

THE COLOR TAPES

The Color Tapes- an intriguing name dont you think? conjours up an image of sound and vision. I first saw them in a support spot and watched them steal the show. At the time I described them as experimental with the emphasis on the bass and drums which on that particular evening provided the drive and melodic flair that the twin guitars lacked. I was to find out later that only the lack of a sound check had left the guitars that far down in the mix. Nevertheless I was captivated by the overall structure, the new frontier adventurism coupled with paradoxically an ultra-dancable commercial sound.

The next time I met up with them was in the flat of Simon Edwards, the head of Heartbeat records, whilst talking to the Glaxo Babies. Edward's flat is a stopping off place for many Bristol musicians so it wasn't too suprising to find The Tapes lead guitarist and lyricist Tony Clydesdale and rythm guitarist Simon present. Simon had a lot of problems at the time and a proportion of the conversation was aimed at assisting him with them.

Unfortunately it transpired that we hadn't helped for the next thing I know is that Tony and Kevin Evans, the bass player, are sitting in my front room telling me that Simon had left and that they were about to record their first single for the local wavelength records, would I like to come and watch and oh -did I know any rhythm guitarists.

So far too early on a saturday morning found a determined bunch gathered in the crescent studios, in Bath to etch a little plastic.

In addition to Tony, Kevin and drummer Danny Pepworth, ex-Cortinas lead guitarist Mike Fewins had been invited along with a view to his joining in Simons place. Quiet and taciturn he said little but watched intently whilst the band ran through the tracks, Mark Stewart let loose his energy and support and various members of the Spics and even a Korgie wandered in and out taking more than a casual interest in the sounds coming out of the monitors. Little did we all think it then but we were to be still there 18 hours later. Patiently overseen by engineer David Lord, who willingly gave up a nights sleep, The Color Tapes emerged with a single of which they can be well pleased.

Later back in Bristol the conversation mainly concerned the single Cold Anger/Leaves of China. "If it were pushed properly it could be a hit" says Kevin always the most ebullient of the group yet in some ways the most hesitant, he adds "but I don't know if I want it to be a hit or not" Commercial but in less obvious directions I add, "yeah - when we were there I felt it sounded really new, and I'm not just saying that to push it - I really did."

"If we think about the reasons why we wanted to do a single in the first place, ^{Says Tony} if they're strongly formulated enough to call reasons then we didn't think in terms of a hit at all, but of a beginning, a gradual building up. Yes we do think we have something to say, but we're not dynamic about it at the moment; We're not saying that we're gonna change that or do this ..." "No we haven't got a common objective or philosophy to talk about" interrupts Kevin, "we could talk about how we like reggae or jazz or Roxy Music but it doesn't mean anything whereas groups like the Pop Group.... "

Inevitably the subject of the Pop Group comes up.

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Being the only local band to achieve national recognition (apart from The Korgies and Interview who hardly count) they are a strong influence on aspiring local bands. So bearing in mind that the Color Tapes and the Pop Group are old friends plus the fact that Mark Stewart was at the sessions you dear reader may already be led to think that what we have ~~xx~~ here is a clone band-- Nothing could be further from the truth. As Kevin says "we're really good friends and I believe in what they're doing, but it's really hard to follow that. If we say that we have the same ideas then people are going to say, 'that's shit, they're ripping them off you know, but...'"

The but is completed by Tony "It's not just the Pop Group and what they think because many people think like that, people we haven't even heard of yet, the difference is one of approach."

Exactly, it isn't just the idea as such but the execution of same that is the operative factor and ~~x~~ The Color Tapes produce a danceable beat coupled to intricate rhythms and imaginative words. The rhythm and melody are essential to capture the attention so that the less accessible lyrics have a chance to come through.

Getting Tony to talk about his lyrics is like trying to get a counter payment ~~x~~ at the DHSS. "Well I usually write under pressure. How it seems to happen is I get a series of scattered images and then I try to smooth them out to make sense" Calm and controlled is Tony's usual demeanor ~~xx~~ but his lyrics belie this hinting at concealed passions, dealing more with relationships, moods and attitudes rather than socio/political situations and solutions. Cold Anger for instance is about a relationship that should have ended but hasn't (maybe can't) and is a smouldering tension filled track whilst the B side Leaves of ~~xxxx~~ China is a softer more mood invoking and

Introspective.

Before we were interrupted by the irritable psycopath who lives upstairs from me the subject was the leaving of Simon and the joining of Mike Fewins." I think Simon leaving was probably the best thing, not that wed thought about it, id have been quite happy if he was still in the band, but things like playing with Mike last night it just showed what could happen" says Tony "the thing was Simon didnt try to ~~contribute~~ contribute, at rehursals he wouldnt say much and that used to drag him down ~~and~~ and us down, but with mike its different ,he puts out ideas expands the scope..."

So thatswhere we had~~xx~~ to leave it. The single will be out on Bristols Wavelength label at the beggining of September and if things go right there may be a licencing deal with virgin. Now that they have an imaginative guitarist in mike maybe all they need now is a manager with the same faith to get them gigs in the rest of the couhtry- any takers?

RAB