

TONGUE IN GROOVE



Wild things

Tribe 8: They're loud, they're bold, they play with chain saws

by Rachel Ebor

Tribe 8's audacity to flex their ever-bulging dyke-punk-energy muscles, matched with raw in-your-face humor (as heard in the track "Wrong Bathroom," a particularly hilarious bit about those of us dykes who get mistaken for "sirs"), is enough to keep the band's CD *Roadkill Cafe* in my "frequently played" pile.

After their particularly entertaining show upstairs at LaLuna on March 28, I decided to do my duty and interview some members of Tribe 8. They were all busily scurrying around doing several million things: packing up, selling merchandise, talking to other people. It occurred to me that band life probably isn't all the glamour that television would have us believe. My enlightenment on this topic commenced when I finally got the chance to sit down with a couple of band members—guitarist Leslie Mah and lead vocalist Lynn Flipper.

Tongue in Groove: Hey, that was a great show! Quite lovely. I noticed that your sound now has a lot more funk to it than your earlier stuff. Any reason why?

Leslie Mah: We've wanted to play more than just punk, because, musically, punk rock is really great to learn when you don't know how to play. It's still fun to play, but I get bored when a band keeps playing the same thing. I like funk and other people in the band like funk.

So, are you moving more toward that direction, or are you going to stay within your punk roots?

Lynn Flipper: When we all came on board, we all had different interests and emphasis, so it's not like, "OK, let's get a band together and you're gonna play the drums like Black Flag, and you're gonna sing like the guy in Black Flag, and we're all gonna play songs just like Black Flag," 'cause we love Black Flag and we'll hand pick people that sound like that."

We all like different sounds—funk, rock, punk rock, Led Zeppelin—you know. Sometimes we just want straight-ahead fast, loud punk rock, right now—simple. There's only three songs like that on our latest record. I mean, if I had my way, it would be more fast punk songs, but everybody else is, "No, I wanna play this, no, I want that..."

Now that punk is crossing over to the mainstream, is that something Tribe 8 is worried about?

Mah: To be mainstream? That's a great worry, that we'll be mainstream; that all of a sudden [chuckles] we'll be widely accepted by parents and teens and everyone in between across the nation and...yeah, right.

Flipper: As far as the sound goes, I don't think we make any effort to make it easy-listening for regular folks. Some people would prefer a peaceful mellifluous sound—beautiful sounds that my mom would love to listen to—but Leslie is really into discordant sounds and wanking the wah-wah and all kinds of shit.

Mah: We're going to be here at the end of May with, hopefully, [local dyke punk band] Team Dresch.

Is that upstairs again?

Mah: Nope, we'll be playing downstairs.

Hmmm, big audience, eh?

Mah: Well, it's with Team Dresch. Now Team Dresch, their music has more mainstream appeal, even though their lyrics are still not so much that way. Their music can be a lot more accessible; they're all really great musicians and are pretty much trained and, I think, more together about what kind of music they want to play. That gives them a certain amount more acceptance with straight people, which I think is a good thing.

Have you played for a straight audience before?

Mah: Oh yeah, it'll always be pretty much a straight audience.

And how is that?

[Lynn recounts an especially funny but difficult-to-transcribe tale of a show that the band did in Knoxville, Tenn., and a member of the audience who ended up being the only woman to respond positively when Lynn yelled out, "Any dykes in the audience?"]

Flipper: Oh, they'd be tripping. People were just typical. Guys and women alike would be like, "What is she about? What are they talking about? What are they doing? I don't get it. Chain saws, knives, dicks, nakedness—I don't understand it. You say you don't like to fuck men, I don't understand that. I don't understand any of this."

They'd just be walking in a daze like, "Uh uh uh uh..."

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April 30, 1996

Dear Friend:

On April 6th our friend and buddy, Rupert Kinnard, was seriously hurt in an automobile accident. The accident injured Rupert's spinal cord and he is now paralyzed from the waist down. While we are deeply saddened that he has been hurt, we are so very grateful that Rupert is alive.

Rupert and his partner Scott Stapley have been through an incredible time of pain, shock and frustration. They are thankful for the outpouring of concern, support and love coming from their friends and communities. The gifts of love have helped them handle the feelings and tasks they face as they go about the business of getting on with their lives.

We are good friends of Rupert's and Scott's. We see up close the incredible challenges they are facing in figuring out how to live with this monumental change in their lives. We know solutions will not be easy. We also know that more help is needed, which is why we are writing to you.

For the next few weeks Rupert will be in the hospital, recovering from surgery and undergoing physical therapy. During that time Scott (and the rest of us) hope the house can be made livable for Rupert, including making it wheelchair accessible. We are working now to have renovations done before Rupert comes home from the hospital.

While the changes that need to be made are very expensive, we know there are lots of resources within our community of friends. We invite you to help by contributing to Rupert's Accessibility Trust Fund. This fund has been set up to help with renovation and other costs. It is being administered on a volunteer basis by an attorney who is a trusted friend of Rupert's.

We have set a goal of raising at least \$25,000 to contribute to the resources that will be needed to create an accessible life for Rupert. We know most of this \$25,000 will come from donations of \$25 to \$100 and that about thirty percent of the total will come from donations of \$500 to \$1,000. If many of us contribute a little and those of us who are able make larger contributions, we will easily reach our minimum goal of \$25,000.

Make your check payable to Rupert's Accessibility Trust Fund or RATE. We have enclosed an addressed envelope to make it easier for you to send your contribution right away. Give one of us a call if you have any questions. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Herron *Cliff Jones* *Renée LaChance* *Kathleen Saadat* *Teri Ventura*
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