

mu'te

in charge:

BATTERY 9

live n-trance:

**DROR DOES
DESERT STORM**

awesome giveaways:

**The NEW R.E.M.
CARL COX
TOM PETTY
PHENOMENON**

cover story:

NINE



hold your breath & count to

The last time these interviewers spoke to 9, it was 1994. Fresh from the Shell Road to Fame, it was Nine's first ever interview. The SA rock music scene hadn't exploded yet, if it even has. There were no Nude Girls. No Urban Creep. And certainly no industry support for Lollapaloser-like (sic) Bandslams. Nine were described as naively arrogant, vol kak, and, well, let's just say they drank a lot. Has anything changed? **mu'te** met the band at a favourite hippie-hop hangout of theirs to take the temperature. **CHRIS ROPER** and **MILES KEYLOCK** slurped the crap instant coffee while **ALEXANDRA MURPHY** framed the poses.

Entirely thrown by the fact that Nine refuse to decamp to the nearest bar and drink (yes, readers, you heard it first on these pages), the **mu'te** journos decide to break the ice by thrusting free copies of the last **mu'te** issue into the band members' hands while sitting in a favourite haunt of Nine's, which we'll call Crusty Café because we're going to slag it off. Think dirt, beads and incense. Yep, this is Obs, Cape Town. We try and order **8** beers (each) to pad the expense account. The waiter sanctimoniously informs us that they don't believe in alcohol. We try to argue, but his brain is stuck in the **70s**. What do they believe in? Something herbal, it appears. We choose coffee and hot chocolate instead.

As Bob Marley wails on the stereo (hot-damn, these Obs hippies are happening), Farrell quickly pages through to the end of SL (as in *Student Life*). 'We normally only read the back music section!' Pausing on a cartoon by Jessie Breytenbach of the recent Bandslam tour, he murmurs: 'She's got a wicked sense of humour'. *Nine seem to be the only band she doesn't make fun of?* 'Which is a good thing, I suppose,' reckons Farrell.

We last spoke nearly three years ago. You were an angry and idealistic bunch of wankers. How do you feel about the music business now? Farrell: 'It's going alright, but it could always be better. We could be -' Jerome: '- earning money, lots and lots of money!' *What? You're still not earning money after all this time?* 'Ag, we're managing to get by. The problem now, is that before we used to play wherever. But now, we're a "rock" band. You know, "pop stars", and we have to make giant events of each of our gigs and you can't play all the time. As soon as you start hitting a certain level, people's perceptions of you change. You've got to project a certain kind of "thing" when you play. People expect to see us now in the high profile context of the Bandslam.'

The waiter arrives with **6** mugs and a pot of incredibly weak coffee. Nope, turns out it's hot water to pour on instant coffee. The waiter seems amazed that we don't know how coffee is made. Top restaurant.

*Tell us about the Bandslam tour. We heard that rifts developed between the **5** bands?* Nine all respond at once, including the catatonic guitarist, James. 'Which bands?' They laugh hysterically. Farrell gets a nostalgic look in his eyes. 'Well, like Dror said in **mu'te**, it's the epitome of what you'd imagine rock 'n' roll to be. Lithium were in the back of the tour bus, like "whoaaaaaaahh!" kind of raging. There was, you know -' Grenville interrupts, showing one of only two sparks of interest all night: 'The banana bread!' Farrell quickly interjects. 'I think they mentioned it, we had this banana bread that knocked everybody out!' Jerome joins the fray: 'Those Lithium dudes were taking it down and this shit kicks ass. They were, what do you call it? Over-zealous - from lack of experience!' (*Laughter*).



'It's cool when you're onstage and you look around and there's babes everywhere.'

So you had a good time with your fellow whiteboys in the back of the bus? Jerome laughs. 'You're talking about that shit in the *Mail & Guardian* about us being a white band who're into cockrock? Well obviously that writer wasn't there.' (Well, maybe in body.) 'Well, there was a quote from James, so he did speak to him! (We find this hard to believe, because as everyone knows, James never speaks.) 'But the problem with that article is that what the writer's saying is that, basically, the Zaps shouldn't have a "black" sound in their music 'cos they're white. It was extremely offensive. Anyway, we're not white, we're Portuguese! Haha! James also did an article which contradicted the other guy, but they didn't want to publish it. So he said "fuck it". But the cockrock thing comes from the idea that rock bands entertain teenagers.'

But Nine do undeniably entertain, and a lot of the fans of their aggressive, energetic mixture of dizzying guitar work, pounding rhythm and rap vocals are turned on by more than just the music. *The last time we saw you live, you were flaunting the rock star bit to the hilt. You seemed quite at home with it? You know, waving at the audience, touching and stroking the front row. What, were there some good looking guys there?*

Farrell: 'Uh, no. They were actually girls, lots of them. The whole front row were all female. It's cool when you're onstage and you

look around and there's babes everywhere.' Jerome is eager to qualify this. 'It's not even a sexual thing, because the last thing I want to do in this band is appeal to a bunch of skin-headed British expatriate punks. I mean a skinhead is usually very nice, but with a large... IQ, you know what I mean?' (We have absolutely *no* idea what he means, but we're leaving it in anyway. We feel the public have a right to know.) 'It's also nice to have female fans because they see a different perspective - they pick up on other songs whereas guys will say, "stop with this ballad shit and get back to the hardcore!"'

Arno has quite a sexy appeal. Some people follow the Nude Girls just for that. Do you have the same kind of following? Farrell: 'Yes! No! I dunno, that's not what we're about. What do you want to know?' *About girls and sex appeal and what makes a rock band great?* 'Well, there's a certain amount of groupiedom happening. But we're all good boys. We're all into love and spiritualism and stuff like that.'


Jerome pisses himself. 'You just want to hear this, don't you? Let's put it this way - when you play in front of a crowd **4** the first time you don't expect them to know who you are. But the people who do are pretty committed and hardcore. It's beautiful to see fanatics. And 60 to 70 percent of them are female - that's nice!' At this opportune moment, Farrell takes his lizard for a spit. *Give us an anecdote*

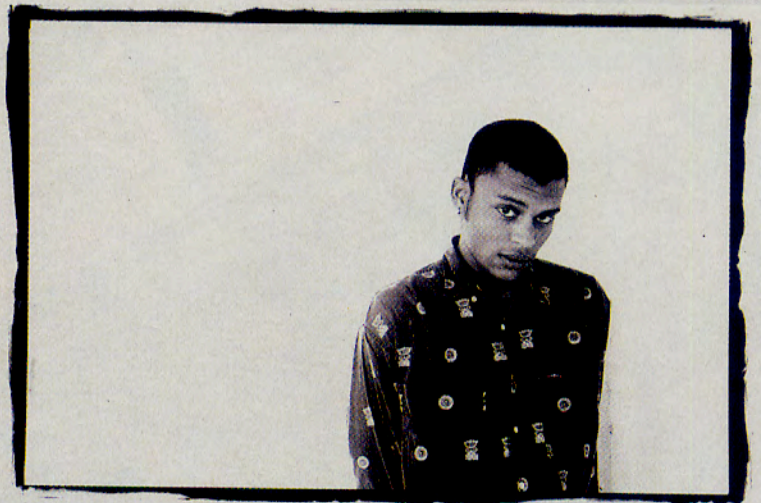
about Farrell while he's not here? Jerome: 'Farrell is a sex god! Him and Arno, phew!'

Nine have their debut CD out (when we get our free review copy, we'll remember what the title is). 'We won a battle of the bands which gave us some money to record, but basically, it was recorded on no budget. We've sold about **300** copies so far.' Grenville, showing his second spark of interest: 'I can't hear my bass!' Farrell elaborates: 'That's the thing, production-wise we're not at all happy with the recording. The time constraints we have with recording really fucks things up. But it's a demo. It's our first CD. And it's an indie release! Nine are obviously perfectionists. When we listened to the CD - yep, we bought **2**, we're fans - it sounded damn fine, a blend of their older favourites and some more mellow new stuff.'

So what happened to the 'ghamcore' sound? Farrell is obviously very tired of this question. 'What is "ghamcore"? People forced us to label our music. We could have called it "masturbation" or "toejam". It was just a name. People in Jo'burg don't get the "gham" thing anyway.'

*OK, **1** last question: what's your music about?* 'Girls. Or lack of girls. No, I'm joking! Art is open to interpretation. We're trying to say something.' Jerome, um, 'explains': 'It's a dialectic dynamic... We are consciously aware of the fact that we do mellow shit and heavy shit.'

Nought, my broer, you do great shit. 



Nine are:

Farrell Adams: vocals

James Reynard: guitar

Grenville Williams: bass

Jerome Reynard: drums