

- | | | |
|-----|---|------|
| 1. | BOYS IN TOWN
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>Monkey Grip</i> s'tk | 2.49 |
| 2. | GIRLFRIENDS #
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>Monkey Grip</i> s'tk | 3.12 |
| 3. | ONLY LONELY (LIVE) + #
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr single b-side | 3.24 |
| 4. | SCIENCE FICTION
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>Desperate</i> | 3.32 |
| 5. | SIREN (NEVER LET YOU GO) #
(Bjarne Ohlin) fr <i>Desperate</i> | 2.28 |
| 6. | I'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY
(Stevie Wright/George Young) fr <i>Desperate</i> | 3.21 |
| 7. | 9.50 #
(Terry Britten) fr single b-side | 3.10 |
| 8. | PLEASURE AND PAIN
(Holly Knight/Mike Chapman) fr <i>What A Life</i> | 3.55 |
| 9. | GOOD DIE YOUNG #
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>What A Life</i> | 3.36 |
| 10. | SLEEPING BEAUTY
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>What A Life</i> | 3.40 |
| 11. | HEY LITTLE BOY
(Bob Gonzalez/Don Baskin) fr <i>Temperamental</i> | 3.01 |
| 12. | BACK TO THE WALL
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee/R. Feldman) fr <i>Temperamental</i> | 4.30 |
| 13. | TEMPERAMENTAL
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>Temperamental</i> | 4.29 |
| 14. | I TOUCH MYSELF
(Steinberg/Kelly/Amphlett/McEntee) fr <i>diVINYLS</i> | 3.46 |
| 15. | LOVE SCHOOL
(Christina Amphlett/Mark McEntee) fr <i>diVINYLS</i> | 5.23 |
| 16. | I'M ON YOUR SIDE
(Billy Steinberg/Tom Kelly) fr <i>diVINYLS</i> | 4.12 |
| 17. | WILD THING
(Chip Taylor) fr <i>Reckless Kelly</i> s'tk | 4.08 |
| 18. | AIN'T GONNA EAT OUT MY HEART
(Pam Sawyer/Lori Burton/Divinylys) fr <i>Buffy The Vampire Killer</i> s'tk | 4.30 |
| 19. | LOVE IS THE DRUG
(Bryan Ferry/Andy Mackay) fr <i>Super Mario Bros</i> s'tk | 4.32 |
| 20. | LOVE IN MOTION #
(Iva Davies) fr <i>Masterfile</i> by Icehouse | 4.43 |

- not included on previous Divinylys compilations. + - live from The Spit, Barton, USA, 1983; broadcast on King Biscuit Flower Hour.

RAVEN

RVCD-67

Divinylys



MAKE
YOU
HAPPY
1981-1993

Divinylys



MAKE
YOU
HAPPY
1981-1993

Hits,
Rarities &
Essential
Moments
of an
Incendiary
Australian
Band

CHRISTINA AMPHLETT gets interesting press. It's almost a genre unto itself; so graphically extreme you begin to wonder if she's a singer or a syndrome. America's normally sedate *Variety* magazine once fell over itself describing how she "stroked a churning emotional cauldron with a pell-mell display of bug-eyed simian poses, burlesqued bump'n'grinding and general gutter-fighter punkoid freneticism".



If there is a thread running through it all, it is the cogent casting of Amphlett as some sort of cornered quarry, hackles raised, claws drawn, ever hissing, spitting and lashing out at foes real and imagined. Dangerous and unpredictable, vitriolic and venomous.

It is not a reputation she has actively discouraged. Indeed, during much of the decade that she has led major Australian rock group the Divinyls, her fiery behaviour has often proved just as intimidating as any manufactured

or manipulated image. "She can be difficult to work with", understates Rick Grossman, a member of the Divinyls for five years. "She tends to let her emotions run her life to the point of irrationality. Once you know where she's coming from it's not all that hard to handle her but you never quite have it all worked out. You can say the most innocuous thing, something that you forget a few minutes after you say it, and three weeks later she'll confront you about and start yelling at you. Not a lot of people can stand up to that."

Sometimes, not even audiences in the rowdy, sprawling, suburban concrete beer barns which house most of Australia's live rock'n'roll. Audiences which, in the early 1980s, flocked to see a salacious, possessed creature in a soiled schoolgirl uniform and tarty torn stockings take stage sleaze into uncharted realms. "I used to love watching the mounting fear on their faces", recalls Grossman. "In the beginning all these tough guys would be packed into the front rows, leering away and yelling out "Show us ya tits!". Chrissie would just turn on them, screaming out what she'd like them to show her. Within the first couple of songs, they'd all move back a bit, sometimes even stand behind their girlfriends, and you wouldn't hear from them again all night."



For all the anger that she has stirred among appalled feminists, Amphlett is no Madonna-mould coquettish 'boy toy'. Boys would be far safer playing handball with hand grenades. She recently fielded a tentative question from a pop paper interviewer with an impatient, "Are you asking me if people try to squeeze my ass after I've gone on in suspenders? Interestingly, that's never happened to me. I've played to concerts where the audience has been all men and it's never happened. I guess it's because I've always been in control."

Rick Grossman used to delight in what he termed Chrissie's 'monster act'. "She'd be howling at the crowd and hopping across the stage screaming and yelling at them, then, for a second, she'd turn her back on them and flash this sly smile to the band, then straight back into it. I remember one night she forgot the words to *Science Fiction*, the showstopper, so she just dived straight into the audience and I had to drag her out. Nobody ever knew though!"

"I remember when I first started I was a monster, a total monster", she laughs. "But Australia needed a monster at that particular time. In terms of women and rock music in this



country, there wasn't really anything happening. Even overseas it was the same, people hadn't seen anything like me there either! But after all this time I think the energy has evened itself out - I've learned to contain and control it. I've grown and I feel more confident about my abilities and my sexuality. I still get off on being this sort of sleazy sex object on stage but after being the schoolgirl, the brat and the monster for so long I think I am coming through now".

Divinyls have teetered near the edge for so long that their many misfortunes have taken on an almost melodramatic soap opera aura. Over a period in which INXS has delivered seven albums and Elton John ten, the band has scraped together just four and a half. Between these recorded offerings, extracted like stubborn back teeth, has been a remarkably entertaining (from the outside at least) sideshow of hirings and firings, blowouts, abandoned albums, law suits, disappearing acts, and more petulance than a brace of ballerinas.

The first Australian act to be signed directly to a major international record company, the Divinyls came excruciatingly close to mainstream global acceptance around 1986, when *Pleasure And Pain* made the lower

reaches of the American charts and major reviewers began salivating. "Her voice", insisted the *New York Times*, "can be a rasp, a coo, a sob, a shout or even a yodel - like an amalgamation of Edith Piaf, Iggy Pop and Otis Redding." They undertook the obligatory 62 American towns in three months jaunts but somehow it all slipped from their grasp. All they were left with was a surprisingly loyal Australia, where radio has been prepared to rally, time and time again, behind their unmistakable tensile singles, drenched in arrogant sexual energy and customised by Amphlett's primal purr and deft slurred twist of key lyrics.

The most recent was *I Touch Myself*, a song heralded by a mass mailing of postcards featuring a naked Amphlett inside what appeared to be a broad-weave fishing net. Taken in a Los Angeles car park, it shows the singer either, depending on one's personal interpretation, preserving her modesty or fondling herself. Although radio did not find the song's lyrics sufficiently explicit to prevent airplay, Australian television declared the video



clip 'AO' and banished it to the wee hours. Even so, the song was number one within a month.

Thus was ushered in the new age of the Divinyls. After two years of silence came a new album, a new record company and, more importantly, a new Christina Amphlett. As befitting the approach of her mid thirties, the feral cat allowed her fur to be combed a little.

"Guttersnipes, that's a pretty good description of us", she boasted as the video was banned and the tantalising taint of scandal

had her almost preening with undisguised delight. "I try to be as trashy on stage as I can because I see that as very much a part of rock'n'roll. We still have a snotty attitude. We react against anything that's clean, or slick. We like to poke around and expose secrets, paint a bit of grime, open up the cupboards and see what people are trying to hide in there."



Trying to fathom Christina Amphlett by looking only at her is to come away with half the picture. There is another component to be considered; a jaundiced looking misfit with an acid tongue, fearsome guitar skills and a decided anti-social bent. His name is Mark McEntee and from day one the Divinyls has been basically the creative conflagration of him

and Amphlett. They fell in together when Chrissie came back to Australia after busking and bumming around Europe for three years. She had fled an artistic but strictly structured childhood and adolescence, determined to swap ballet lessons and drama classes for park benches in Zurich and stints with amateur rock bands in Italy.

McEntee's rebelliousness wasn't quite that focused. He had run away from his Perth home at 14 to hitchhike across the Nullabor with \$11 in his pocket. The police sent him back but he inexorably made his way east again with his guitar and a cold, contemptuous anger. "Mark learned guitar because he was such a creep", says Amphlett, only half joking. "He would sit in a corner at parties and play and people would gather around." When these two scruffy ragdolls finally connected in the

Divinyls, it was as if a circuit was switched through. When Chrissie was sacked from the band before the first record it was Mark who came and fetched her back. "It was a real gang thing", he now recognises. "We formed our own gang of two."

Their relationship is no less puzzling now than it was a decade ago. In the early days of

the Divinyls they were lovers, though neither will admit to it now. They were also fierce adversaries. "I've seen them have the most horrendous physical fights - on stage, back stage, out the front of Selinas, everywhere", relates Rick Grossman. "They were usually forgotten in a couple of days but pretty earth-shaking at the time." Former manager, Vince Lovegrove, recalls "fist fights and screaming", and feels that "most of the things that went wrong with the band happened after one of their spats." He was also never quite sure of the degree of premeditation. "Chrissie really is a mighty actress and an incredible manipulator of people and situations."

Some of rock's greatest entities - most notably the Who - not only survived internal friction but thrived on it. For the two man 'gang' in the Divinyls, it proved almost therapeutic. "We don't get on", admits McEntee, "but we are very fond of each other and we probably do love each other. You have to toughen yourself to Chrissie to survive. A lot of people can't take it but I had to stick up for myself at school and get used to being pushed around. I don't know about all this "vulnerable side" stuff. When I'm around her I need *my* vulnerable side protected! I can never describe adequately what it is between us; we're close but we drive each other crazy. We don't know what we are either, it's really weird. I guess it all makes sense in

the music. We reflect each other's ideas and tastes, our minds are close. It's hard for me to have respect for anyone but, to me, she's got the best voice to be heard, it's so unique."

Amphlett sees the relationship as "quite strange, something I can't quite put my finger on. There's a similar vision, a similar sense of humour in our music. The style of my voice and his guitar seem to complement each other. We balance each other so that the Divinyls is not frustrating for either of us. Sure, we do go off at



each other. I react to things, it's a natural instinct, say one thing to me and I'll automatically say the opposite. But the arguments have become much more productive. Some of the things we've done in the band have been really scary but we know that one of us will always pick up on the moves that are not right. We always have."

Like their classic early hit *Siren*, they continue to uncoil like a tightly wound spring. "On stage I'm very driven", says Amphlett. "I've always tried to put on a show, to make each song entertaining. I'm always working to take the audience someplace. That's the nature of a Divinyls performance - it builds and builds until everybody's going with you. That's what makes you high. So many Australian performers miss the point. It's great to be an effective songwriter but you've also got to get people through the door."

"Yes, she's an animal", once decreed Britain's *New Musical Express*, "but she's much more dimensional than that. Amphlett's the most complex, the most true female singer and songwriter since Chrissie Hynde [leader of the Pretenders]. Her vocals would maul a lesser band." She has long been aware of her own potency and has never been unsure of how to direct it. "It's just the way I was born", she chides. "I don't take a sensual vitamin every day! I'll bail out when it's no longer potent. I'd

never want to be up there as some tragic figure. That's just not me."

Glenn A. Baker

(Extracted from *Chrissie Amphlett and the Polished Art of Sleaze*. The Australian Magazine, 1991)

Footnote:

I Touch Myself, the Divinyls first single for Virgin, at the end of 1990, gave the band their first Australian number one and a #4 American smash, as well as a long overdue top ten hit in Britain. The February 1991 album *dIVINYLS* reached top five down under and #15 on Billboard in the U.S.. The remainder of their early nineties Virgin period saw a successful run of film soundtrack placements of raunchy or smouldering cover versions of 60s/70s hits, which continued their revived new American presence among a young audience (their initial impact there had been with the tailor-made Mike Chapman/Holly Knight song *Pleasure And Pain* in 1986, which reached #76 on Billboard).

After an indie label *Divinyls Live* CD, they effectively reinvented themselves with the stark and almost disturbing *I'm Jealous* hit on RCA, followed by the *Underworld* album in 1996.

More than a decade and a half and 15 hit singles on from their explosive debut with *Boys In Town*, the Divinyls remain a force to reckon with, able to surprise at the least likely moments. Hard-hitting and ferociously dynamic, they stand as one of Oz Rock's most impressive and charismatic units. Let me out of here? Not while Chrissie's singing!

Glenn A. Baker, 1997



ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



Album conceived and compiled by Glenn A. Baker with the assistance of Kevin Mueller and Peter Shillito.

Original WEA, Chrysalis, Virgin and Massive Recordings, issued by arrangement with Warner Music Australia P/L, EMI Music Australia P/L and the Massive Recording Co. P/L.

Produced by Mark Opitz (1-2, 4-7), Divinyls (3), Mike Chapman (8-13), David Tickle & Divinyls (14-16), Charley Drayton & Divinyls (17-19), Bill Laswell (20).

Track 6 originally recorded by the Easybeats, 7 by the Twilights, 11 by the Syndicate of Sound, 17 by the Troggs, 18 by the Young Rascals, 19 by Roxy Music, 20 by Icehouse.

This compilation © & © 1997 Raven Records, P.O. Box 2027, East Ivanhoe 3079 Australia All Rights Reserved.

Unauthorised duplication is a criminal offence.

Mastered by Warren Barnett at the Raven Lab. Artwork by Greg Klein at Alan Duffy Co. Advertising (ADCO), Sydney.

Front cover photograph by Bob King.

Photographs from The Glenn A. Baker Archives. Special thanks to David Baxter, Laurie Dunn, Iva Davies, Michelle Straney, Francine Keeling, Chris Spencer and the indefatigable Chrissie Amphlett.

AMCOS

Recording Line-Ups:

(1980-82)

Christina Amphlett - Vocals
Mark McEntee - Guitars/Vocals
Bjarne Ohlin - Guitar/Keyboards
Richard Harvey - Drums
Jeremy Paul - Bass

(1982-1987)

Amphlett, McEntee, Ohlin, Harvey
Rick Grossman - Bass

(1987-88)

Amphlett, McEntee
Warren McLean - Drums/Vocals
Tim Millikan - Bass

(1990)

Amphlett, McEntee
Randy Jackson - Bass
Charlie Drayton - Drums
Benmont Tench - Hammond Organ



Others who can claim to have been Divinyls over the years covered by this anthology include: Roger Mason, Frank Infante, J.J. Harris, Jim Hilbun, Mark Meyer, Tim Powles, Jeff Phillips, Ken Firth, Tom Cain, Kenny Lyon, Matthew Hughes, Charlie Owen, Jerome Smith, Lee Borkman.

Also Available from Raven:

Cool World (41 Essential Oz Rock Singles 1976-86)

RVCD-55

The Church - *Almost Yesterday 1981-90* RVCD-43

The Saints - *Scarce Saints* RVCD-05

The Saints - *Songs of Salvation 1976-88* RVCD-09

Bon Scott & Fraternity - *Complete Sessions 1970-73*

RVCD-56

Golden Miles (Australian Progressive Rock 1969-74)

EQS