

Interview with Vicki Marks – Singer in End Result

How did you end up in End Result?

How I ended up in the band, I was actually in the pub in Prahran, and I was going out with Johnny Feedback at the time. I'd run out of cigarettes and so I saw these people and I said, "You smoke?" So, I went up and said, "Excuse me can I bum a cigarette?" sort of thing. And they went "Oh, you're Vicki. Do you want to join our band?" And I said, "Yeah, yeah, no worries. Give me a cigarette". And the next thing I know I am in **End Result**...And then we all got talking and everything and John and I ended up joining End result.

So, you were going out with John. How old were you and how did you fall into the punk scene?

I ended up in the punk scene originally with Smeer. I used to go out with Smeer and him and we got into the punk scene together. I'd already dabbled a little bit with the punk scene but not a helluva lot and Smeer had sort of, you know, been dabbling in and out because him and I were both in the Australian rock scene sort of and then got together through various bands and stuff like that and then we started going to punk gigs, started meeting people and all that sort of stuff.

So, you lived with him at Hardcore house?

I lived there well before it was Hardcore house.

How long were you with him for?

Four years.

Okay and what year are we talking about?

I started going out with him late 1970s and then I left him and went out with Johnny Feedback around about 1982.

And how old would you have been?

I was about 18 when I met Smeer and I was 22 when I started going out with Johnny.

So, you were going to punk gigs, so you obviously knew who End Result were?

No, I hadn't seen End Result before. I didn't know anything about them, so because...between the transition between Smeer and Johnny Feedback there was a little bit of grief, so I didn't go to a lot of gigs for a couple of months or whatever, so I didn't see certain bands and stuff like that. I was good friends with some people, the guys and Tracey from **Civil Dissident** and some of the guys from **Murder Murder Suicide**, and **I Spit On Your Gravy**. I hung around with all of them.

Where were you living at the time?

When I was with Smeer I was living in St. Kilda and then we moved to Hardcore house, and with Johnny Feedback we were living in Port Melbourne and then we moved to South Yarra and then Balaclava.

So, what did you think with the punk thing? The hardcore movement had just gone from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, what was your perception of what was happening, was it exciting or...?

It was because it was very political as well, like a lot of bands we were into were very political bands, you know, standing up for things we believed in...and not to trust governments and believe in everything that you're told by the government, sort of thing. And it was exciting times because everybody became like a little family and there were a few people who rented or a few people who were on the dole sort of stuff so it was like a little community and if you didn't have something to eat on dole cheque days people would buy drugs and alcohol, whatever, and have a good time and party on for a while then everybody would go "Oh, okay".

How did you look?

I had pink hair, short on one side and long on the other and at one stage, really short hair and then long hair but at one stage I had a job, so I had to have a bit of a normal office type look. I did have a brilliant idea one time to have my hair bleached, dyed pink for the weekend so that when I went out and then put a black rinse through it Sunday night...it went purple so I had to put my hair in a turban thingy and go to work and they're like "What have you done to your hair?" I said, "Nothing, I just felt like wearing it like this." And they're like, "No, somethings wrong with your hair". So, I showed them and they said, "Wait until the boss sees it!" The boss walks in and goes to me "What the Hell have you done to your hair?" "Oh, I had a bit of an accident." He goes "Here's a hundred" – whatever it was – "Go to the hairdressers and get it fixed and come back with one colour, now". So, I took the money and went and bought a hair dye and dyed my hair black and kept the rest of the money and we all partied on for the rest of the week...And went back and said, "They've done it" but I just had to keep normal hair for a while.

So, what was it like being one of only a few women in bands?

There was **Tracey from Civil Dissident** and **myself**, the two girls from **I Spit On Your Gravy** (the Spitettes), there was **Liz** who ended up being in **G.A.S.H** but she was in **Boot Boys** to start and then went to **G.A.S.H** and then eventually **Vera** and another girl called Anna who were also in **G.A.S.H**. Tracey and I were two of the first, well Liz actually before us in Boot Boys but then **GASH** didn't happen until later.

It was funny that Smear was in G.A.S.H? GIRLS AGAINST SEXIST HYPE.

That's what I used to say.

I suppose you could say he was a guy against sexual harassment.

Exactly, but just the name alone was enough to say "Errr". It just sounded like a real shove back from the name **G.A.S.H**. I don't know, I just hated it, but that's my opinion. It's funny because I was in Brisbane and I actually heard their song, the 'Cleo, Cosmo, Woman's Day' one, and I had no idea at the time who they were and now years later I'm like "Okay, my God I heard that song years ago and I had no idea who they were".

So, what was it like? Did you find there was a bit of sexism going on?

You know what, I probably didn't notice it. We were all just mates. I don't think anybody looked at me and thought "Oh, she's sexy or hot" and I don't think anybody really treated me like "Oh, she's just a girl" or anything like that. And if they did, I probably never noticed it. If there was an occasion I probably said something.

That's good because I was wondering if there was any, "Oh, what's she doing in the band?"

No, I think a lot of people were like "Oh, wow, that's cool". Everybody respected Tracey who was in Civil Dissident "Oh, wow" you know, "A female bass player" and then she started doing drums and all that sort of stuff. Yeah, so I think everybody was just like "Oh, cool, there's girls in bands" and nobody ever said, "I don't want to be in a band with you, you're a girl". It was just "Hey, yeah, let's do it". I never...and look, there probably were factions who were a bit funny with girls and stuff like that, but I think being in a band made it easier to do what you want and get what you want.'

Did you notice there were divisions in the hardcore scene? Tell me what your perceptions were, I mean everyone has different perceptions of it.

There was like the hardcore house people, right, so there was that group, and the people hung around with them. There was Civil Dissident and Murder Murder Suicide and End Result, those sorts of people. The rest of the people just followed whoever, sort of thing.

Like with the divisions, was there disharmony?

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, there used to be bagging and bitching behind each other's back, yeah, but there were articles written in magazines about people.

So, what about the skinheads?

Oh, the skinheads were... there were a few who hung around with the punks and were amicable and got along okay and then there were the ultra-violent ones who wanted to fight everybody. They'd come to the punk gigs and then at a certain time would start shit and then the skinheads who were amicable, you know, would then have to side over with the tougher skinheads because they had to show a bit of solidarity, otherwise they weren't going to be skinheads.

Do you recall any outstanding moments?

I got bottled in the head one night because Big Tony, he and I used to go out with Debbie (?). I was at a gig one night and I think Depression was playing, it was in a pub in Prahran, The Duke of York or one of those. There must have been a bit of an argument or rumbling and all that with a few people and Big Tony was a skinhead but he hung around in the scene, he would knock you out as soon as look at you but at the same time he would sit and have a drink with you so you wouldn't know which Tony you were going to get. So, he threw a bottle at somebody, and I didn't know what was going on and I stand up from the table to go and get a drink and it just went smack, straight in the head, split my head open and everything and got Smeer going "Oh my God, are you alright?"

I went home and I should have had stitches in my head, but I went "Oh no, doesn't matter, just leave it". I've got a nice scar on my head. I could never shave it. And I remember when we had a gig at, this was when I was in Balrog, which was a punk band with me Raines, Johnny Feedback and Dave Ross. We had a gig in a church hall in Richmond and all these skinheads turned up and they were there to cause trouble, and we'd already played. I think the Hard Ons were playing and a few other bands and trouble was just about to start, they were just about to get into it and, I don't know what made me do it but I jumped off the tall thing I was standing on and gone over at the back and I've gone in between everybody and just said, "Stop it. Stop it now. You just get over and you, I don't want to hear any shit from you. Just do it fucking now mate" and a couple of people I know came over and said "Oh my God, what's going on? Are you alright?" "I'm fine but these fucking shitheads are going to behave themselves because I will not have this shit at one of my gigs now do what I fucking tell you." And they all went "Oh, okay" and skulked off.

And everybody's gone "I don't believe that just happened" and I went "No, I won't have it" and then I went and stood back where I was standing and thought "What a fuckwit. What did you do that for? They could have killed you'...I might have been a bit scary. I just lost it for a moment, they must have thought "Oh fuck, let it go, let it go" and like we had to escort people in and out of the gig and stuff like that because skinheads wanted to bash them.

Why do you think skinheads wanted to bash punks up and destroy gigs, was it because the skinheads were right-wing and the punks were left-wing, and their ideology clashed?

Look I think they were just people who... I think the fact that they shaved their head and wore skinhead clothing meant nothing. I think they were just people who were going to be violent no matter what and realistically they didn't have to come to our gigs, they could see their own bands but they wanted to come to our gigs and they had a good time and then further to that they would bash everybody to have a better time and I don't think it would have mattered whether we were good, bad or indifferent, they would still come and bash people up, and if it hadn't have been the punks it would have been somebody else.

It made the punk gigs hellish though, didn't it?

Oh, it did, like there were a lot of really great gigs and fun gigs but there were quite a few that ended up in tears sort of thing.

What did you think about the fashion effect of punk back then? Did you think that was an important part of it?

It was in a way because, and even though we were all saying we wanted to be individuals and nobody wants to wear uniforms and all that sort of stuff, it became a uniform and it became an emblem to show where you're at and what you were with and I think when you're young, you are naïve and you think "I'm not going to be this, I'm not going to be that. I'm going to be different to everybody else". But you're not. You end up forming or conforming into some shape or form whether you like it or not, but you don't see things like that until you're older. Oh yeah, we all had leather jackets, and we all had studs, and we all had coloured hair and everybody had mohawks and everybody had this, so you're still conforming to an image or an idea or whatever, but it did evolve, and the other thing that I found, there was so much creativity in amongst it.

Out of everything, even though we all had our studded belts and that sort of thing, there was so much creativity and people made their fun. There were no Super Mario PlayStation games or this, that and the other, there was no YouTube or MTV, everybody made their own fun. So it was, I'd get to your house and a couple of people would turn up and you might have a bit of a jam or whatever and go "Oh, yeah, that's good" and play it the next day and go "Oh, fuck. What were we on?" and everybody seemed to have a good time. You had your down times and your sad moments and that sort of stuff but everybody – it was more of a community and when people were going wrong in the community, then people distanced themselves from it.

And did you think that was cool?

Well look, it depends on how they were going wrong. There's only so much you can do for people. There are only so many ways you can help and then they have to want to help themselves. So, there's only so much you can do and then you're the one.

Because heroin became a part of it.

Oh, huge and then even went through the skinheads. A lot of skinheads ended up becoming heroin addicts as well.

Obviously, it had a devastating impact because a lot of people died and OD'd and a lot of people committed suicide and that sort of thing, too many...What kind of an impact did that have?

I think one of the first ones that I can remember would be **Paul Valium** because he was so young. He was only sixteen or something. I remember when he first came into the scene, he was only a young kid and everything and within twelve months, maybe two years, he was an addict. An alcohol and a drug addict and I sort of thought to myself "How bad is that?" This kid comes into the scene and what problems he had before that I don't know, there's always things that make people go down the tracks they go down. Some could be he was just that young and peer group pressure with the people he hung out with or maybe he had problems already, I don't know, but that one hit hardest because he was dying in a gutter and the skinheads stole his boots, his Doc Martens, off his feet while he was dying or when he was dead and that made me go "That's disgusting!" And that was a realisation that for as good as the scene is and for all the happy times and for all the little community spirit we thought we had and that it made you also think that we had none in some respects.

There were a few stories like that. There was Paul Valium but there was also Borgy, was that one that shocked you as well?

Not really, Borgy didn't shock me that much because Borgy was on a road to ruin anyway.

Did you know him well? Tell me a Borgy story?

He used to have belly fluff called 'Albertus' and I don't know if it was a pickup line or what. He'd go "Do you want to meet Albertus?" And he'd get Albertus, and he just pulls this piece of belly fluff out of his belly and say "Albertus" and then put it back again. He was just an idiot. I've got photos of Borgy and ahhh, he was funny. He was very funny. Almost simple in a way. There were times when I thought "Fuck, you're a bit simple aren't you?" but very funny. A smart guy in some respects but he was always being taken advantage of.

Someone told me that he thought he was always going to die.

Yes, because he used to have heart palpitations this that and the other and blah blah blah. He was someone who was waiting to be diagnosed with something.

Then he OD'd, so why do you think he got into heroin?

I think there's probably a few reasons but some of the reasons I would put a finger on is one, try and fit in with everybody, start taking drugs to fit in with everybody, that sort of stuff. Two, I don't think he was ever comfortable with who he was and three, I think he had a lot on his mind so he needed something to take everything off his mind and he always thought he was dying so he had a bit of panic about that and we, Denise and myself and a few others took him to hospital several times because he was "I'm having a heart attack". So, we'd rush to the hospital, and it would be like a panic attack or something and back then none of us knew what a panic attack was or anything like that because none of us were ever depressed or anything, so yeah, he really thought there was something wrong with him and there may well have been. I think he did have like a bit of a heart problem or whatever because I think they put him on tablets for it at one stage and I don't think he coped with that when he finally got a diagnosis.

He was a bit of a genius.

Yeah, and when I say he was simple, he had that...a bit of 'Rainman' about him. He was really like "Ooohhh" but at the same time he was very smart. Like he could do things, he could make stuff, and he was a great skateboarder.

I heard that he put something on the back of his skateboard to make it grind and sparks came out.

Yep, exactly. I don't know what it was but yeah, as he went down sparks would be shooting out of his skateboard, and everybody would be getting out of the way. I remember when I lived at Bank Street, I came home...really early and I thought "Where is everybody?" This was unusual for Bank Street to be no-one at all...then about two hours later everybody rocks up. Borgy had brought over his skateboard and Denise had decided, who was living at Bank Street, decided "I'm going to have a go at this", on carpet, and just went phwish and broke her arm, so they all had to take her to the hospital. Borgy goes "I'm never gonna let you ride my skateboard again". And then she did it again about two months later...I think she sprained her wrist or something, other arm and what it was, she was saying to people "All I did was this" and re-enacted it...

Before Denise moved into Bank Street, I lived at Bank Street and we'd go over to Denise's place sometimes, she lived in a flat at Balaclava or something and she rather fancied Paul from Vicious Circle, so we'd hang out with all these people and they'd come over to Bank Street and sometimes Paul would just fall asleep and one night me and Rick and Denise were in the kitchen getting a drink and he started going "Errrr" in his sleep and we've started giggling like two idiots and he started talking and we've gone "What?" And we thought he was mucking around right and we've gone over to him and we've gone to wake him and this voice has just gone "Don't touch me" like that and we've just gone "Fuck" and flew down the hallway and we're trying to tell them and couldn't get it out and he was asleep and out to it and talking and it was like another voice and one night we taped it and it scared me, scared all of us and he didn't even know he was doing it.

Do you think he was possessed?

You know what, I was waiting for his head to spin around. That's how it was, and we were just "Fuck" and he had no idea that he was doing it, none whatsoever...And the voice that said, "Don't touch me" was like Regan from The Exorcist, whatever, it was like "Shit". We were freaking and the others were going "He's putting it on". He wasn't. When we played it back to him, he was genuinely freaked out.

I know there was violence and that wasn't just from the skinheads but in-fighting in the punk scene.

Oh, yes, exactly and especially too because there was this macho stuff like this guy's going with that guy's girlfriend behind his back stuff. I remember one guy who shall remain nameless who screwed nearly everybody in the punk scene, and he had a girlfriend, and the girlfriend would just be standing there crying "Oh, I don't know. I think he's having it off with somebody". And everybody would be going "Oh no, no, no" and all the people consoling her had all had it off with him...The punk scene before Depression and stuff like that, you had the Zorros and The Boys Next Door and that sort of stuff and that was a cool time as well.

I remember Smeer and I met the guys from the Zorros on the corner of Elizabeth and Collins Street one day and we were like "Oh wow, punks" you know, because you didn't see a lot around and we had a chat to them and they're like "We're in the Zorros" and we got to know them and went to a couple of their gigs but it's amazing how many people came into the scene for a while and then disappeared. There was one, I'm pretty sure they were friends of Paul Conroy's or Rod McMurrich's,

a guy and a girl. I think they lived out Camberwell way and she did a documentary, an actual video on the punk scene. I know it did get played on SBS or something like that and she went around and interviewed everybody in the scene...

You had fun, yeah?

Look, I had a ball, I had a great time. There were a few moments when, you know, but that's everything in life, you always have those moments, but I had a great time. I'd definitely do it all over again...I know people who go "Oh no, I've moved on" from that scene or lifestyle or whatever, and I have too, but at the same time I have an affinity to it. It's from where I came from.

Do you have any regrets?

Probably that I didn't go further with my music at that stage but other than that, nah, no regrets.