

1 **Pleasure and Pain** 3:55
(H. Knight/M. Chapman)
Zomba Music Pub Ltd
From the album What A Life!

2 **Temperamental** 4:29
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
EMI Songs Ltd
From the album Temperamental

3 **Back to the Wall** 4:50
(C. Amphlett/R. Feldman/
M. McEntee)
Virgin Music (Pubs) Ltd
EMI Songs Ltd
From the album Temperamental

4 **Only Lonely** 3:15
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
EMI Music Pub Ltd
From the album Desperate

5 **Punxale** 4:15
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
EMI Songs Ltd
From the album Temperamental

6 **Don't You Go Walking** 5:58
(M. McEntee)
Chrysalis Music Ltd
From the album What A Life!

7 **Boys In Town** 2:50
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
Copyright Control
From the album Desperate

Compilation © & ©1991 Chrysalis Records, Inc.

Chrysalis
Bramley Road London W10 6SP



8 **Hey Little Boy** 3:01
(D. Baskin/B. Gonzalez)
Copyright Control
From the album Temperamental

9 **Science Fiction** 3:52
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
Copyright Control
From the album Desperate

10 **Sleeping Beauty** 3:38
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
Chrysalis Music Ltd
From the album What A Life!

11 **Casual Encounter** 3:05
(C. Amphlett/M. McEntee)
Chrysalis Music Ltd
From the album What A Life!

12 **I'll Make You Happy** 3:21
(S. Wright/G. Young)
Copyright Control
From the album Desperate

Tracks 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
produced by Mark Opere
Tracks 1-3, 5, 8, 10
produced by Mike Chapman

Liner Notes: Bruce Pilato
Art Direction: Randall Maran
Design: Rigelhaup Design, NYC
Photo: Moshe Brakha

CCD 1846 CDP 3218462

Essential



12 TRACK COLLECTION

EMPIRE

**It's one of those
legendary
rock & roll
stories . . .**



It's one of those legendary rock & roll stories, the kind you hope is true but might actually be the dream of an overzealous publicist.

Yet the incredible story of how Christina Amphlett and Mark McEntee first met and formed Divinyls is quite real.

The scene: Australia's prestigious Sydney Opera House. The date: sometime in 1980.

"I had been singing in this eight-piece choir to develop my voice," Amphlett recalled. "One night, we had a religious concert at the Opera House. The audience was full of priests and nuns, and Mark was there. During the concert my stool fell over and my microphone cord got wrapped in it, and I ended up dragging the stool from one end of the stage to the other."

McEntee was mesmerized as Amphlett — while singing like a woman possessed — carried on as if nothing had happened. "From that moment," he said, "I knew something had to be done; that we should form a group."

It was an auspicious beginning. Divinyls became a powerful, challenging unit that was brash yet often tender. (What other powerhouse rock band could call their publishing company Astute Lullaby Kings?) And they remain one of the most distinctive bands to emerge in the 1980s.

Divinyls were first introduced to world audiences as part of the Australian Assault that spawned Men At Work, Midnight Oil, INXS, and New Zealand's Split Enz. But that's about as close as they've come to being placed in *any* kind of familiar category. In many ways, they are the quintessential rock outfit: great songs and passionate performances, wrapped in the unforgettable persona and brazen sexuality of Christina Amphlett.

She and McEntee had begun writing together almost immediately after the opera house incident.

"I just rolled up at Chrissie's place with guitars and some amplifiers and we just started writing," McEntee has said. "We said, 'This is pretty good,' so we kept on."

Augmenting Amphlett on vocals and McEntee on lead guitar were keyboardist rhythm guitarist Bjarne Ohlin, bassist Richard Grossman and drummer Richard Harvey. They played the sleazy bars around Kings Cross, Sydney's "sin capital." It was Divinyls' pay-your-dues period.

Australian film director Ken Cameron caught the group in one of those bars. He happened to be casting a film version of Helen Garner's dramatic book, "Monkey Grip," the story of a volatile relationship tainted with heroin addiction. The result was a six-song soundtrack EP through WEA International, featuring two 1982 homeland hits, "Boys In Town" and "Only Lonely," as well as a supporting role in the film for Christina Amphlett.

To the surprise of many, she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress at the Australian Film Awards.

But it was Divinyls' brilliantly energetic and unpredictable live show that won over club audiences. When they had a falling out with WEA,

they were pursued by no less than four international record companies. Chrysalis won the bidding war.

In late 1982 the group was flown to New York to record their debut album with producer (and fellow Aussie) Mark Opitz. The LP, simply titled *Desperate*, raged with feelings of hopelessness. Aided by a ballsy Bob Clearmountain mix, it exploded with new versions of "Boys In Town" and "Only Lonely," plus a pure pop cover of the Easybeats' "I'll Make You Happy."

The critics raved. *Rolling Stone* called *Desperate* "1983's antidote to technopop burnout." Their live performances received similar praise. In fact, Divinyls' first show in support of the album was at the US Festival in front of no less than 300,000 people. A four-week spring tour was extended through the end of summer.

But the public didn't know what to make of Divinyls. The group couldn't quite be labelled new wave (despite Amphlett sporting a dead mouse on her blouse and fishnet stockings that looked like they had been washed in a

Cuisinart). They were too accessible to be called heavy metal, too raw to be power pop.

The group returned to Australia. Recording began on *Desperate's* followup, with Mark Opitz again producing. They cut three songs, including "Don't You Go Walking" and "Sleeping Beauty." Yet Amphlett and McEntee were disenchanted. They returned to the road, replacing drummer Richard Harvey with J.J. Harris, and wrote more songs.

A year later they tried recording again, this time with producer Gary Langan, a Trevor Horn protege and member of Art of Noise. He brought a sophisticated, high-tech edge to Divinyls' sound, but a full album failed to gel. Once more, recording stopped.

Eventually, Amphlett and McEntee journeyed to Los Angeles, where they convinced acclaimed pop producer Mike Chapman to return with them to Australia and finish their second album, now dubbed *What A Life!*

Chapman ended up producing only two cuts, but they were Divinyls at their best: "Pleasure & Pain" (which Chapman co-wrote with Holly Knight) and "Sleeping Beauty." Still it was a hodge podge effort. The album failed to ignite and the group, disappointed, disbanded. Amphlett and McEntee relocated to Los Angeles to concentrate on songwriting.

It paid off. Divinyls returned in April 1988 with *Temperamental*, produced by Chapman and mixed by Bob Clearmountain. More focused and back-to-basics, the album re-established the group in hard rocking fashion. And it further developed Divinyls' growing audience outside Australia.

Amphlett and McEntee returned to New York that summer with a new band, performing for delegates of the New Music Seminar at a sold-out Ritz theater. For anyone who was there, or saw the band that summer, the sight of Amphlett jumping around the stage, flailing her arms like some sex kitten gone berserk, remains forever etched in the mind.



As the 1990s began, Divinyls went through strange times. The group left Chrysalis and temporarily moved to the red light district in Paris, France. They returned with a new record deal, a slicker sound and the U.S. hit single that somehow eluded them in those early years.

It was their original raw edge—the product of a thriving, lunatic partnership—that got them there, and that's wrapped up in *Essential Divinyls*. Amphlett recently described her unique collaboration with McEntee.



"We're very careful and particular about what we do," she said. "Although people think we sometimes contradict each other and we're at cross purposes, it's because we both think it's important to get things right... to express ourselves."

These recordings are what expression is all about.

Bruce Pilato
Contributing Editor
MIX magazine



**.. the product of
a thriving, lunatic
partnership . . .**