

MEN OF CLAY

They come from Bristol, don't believe in writing songs about 'shagging' and are worried about the South American rain forests. Who are they? CLAYTOWN TROUPE. More info below . . .

CLAYTOWN TROUPE burst onto the scene back in May with the release of their debut single 'Prayer', a tune *so vibrant, so sexy* it had to be secured in a special leather pouch. I was impressed. They played gigs, and I was even *more* impressed.

Island Records announced that Claytown Troupe were their fastest ever signing, just four days elapsing from live sighting to contract inking according to vocalist **Christian Riou**. I'm surprised it took them so long!

The Troupe really are something special, a fact brought home to me in stark relief when I met up recently with Christian, **Andy Holt** (drums), **Paul Waterson** (bass) and **Rick Williams** (keyboards). Guitarist **Adrian 'Ben' Bennett** was strangely absent.

We're sitting in a tiny studio in Tulse Hill, London listening to the remixed tracks from 'Through The Veil', the mesmerising debut Claytown album. Andy mused on the delivery of said tracks.

"There is a fair amount of variation. 'Love Is' is more like a **Doors, INXS**. Punky sort of thing, whilst 'Alabama' is more of a straightahead Rock 'n' Roll number. Then 'Hey Lord' is slower and more rhythmic and 'Real Life' is quite Thrashy in its own way."

"Rock is the common denominator," adds Rick. "The sort of album we wanted to make is the type we'd like to go out and buy."

Claytown Troupe express considerable dissatisfaction with the current Rock scene.

"I find it really fucking boring," states Andy. "I used to like bands such as **Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, UFO and Iron Maiden**, but I got bored with it all 'cause all the bands playing now are just doing the same thing over and over again. We play what we like to hear. We don't say we're a Rock band, an Indie band, a Doors band or anything. If someone comes up with an idea we just put whatever we personally feel into it, that's why we all write together."

CHRISTIAN GOES on to explain that the traditional Rock 'n' Roll self-destruct attitude with some disdain.

"It's the whole yuppie money-orientated thing. Bands are saying that they want to be rebels, and individuals, but most of 'em don't really. All these bands now are totally hung up on the fucking money, they're not trying to create anything new or change things. Unfortunately, with the Rock 'n' Roll attitude it's all, 'Fuck you, I'm alright Jack', which is a totally selfish attitude. Most of these people end up being shat on themselves for being too fucking cocky. It's stopped Rock from changing and progressing."

Rick (getting a word in) concurs: "The music business is so orientated towards safety that it's frightened Rock bands out of existence."

Christian believes that Claytown Troupe's lyrics are a departure from the more usual Rock 'n' Roll poetry.

"Our album is about experiences that we as normal English people go through. A lot of bands write songs about how much they drank or about women they shagged, and who wants to know that?! I don't wanna hear about someone getting pissed and being sick, or shagging some bird that he doesn't wanna talk to the next day. It's like sitting next to a nutter on the train when you listen to those records. Go away, don't talk to me! I don't wanna hear about someone else's sexual habits."

"Most kids aren't gonna get paryletic and shag loads of sexy models and take loads of drugs. Who wants to burn out? I'd rather carry on at a good level for a long time. We get a lot of letters from people who are glad we don't sing about things like that. We look at things soberly . . . even if we were pissed when we wrote the songs!"

CHRISTIAN GOES on to explain that the three singles set to be lifted from 'Through The Veil' represent a continuing concept.

"It all ties in. 'Prayer' is about all the trouble going on in South America (specifically the destruction of the rain forests). I met these South American Indians who had come to live in Bristol. They were really fucked up because their families had been killed. 'Prayer' is about a chap offering up a prayer because he's not happy with how things are going. And 'Hey Lord' (current single) is about the person he's praying to, this God-type character, looking down and saying, 'Yeah, what do you want then?' 'Real Life' (next single) is about everything going wrong in the world."

Fortunately, 'Real Life' is unlikely to be autobiographical as life should proceed extremely well for Clayton Troupe in the future. A down-to-earth bunch of chaps with high ideals. I can safely predict that it won't be too long before we see them adorning covers and gracing centre spreads.

MAURA SUTTON

**Claytown Troupe:
'A down-to-earth
bunch of chaps
with high ideals'**

