to create music? Is it after dealing with quite different things than music, for example after the job, or is it that inspiration comes after long lazy hours relaxing? Maybe it`s something else?

PJ: If you`re working in a boring 9-5 job, which i`m not but have done in the past, it can be difficult to get motivated when you come home feeling like shit everyday. Having the time to relax and drift into it works better for me. The reason I gave up my old job was because I hated it so much and it was sapping my creative energy. Tomoko would give you a very different answer i`m sure. She is a ball of creative energy. Anytime, any place. It amazes me.

KS: By citing the title of a demo release by Spacemen 3, “Taking Drugs to Make Music to Take Drugs to”, is that the ultimate truth about the music creating process or could it be done another way?

PJ: It`s an obvious truth for us, isn`t it? If you think about it, all the greatest albums ever recorded were created with some assistance from drugs. They open your mind to a different world. It can get in the way of things and it has for me in the past, but generally it helps me to think outside of the box. It`s also noticeable that when artists stop taking drugs, they also stop making great albums, haha. Like Bowie for instance.

He finished by asking me to recommend London bands that I thought



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were worth checking out, but I'll leave that off here.