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The Springbok Nude Girls

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En Nou Vir Die

Springbok Nude Girls

vyf manlike popbokke, of nie?

Don't ask me why we're called *Springbok Nude Girls*, and don't mention *fucking boerepunk* or *fucking boeregrunge*. Arno clearly feels strongly about this, I haven't even had time to use the great opening gambit I'd worked out. Which was to tell him that I wasn't interested in where he got the stupid name for his band.

On the small makeshift stage at the front of the Delicious Monster in Stellenbosch, scene of our interview, Koos Kombuis is tuning his guitar. It's painted with a large South African flag. One of the voorvaders of the boerepunk genre, and his sons seem to be turning on him.

Journalists have got no imagination. Ons speel nie soos Steve Hofmeyr nie, ons praat Afrikaans, so we must be boerepunk.

This is not just the normal naive attempt of young bands to avoid categorisation (like, we don't dig labels man). Firstly, the Springbok Nude Girls might be young but they're certainly not naive (they have lawyers negotiating their contracts, as opposed to the normal South African practice of getting paid in Black Labels). Secondly, Arno is absolutely right. In some kind of strange distorted hangover from the good old days of apartheid, music journalists seem to categorise certain bands according to their race. And boy, do they love classifying. Of course, this attempt to categorise bands is also an attempt to control them, and to prevent the new from emerging and threatening them. So if you're Afrikaans and you don't wear those ugly Judron rugby shorts, and you don't sing songs about how you're lus for meisies and Jesus - well, you must be alternatief Afrikaners, or boerepunk.

Yo, idiot music journos - have you noticed that the Nudies don't sing a word of Afrikaans? Their strength, and the newness of their sound, lies in the fact that they refuse to do what critics and fans expect of them. The funniest moment of a recent Springbok Nude Girls gig occurred when one of the Stellenbosch groupies that follow the band around (incredibly yucky

arty types who own all the Nick Cave CDs and a cellarful of Nederburg wine, all bought on their Neelsie card) screamed out 'you don't have to sing in English', and Arno replied 'die dame hier voor wil hê dat ek Frans praat'. Imagine the mal liturgy that's going through their heads as they dance their homage: Valiant Swart is dead, but Lo! He has risen again on the third day!

It's true that Arno speaks an interesting bilingual hybrid of English and Afrikaans. Is this an attempt to be part of the increasingly multilingual South Africa? *I'm Afrikaans, but who doesn't watch TV? Our TV is American, our food is American. South Africa is American. Hell, even our anger is American. How do you say McDonalds in Afrikaans?* But enough of asking weighty questions. As every self-respecting fan knows, there are only three things that bands are at all competent to talk about. Here they are.

S · E · X

In live performances Springbok Nude Girls reek of sexiness, an erotic effluvium of raw power and edgy madness. Arno has the fragile build and huge voice all truly sexy male vocalists have, and I'll swear he strokes his penis while he sings.

No way, what kak. I concentrate on the mike when I sing, al die bloed sit hier bo (hits himself on the head), jy moet jou note kry. My hand just pulls at my pants unconsciously, I would never do that on purpose. ➔

LEFT TO RIGHT: ARNO BLUMER (bass) ARNO CARSTENS (vocals) FRANÇOIS KRUGER (guitar) THEO CROUS (guitar) ADRIAN BRAND (trumpet)



“I want to be the bisexual face of 90’s rock.” - Adriaan

it possible that he objects to being likened to Rabbitt?). *Nooit, I’m not into that. I like to keep a distance from the girls, although we did wear dresses when we played at Wingerdstok. People know me now and watch me. I gripped a girl in Joburg, when I got back everyone knew about it. The thrill is gone. I phoned my old art teacher today and he asked me how my sex life was. I told him that I got laid last night. I lied. I don’t want to take the chance of rejection. Hell, I’m a professional masturbator.*

DRUGS

Using it as a prop rather than a stimulant, Koos Kombuis is taking slugs out of a bottle of Tassies. Aren’t popstars supposed to drink Jack Daniels? Where do the Nudies get the energy and inspiration to

construct their intriguing melodic mayhem? *Dope is important to our songs. I’ve been a wee drug addict ever since I moved to Stellenbosch. I do a joint because I don’t do music all day, I have a shitty day job and then I come home and write songs. Ek kla permanent, ek moan altyd. I need to relax before I can write.* François: ‘I don’t drink! (Yep, naturally weird. A sober popstar.)

& ROCK ‘n ROLL

The Girls’ music is difficult to categorise because of their diffuse musical styles. But if I was forced to describe it (say by the threat of having to listen to ‘Lisa se Klavier’ for the thousandth time), well; they have the rawness of Housewives Choice, the startling tempo changes of Live Jimi Presley, the lyrical whimsicality of The Radio Rats and – I suppose you get the idea. But one thing’s for sure, they have the sound of the Springbok Nude Girls.

‘Arno writes most of the songs, and whatever lyrics there are.’ Arno has a refreshing attitude to his words. He doesn’t treat them as precious poetic gems, but as tools to express whatever he means at the time. *Ag, I just make the words up sometimes. Our first CD is just a blah-blah situation, whatever fits. When our song ‘Stay (For*

Fuck’s Sake)’ got banned on Radio 5, I just changed it to ‘Funk’s Sake.’ That was around the time that Louis Luyt’s rugby Springboks were threatening to fuck off, so it was funny to hear the DJ saying ‘and here’s “Stay For Fuck’s Sake”, by the Springbok Nude Girls.’

Are SNG going to be successful enough for their taxes to fund a part of the RDP? François: ‘Bands in South Africa don’t make money. They get to the point where they can’t go any further, they’ve had their singles, their CDs, and that’s it. Like B-World. Unless you become one of those disgusting Pepsi bands.’ Pepsi bands? ‘You know, like Mango Groove or Juluka. No, in the past year we’ve had a CD, a No. 1 – so fucking what. When I’m 60 and I’m broke, still living with my parents – (this guy is *terminally* weird) – I want to look back and have this musical legacy. That’s all that’s important.’

Well into his set, Koos Kombuis is now caterwauling about arme blankes, and I’m starting to understand him. Arno echoes François. *We were offered the support slot to Bon Jovi and we turned it down. We don’t want to be associated with a glam rock band like that. We’ve been offered several record deals, but these people think they can own you. It’s a klomp kak. People hear Sony and they start seeing dollar signs. We want freedom. So they’re not going to join the ‘Boerekanga for the boring’ brigade? (I have to misspell ‘Boere-cashflow,’ because certain parties have registered their brand of music as a trademark – a perfect example of the ethos the Nude Girls are trying to avoid).* François: ‘We just want to play what we know.’

Finally, the crucial question, in which I gooi out any anachronistic ideas of journalistic objectivity and reveal myself as a slavering fan. How do you achieve that perfectly blended package of harmonic pop, strident funk and kaalgat power? François: ‘Our music is like a train moving forward. From behind the drums the thing I see best is Arno. If he’s moving like this (waves hand frantically, knocking glasses off table) then I know it’s cool!’

Koos winds down his gig with a duet with a drunken fan. Arno applauds fondly. *My first gig ever was with Koos at The Base. It was my first acid trip as well. I came out-side afterwards, they’d stolen my car, broer.*

Everyone’s a critic.



➡ So who’s the sexiest one in the band? Adriaan, uncharacteristically refusing to blow his own trumpet, says ‘We’re all sexy.’ François, the drummer, who also seems to be the obligatory silent one in the band, thinks deeply and then delivers his verdict. ‘I think Erik Estrada from CHIPS is really sexy. We can safely categorise François as someone who doesn’t need to try and be weird, the man’s a natural. But of course all this talk of sex is not the usual mundane fascination of rock stars for bodily excess. It’s part of what this band is, and sexuality permeates their music. On stage, Koos is busy singing about ou tannies and their ‘period stains van die sestige-jare.’ Off stage, Adriaan is discussing his necklaces. ‘Look, I’m wearing the symbolic change of the Afrikaners from Christian Nationalism to New Age around my neck (shows lump of something on a thong). And this pendant (another lump) brings sexual partners, it’s a gift that a witch friend gave to me. And these are beads made by women in Malawi (lots of little lumps strung together). I want to be the bisexual face of 90’s rock.’

Arno: *Adriaan is a Satanist moffie.*

But seriously folks, what is it like to be the new Rabbitt, with an audience that is obviously as turned on by Arno’s boerebod as it is by the funky wailing of Theo’s guitar? Arno doesn’t like this question (is