

HEY JOE! HAVE A *LISTEN* TO...

The 12-string '60s pop of the Berkeley Squires

by Glenn Sadin, with introduction by Mojo Mills

SHINDIG! contributor Steve Coleman's Prepare To Enter The Garage internet links page was where I first came across the Berkeley Squires. After checking out their web page I found that I still wanted to know more about them and contacted the band directly. Within a week I had received their fantastic four-track demo CD in the post – and discovered that not only are they a bunch of cool looking dudes but they also know the score when it comes to good melodic '60s inspired music. Here is what Glenn, the guitarist, had to say...

Between 1981 and 1988 I was the guitarist in a Pennsylvania-based band called The Seen. We released several recordings during this time, the most well known being the song *Jealous Girl*, which appeared on volume 2 of the 1984 Vox/Bomp compilation *Battle of the Garages*. There was also a full album, *Under The Sun/In The Rain*, which came out in 1986 on a local Pennsylvania label, Red Dog Records – which garnered quite a few positive reviews in various magazines, both in the US and in Europe. That same year we also released a single, *When I Was Young/Stopping On Go*, on Neil Skok's Paradox label, and had a version of *Hey Joe* on the Declaration of Fuzz compilation on Germany's Glitterhouse Records.

In 1988 I moved to San Francisco, since when I've not been very active with regard to playing in bands, mainly because of the difficulty in finding like-minded musicians



Glenn Sadin uses a Rickenbacker 360/12v64 12-string (with the pick-ups rewound to match the original Rickenbacker pick-ups), Rickenbacker 330 (with vintage-style 'toaster-top' Ricky pick-ups installed), a Vox ac30 and Fender Reverb tank.

Early influences for Glenn were Paul Weller and The Jam, although he now also listens to a lot of jazz, soul and blues, as well as digging 'big-time' the teenage symphonies of Phil Spector, Brian Wilson and Jack Nitzche). Married to a Japanese woman, Mariko, he's also been getting into the Japanese Group Sounds, which he's been picking up at flea markets during visits to Japan. He's

currently working on a compilation of '50s and '60s Japanese pop music with Lee Joseph of Dionysus Records. If you're on the internet why not take a look at the web site on Japanese pop music that he maintains at <http://home.earthlink.net/~glenn_mariko/nihon.htm>.

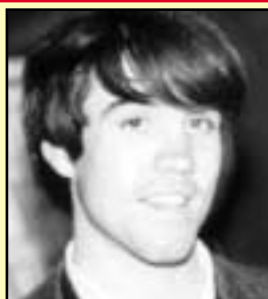
who shared my tastes – a situation that I found very frustrating. Most of the rock bands on the Bay Area either play heavy metal, punk or grunge, none of which appeals to me at all.

There were a few bands that went absolutely nowhere and aren't even worth mentioning by name. But then in February 1998 I met an old band mate from The Seen, Doug Edmunds – who's now the drummer for Big Deal recording artistes Gladhands. His band was in San Francisco opening for Ben Folds Five and so I got to hang out with them backstage. One of Doug's friends (who he met whilst living in

Nebraska!) is Domenic Priore, a well-respected music writer and all-round hipster who also puts out albums of re-issued material. Although I didn't know it at the time, he'd been living in SF for some time and when I heard he was coming to the show I was very much looking forward to meeting him. As it turned out we hit it off in a big way and have since become good pals. Having mentioned to Domenic that I was on the look-out for cool musicians to form a band he immediately suggested his good friend Ron Silva – who, of course, I knew from the records by The Crawdaddys which I'd been listening to since the mid-'80s.

A few days later Domenic arranged for me to meet Ron Silva at a neighbourhood Irish pub where Ron was performing with his band, The Termites – a 1960s hit parade covers band that he sang and played guitar with for extra pocket money. Ron seemed interested in working with me, mainly due to that fact that I'd written a lot of '60s flavoured pop songs and he'd spent too long playing only covers. It was that same night that I was also introduced to Jeff Jacks, the second guitarist in The Termites and a fellow '60s freak – he was familiar with The Seen already from *The Battle of the Garages* comp.

We got together again when Ron called to ask if I had any demos of the songs I'd written that he could listen to. I gave him a



Ron Silva plays a Fender Precision Bass and uses a Crate bass amp when he plays with The Berkeley Squires, although for the demo CD he used a borrowed 1965 Hofner Beatle Bass. He plays guitar in The Termites, a top 40 (ie Beatles, Stones, etc) covers band, as well as The Cuban Heels (with Alec Palao, Daniel Swan of the Sneetches, and Jeff Jacks). He is drummer for The Black Diamonds (a fantastic pop trio formerly known as The Nashville Ramblers, with Carl Rusk of The Mystery Machine and Tom Ward of The Gravedigger V and Saturn V) and also The Saturn V featuring Orbit (with Orbit, formerly of

The Purple Knifs, Johnny Bartlett, ex-Phantom Surfers, Chris von Sneidern, pop idol, and the previously mentioned Tom Ward.

One of Ron's great loves, besides The Beatles and Gerry & the Pacemakers, is the sound of rhythm and blues – something which is very apparant to anyone who's heard the records of The Crawdaddys or Ron Silva & the Monarchs. There's the possibility of yet another band in the near future in collaboration with Glenn Sadin, playing only R&B, as Ron has a fantastic voice for that kind of material.

cassette of five songs that I'd recorded on a four-track Portastudio – and he totally dug it. He then suggested that maybe Jeff would be interested in joining us. Jeff had demo cassettes of songs he'd written too, which Ron and I had a listen to – and we totally flipped for them! The next move was to have a practice and see how it works out – and we were all pretty excited about how well we sounded together. So Jeff suggested that we get his friend Stephen Moss over to play drums with us.

At the beginning of this year Stephen was involved in a major traffic accident – he was riding his Vespa when a drunk driver hit him – and so when he joined us he was still a bit shakey and out of practice, due in part to the accident and also because he'd not been on his kit for some time. Being unable to work he was forced to sell his drum kit but when we met him in April '98 he'd just acquired a new kit thanks to some generous friends who got it for him as a birthday present. Since then he's developed into a very steady, inventive drummer – and is perfect for the Berkeley Squires.



Jeff Jacks has a Rickenbacker 620, a Vox teardrop and a Fender Twin Reverb. He is very much into mod-oriented or influenced bands, such as The Who, The Jam and Oasis as well as being a big fan of '60s garage and pop.

He started out playing music down in Tampa, Florida back in the mid-'80s in a band called The Immediates (who released a pretty cool 12" EP and had some tracks on some comps from locally-based labels) and The End (who released a 45 called *No No No*).

Since moving to San Francisco he's played in The TrebleMakers, with Alec Paleo, has performed in a re-vamped line-up of The Beau Brummels with original vocalist Sal Valentino and played with the Flamin' Groovies' Cyril Jordan, who has also sat in with The Termites on occasion.

All of us in the band are, of course, big fans of mid-'60s pop like The Beatles, The Who and The Byrds, as well as garage bands like The Standells etc. As a band, however, we tend to model ourselves after the pre-psychedelic era San Francisco Bay Area folk-rock bands such as The Vejtables, The Beau Brummels, The E-Types and The Baytovens who had a very different style from some of the more well-know Los Angeles groups. Having just bought a Rickenbacker 12-string, I've been listening a lot lately to jangly pop bands like The Choir and The Dovers. I like to think of The Berkeley Squires as a 1990s extension of what all those bands were doing back then.

During the summer some very important developments have taken place for the band. A three-album deal was signed with Dionysus Records of Burbank, California. We expect to be recording the first album very soon, so that it'll be available in early 1999 – on both vinyl and CD. Bam Balam Records in Spain is including our song *Listen...* (which we originally recorded for our demo CD) on volume five of *The Bam Balam Explosion* compilation. Our biggest show so far has been the International Pop Overthrow festival in Hollywood, where we received a very enthusiastic and positive reaction from the audience. Not bad for a band with only a few gigs under its belt!



Stephen Moss started playing the drums as a youngster whilst living in Guam. He uses a 1965 Slingerland four-piece kit.

Stephen is totally into the '60s mod scene in the Bay Area and is a pretty sharp dresser. He's a big fan of The Beatles and The Yardbirds, and also loves '60s soul music – though his previous drumming experience was with a young punk group. He is also playing occasionally with a new group called The Mean Reds, who are a bit more raw in style than The Berkeley Squires.

