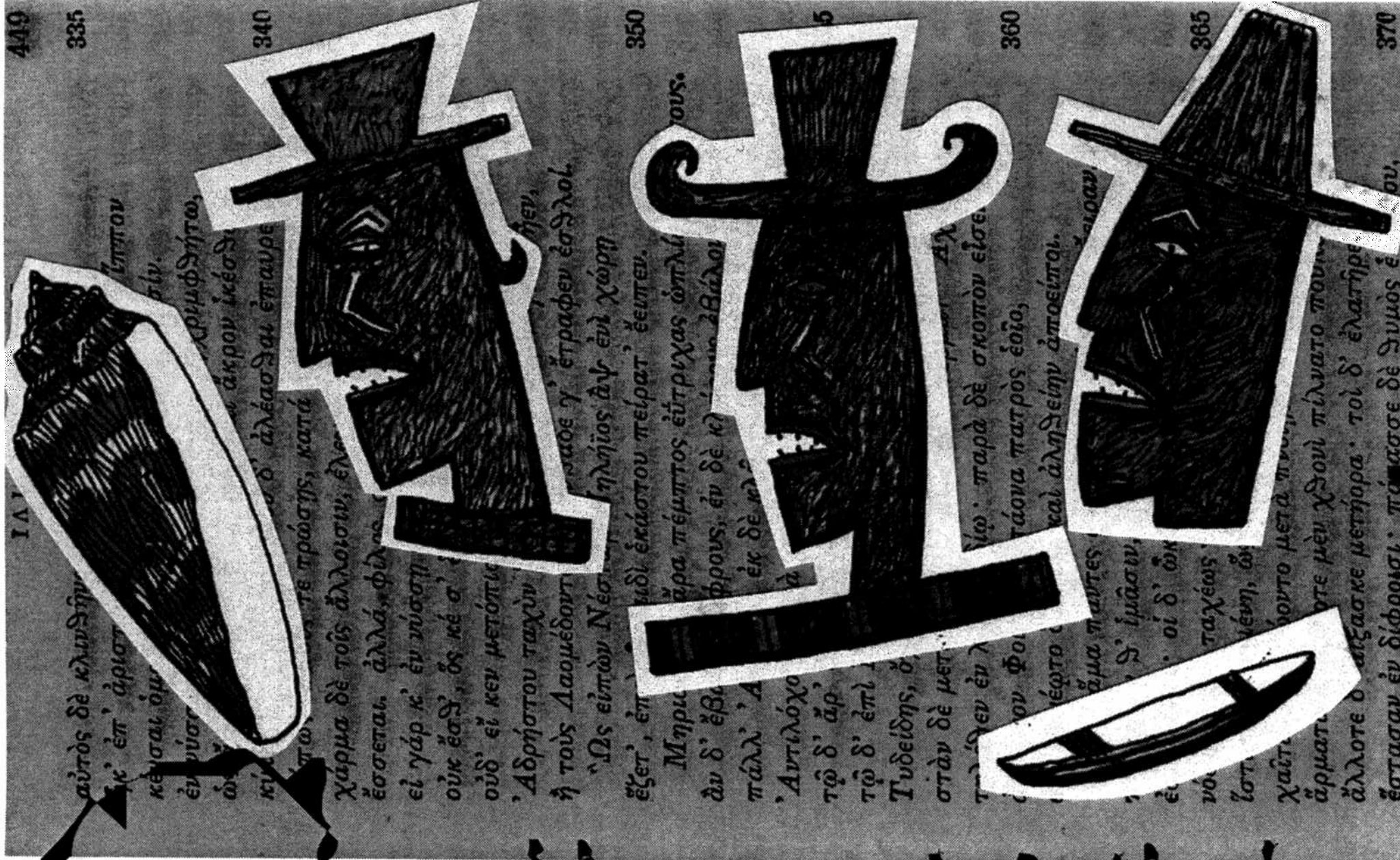


# Rawling with



449

335

340

350

360

365

370

αὐτὸς δὲ κλυθῆναι  
ἐκ' ἐπ' ἄριστον  
κέναι οἴον  
ἐνύστατον  
ὡς πρὸς  
κίχλην

ἵππου  
σίν.

φριμφθήτω,  
ἀκρον ἰκέσθαι

ἀλλάσθαι ἔπανρε

χάρμα δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοισιν, ἐλε  
ἔσσεται. ἀλλά, φίλος  
εἰ γὰρ κ' ἐν νύσση

οὐκ ἔσθ', ὅς κέ σ'  
οὐδ' εἰ κεν μετόπι

Ἀδρήστου ταχύν  
ἢ τοὺς Λαομέδοντι

ὦς εἰπὼν Νέστωρ  
ἔξετ', ἐπὶ

Μηριόχου  
ἀνδ' ἔβραχον

πάλλ' Ἀχιλλεύῳ  
Ἀντιλόχου

τῷ δ' ἄρ' ἔειπε  
τῷ δ' ἐπὶ Τυδείδης,  
στάν δὲ μετ' ἄλλων

ἐν λείπῳ Φοῖβου  
ἰέωτο

ἅμα πάντες  
δ' ἱμάσιν

οἱ δ' ὄκνησαν  
ταχέως

μένει, ὡς ἔπειτα  
ἔοντο μετὰ πύργῳ

ἄρματα ἔλαττον  
ἄλλοτε οὐκ ἔβραχον

ἔστασαν ἐν δίφροισι· πάσασε δὲ θυμὸς ἔ

ἴσασε γ' ἔτραφεν ἑσθλοῖ  
ἦεν,

ἡλθίος ἀψ' ἐνὶ χώρῃ  
ἔειπεν.

ἄρα πέμπτος εὐτρίχας ὤπλη  
φρους, ἐν δὲ κ' ἔβραχον

ἑκ δὲ κ' ἔβραχον  
ἄλλοτε οὐκ ἔβραχον

ἴω· παρὰ δὲ σκοπὸν εἰσε  
τάονα πατρός ἐοῖο,

καὶ ἀληθείην ἀποείποι.  
ἔβραχον

ἄρματα ἔλαττον  
ἄλλοτε οὐκ ἔβραχον

ἔστασαν ἐν δίφροισι· πάσασε δὲ θυμὸς ἔ



# Tarts

interviewed by mail by Leslie Gaffney

9.9.94

## INTERVIEW RESPONSES

...came to my attention mere months ago, but immediately upon my first listen to **Mayten's Throw**—their latest in a slew of musical releases over the years—they received my complete devotion. The intriguing compositions on this disk are slightly more accessible than the adventures undertaken on the previous year's **Operas** LP (experimenting with a 78 rpm player and specific philosophies regarding noise and the passage of time), and is a recommended introduction to this creative "union." A union whose recording history surpasses even the most prolific artists that come to mind...

My intrigue manifested an eight-question curiosity-quencher, but my return was much greater. Suzanne and Michael astounded me with their generous and fascinating responses (transcribed and accompanied on disk with heaps of photos and Suzanne's artwork!)

Crawling With Tarts can tell a great story—through their instruments, their lyrics, and in the following text; why not write to them and find out first hand...?

**These answers were recorded on a tape recorder during a walk**

**KEY:** Suz, Mic.

### I.

ROMANTIC HISTORY (THE WHOLE STORY).

In February 1983, I answered a note scrawled rather chaotically on a bulletin board posted outside my JC music theory class, for an "underground punk" band, I think it was. They needed a drummer. When I called it was Suzanne, and she was so enthusiastic it was as if I was already in the band; before they heard me or knew anything about me, I was in. The band was called **Youth Camp**, and they had mostly original tunes written by Suz and by one of the guitarists, and some cover songs (Johnny Thunders, etc.). Suz and I, kind of on the side, started making a magazine, related to the band and not, called **Youths Go Camping**. Suz had a boyfriend, but he was a night cook, so she and I drank lots of coffee and worked on this magazine and other projects until dawn many nights. At this point our relationship was still entirely on a creative level (I thought she was happy with her boyfriend). This went on. In December (still 1983), I took her to a concert in LA (Glen Branca), and afterwards we walked around the city and had our pictures taken in a photo booth. Something else was happening between us, we felt a kind of irrational sadness which we later knew was due to our partial separation, and it shows in the photo booth pictures.

The next day we (**Youth Camp**) were back in LA, sneaking into a recording studio that a friend worked at (we saw **Black Flag** and David Bowie master tapes upstairs in their storage room.) Suz and I were in agony. Then, again the following day, December 9, we ran away together, just decided to leave town without telling anyone. Suz had to wear my clothes because we couldn't go back to her house. **I took what I was wearing, and my camera...in San Diego Michael took me to thrift stores and bought be moo moos.** At first we tried to go to Paris, but we found out we couldn't without passports. So we went to Mexico...**we had a fabulous time.** We drove a truck and slept on beaches. We forgot to call anyone for three weeks. When we finally did, on the solstice, we found that certain things were in chaos back home. Suz' apartment, where her ex-boyfriend still lived with all of their possessions and Suz' artwork, was a disaster. Suz' mother threatened to take her cat and three kittens to the pound. Ex-band members threatened me with a beating. We immediately started back from central Mexico, taking three days to cover area previous traversed in twenty, to save Suz' (our) cats and artwork. Without hesitation, we packed and moved a few hundred miles away from everyone to be alone and start **Crawling With Tarts**. **I guess that's a romantic story.** We still have Feferone; the others have since run away.



Performing "Motors" 1990 photo: Dave Landau

## 2.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEALS WHEN RECORDING? JUST GRAPPLING WITH FASCINATING SOUNDS?...TRYING TO COMMUNICATE A MESSAGE?...ATTEMPTING TO EDUCATE SOME ENGINEERING CONCEPTS?...PASSING TIME? **Most of our recording is done after pieces are already composed. Not unless we are working on a...a piece of music, and then we record what we do and then go back and, kind of sift through and...re-edit things we like...and move things around.** So really the only ideas we have are when we're mixing? **Right, so the only ideas come when we're mixing.** And we add things then...**No, but we have ideas when we begin...**we knew we had ideas before. **Yes. We have ideas all of the time.** So what are the ideas? **When recording?** What are the ideas. **Things to create? Things that don't sound...[resigned] I don't know...**[Mic reads the question for the first time]...Suz, the question is *ideals!* **What are "ideals"?** Ideals are like, what is it that you are trying to achieve and, is it really an ideal? A thing that's not quite achievable but just approachable. What are those ideals...that you...in other words, what is the essential element that you are trying to reproduce in music. And is there an overall essential element, or are there different elements...I mean is there one, sort of *grand* element that you would say is an ideal for all of the music. First that question: Is there a

grand ideal? **Grand ideal. You know, I don't really think about much when I'm creating the music...I just go in there and deal with the instruments and get inspired by what I see and the sounds I'm making.** So you're saying that there is an inadequacy in the speech and conscious thought process, in other words, it's an illogical ideal. **Yes, it's an illogical ideal...mixing is different, though. Once I get all the little parts...after I get all the textures, and all the shapes and forms and stuff I want, and all the...then I go in and extract and add to, then I work with what I have. I kind of create a palette-type thing and then I go in...it's like painting, you know you paint out parts you don't like then you put in other parts.** OK. And then maybe she wants to know some of the sub-ideals. Ideals that might come into play in a particular piece. OK, we have an idea that there is a grand ideal that deals with illogic...**Right...**that's not easily explainable. And we accept that, we think that is fine. But are there any sub-ideals? There are some various classes of music that we could say that there are...I'll just, for example, define three or four classes even though there are many more. And one of the classes might be...the turntable performance pieces. **OK, so what are your ideals when creating the turntable pieces?** Well...some of the sub-ideals? **Those are all about narratives, those are all about building stories.** ...stories, that's excellent; that's why they are called "operas." **Right. That's why the**

**record pieces are that way.** So the ideal then is to communicate a linear story. **Yes.** A story with a theme and plot. **Right.** Well, I think that's true sometimes but other times I think we have nonlinear stories that are...**branches...they deal with religion and politics and social...they are branches of whole...they are cohesive but they have offshoots so that you can go off in different directions...which makes it open-ended, it makes it so you have to...everyone gets something else out of it...they understand it differently.** Right. **That's what the operas remind me of.** OK. I can't think of any other sub-genres that I want to talk about right now; let's go on to the next question.

## 3.

CRAWLING WITH TARTS' MUSIC SOUNDS LIKE IT WOULD INSIST UPON THE ENVIRONMENT OF HOME-RECORDING...YET YOU'VE VENTURED SEVERAL LIVE PERFORMANCES (DOCUMENTED ON CASSETTE) AND EVEN MADE A FILM THAT INCLUDES THESE LIVE PERFORMANCES. WHAT'S THE LIVE SET-UP LIKE (HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO HOME)? Well first of all, it *is* much easier for us to create our music at home because there is much more of an element of control. In fact with some of those live performances, quite often, we were disappointed because of elements that we had to let out of our hands; sometimes they go wrong...sometimes they don't...sometimes it's great. And there are a few musicians we can work with that have very much the same ideals as we do about completion of a live performance...but sometimes we get into a situation where the sound engineer is...**inept?**...they've got no clue...levels go up and down...we've had some untoward experiences. This is one of the reasons we started working with turntables so that we could, the two of us, perform live more ideas, simultaneously, than two people normally can. Some of the recorded music *is* translatable to performance. Some of the recent pieces were made specifically for performance. Just about all of the operas were made that way, with a performance in mind...and then later, recorded. The performance and recording of these are similar. Things are balanced better on the recordings, but the live shows include audience interaction. **And they also...they're faster and**

more alive...more hooked into the nervous system, rather than into the creative...The visual part was important...But you play differently when you play live, compared to when you play for recording...So it's very complicated for us to perform, it takes a long time to set up for one thing...we usually don't perform the same piece more than once in a particular city...so, for that reason we don't perform a lot. **Oh, she wanted to know about the set-up...**the set-up, maybe she means...what does she mean? **Like maybe hooking in...wiring...maybe she means setting up drums...**we've had to get some special gear for performing live...**some of our tables are really beautiful, remember that table, we set up this beautiful table...**yeah...**but I don't know, let's move to the next question.**

## 4.

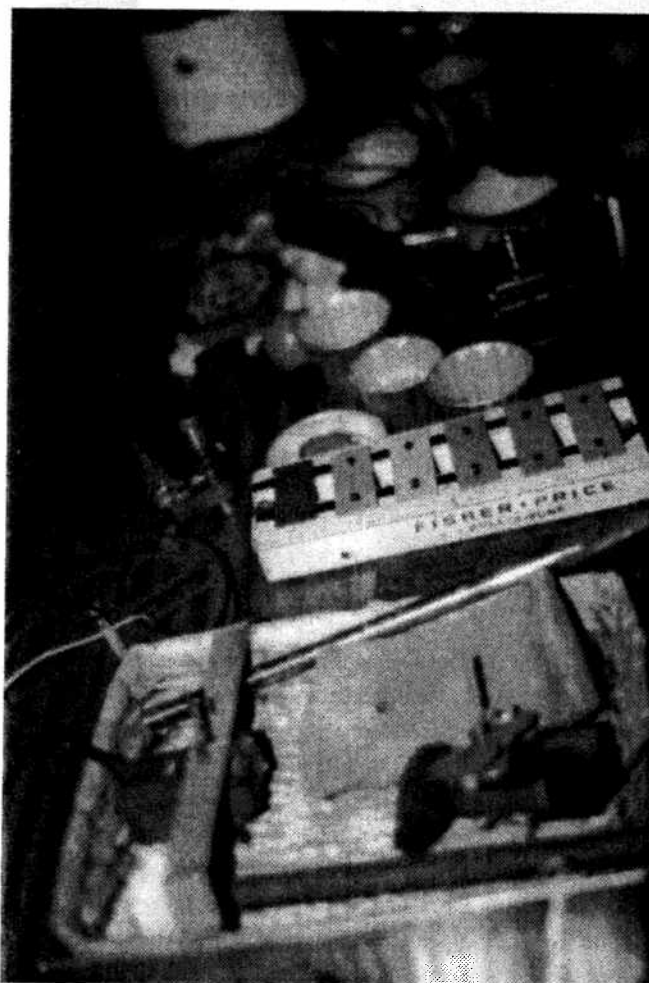
IS THE LABEL **ASP** STRICTLY FOR CWT RELEASES? HOW DID YOU FINANCE THE **OPERAS** LP AND **MAYTEN'S THROW** CD?

**ASP** is actually the union of Suz and I, it started even before CWT, and...it's just for our work together, sort of a group name...so we haven't released anyone else's work on it...and I guess we probably won't because we barely have time to manage our own part of this.. **and finance our own stuff.** Financing our stuff...it's financed by day jobs, but...**no, financing our stuff...**yeah, now they are starting to finance themselves...income from **Operas** is paying for **Mayten's Throw**, which is almost ready to pay for a new one. It just takes more time than we would like.

## 5.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR RESOURCES FOR MATERIAL FOR THE **Operas** LP?...DID YOU STUMBLE ON A BIG COLLECTION AT A YARD SALE?...DID YOU RAID THE FOLKS?...SCOUR THE RECORD BINS? Oh this is an interesting question, well, because some of these things *did* come from our folks, in the sense that, we grew up hearing a lot of this music subliminally, and regarding some of these researches, it originally was not so much the idea of putting out

music using these sources, but an exploration looking for...trying to understand some of this stuff that we had heard...recordings, but also advertising, things like that. My parents set me down in front of the television a lot when I was little and I know I soaked up a lot of advertising...I've always been curious about what it was, of what it was made, and what



Instruments used in "Motors" 1990 photo: Dave Landau

effect it had. As to the rest of the question...those recordings come from everywhere, not just one cache.

**I think our beginning started with the record player we first bought...a 78 player bought in England, and we had that one record...that's right...and then from there we started collecting 78s, and then through 78s we discovered the one-of-a-kinds...and through one-of-a-kinds we started...**those being the amateur disc recordings...**those started inspiring us to make the operas.** The Bee Opera was the first opera in which we used the record player...and that's where we used the first form of the bee static...we actually

used a turntable first on **Voccianna...that was the very first time we used a record player...**and it was used in **Sarajevo Center Metal Doors**; I can't remember if that was before the **Bee Opera**...oh, but this is about the material, though, about what's on the disks. It ends up that these records contain a lot of interesting cultural artifacts. I guess the most important thing about them is that they weren't made for aesthetic reasons; they were made for someone's personal documentation, or they were singing a song, or speaking a letter to somebody else...so they are personal and...completely divorced from the idea of *creation*, as an insulated, separate world (such the worlds of art or music). Their world was just their real lives...and that's one of the most attractive things about them and why we like to use them. That aspect...that's the content...but there is also the surface noise, which is really quite beautiful...it's not overdone, overstated...it's simple but complicated, simple in sound but complicated in information. **Right.**

## 6.

WAS THERE A TRANSITION DURING THE YEARS OF CASSETTE RELEASES WHEN YOU BEGAN TO WRITE MORE "SONGS" (WITH VOCAL/GUITAR/DRUM) RATHER THAN STRICTLY PASTICHES OF FOUND SOUNDS? **We've always used found**

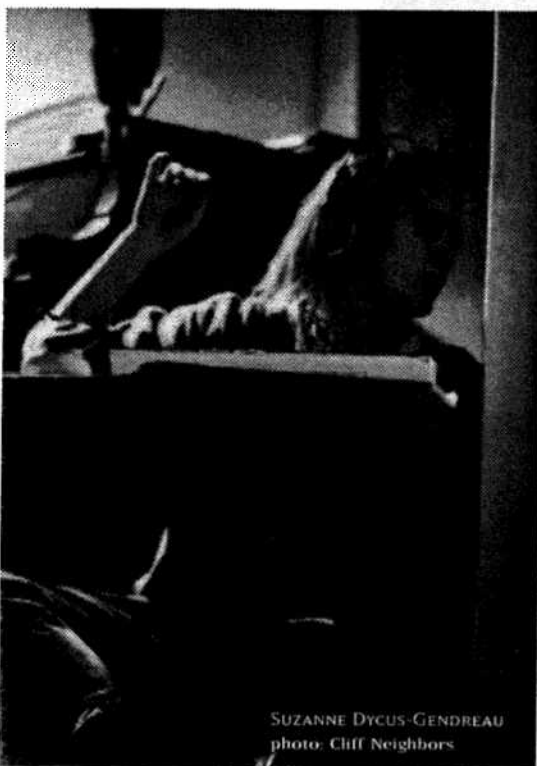
**sounds, even in the songs.** She is wondering...did we all of a sudden

start writing songs...let me see...**on the very first CWT release...**yes, there were some songs on there..."Kingbird"...but there were more cut-up things...I guess it's a combination of our two worlds. **It's the same as it's always been...**yes, it is. **Except that the new release on Silent is just going to be songs, but the songs are not just guitar, vocals, bass...**but the fact is, we haven't written a song in several years...**no, we don't make songs anymore...**all of the songs are old, in fact, **Mayten's Throw** was recorded a while back...**well I guess we should explain that about eight years ago we had this huge amount of songs and we were going to release them, and then we never got**

them on to anything, remember? It was the Poolside project-thing...and so we wrote a lot of songs with the intention of making a record of all songs, which never happened...which never happened. So some of the songs ended up on the Portuguese release **New Caldonia**, some of them came out on the **Lavender Bobby 7"**... some are out on Candy Tooth Ceylon...yes, yes, some of them filtered out onto various cassettes, and some ended up on **Mayten's Throw**...and then I guess the final part of that story will be the **Silent** CD compendium of songs. So the song era is sort of over...the song era is over...maybe it will come back.

## 7.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER SOME OF THE MORE ECLECTIC PIECES OF YOUR INSTRUMENTATION? The Squeaky Hinge...it's a giant squeaky hinge. We have an instrument that we made that was modeled on a folk instrument that we saw in Lisbon. We have a cutting machine, a disc cutting machine, that we use. [Suz and Mic digress, inventing sections for **Particularly Noisy Opera** to be written for an upcoming concert using the cutting machine.] The reason it's particularly noisy is because the disc recorder has a very dull needle, so anything it cuts right now is particularly noisy. **Many**



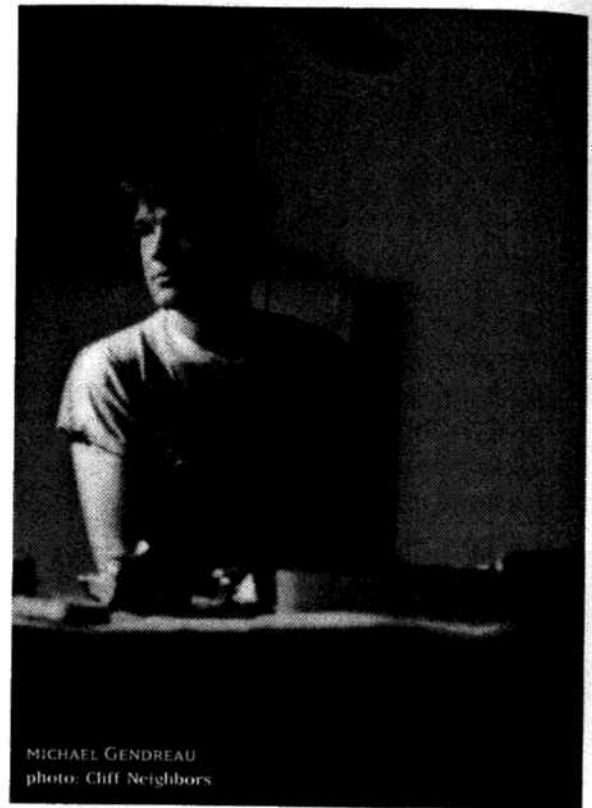
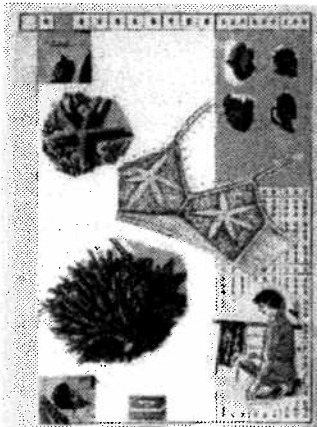
SUZANNE DYCUS-GENDREAU  
photo: Cliff Neighbors

**drums...lots of drums. Oh! Motors!** Oh yes, motors...we have both AC and DC versions of small, hand-held motors...a piece on **Mayten's Throw** is done with those...AC electric motors shoved in between the strings of a grand piano. And **Bee Opera** also has them on it, and the ones that are used in the **Bee Opera** are tiny DC motors powered with 9 volt batteries. We have quite a few of those... they are like bees...they have tiny fans built into them and...we turn them on and set them on drums and...**right...**they sound like bees. **Suitcases of found metals. And contact mics and that sort of stuff.** There are many things...strapping metal...it's just endless, really. We have pieces in which each sound is from a different instrument. Let us go on.

## 8.

WHAT/WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE POP ACTS?

Pop acts? Oh, like Charles Aznavour? People like that, huh? **Nancy and Lee. Brazil '66!** Perez Prado, he's great. **Is he pop music?** Yeah, it's music that is made to be consumed by masses. Oh! Burt Bacharach. **Burt Bacharach...**he's one of the greatest, ever. Arthur Lyman. That's some of the music that was in our subconscious. Lots of soundtracks, too. **I really like soundtracks to movies.** Yeah, John Barry, and Nino Rota, of course. How about other foreign pop stars? **The French woman we like.** Oh, Edith Piaf? **No, no. The one who cut the little records and was in "Masculine, Feminine."** Oh, Sandi Shaw. Gosh, there are so many that I just can't think of them...**It's too hard to think when there are so many.** ☺



MICHAEL GENDREAU  
photo: Cliff Neighbors

## THINGS TO COME

**Sarajevo Center Metal Doors** CD  
(ASP, Oakland, CA)

**Grand Surface Noise Opera Nrs. 3 (Indian Ocean Ship) and 4 (Drum Totem)** CD  
(Realization, Ventura, CA)

**Madeleine** CD (Silent, San Francisco)

"Trecher Track" on **Turntable Solos** CD  
(Trigram, Tokyo, Japan)

"Small Quiet Music for Tabletops(e)" on **No Machine is Silent** cass.  
(Realization Recordings)

"End Loop Haiku," "Drum Haiku," and "Haiku™" on **Haikus** CD  
(Softwatch, UK)

"Scenes from the Ottoman Empire" on **23 5** CD (23 5, San Francisco)

"The Smocking" on **Auricular** CD  
(Auricular, San Francisco)

☛ for a complete list and description of all of Crawling with Tarts collaborations and releases, write Popwatch with your return address or fax number and I'll send the 3 pages CWT sent me. Or again, write the band! **Mayten's Throw** is available for \$10 postpaid (U.S) from ASP P.O. Box 24908, Oakland, CA 94623 USA, and is an incredible document of their brilliance.