

# FLAMING TOUGH

## Putting Out Fires with Gasoline

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**Morrissey** is incorrigible. Check out his poker-faced reply when England's *New Musical Express* asked him if success had engendered any lapses in his meat-free, sex-free, drug-free life-style:

"I think as long as I make records, I'll be sealed up in this vat of introspection. Maximum attention has got to be given to everything I do, and, in order to concentrate absolutely perfectly on everything, I have to give up sausages."

Or consider his languorous bitchery when asked about charges last year from **The Communards** (Jimmy Somerville and Richard Coles) that he ought to be addressing AIDS. "I think that was Jimmy Tattyhead, not Richard Coles. Richard is a very well-brought-up young man, but I'm not sure about Cilla Somerville. I really don't know what they mean."

I would have been pleased to inquire, but **The Communards** canceled their promised U.S. tour—after Richard Coles had assured our readers that they wouldn't. Rather rude. Do we just blame it on Cilla Tattyhead? It was

Evelyn Waugh who suggested, "Manners are especially the need of the plain. The pretty can get away with anything."

Tragically and unprettily, Morrissey won't be over soon either: He has deferred live shows until he has finished a second solo LP and can present a generous set without resorting to Smiths' tunes. Fans may choose to stave off suicidal tendencies by seeking refuge in his 12-inch single "Every Day Is Like Sunday," with three tasty new tunes on the B side.

On "Disappointed," he blithely threatens, "This is the last song I'll ever sing." But as the sound of cheering crowds fills the track, he adds, "No, I've changed my mind," inspiring a chorus of groans, to which he replies, "Good night and thank you."

One summer tour to count on is **Eraseur's**. After a spate of U.K. sets that saw the press referring to irrepressible vocalist Andy Bell as "the male Madonna," the duo is primed to showcase its third LP, *The Innocents* (Mute/Sire), stateside. The disc finds Bell, with balls intact, soaring into the disco stratosphere over Vince Clark's tricked-up, impossibly catchy tunes. A slew of riveting, evanescent dance anthems, as well as the James Bondish instrumental "65 Miles," dwarf the LP's lapses: a laborious Elizabethan waltz dubbed "Dreamland," the goopy mock-gospel "Yahoo," and a clumsy cover of "River Deep, Mountain High." The last, thankfully, was consigned to only the CD and cassette.

When asked—before release—if any of the lyrics were gay, a record company potentate replied, "Anything that Andy sings is gay." Catch this team live if you doubt his word. Bell burns and flames tough.

Believe it or not, **Boy George** rates equal accolades for his new single, "No Clause 28" (Virgin/U.K.). The technorap opens with

Margaret Thatcher insisting, "This lady is not for turning." Then the Boy snarls decisively, "The woman is an idiot; she'll never be anything but a common frump," launching the song into an assault on Great Britain's homophobic legislation, over a riff lifted from "Soul Makossa." It's kickin' to credit this legislation with propelling Boy George back onto vinyl—wit and rage intact—stoking toward a powerhouse comeback.

Hetero socialist **Billy Bragg**, the United Kingdom's electric answer to Woody Guthrie, has also marched against Clause 28 (now Section 28), and he regularly championed gay rights on his recent "Save the Youth of America" tour.



Eraseur's Andy Bell (left) and Vince Clark: soaring into the disco stratosphere

RICHARD HAUGHTON

"I was so outraged when I read *Rolling Stone's* piece [a poll of Americans ages 18 to 45], which found that 75% said they considered gays unacceptable as friends or fellow workers, that I've brought it up every night in concerts," Bragg told a reporter. "These aren't just gay rights; they're human rights."

Likewise, **Sinead O'Connor**, the 21-year-old "suedehead," unwed mother, IRA supporter, and pop phenomenon, told reporters at a San Francisco press conference that she too would fight the bill. She stated that she considered it "the most fascist, draconian legislation, along with the British Anti-Terrorist Act, passed in the U.K. this century. It is despicable."

O'Connor's current 12-inch remix of her tune "Put Your Hands on Me"—featuring a black woman rapper from New York, **M. C. Light**—makes a better video than a disc; Sinead should have called Roxanne Shante. Still, O'Connor's commitment to toughness and truth over tact and timidity are righteously inspiring.

Celebrate the summer with these audio inspirations:

1. *Shirati Jazz, Benga Beat* (Carthage). Too many discs of Third World music are either ethnographic curiosities or hokey hybrids that function as easy listening in their country of origin. This Kenyan combo, recorded in the United Kingdom, proves an exemplary exception. Let them lift your heart, soul, and feet up off the ground.

2. *The Pearls, Jelly Roll Morton* (RCA). Imperious, mischievous, and elegant—this is the mercurial monster who insisted that he *invented* jazz in 1902. Morton merits the megalomania on these 16 long-unavailable cuts from 1926 to 1928. Soak in it.

3. *Life's Too Good, The Sugarcubes* (Elektra). Could this year's best new band be a sextet from Iceland whose lead singer sounds like an innocent naïf raised by she-wolves? Consider this disc as evidence and yourself as a lucky juror. Get incorrigible.

—Adam Block