

Words by Mark Ivey (The Young Savages, The Virgins, White Elephants)

Dear fellow Melbourne punk rockers,

I started out in 1978 in a band called **The Young Savages** as the drummer. We were the first Melbourne band to do Sex Pistols and radio birdman type stuff. We played a few gigs and we got rid of the singer who was a mongrel, I took over the singing position, got The Aliens (remember them) roadie as drummer and then changed our name to **The Virgins**.

We played around Melbourne for quite a long time. We played with **X-RAY-Z**, The **Models** (who hated us. Sean Kelly said I was scary), **Little Murders**...the list is endless. The blokes in X-RAY-Z were the best, they were cynical about life like us. The manager of the band at that time was Geoff Sick who later was the bass player in The Sick Things and White Elephants. We were banned in the end from every venue in Melbourne mainly due to smashing our equipment, destroying bibles, etc.

We did a reunion gig in 1981 or 1982. I cannot remember which. (*It was actually 1984) What I can remember is that in the crowd was a young Tim Hemensley (with his mother) soon to get together **Royal Flush**. After the gig he approached me saying he loved **The Virgins**, and we were friends from that day forward. I also drummed for the Z-Cars for a while as well. The virgins released one tape called '1979'; it is very hard to get as only 100 copies were done.

White Elephants are another kettle of fish. We were managed by Neil Rogers (of 3RRR), the line-up over the years changed but Mike Chrystal and myself always stuck it out. Many have passed through the ranks: Geoff sick, Dave Thomas (Bored), Steve Fuzesi (Little Murders), Sean Greenway, Tim Hemensley, etc.

I can remember being told in 83/84 that Gudinski was coming to check us out at a gig we were going to do at a pub in Richmond on the Friday night. The thought of being in his stable really sickened us, so that Friday morning I bought a pigs head from the butcher's shop (3 dollars, very cheap back then, now about 20 dollars). At the gig we supported Pseudo Echo, I put the pigs head at the front of the stage, we were doing TV eye and Geoff Sick said "Mark, here he comes." I kicked the pig's head in his direction, he moved to one side and left straight away, good riddance, nobody controls us.

Rob Younger from Radio Birdman came to see us sometimes, he was probably told that we did 'i.94' a great Birdman classic. I also know that Chris Bailey from the saints thought we were okay, so that is great. We have been told that The Virgins and White Elephants have influenced many and that makes Mike Chrystal and myself feel proud. The Virgins got back together in 2002, Mike, myself, Geoff Sick on bass, the late, great Tim Hemensley on drums. We have done a few gigs; we also did a cd *The Virgins live at The Builders Arms*. Geoff has left and Tim has passed away. We now have on bass, Peter Shaw (Skippy the butcher) and on drums Rick Ferrara (White Elephants).

All the best, Mark Ivey.

*(inserted by Punk Journey)