



THE BLOOD ARM

Red army: (l-r) Nathaniel, Dyan, Zach and Zach are grilled by Alex and Nick

Nat soaks up the typically restrained LA crowd reaction



Our new favourite band

Words: **Franz Ferdinand** in Los Angeles
Photographs: **Jenny Swift** in Los Angeles

Seven days in Vice City

Ben Blood Arm's cheapskate guide to a week in LA

Monday
Spaceland, Silverlake (free): Busy and good local talent. The Echo, Echo Park (free): Cool bands, cheap drink offers.

Tuesday
The Beauty Bar, Hollywood (free): DJs Andrew and Blake play the best music in town. The Kibbitz Room, Canter's (free): Ditto. DJs Zach and Ethan know their shit.

Wednesday
Club Moscow, Boardner's, Hollywood (free): You'll enjoy it without standing near a mirror to look at your hair.

Thursday
Vine, Hollywood (free): Talk about too much stimulation. Fuckin' Awesome, Cinespace, Hollywood (free): The Red Stripe is free – awesome!

Friday
L-Train, El Cid, Silverlake (\$5): DJ Paulie brings out the best new bands. Underground, The Tempest, West Hollywood (\$5): Good '60s stuff and lots of dancing.

Saturday
Hang The DJs, The Echo (\$5): An old-fashioned dance club. Par Avion, The Ramada, Los Feliz (\$5): Multilingual pop.

Sunday
I only do movies and bowling.

They play gigs in warehouses, reference '70s arthouse movies and are part of LA's shadowy underground. Meet Franz-discovered haemoglobin-happy art-rockers **The Blood Arm**

Franz Ferdinand: Do you consider The Blood Arm to be a pop group, a rock band, or something else?
Zeb Carlisle (guitar): "We hate stereotypical rock and pop bands, so would probably hesitate to say either."

What will us Limeys get from The Blood Arm?
Ben Lee Handler (MC): "Bitten. Everyone that knows Nathaniel (*Fregoso, vocals*) has woken up at some point with bite marks from him."
Nathaniel: "There were charges pressed against me one time. Then I went to AA for 30 days."

Is it fair to say you aren't a typical LA band?
Nathaniel: "I dunno but who are? The Doors, maybe."
Zeb: "We are all from southern California, apart from Dyan who is from northern California. I'm sure that colours our music to an extent. The Beach Boys were a great LA band, but The Doors and Love were better."
Ben Lee: "They're a cross between The Doors and The Fall. Nathaniel went to film school at UCLA, like Jim Morrison. He made a film where a guy was running around in a horse's head."
Nathaniel: "It was very... experimental, ie, BAD."

Franz on The Blood Arm

Alex: "They have everything that makes a good band. Great songs, great stage presence, they're great players, the frontman Nathaniel is completely commanding. At a typical gig, he goes right into the audience and dedicates tracks to people, which sounds terrible, but it actually works. The Blood Arm have an *aura*. It feels like they're part of a secret society. They're literate and precise and acerbic. And their lyrics are amazing too. All this, and they don't sound like they're from LA either, which is good. They sound like they come from Edinburgh!"

Zach: "We've been in this band for two years. We're not in it for the money or the girls."
Nathaniel: "We get neither."
Ben Lee: "Apart from Zach."

We love your lyrics: "If you go to London/There's a chance the Queen will make you a knight".
Nathaniel: "That's based entirely on a ('70s arthouse director) John Cassavetes film."

Are lyrics important to you?
Nathaniel: "They're important. There's an element of improvisation, but it can't be nonsense."
Ben Lee: "There's a lot more weight to Nathaniel's lyrics than with most bands today. It's as if they're from another era. Dickensian..."

What's your favourite Fall album?
All: "Perverted By Language"

Do you get NME in Los Angeles?
Nathaniel: "Yeah, it's funny to read..."
Ben Lee: "They use 'S's instead of 'Z's..."
Zeb: "I read it online. It creates excitement for new music in the UK – something needed in the US."

We intend to steal your ideas. Do you mind?
All: "Ha ha... no, we don't mind at all."

There's one question we hate being asked: where did you get your name from?
Dyan: "We all love to give blood. You can't give blood in the US if you've been in the UK for three months."
Ben Lee: "And there was a certain archduke in 1914..."

"Everyone that knows Nathaniel has woken up at some point with bite marks from him"

Blood Arm MC Ben Lee Handler

Ben Lee: "The girl was crazy."
Dyan Valdes (keyboards): "She pushed him into it."
Nathaniel: "AA's great. The stories there are so intense: 'They stuffed me into a mattress, then I took a bunch of heroin and drank a bottle of rum.'"
Ben Lee: "Nathaniel's famous for taking a bottle of spirits to a party and forcing people to drink it. He was forcing my girlfriend last night. She's pregnant."

Were you friends before you were a group?
Zeb: "Nathaniel has always been a dark figure roaming around the LA scene. When we first started hanging out there was an element of danger and excitement which eventually manifested itself into a band. Now we are a gang and hang out every day."

When we first saw you play, it was at a warehouse party in LA that reminded us of the shows we used to do in Glasgow. Is there a good scene here in LA?
Zach 'Spider' Amos (drums): "There's so much craziness going on every night, it can't help but translate into the music."

Do you want to be famous?
Zeb: "Absolutely, especially if fame is followed by some degree of fortune... enough to not have to work and be able to sleep in every day would be ideal."
Nathaniel: "I haven't paid my rent in two months. If it helps that, I'd be happy."
Dyan: "To be able to write and play music all day and not worry about anything else is appealing."