

Interview with Shane Grubb - Bass player in groups: Alligator Parade, Kill Kill Kill!, Slush Puppies, Stone Circus

What was Punk to you? When did you discover Punk?

I discovered punk through my next-door neighbour, and my brother. He was playing records like the Dead Kennedys, Sex Pistols, and a few Australian bands. I was playing a lot of blues as well. The first band I joined was a cover band, doing Sex Pistols and Clash covers. I never really felt punk - I like punk bands and stuff, but I never really felt I was a punk, as such. It was a scene with a whole new set of rules to follow - there was a lot of militant posturing going on, and that was what made me think, "no, I'm not a punk", but I liked punk music.

So how did you get to be in bands like ALLIGATOR PARADE and the SLUSH PUPPIES then?

Well, I started playing guitar when I was 12 and then when I was about 15, Phil Rose and I were involved in a School Deb together up in the Dandenongs. So, I met up with Phil and they were in a band called ECCENTRIX and needed a bass player. When he found out that I played guitar, they had another band called the DEMON BATS FROM HELL (Phil was on a bit of Nick Cave trip at the time) so he taught me a bit of bass guitar and yeah, so I joined them and that's how I got into ALLIGATOR PARADE. They lasted about four years and we played a lot of gigs across 1984 to about 1987 with Phil, myself and Chris, (not so much Dave Dixon), all being into THE BIRTHDAY PARTY, so the music was punky, but sort of had that kind of a grunge edge to it as well, I guess.

Phil and I became totally obsessed with Pop Punk and that was kind of it for ALLIGATOR PARADE. David formed his own band (WINDSCREEN VIPERS), he was asked to join the SLUSH PUPPIES, but I think he may have been a bit intimidated by Mick Weber (R.I.P.) who was in the SEMINAL RATS with Todd McNear and I guess as Mick was a great lead player, David didn't really know if he had a place in the band, you know. So, the Rats split up for a little bit and Mick and Todd joined the SLUSH PUPPIES. Then we all sort of went our separate ways, except for Mick and Todd who went on to join HOSS with Joel Silbersher. SLUSH PUPPIES did a tour of Sydney with COSMIC PSYCHOS and GOD and that was great, as me and Tim Hemensley got to see THE SPLATTERHEADS for the first time and we both got wild and had a great time, so that is one of my fondest memories of that time.

And you mention Tim Hemensley, so what was he like as a person then? You mention that he lived punk, so what do you mean by that exactly?

Well, he did, like he hated the cops and you'd speak to him 10 minutes before he'd go on stage and he was like the mildest guy right, polite, intelligent... and when he got on stage he just turned into a fucking animal y'know! It'd be on for young and old; he'd get up there and abuse the crowd and it was great y'know! And look there was a bit of show business too with Tim. I remember one night, Tim, John Nolan and I were in the toilets of the Prince of Wales Hotel in St Kilda, and we had some lines of speed on top of the toilet cubicle and sure enough the two bouncers come in and look under the door and there are like six feet there y'know, and they're like "Right, open the fucking door. Where are the drugs?"

And they start searching us and they ripped Tim's leather jacket apart looking for drugs, just to piss him off y'know and we ended up having to leave as they kicked us out of the venue, and we never got to have our lines of speed, so some lucky cunt would've walked in and gone wow!

Another night we'd just seen THE NEW CHRISTS at the Prince of Wales, and we went down to the Linden Tree and tried to get in as Jim Keays from the MASTERS APPRENTICES was playing. This was like 2 or 3 in the morning and there was this guy with a DEF JAM cap on with BE DEF written on it and Tim looks at this guy (he was huge) and says "Yeah mate, Be Def" and I go "Yeah mate "Be Def" and the next minute he grabs Tim, pulls him over and throws him through a plate glass window! Luckily, he didn't get seriously injured though he did have to go to hospital, as he got a bit cut up. This incident would later appear in lyric form in a POWDER MONKEYS song. And another time right, we were up in Bondi on that tour that I mentioned before, and were on the beach and these Surfies came up and said, "Hey get off our beach ya fucking junkies" and Tim got up...I don't know why but he did and anyway they punched him out! And about half an hour later we were all coming down off speed and dope and shit. So, we got these lumps of wood, and we all went looking for these surfies and we were running around Bondi beach with our lumps of wood looking to beat on some surfies, but nothing happened, and we got out of there. Another one was we were out in front of the Linden Tree again and these two guys come up and one of them just hits him over the head with an empty bottle! We called the cops and they caught the guys as they were pulling out of the Prince of Wales car park and we were kinda vandalising their car a bit after the cops sorted them out.

But getting back to the SLUSH PUPPIES, Phil and Mick wrote most of the songs in that band and we released a single on Au-Go-Go ("You're so perfect") and we had a good mix of poppy punk stuff and the heavier songs. And there were a few other bands that I was involved with such as JONESTOWN and PUSSY, all quite different and original music-wise.

And what about Geoff Sick? Tell me a little bit about him.

Geoff! Well, I knew of THE SICK THINGS and I never saw them in the day, but they did a lot of reformation gigs and I was a fan of their single "Committed to Suicide" and "Fuck the Police." I'd seen him play in the WHITE ELEPHANTS and SLAUGHTERHOUSE and DESPERATE LIVING and he loved ALLIGATOR PARADE as we had a bit of a 1977 thing going on and he was a fan because he loved THE DAMNED, and we played one of his parties. And I have good memories of Geoff, like one time getting me up on stage with the SEMINAL RATS to sing "Search and Destroy" as he used to do that, just grab you and drag you up on stage to sing a song with the band y'know.

Yeah, a tragedy that he's now dead and in tragic circumstances y'know, as his Mum died and he loved his mum to bits, and this is coming from a guy who had a song called "Kill Your Parents" and he really used to look after her. So, I was influenced by Geoff's bass playing and he would come and see me play in STONE CIRCUS, even though he was not a big fan, but just as support. We got to play in KILL, KILL, KILL which Geoff loved as he got to play some of his favourite songs before he died like "Remedy" by ROSE TATTOO and "No Fun" by IGGY & THE STOOGES, some HÜSKER DÜ, and his fave songs from the WHITE ELEPHANTS and THE VIRGINS which was great, and I got to play with him for a year which was great.