

MAKE UP

A Biography

Make Up is a group that, years after their dissolution, still divides listening society.

Formed in 1994, Make Up were from a distance a Rascals style, "blue eyed soul" group, but were in actuality, much more complex. Make Up's intent in the beginning was to create ad lib narratives over dance groove vamps so as to address imminent situations on hand, and to re energize the often staid, bland, and formalistic ritual of rock 'n' roll. Appropriating Gospel music's use of the congregate as a "fifth member" the band was bent on audience inclusion through call and response vocals, lyrical "discussion" techniques, and destruction of the fourth wall via physical transgression. Their records and performances were extraordinarily influential, and their single *FREE ARTHUR LEE* was a major factor behind the rehabilitation of that star's career. They were also involved with anti embargo pro Castro groups and other anti imperialist aggregates.

While they released both "live" records and "studio" records, all were created with an eye toward spontaneity. Most studio songs were cut as they occurred to the group at the moment. Therefore their studio records themselves were in a sense, quite "live." Because of their consideration of their audience and the special techniques they applied to performing, their live shows were legendary and they became the much copied convergence of soul, surf, skronk, and stomp. They were highly influenced also by bubblegum music, particularly the continental variety called "yeh-yeh" music. The factory style of production that this sort of music had utilized interested the group, who were dedicated to expanding the workforce as opposed to the rock n roll trend (begun by the Beatles) toward self sufficiency and "downsizing" labour. This expansive attitude was related to their utilization of the "congregate" as a group member.

The Make Up were never on one label, releasing records through a large variety of independent labels, most notably the K and Dischord companies. Make Up, featuring Ian Svenonius on vocals, James Canty on electric organ and electric guitar, Michelle Mae on electric bass guitar and Steve Gamboa on drumkit, were joined in late 1999 by a fifth member, Alex Minoff, who played guitar with the group until their dissolution in early 2001. The group were known also by their many community activities which included a nite club called COLD RICE where they disc jockeyed every week, starting that now ubiquitous trend of the weekly nite club band/DJ scene.

Make Up's recordings were marked also by a close collaborative style with their various producers who included Brendan Canty, Calvin Johnson, Guy Picciotto, Adam and Eve Royal Trux, John Loder, Jonathan Kreinik, Mike Fellows, Ian Mackaye, and Juan Carrera. They collaborated musically with Dub Narcotic Sound System, Kid Congo Powers, Miighty Flashlight, et al. and their songs were "re mixed" by several characters as well. They toured extensively across five continents with many other groups such as Royal Trux, Dub Narcotic Sound System, Sonic Youth, Fugazi, Ted Leo, Slant 6, Lung Leg, Mr Quintron, Blonde Redhead, and several others.

Make Up dissolved due to the large number of counter gang copy groups which had appropriated their look and sound and applied it to a vacuous and counter-revolutionary form. The members went on to form the groups WEIRD WAR (Ian Svenonius, Michelle Mae, and Alex Minoff) and FRENCH TOAST James Canty while also engaging in other projects.

MAKE UP INCOMPLETE AND UNAUTHORIZED DISCOGRAPHY

- 7" "R U A Believer" b/w "Version Dub Narcotic remix" K Records 1995
- 7" "Blue Is Beautiful" b/w "Type U Blood" Black Gemini Records 1995
- 7" "Trans Pleasant Express" b/w Meta Matics Black Gemini Records 1995
- 7" EP "We're Having a Baby"/"This is...Young Vulgarians" b/w (Slant 6) Time Bomb Records (1995)
- Song "We're Having A Baby Live" on *Chicken Bomb* compilation 1995
- LP/CD *DESTINATION: LOVE Live! At Cold Rice* Dischord Records 1995
- 7" "Substance Abuse" b/w "Under The Impression"/"Have U heard The Tapes?" Time Bomb Records 1996
- LP/CD *AFTER DARK Live At Fine China* Dischord Records 1996
- LP/CD *SOUND VERITE* K RECORDS 1996
- 7" *FREE ARTHUR LEE* b/w "Version Dub Narcotic Remix" K Records 1997
- 7" "Untouchable Sound" b/w "I Didn't Mean 2 Turn U On" Woo Me Records (1997)
- 7" "I Want Some" b/w The Cranium Slowdime Records 1997
- VHS *Blue Is Beautiful* Film by James Schneider Dischord Records 1997
- LP *IN MASS MIND* Dischord Records 1998
- SONG "Hanging out in Someone Else's World" on *Selector Dub Narcotic* compilation K Records 1998
- 7" "Wade In The Water" b/w "Remix The Designer" All City Records 1998
- 7" "POW! To The People" b/w Lung Leg Southern Records 1998
- 7" "U R My Intended" b/w "The Choice" K Records 1998
- 7" "I Want Some" b/w "POW! To the People" Giant Claw Records Australian release 1998
- LP/CD *SAVE YOURSELF* K Records 1999
- SONG "Rough Riders" on *Illuminati* compilation Geographic/Domino Records 1999
- 7" "Born On The Floor" b/w "Little Black Book" K Records 1999
- 12" EP "Every Baby Cries The Same"/"Hey!Orpheus" b/w "Grey Motorcycle"/"I Am If..." Slowdime Records (1999)
- 2 X LP/CD *I WANT SOME* (Singles Compilation) K RECORDS (2000)
- SONG "When Love Calls Yr Name" on *Harpichord* compilation S.H.A.D.O Records (2000)
- LP/CD *UNTOUCHABLE SOUND LIVE!* Sea Note (2006)

