

**BIRDS WITH EARS BIRDS WITH EARS BIRDS WITH EARS
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If you have had the pleasure of seeing "Birds With Ears" then you won't need me to tell you they're a strange exciting mix of surreal pop, glam rock and rhythm and blues. If you have 'nt seen the band, then you have the delight to come. Either way, you are about to hear about some rather original people..children of imagery... purveyors of instant art-----

- "Birds With Ears" are:
- Ian Smith:Lead Vocals and Bird Whistle;
 - Laurie Morris;Vocals and Sax;
 - Rob Hayes:Guitar;
 - Ian Porter:Bass Guitar;
 - Billy Cowie:Keyboards;
 - Simon Lewes:Drums.

I asked the band how they came to choose their name.Laurie told me that she was sitting in a summer garden sipping ice

cream sodas and writing two line plays,one of which was:

"Look it's Brian...he's smiling." when she hit upon "Birds With Ears" and thought it would suit the band.Okay,how did they get together?Well, seven or eight months ago Brighton Art C ollege Tutor Billy Cowie got together with student Ian Smith to make tapes and experiment.They were soon joined by fellow students Rob Hayes and Laurie Morris and they spent time working out in Falmer's electronic studios.

Ian Smith:"We were going to do a gig with a drum machine,then J (the band 's Manager)told us about Simon who was looking for a place to live and was a drummer....."

So we very nearly have a complete band,that is except for a Bass player. Their first gig was at an accident party(their words)in the Basement supporting the Louder Animal Group and The Plump Persons.After that gig Plump Persons found themselves minus a Bassist,and Birds With Ears were now complete.Anxious to discover at least a small

portion of what makes these people tick,I asked them to name their individual influences in music. A mistake,no named influences forthcoming.I changed tack and asked them how they felt about the current music scene.

Laurie:"I think the music scene generally is quite healthy,but it could be more so locally.

Rob:Manchester is healthier..it"s not so revivalist

Laurie:You're so limited to what you can do in small clubs...it would be nice to be able to solidify the presentation;on a larger stage there's more room for spontaneity.

Ian Smith:Yes,it's important to have the freedom to move;the image comes from the energy in the music.

Laurie:When we first started,I felt I was static, I had to loosen up,it's a snowball effect,if you



BIRDS WITH EARS (2)

move about you get more energy....

Ian Smith: And you have to be able to see the audience-look them in the eye.....

So much for talking about it. We finished our chat and the band went off to prepare themselves for doing it. What follows is a brief resume of the set. Well, for starters, you have Ian Smith and Laurie in the front and the mere combination of the pair is enough to give the grey matter a rest. What I am trying to say is that to witness for the first time Ian's peculiar movements and entertaining grimaces as well as being aware of this smaller, more graceful, but equally entrancing figure on his right is to be utterly enthralled in it all. For visuals I award this band ten out of ten. Then one becomes tuned in to pulsating, almost sixties sounding keyboards, then guitar and so forth.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that it all begins gradually, it's more of an attack than that. Wailing sax and pounding rhythm and people on strings like mannequins. I am part of a crowd seeing a mediaeval travelling circus practising illusion, and what's more I'm dancing. Two numbers in and I'm glad I brought a tape recorder with me, but fervently desire a video machine, something I've never even thought about before.

The third song begins and is announced "Emotions". One of my favourites this. Ian and Laurie detailing for us the many complexities of our most mortal attribute. "Anger"-eyes accusing and pointing-"hilarity"-they titter and screech with glee-"sadness..rage..jealousy..hate..love..." - then backing is sparse as they become ashamed of love..."I'm so ashamed of you". The fickle ego; fie the falseness of man. They grimace and writhe as the music becomes climactic, racing, crazed, discordant.

The next song is called "Destinations", and I find it doll-like.

"Because there's no-one waiting to meet us/to greet us/we can do anything/anything". Then Laurie picks up a cowbell.

"I am very sensible/and I never sweat/we smell fear/something tells me here inside/that I have'nt suffered yet/we smell fear". Ian paints us a picture of ludicrous proportions. "We Smell Fear" is a strong song-very strong.

"Master Fool" gives more clues. "See how we wait for him/it interests us to hear of him"....check out "Birds With Ears" soon...we're all Brian..



by
trish