

LET'S KONQUER KAMPUS!

with Freddie Fortune & Michael Maltese

by Mojo Mills

OKAY, this 'zine may not feature absolutely every modern garage band on the scene – I mean, c'mon, some of these so-called bands are simply not worth listening to – but we've still got time for the crême de la crême. Fortune & Maltese and The Phabulous Pallbearers happen to be just that. If you don't know them already, then take our word for it and get their stuff. All recordings carry the official *Shindig!* seal of approval. A fantastic blend of fun, fun, fun!

duo. It was so vivid that I woke up and wrote down what I could remember of it, including some of the words to *Wicked Weed*.

The record had consisted of *Wicked Weed*, *No Dice* ('a song Mike & I had wrote for the Covingtons but never performed'), a Bobby Fuller song, but I couldn't remember which one, plus one other original that was not recallable. I called Mike up the next day and told him about the Fortune & Maltese dream...

SD: Did all the band members know each other before?

FF: Kind of... I knew Nat because he was Mike's roommate in college. I also knew Dusty from his other band The Sinatras and Twister. I didn't know J.C. Graves though.

MM: I had called Fred out of the blue in, I think, in 1989 'cause I saw a Covingtons flyer (way before I was in the group) and thought it looked like a cool band. We blabbed over the phone for an hour about all kinds of crap. That's when I first met old Fred.

SD: Had any of you been in many other bands before?

MM: Yeah, I was in The Covingtons, The Sleestacks, Twister, The Churchkey-4 (with Kent Berglund on bass), The Royal Hearsemen and Sir Gluttiae (with Mike Hurtt of The Royal Pendletons), Vibrolux (with Mike's brother Eric) – and some others.

FF: The Covingtons, The Visigoths, Vladimir's Universe and my high school group The Polish 9.

SD: What got you into this music?

MM: The sheer uncontrolled fun of it. No other type of music gets me so excited. Did that sound right?

FF: The Monkees turned me on to the sixties look and sound as a kid. Then in high school I stumbled onto The Standells and the Nuggets LP. I haven't looked forward since!

MM: It's gotta be music to get the folks dancing.

SD: Has the group's line-up been very consistent over the years?

FF: Yes, up until recently. Our bass player J.C. quit. Mike then switched from organ to bass and we brought in Nat's fifth cousin Karl in on organ. Karl has worked out fantastically – now Mike can jump around like an idiot a bit easier now. Joining Nat in and I in the fool brigade.

MM: Things seem to be flowing smoother nowadays. Now, of course, I have to haul a heavier amp.

SD: Is there much of a scene around your way?

FF: The Detroit area is really happening! There is so much going on around here, you wouldn't believe it. The Henchmen, The Volcanos, The Dirt Bombs, Mondo Mod



Shindig!: When did the band form?

FF: The band started in '94 officially, but the music started in '93.

MM: Back on that fateful weekend...

FF: Mike and I had been playing together with Johnny Chan in the Detroit area in a group called The Covingtons. Johnny eventually split for New York City, and we trudged on without him for a while with other guitarists, unsuccessfully. I think we played our final show without Johnny in December of 1990.

Mike and I had remained friends, however, even though he had moved to Kalamazoo and I was living in Ann Arbor. I had pretty much decided after the Covingtons had split that my days in rock'n'roll were over. I sold the PA etc, but was still really into music. One night as I slept I had this dream that Mike and I put out a record as a

MM: I said, 'Well, what are you doing this weekend? Let's record it.' I was in other bands at the time (The Sleestacks and Twister) and we had just finished setting up the first Omega Sound studios on North Burdick in Kalamazoo. I thought it'd be a good idea to run the equipment through its paces.

FF: I paid somebody off at work and headed to kalamazoo that weekend. We wrote and recorded the EP that weekend – October '93 – and even took the photos for the cover. It came out, I think, in January '94.

Fortune & Maltese were done and as far as we knew that was going to be it. But the record got so many good reviews we decided to do another record, *Wig Wam*. Then people started to ask, 'Hey when are you guys playing?'

etc, etc. Plus, there seems to be an interest from the younger kids too. Just saw a band two nights ago called The Sights. No member over 17, all of them fully decked out in '60s mod threads. There are cool bands from Ohio that come to play around here too. The In-Sect are great. There is a group from Cincinnati called the Greenhornes that are absolutely fantastic. I guarantee you'll be hearing about them in the future. They are the best new group I have seen in a long time!

MM: Well, I hate Detroit! The environment, that is. Crumbling buildings. Finding closed highways that are unannounced as you're speeding to a gig. Detours. Historic monuments being torn down for plexiglass cubicle zoos that in time will only get blasted away themselves. But the SCENE is happening. Kalamazoo is Kalamazoo! Great place to take care of business. Chicago doesn't seem to have much of a scene of anything. There's work to be done.

FF: I'll take a scene anyday over the isolation known as Kalamazoo! I dig Chicago, but Mike is right. There is really no garage scene in Chicago. You would think a city that big would breed a big scene. Guess we just gotta think fondly of The Shadows Of



knight, New Colony Six and The Shady Daze.

SD: Your blending of many musical styles brings to mind the likes of Paul Revere & The Raiders. Are they an influence on you? (From pictures I've seen I'm sure they are.)

FF: The Raiders are in my top ten favorite groups, I love those guys!

MM: Definitely one of the top bands that have ever been or shall be. We haven't worn



Discography

7" EPs

- *No Dice + 4*
Split label release between Leppotone and Happy Hour Records (1t-003)
- *Wig Wam + 3*
Split label release between Leppotone and Happy Hour Records (1t-005)
- *Fiddled While Rome Burned + 3*
Forthcoming late 1998 on Get Hip's Keystone subsidiary

7" 45s

- *Genie in the Lamp/ Vampira*
360 Twist (360t-009)
- *Leave No Stone Unturned/ Time Has Gone*
Get Hip (gh-212) with promo film
- *Bewitched/ Don't Wanna Cry*
Larsen [France] (1z-039)
- *Knaughty Knight/ Good-n-Plenty*
CAD - forthcoming late 1998

LPs/CDs

- *Fortune & Maltese*
Screaming Apple [Germany] (scal p-110)
- *Konquer Kampus*
(Hillsdale (h1p/hcd-103) with promo interview 45
- *Live at Harvey's*
Dutch bootleg of live set with previously unreleased F&M bonus cuts
- *Fortune & Maltese*
Get Hip (gh-1057cd) CD re-release of Screaming Apple LP, with bonus cuts

Compilations

- Splitsville Confidential EP (Splitsville)
- Trans World Garage Vol. 2 (Misty Lane) [Italy]
- Ventures Tribute Album (forthcoming late 1998 on Musick Recordings)
- Trashmen Tribute Album (forthcoming late 1998)
- Bobby Fuller Tribute Album (forthcoming late 1998) [Japan]

the outfits in a while though. By the way, Mark Lindsay almost came to one of our shows in Seattle, or so I hear.

SD: Could you imagine moving more into teen-punk, frat or folk-rock, or do you think you'll continue to mix it all up?

FF: I want to continue doing all styles, but the next LP will definitely be more in the garage, folk and mod sound. At least it sounds good on paper! There are so many great sounds, why pigeon-hole yourself into one small area. We ain't even gotten around to bubble gum and psychedelia!

MM: I hear... horns and strings. Ballads and marches.

SD: Fave '60s bands?

FF: The Bobby Fuller 4, The Nightcrawlers, The Turtles, The Standells, The Byrds, The Beach Boys, The Zombies, The Rolling Stones, The Seeds, ? & The Mysterians, The Pretty Things, Love, Thirteenth Floor Elevators, Them, etc. Not to mention hundreds of the more obscure USA groups, too many to list!

MM: All the above (ha, that was easy), plus The Equals, The Raiders, Sonics, Wailers, Bruce & Terry, We The People, Gillespie, Vallee, blah blah blah...

SD: Who do you consider your modern day contemporaries?

FF: My fave new bands are The Saturn 5, The Loons, The Boss Martians, The Hate Bombs, The Untamed Youth, The Hentchmen, The Insect, The Evaporators and The Greenhornes.

MM: Yup. Of course The Royal Pendletons, Big Sandy, Deke Dickerson (the solo sensation), The Bomboras, Dirt Bombs, Volcanos and The Chevymen.

FF: How did I forget The Pendletons?

SD: Best/worst gigs?

FF: The most fun shows for me would be with Question Mark & The Mysterians, Mitch Ryder and Link Wray. Let's just say there have been more good shows than bad. I think our second or third gig at the Unitarian Church in Ann Arbor really sucked! We also got rained out at an outdoor gig in Kalamazoo, they moved it indoors but everybody had left.

MM: Always have fun playing those outdoor shows. Fresh air and Good, solid work. I like playing the State theater in Kalamazoo and the Magic Bag in Detroit or wherever. Maybe the best show WAS the Mitch Ryder show for the performance factor. Nothing like playing to a crowd of folks 25 years older than you and hearing that fantastic applause. The only shows I've danced at were the Question Mark shows so maybe those were the most fun...

SD: What are your expectations of your forthcoming British trip?

MM: I expect to get in touch with my English roots. Grandfather was from Cornwall, worked in the tin mines. I've started getting my hands on some English money already so I can buy gum and coffee as soon as I step off the plane.

FF: I'm really looking forward to it! Even though y'all talk funny! But seriously, the whole garage music scene is the greatest! For the most part the people who are into it are some of the coolest, most sincere people I have ever met – with very few exceptions! So that is what I'm really looking forward to – new scenery and meeting new people. Hey, that to me is what it is all about. The squares can call it whatever they want, but

the nutcases that really dig it are into it for the long haul. I never would have thought that we would be going to Europe because of it. Hail, hail rock'n'roll!

See you at the Wild Weekend!

MM: I also wanna get some new threads. Is that Carnaby Street thing still happening?

FF: Yeah I'll join ya! You gotta hip us to some cool waxery too!

SD: To finish of how would you explain the band in a sentence?

FF: The most fun and expensive creative waste of time I could have ever thought of!

MM: I thought I'd have to be a lot older to feel so poor!

Cmon down to the show!

