

Liberty 37

Swansea's **Liberty 37** formed in 1996, calling themselves Travis Inc until some other band had the same idea, and then opting for Applecote, which wasn't favourably received by the Apple Corporation. So far, no one has objected to name no. 3, but there's still time for the director of the cult Western China 9 Liberty 37 to come out of the woodwork.

Travis Inc made enough of an impression during their brief incarnation to feature as "ones to watch" in Kerrang's Class Of 1998 feature, where they were described as "*Soaring, uplifting, but still bruising - Radiohead gone hardcore.*" That snap assessment was a neat encapsulation of Liberty 37's strength - an ability to pile up intense layers of guitars without sacrificing melody or obliterating delicate shades of feeling. The band first demonstrated the trick on vinyl for Org Records release on their debut single - "*No Beauty*", a record that won them more friends and clinched their deal with Beggars Banquet. Their debut record for Beggars was the Stuffed EP, released in May 1998, which saw them "sending waves of emotion crashing against solid, abrasive guitars" (Kerrang!). A UK tour with Bullyrag saw Liberty 37 spread the word around the country for the first time.



In 1999 Liberty 37 released "*Revolution*" in January and then the action came thick and fast. Liberty 37 joined Pulkas and One Minute Silence on a 22-date festival of riffing and moshing, which lurched its way around the UK in February. They finished recording their debut album "*The Greatest Gift*", and in May of that year they released "*Oh River*", which was playlisted by MTV in the UK, following it up with another jaunt round the UK in the company of A on an 18 date UK tour. The band finished up playing at the Reading / Leeds festival in August.

Following the release of their single *Revolution* in February 2000 the band embarked on their first headline tour of the UK through the months of March and April. Following this the band started writing material for their second album during the summer of 2000. The demos were completed in February 2001, Beggars Banquet decided not to take up the option on the album, however Independent label Mighty Atom were quick to step in and offer the band a new deal. They enlisted the help of record producer/ mixer Joe Gibb (*credits include Catatonia, Leftfield, Janes Addiction*) to start mixing "*God Machine*". When finally completed all were agreed that the album surpassed the impressive debut *The Greatest Gift*.

God Machine is set to confirm Liberty 37's status as one of the country's most promising rock bands - intelligent, unpretentious, powerful and passionate, it's a convincing selection of songs, which deserves to win the band a wide audience throughout the World.



KERRANG

Reviewed: October 2001

Genre: Rock

Label: Mighty Atom

Key tracks: 'Jihad', 'Father Forgive Me', 'Mary Jones'

KKKK

The sweeping post-grunge epics on Liberty 37's breathtaking Beggars Banquet debut 'The Greatest Gift' should have made them stars. That the Welsh quartet are instead releasing its successor on a tiny independent label run out of a recording studio in Swansea, while the vastly inferior Stained can boast a Number One album, tells you everything you need to know about the current state of the British music scene. And even though 'God Machine' struggles to scale the heights of its predecessor, there's still enough power, passion and pride exhibited here to last Puddle Of Mud their entire career.

The topically titled 'Jihad' slips sublimely between bottom heavy groove and lilting melody, while 'Father Forgive Me' dabbles in dark, distorted electronica, guitarist Tim Batcup supplying subtle soundscapes for Ishmael Lewis' awe-inspiring vocals. If only Fred Durst's A&R remit extended as far as Swansea then Liberty 37 would surely be several million albums to their good by now.

Reviewed by Dan Silver



METAL HAMMER.

LIBERTY 37

God Machine 8/10

November 2001

(Mighty Atom)

A WARM welcome back to Liberty 37, who many suspected had gone permanently AWOL while trying to follow '99's enjoyable 'The Greatest Gift' debut. They may have split with Beggars Banquet, but 'God Machine' is an album rich in both texture and quality. The Swansea quartet have been described as 'Radiohead gone hardcore', but don't let that put you off because all they have in common with Thom Yorke's crew are fragile, simple arrangements and an emotive mindset. Twink's bass and the warming vocals of Ishmael Lewis are at the sound's forefront, but although they'll never challenge Napalm Death in the noise stakes, Tim Batcup keeps things well within the realms of hard rock with some adventurous, occasionally blistering guitar. It's a testament to the quality of the material that none of the songs stand out - all are worth hearing.

DAVE LANG [8]



CLASSIC ROCK

LIBERTY 37

God Machine

November 2001

(Mighty Atom)

I don't know how to say this, but there's more to Welsh rock music than the Stereophonics, Catatonia and the Manic Street Preachers. Shocking, I know, but take Swansea-based Liberty 37, for example. Their savagely understated debut, 1999's 'The Greatest Gift', was a low-key epic, showcasing a band with more than a fighting chance of becoming one of Britain's brightest hopes. Evading surrounding scenes, fads and fashions, they'd carved a sound of their very own. It is therefore greatly relieving to discover that follow-up 'God Machine' doesn't hamper their (surely) imminent ascent.

A confluence of soaring choruses and intelligent rock, Liberty 37 are a thinking man's band unashamed of being at one with spirituality and emotion. The tones of vocally blessed Ishmael Lewis exert an airy ambience that immerses you into an involuntary state of serenity, and the bridging of heavy intensity and stirring lyrical sentiments make listening to 'God Machine' a near-religious experience.

ROSANNA SLATER

If you are looking for a classic in nature with an emotive feel, then check out the second album from Swansea four piece Liberty 37 titled "GOD MACHINE" (*mighty atom*), and featuring the vocal might of pocket terror Ishmael Lewis, this is a record of genuine quality delivered straight from the heart. Listen to high point 'Stanislaw' and tell me that you haven't been touched in some deep and unmentionable place. Go on just you try! Poetry, pure an' simple.

DANTE BONUTTO



ORG RECORDS FANZINE

LIBERTY 37

Www.organart.demon.co.uk

Sean Organ

November 2001

LIBERTY 37 "God Machine" (*Mighty Atom*) - Whoosh, sounding better than ever - look what I found in the second hand record shop in Soho where the proper journalists go to sell their free promo copies. Liberty 37 are back from where ever they've been, I thought they'd gone for good - gave up communicating with us ages ago but we still love those early records we put out for them (*and the letters from the Travis legal department - Liberty 37, many name changes ago were called Travis at around the same time as - ah it's a long story...*) Anyway, this is better than ever mostly because, amongst other things, they've made it far less obvious (not that they ever were obvious), they've moved it further on, they've built on the

excellent debut on Beggars Banquet (dropped after one album – why do the big UK labels always fuck it up when it's all so obvious to those of us without the means to do it properly!). Their emotional hard-edged epic rock drips with more restrained drama than ever - God Machine indeed. It's very much Liberty 37 - Ishmael has such a distinctive voice, there's no mistaking that Liberty 37 sound and yes, there's still great big hopes inside. If Liberty 37 fit in anywhere, and to their credit, they never really have, then it's alongside bands like Red Animal War or my current favorite band in the whole wide world Appleseed Cast and Hundred Reasons. Emotionally melodic drama, always so laced with uplifting hope and restrained beauty - this goes far beyond anything Liberty 37 have done before, this is faith restoring. Liberty 37 are one of the very best bands out there, don't, whatever you do, let them slip out of our/your grasp because this is what it should really be about - everyday should be about lots more than just survival, take that feeling back.

SEAN ORGAN



ROCK SOUND

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

4/5

Reviewer: *Darren Sadler*

Release Date: *In shops now*

It's a funny old game, the music industry. Bands come out, get hyped, record companies fight tooth-and-nail to sign 'em up, chuck loads of money at them, expect instant overnight success – and sit back on their laurels. The act doesn't chart straight away, so yet another band bites the dust and more talent goes unnoticed. It nearly happened with Liberty 37. Nearly, but not quite. Y'see, despite parting ways with Beggars Banquet after the release of their critically-acclaimed debut "The Greatest Gift", the Swansea based quartet didn't shrug their shoulders and give up. Nope, Liberty 37 have bounced back and recorded what is, quite frankly, an album that pisses all over their debut album from a great height. Yup, Ishmael Lewis and co have released an album packed with post-hardcore-tinged, beautifully-crafted slabs of musical brilliance – and there's not a whiff of major label interference anywhere! Here's an album that isn't built up on pent-up teenage frustrations or shout-along fist-clenching anthems – Just solid, tight vignettes that are surefire classics in the making. Indeed, 'God Machine' is as huge as you'd imagine a creation with such a name to be, and named partly due to Ishmael's love of the gone, but not forgotten, genius band The God Machine, who were of course immense in their own right. As the singer reminisces: "I'm Wales' biggest God Machine fan. I think I've cried twice in my life when people have died, and one of them was when I heard that Jimmy Fernandez had died – I was heartbroken. It was unbelievably sad; they were the greatest band I had ever heard! Everyone needs the God Machine in their life". Opening with the apt 'Jihad' and following on with the colossal sounding 'Stanislaw' – which features Hitler's Intolerance speech – never has rhetoric been so well timed! Themes of war and worldwide unrest are clearly prominent throughout 'God Machine', but this aint no RATM 'politics down your throat' style, more Ishmael Lewis' viewpoint on life, the universe and everything. Unfortunately, to describe Liberty 37 as 'thinking mans rock' could inadvertently make them sound boring, but Liberty 37 make you think, they've created songs to absorb the listener – they make songs that will stand the test of time, rather than being forgotten in a matter of minutes. Elsewhere 'All of Myself' is a full-on hard-hitting pop ditty and 'Father Forgive Me' is a delicate, moving up-tempo rocker, and any track featured here could quite easily sit on any emo-album you care to think of. Liberty 37, then – They're not pin-ups, they're not American, they certainly won't be telling you to 'go fucking mental and rip the place apart' during a set. But Liberty 37 piss over so many mediocre acts of the same ilk currently selling millions of albums, and they're for real. Take your time to discover, and enjoy for years to come!

DARREN SADLER

William Desborough at **MTV** has stated that in his opinion "God Machine is the best rock album I have heard this year by a UK band..." October 2001.

WILLIAM DESBOROUGH

Liberty 37 have so far been featured and playlisted on

- **BBC Radio 1 Evening Session Wales** – 4 exclusive tracks plus interview.
- **BBC Radio Wales** – Interview plus 4 tracks and *All of Myself* playlisted (*Adam Walton show*)
- **XFM** – plays various tracks from the new and old album (*Ian Camfield show*)
- **Virgin FM** – Played *All of Myself*
- **Radio1 evening session in Wales** – Plays *Head of David*
- **Total Rock Radio** – *All of Myself* playlisted

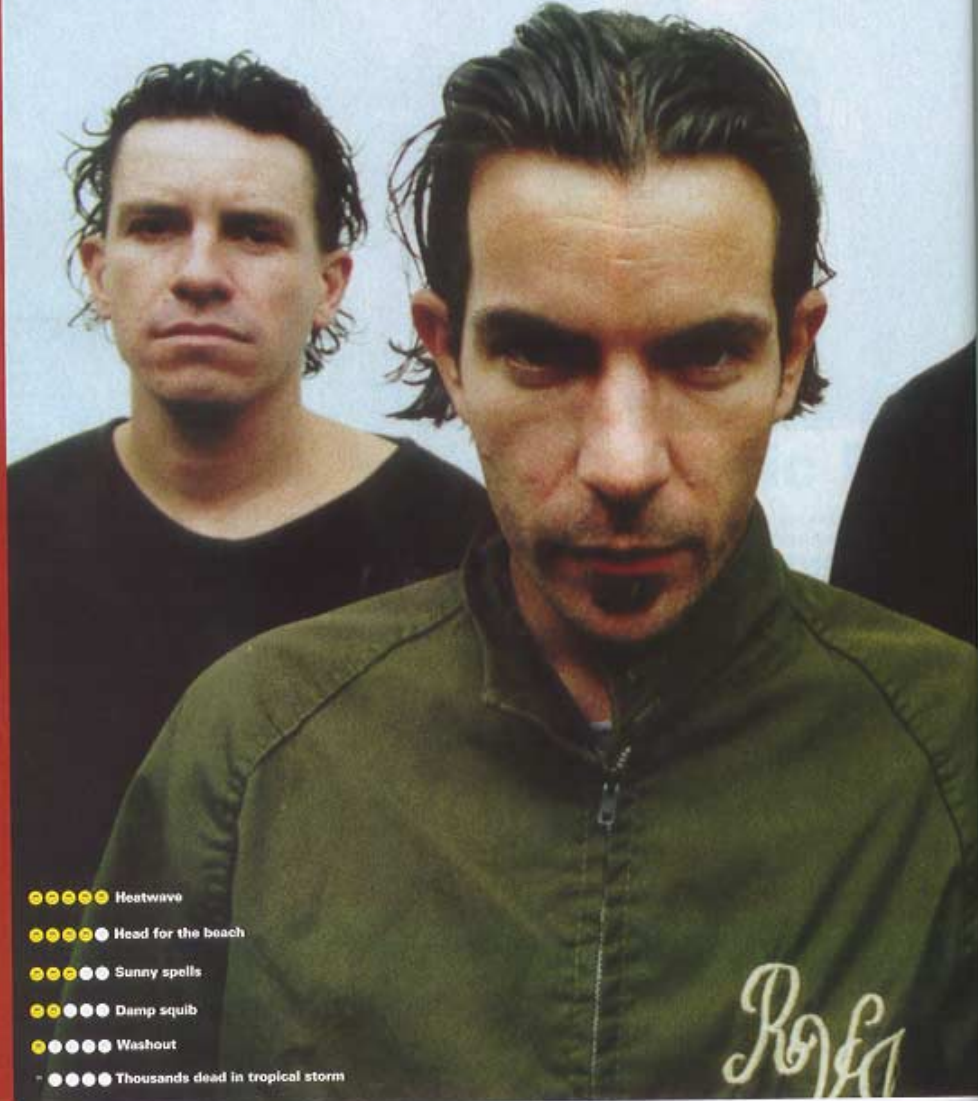
album of the month



LIBERTY 37

'God Machine'

(MIGHTY ATOM PRODUCTIONS) ●●●●○

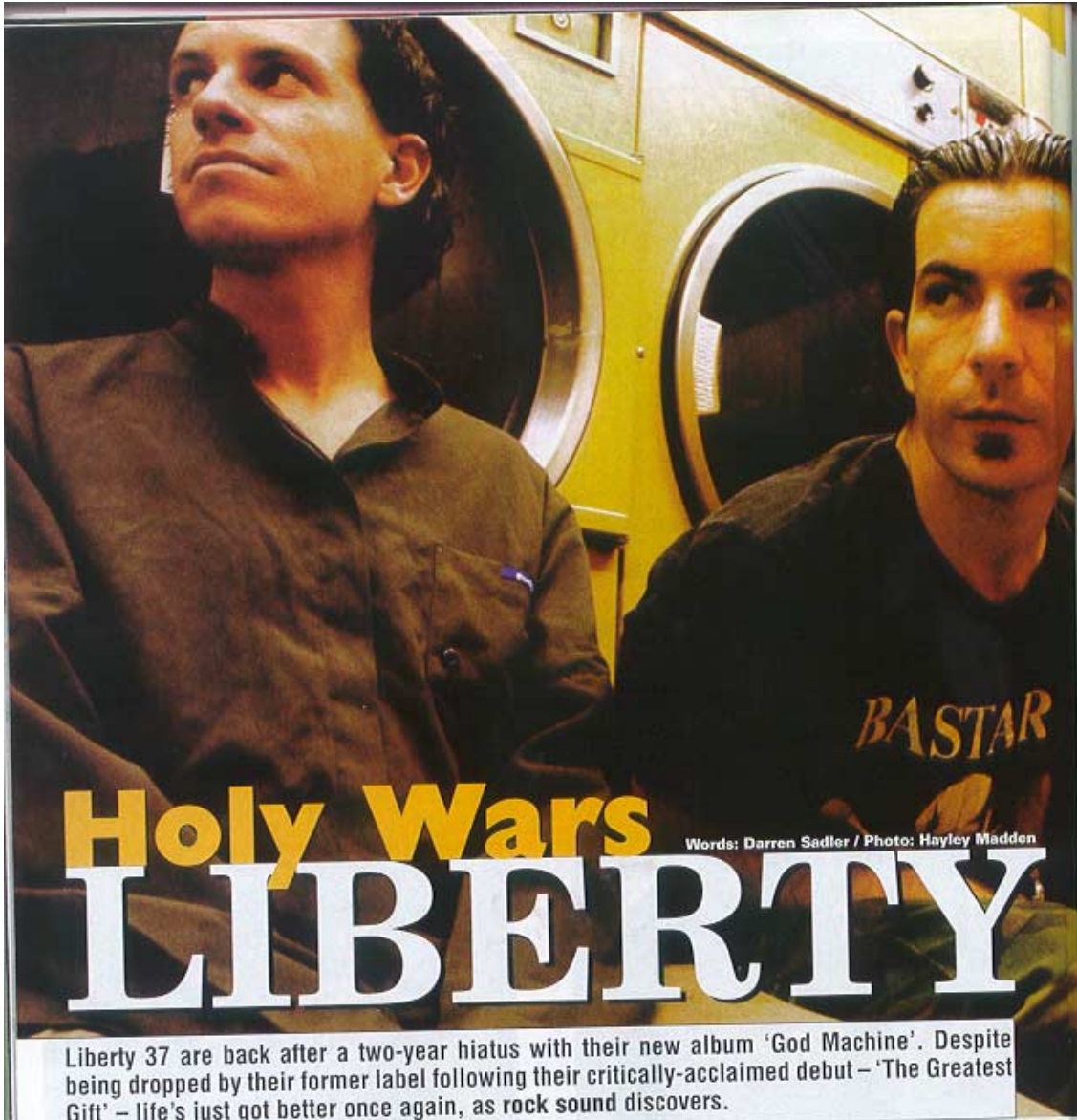


- Heatwave
- Head for the beach
- Sunny spells
- Damp squib
- Washout
- Thousands dead in tropical storm



It's a funny old game, the music industry. Bands come out, get hyped, record companies fight tooth-and-nail to sign 'em up, chuck loads of money at them, expect instant overnight success – and sit back on their laurels. The act doesn't chart straight away, so yet another band bites the dust and more talent goes unnoticed. It nearly happened with Liberty 37. Nearly, but not quite. Y'see, despite parting ways with Beggars Banquet after the release of their critically-acclaimed debut 'The Greatest Gift', the Swansea-based quartet didn't shrug their shoulders and give up. Nope, Liberty 37 have bounced back and recorded what is, quite frankly, an album that pisses all over their debut from a great height. Yup, Ishmael Lewis and co have released an album packed with post-hardcore-tinged, beautifully-crafted slabs of musical brilliance – and there's not a whiff of major label interference anywhere! Here's an album that isn't built on pent-up teenage frustrations or shout-along fist-clenching anthems – just solid, tight vignettes that are surefire classics in the making. Indeed, 'God Machine' is as huge as you'd imagine a creation with such a name to be, and named partly due to Ishmael's love of the gone, but not forgotten, genius band The God Machine, who were of course immense in their own right. As the singer reminisces: "I'm Wales' biggest God Machine fan. I think I've cried twice in my life when people have died, and one of them was when I heard that Jimmy Fernandez had died – I was heartbroken. It was unbelievably sad; they were the greatest band I had ever heard! Everyone needs the God Machine in their life." Opening with the rather apt 'Jihad' and following on with the colossal sounding 'Stanislaw' – which features Hitler's Intolerance Speech – never has rhetoric been so well-timed! Themes of war and worldwide unrest are clearly prominent throughout 'God Machine', but this ain't no RATM 'politics down your throat' style, more Ishmael Lewis' viewpoint on life, the universe and everything. Unfortunately, to describe Liberty 37 as 'thinking man's rock' could inadvertently make them sound boring, but Liberty 37 make you think, they've created songs to absorb the listener – they make songs that will stand the test of time, rather than being forgotten in a matter of minutes. Elsewhere 'All Of Myself' is a full-on hard-hitting pop ditty and 'Father Forgive Me' is a delicate, moving up-tempo rocker, and any track featured here could quiet easily sit on any emo-album you care to think of. Liberty 37, then – they're not pin-ups, they're not American, they certainly won't be telling you to 'go fucking mental and rip this place apart' during a set. But Liberty 37 piss over so many mediocre acts of the same ilk currently selling millions of albums, and they're for real. Take your time to discover, and enjoy for years to come! **S**

Darren Sadler



Holy Wars

Words: Darren Sadler / Photo: Hayley Madden

LIBERTY

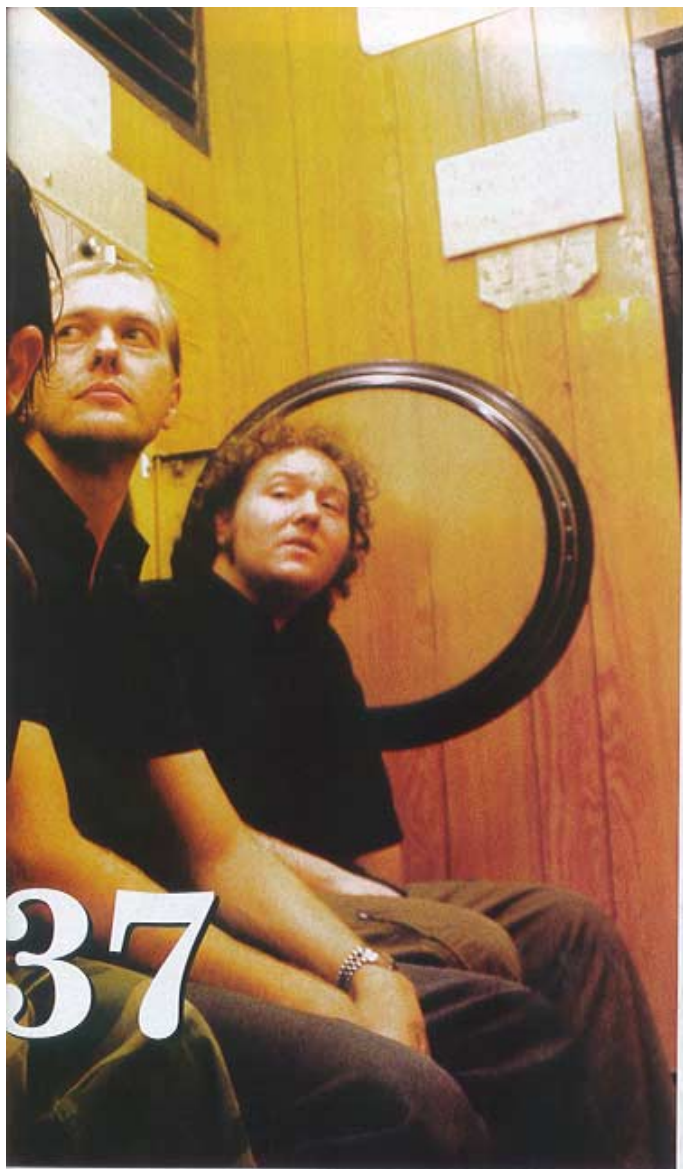
Liberty 37 are back after a two-year hiatus with their new album 'God Machine'. Despite being dropped by their former label following their critically-acclaimed debut – 'The Greatest Gift' – life's just got better once again, as rock sound discovers.

Being the son of two preachers from the Welsh Protestant church community, it's not surprising that religion has played a strong part in Ishmael Lewis' life, even in his youthful sex life, as Liberty 37's singer reflects. "I remember the first time I brought a girlfriend home, it was dark, I think I was about 17 – I was a late bloomer – and I remember a huge bang and she fell on the floor. She'd tripped over a container of ashes just waiting for a burial, thankfully there was no damage done!" Despite his upbringing, as well as a stint of work experience at a local funeral parlour, Ishmael isn't a religious fruitcake.

"Some religions are big on rituals, big on rules and regulations, and to me that is the absolute antithesis of what I feel about it," he explains. "If you believe God is a biscuit – great; and if you believe he's an all-conquering guy with a white beard and you have to lead a certain path for the rest of your life to get into it – then whatever, then so be it."

When 'The Greatest Gift' was released, Ishmael quit his teaching job to concentrate on the band – surviving life on the road through countless crap jobs. When the success cogs slowed down, he eventually succumbed to finding 'real' work once again.

Hence rock sound is chatting to the articulate frontman as he sits in a Swansea school car park while on his lunch hour. He's not bitter though. "I was out of work for a year and basically got fed up of eating leaves! It was really a case of desperation, I've got two cats, I've got responsibilities, I can't manufacture cat food on my own..." Despite the setbacks, Liberty 37 didn't give up. While same-era scenesters Pulkas split, and Cyclefly still remain in the 'missing in action' file despite having recorded a second album which features one Chester Bennington on guest vocals, Liberty 37 just took a step back and continued creating.



INTOLERANCE AND INTELLIGENCE

Scrimping and saving to record, Liberty 37 (also featuring bassist Twink, guitarist Tim and temporary drummer Rod) started work on 'God Machine' back in January, and when Beggars said "adios", Swansea-based Mighty Atom were more than happy to step in.

'God Machine' has just been unleashed, although featuring a track called 'Jihad' and a sample of Adolf Hitler's notorious Intolerance Speech, timing is a little bit of a sensitive subject.

"It's not like 'hooray Jihad! let's do it in a Hanoi Rocks version', it's far more about personal freedom and free expression," reasons the singer. "To me the song is responding, it doesn't matter whose religion it is, but the idea of prescriptive notion of a set of rules and morals that you have to subscribe to if you want to be respected in the place you live, just seems so ridiculous — but yes, in terms of timing, that would be called Liberty 37's curse!

"The fact there is a sample of Hitler on the record is no way supportive of the speech — it's the most offensive, loathsome actual presentation ever heard — and the song is about the perspective of a family

torn apart by the evils of the Nazi ideology in Czechoslovakia. Hitler was, in terms of what he did to the world, possibly the most evil person in history, but I don't think you can do what Stalin did and just erase the things you don't like. I think it is important to let people hear these words — they have a tonal quality and are incredibly powerful. It's interesting because I don't think most people speak German, so you can be swept along just by atmosphere; they're very powerful words but when you know what he's talking about it's reprehensible in the extreme. But as Bill Hicks once said, 'all information is good information'."

Look inside the cover of 'God Machine' and you'll also been greeted with a number of website sources. "The reason we put the addresses on is because music fans are spoon-fed opinions about politics in exactly the same way that they're spoon-fed music. Look at the fact that a band like Staind are selling a million records," opines Ishmael. "Now irrespective of your opinion of them, the reason why they're selling so many records in this country I think is the media coverage, and I think it's important to have another voice. And while the mainstream media will have its targets, I think it's important to actually stand up for other people's views. Again I think it was Bill Hicks who said the most ridiculous thing to do when you have someone from the KKK on a talk show is to say 'shut up' and not let them talk, because you do have to know your enemy. To me those addresses just represent a place where you can get information, and if someone thinks we're full of shit for it that's fine by me, that's okay."

So is there still an audience for intelligent music in the baseball-capped, cover-song-obsessive, rucksack-wearing generation? Ishmael reckons there's room for everything.

"I used to be a fan, for my sins, of The Mission and — all due respect to Wayne Hussey — in terms of lyrics they were garbage, they made no sense, there was no narrative, no themes, it was purely atmospheric and went with the music. To me, Limp Bizkit — the music is very belligerent, but obviously these people are quite media business-savvy and they know what they want to do. They understand if you make something a bit more interesting or challenging then people might not be interested.

"It'd be nice to think that just because you got something with a little thought in it you weren't precluded from the playlists. The thing is though, if you don't sell you don't make it in a lot of these sorts of industries — and that's not an intelligent thought, so there's no reason why intelligent bands should flourish!"

A huge lover of Deep Elm Records artists, Fugazi, Quicksand and emo-tinged hardcore, Ishmael faces Liberty 37's future with a justified confidence, as he concludes: "We never really felt truly accepted, we don't attract a fashionable audience, we tend to attract young teenage boys interested in guitar pedals and your older rocker. It's a strange brew, but I think there's something for everyone if they listen.

"We don't have the things that tend to approach mainstream appeal — and while I could say I couldn't care less, it would be good if we got a broader appeal. I have my fingers crossed and I am considering collagen implants, plucking my nose and all the rest of it, just so I look good in photos!"

Thing is mate, there's no need, the music says much, much more! **15**



GOD MACHINE
CD Album
released 29 October 2001

MTY336



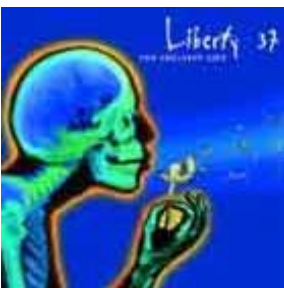
REVOLUTION
CD Single
released 21 February 2000
Revolution
When We Say (XFM Acoustic Session)
eCD with videos for When We Say and Oh River

BBQ343CD



WHEN WE SAY
CD Single
released 20 September 1999
When We Say
Pig
Some Messages

BBQ339CD



THE GREATEST GIFT
CD Album
released 5 July 1999

BBQCD210



OH RIVER
CD Single EP
released 10 May 1999
Oh River
Long Snake Moan
Hole In The Water

BBQ336



STUFFED EP
CD Single
Stuffed
Letter From 10 Years Ago
I.V.Buddy

BBQ323CD



NO BEAUTY
CD Single EP
No Beauty
Badger Song
Francie
Take It Like A Man

ORGAN041

Liberty 37

Press Pack

DISCOGRAPHY

REVIEWS

RADIO PLAYS

VENUE: DUBLIN CASTLE, LONDON

KKKK

Welsh emo stars make glorious return

Liberty 37 disappoint no-one. Their new album, the four K-rated 'God Machine' is a wonderfully moving post-hardcore effort, and tracks like 'Cover My Eyes' translate beautifully to the stage. Vocalist Ishmael closes his eyes and shakes his head like all the world's problems are on his shoulders, while guitarist Tim switches from sombre sounds to crushing riffs with ease. Tunes off their debut album, 'The Greatest Gift', gel perfectly with the new material, but it's also clear just how much the band have improved, particularly as song writers.

It's a cliché, but if either of tonight's bands were American...etc. Geographical handicaps aside, they both deserve to be huge. Make it happen.

BRETT CALLWOOD

from Kerrang

November 3, 2001



VENUE: THE UNDERWORLD, LONDON

Thursday 27th November 2001

Ishmael Lewis should have millions of people worldwide worshipping at their feet; Ishmael Lewis should be commanding the stages of stadiums, not the musty squalor of London's Underworld on a bitterly cold Thursday night. Here is a voice that is so packed full of emotion it defies logic. Ishmael Lewis is another Bono in the making, and he'd most definitely win hands down in a fight with the likes of Aaron Lewis. The diminutive Welshman leads Liberty 37 through a set with such passion, while hurling himself around the stage as if he's become possessed by the words and music the band are producing. Older songs 'stuffed' and 'revolution' are mixed in with the gems that make up the band's momentous second release 'God Machine'. And as the band pound

through the epic 'Stanislaw', and the off-kilter rhythms of 'Broadside', it's impossible not to be swept along by the incredible power that the quartet display. This is post-hardcore mixed up with brilliant, vivid pop sensibilities, exquisitely executed by superb musicians, and did we mention Ishmael Lewis' vocal talent? Easily the most underrated frontman alive, it's a crime that this man with such obvious charisma and writing talents shouldn't be a spokesman for a generation. It's time for a revolution.

Rock Sound

December 2001

LIVE REVIEWS