

ROCKER'S REPORT



Wiseblood's Clint Ruin: *How dry I am.*

● Julian Cope, Variety Arts Center, Aug. 5.

Frequent, tiresome references have been made to Julian Cope's self-interment in the Rock God Big House, wardens Osterberg and Morrison presiding. This comes not only from his acid-damage music, squirmy stage pretensions or standard-issue leather pants, but from his terminal case of ego edema, resulting in the messianic *Saint Julian* album. No one told Tamworth, England's greatest import that one usually has to die to hit martyr status, although the systematic slash-and-burn of brain cells may turn out to be a secondary route.

But enough about image and persona: Cope is one of the few artists who cultivates his talent as carefully as his lifestyle. The set ripped in with "Trampoline," a tough little number that juiced up the audience for a succession of finely crafted, professional gut-wrenchers and kept up the blazing momentum through the closing "World Shut Your Mouth." It was only during the encore that St. J showed what he is capable of — true god-head attainment: oozing sexual tension, wanking the mike, performing an agonizing shirt-removal sequence, and finally climbing on top of an amp and stretching out in a mock-icon pose and toppling. Boom. . . Out go the lights. . . Show is over. . . God is dead.

—Arion Berger

● Wiseblood, Lydia Lunch, Richard Kern's Deathtrip Films, Scream, Aug. 7.

Lydia Lunch has assumed the form of some modern Clytemnestra, a broken mirror reflecting a doomed society on its last gasp-go-round. For five minutes or so she stood there like the flipside of Tammy Bakker's soul, a devil doll preachin' her version of Armageddon and gettin' a rise from the peons. For those who still have a need to work out their self-abusive fantasies so they can re-enforce a chosen concept of "reality" as some straight-to-hell shithole, for those who let that funky, murderous animal nature run wild rather than trying to tame the damn critter, Lydia Lunch is the meal ticket. However, no matter how artlessly artful we found Ms. Lunch's abbreviated rantings (and she is never at a loss for words), we also found the whole thing almost quaint in its by now pro forma nihilism. Of course, it doesn't matter one iota to Lydia Lunch if we subscribe to her vision of the world, or even if we like her performance. That's the correct defensive stance for an artist like her to take. But she's not an idiot. In fact, she's fucking brilliant when she wants to be. Which makes the inexplicable predictability of what she does all the more frustrating.

Wiseblood is the latest project for the man with a thousand names and backing tracks, Clint/Jim/Foetus/Ruin. Aided and abetted by another sonic terrorist, Roli Mosimann, Wiseblood on record can sound like Stravinsky on bad acid, zapped-out Loony Tunes from Camarillo driving a Harley

Gary Silva



Rock City Angel Bobby Durango: *Baby, I'm for real.*

through hell. Like his paramour Ms. Lunch, Ruin is one of the more prodigious artists when it comes to lancing those sociopsychic boils. But it takes more than a Sisters of Mercy-like fog show, harsh lighting, getting fucked up on stage and occasionally flashing pubic hair to transform somewhat dreary dronings into some form of either terrifying, aggressive or transcendent music-vision. Great musicians, haphazard performance, same old attitude. Why don't they do something as revolutionary as their initial work has been — like put out an album of New Age music?

As for Richard Kern's films, he's gotten certain New York anti-celebrities to act out their wildest porno-flick and snuff-film fantasies in the name of some kind of art, and it was amusing to watch Scream-ettes, they who would pattern themselves as fashionable ghoules, fleeing in grossed-out horror at the cinematic sight of a man shaving his pubic hair. A genuine successor to underground filmmakers like Kenneth Anger, Kern's unapologetic work will have most people getting too hung up on the visceral punch to see where the impulse to make these films comes from. However, for those of us who have seen plenty of fuck-films and know every slasher film trick in the book, this stuff was fairly laughable. We know people can cut themselves and bleed and have weirdo sex and jerk off and freak out and make ugly faces and do all kinds of torturous shit. . . So what? But then, "so what?" seemed to be the general mood of the evening.

—Craig Lee

● Rock City Angels, Scream, Aug. 8.

Scream seems to pack out when trendy bands like Demolition Gore Galore play, but when an honest-to-God rock & roll band like this headlines, it seems as if the Screamsters are too cool to show their dyed-black heads. The very presence of the Rock City Angels blows the cover off of all those pseudo-junkies buying trinkets on Melrose. The Angels may have elements of punk, a touch of glam and the requisite street trappings, but they've also got something a lot of other local trend-combos are missing — depth. Their music doesn't come from Aerosmith, it goes right for the roots, starting from '40s blues and '50s soul. These influences are more felt than heard, as they should be — after all, this is music that depends on *feel*. The Angels don't look much different from other L.A. pretenders, but behind the cowboy hats and guttersnipe wardrobe beats a lot of heart. When singer Bobby Durango performed Otis Redding's "These Arms of Mine," his eyes glistened with tears. It wasn't a put on. Occasionally, this group may act like it doesn't give a damn; at the same time, they aren't afraid to drop the facade that most bands try to define. As for all you shallow poseurs who paint pretty pictures over an empty shell — take a hike! No one missed you, anyway.

—Janiss Garza

Janiss Garza



Lydia's Lunch-box.

David Hermon

LETTER FROM LYDIA August 10, 1987

To whom it may concern:

Enraged as usual by the complete incompetence of people who by now should be able to complete the simple functions for which they are paid and employed to do, I can no longer squelch the hideous and overpowering disappointment, frustration and anger that still plagues me after the events that took place on the night of August 7, 1987 at the SCREAM.

After looking forward to and planning for weeks our return to the Los Angeles area, I was sadly reminded of exactly the type of behavior which drove me out of this insidious hellpit in the first place.

In a futile attempt to assure that the show would go on as planned, I had placed at least 10 phone calls to Dayle, the booking agent for that moronic inferno for which we had the incredible misfortune to present our only Los Angeles show at.

After having received the list of our various technical requirements at least six weeks in advance, and post said phone calls, I felt that surely there would be no room for inaccuracies or discrepancies. I should have known better and am still kicking myself for foolishly trusting someone based on their agreeable and pseudo-sycophantic phone manners.

Upon arrival at soundcheck, which proceeded to take five hours, since the entire staff of the SCREAM seemed to either be stoned, stupid or possibly nearly brain dead, we still had not even half of our lighting requirements and a soundcheck level which completely belied what was soon to be haphazardly presented as the actual show. Having heard that the notorious RATMAN (known for originally building BLACK FLAG'S P.A.) was in charge of sound, we stupidly felt that he could at least be trusted to present a decent level of comprehensible volume, but I was once again proved foolishly wrong in trusting ANYONE to have the slightest amount of personal responsibility.

To begin my incredible infatuation, the sound for the DEATHTRIP films was asked to listening to a

scratchy 45 on a portable turntable. Oh well. Why should they bother anyway, it's only the FILMS, an integral part of the COMPLETE show.

And certainly, according to their unprofessional buffoonery, why the hell should my portion of the show be lit so that possibly the audience might be actually able to see me in my only performance in the entire area for what will surely after this be as long a time as possible, because frankly, I JUST CAN'T STAND IDIOTS.

And speaking of IDIOTS, for 20 minutes prior to the start of the show, we were incarcerated in the dressing room, from which we eventually escaped only after Martin Nation buckknifed us out of there.

Putting my own selfish infatuation for some sort of tolerable presentation aside, the most insulting aggravation was fueled by the sloppy stoneheads whose only excuse for being present was to collect their paycheck for sitting at the foot of the stage, unable to simply start the smoke machine on time for the headline act or rectify the electrical dangers presented after copious amounts of water were spilled all over the exposed and untaped wires on the stage, shrugging to their girlfriends that it wasn't their job. My intolerance began to mount as the sad and sorry sound man, ferreting under pressure from the management, kept polluting the sound by attempting to satisfy the management (incredible that this shitty place even has one). It was a running battle after every song as I vainly attempted to talk some sense into him, pleading to correct the muddiness, raise the volume and have a semblance of respect for what we were trying desperately to present. Unfortunately, we failed, thanks to the idiocy of a club who, unless they have a complete overhaul of their entire staff, I seriously doubt I will ever be tricked into dealing with again. Dear Scream: Thanks but no thanks for one of the most irritating, frustrating and disappointing shows of my life. May I never have the misfortune of repeating this dreadful miscalculation again. See you in my dreams. DEAD.

—Lydia Lunch, for Wiseblood, Deathtrip and the Audience