

IRT: You were asked to join the band Liquid Idiot when you showed up with your marimba to one of their shows. What do you remember about that night?

Dennis Young: It was a crazy, frenzied night of music. Everyone was playing percussion and banging on something to make noise. It was held at the Old Observatory on the Rutgers campus in New Brunswick. I saw the poster (Liquid Liquid bassist) Richard McGuire made up for this and told him I had a marimba, so he invited me down. We were both in the same music class at Rutgers and this is how we wound up meeting.

IRT: After you joined Liquid Idiot, how did Liquid Liquid get its start?

DY: Liquid Liquid started when the three guys in Liquid Idiot decided to record a demo and asked me to add a few percussion parts. After that, they asked me to play a show in the city with them where they changed the name to Liquid Liquid.

IRT: What stands out in your mind about the early days of Liquid Liquid? What were some of your favorite clubs to play in with the band? Any stories come to mind when you think back to playing gigs at The Roxy, The Funhouse, Danceteria or CBGB?

DY: Those were amazing times for clubs in the city. There was a certain groove and creativity in the air at that time and it was apparent in our music. I loved playing at Danceteria and the shows with Konk at the Peppermint Lounge stand out. The Fun House show was also quite an experience. It was back when "Cavern" was becoming the classic dance song it is today and we all felt like big stars for one night. Another gig I remember was this one show that was promoted by Rick Rubin back when he was still at college student at NYU. It was at the Diplomat Hotel in 1982 with the Treacherous 3 and that old punk band Heart Attack. Rick was a fan at the time and would always drop by 99 Records to hear what was new on the label.

IRT: Did you ever play out on Long Island?

DY: We did play once on Long Island, opening for the Talking Heads in Hempstead back in 1982.

IRT: What was your favorite club to play, personally?

DY: Danceteria was always special to play due to its atmosphere and always interesting audiences. The late Ruth Pulsky, who was the booking agent there, was always great to us. We were shocked to hear of her tragic passing after the club closed down.

IRT: What were some of your favorite groups that came out of that New York scene back in the early 80's? And what was it about that time that inspired such a unique sound?

DY: I would say ESG, Konk, Bush Tetras, Delta 5, Alan Vega, Glenn Branca and Pulsallama. We were friends with the folks from Konk and Pulsallama. Pulsallama was a 13-piece, all-female band with one of the singers being actress Ann Magnuson. We were also into a guy by the name of Zev who played homemade metal instruments. In NYC especially, I believe it was the influence of African and reggae music that inspired bands like ourselves and others to create more groove-oriented music.

IRT: How about the rest of the scene in NYC during the early 80's. Did you guys ever play gallery shows or chill with any of the players in the vibrant downtown art scene, guys like Mapleshorpe, Basquiat or Warhol?

DY: Only Richard McGuire really played a role in that scene from the band. He did all of the amazing artwork for Liquid Liquid, including the album covers and posters. He still today is very creative in the animation and art world.

IRT: "Cavern" was sampled for Grandmaster Flash's "White Lines". I know there was a long legal battle between your label 99 Records and Sugarhill over this. How did you feel when you initially heard "White Lines"? Were you into the early hip-hop movement at that time? If so, did Liquid Liquid ever collabo-

rate on stage with the Furious Five or any other hip-hop acts beyond the bill you shared with the Treacherous 3?

DY: At first we were upset about the whole thing, but in time it got better. We never targeted our music for the early hip-hop movement...it found us. Also, we never collaborated live with any of the early hip-hop artists, but there were some great "White Lines"/"Cavern" being created at the time. I will always remember the one they always played on 92 KTU at the time with the legendary DJ Paco.

IRT: In general, are you inspired by any of the new music you hear these days?

DY: Not really. I am always busy working on my own music so I don't find much time to listen to a lot of new bands. I did play with a band called Skeletonbreath a few months back and they were great. Also, I have been into a lot of roots/folk music of late, stuff from guys like Richard Thompson and Nick Drake, which has inspired my new music.

IRT: How has the works of Drake and Thompson inspired the stuff you are doing now?

DY: I have always managed to change styles with each new record I do. This one is rather dark, rustic at times, with a lot of emotion and sadness. I always wanted to make a record with songs based on my acoustic guitar and vocals. As the recording progressed though, I ended up having an additional 13 musicians help to add to the songs. A special thanks goes out to the guys at Firedog Studios, Tom Destefano and Kevin Booth, for making it a comfortable atmosphere to create and lending me their musical talents.

IRT: We know you have been looking for a label to put out your new solo album, Shadow. Any luck yet?

DY: Not yet, but I am in talks with a few labels so we will see what happens in the next few months. Otherwise I'll just release it myself. I have a few songs posted on my website and on my MySpace for anyone who wants to hear them. Everyone who I have played the album for enjoys the songs and is really surprised with the different musical direction I have taken on this recording.

IRT: How about the Liquid Liquid catalog. Your old records are very hard to find. Even the Grand Royal/Mo' Wax comp that was put out a few years back is out of print and going for mega bucks online. Any plans on reissuing any of the older stuff on one of the many labels who have been re-releasing lost treasures, like Soul Jazz or Water?

DY: We are working on it and hopefully before the end of the year the music will be available again.

IRT: What's the story with the Liquid Liquid comeback. A lot of fans have been hungry for some new material after hearing your re-working of "Bellhead" on the second DFA compilation. Is anything in the works?

DY: The reunion is over. I don't see any plans in the future to play again. However, we did go into the studio in late 2003 to record with the DFA, but we're not sure when this music will be mixed for release. The studio version of "Bellhead" was from those recording sessions.

IRT: What does the DFA stuff sound like, and how'd you like working in the studio with Tim Goldsworthy and James Murphy?

DY: The songs recorded for DFA had a tremendous amount of energy and power. It was the peak of the 2003 version of Liquid Liquid and we sounded in top form. I don't remember the band being so strong and powerful like we were at that particular point in time. It was really great having the opportunity to record with Tim and James. They are the best in the business and really down-to-earth guys. They have a very good musical ear to what works and what doesn't work.

DIPLOMAT
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TREACHEROUS 3
HEART ATTACK
FRIDAY, MARCH 26
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CRYSTAL BALLROOM
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Doors Open 10 PM
Admission \$10
Advance Tickets \$5 (Reservations)
99 MacDougal St.

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SUN. AUG 9 2:00
MAIN EVENT
KONK
VS.
LIQUID LIQUID
"PIG IRON" DAWSON
"BLURRFACE" HARTLEY

Vintage concert posters from the Dennis Young collection:
Left, At the Diplomat Hotel
Right, At Tompkins Square Park