

NOTHING COMPARES 2 UTENSILS

● Couldn't Ikea less about most modern chart fodder? **KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** could be just the thing for that sink-ing feeling. **SIMON WILLIAMS** believes success could be just a dish away. **KOD's** image: **PETER WALSH**

Midnight in Amsterdam the numbingly cold, tediously rainlashed city of Bohemian dreams, and Kitchens Of Distinction are giving a local radio reporter what is commonly referred to as "a bloody hard time".

Teetering on the brink of his seat, waving a microphone dangerously close to the beamingly disinterested faces of singer Patrick and guitarist Julian, this particular DJ isn't just hung—he's being drawn and quartered into the bargain.

"We started two-and-a-half thousand years ago as Pyramids Of Distinction, when Cleopatra had all that bother with Anthony," recalls Julian helpfully.

"This has nothing to do with fish and chips in England?" asks our Dutch interrogator. (Great question, must remember to use it...)

"We don't eat fish, fish sucks," comments Patrick magnanimously.

"Erm... so tell us about your smashing CD, 'Love Is Hell'," probes the exasperated local.

"Well," sighs Julian, "there's this programme in England called



For canal, it's KOD!



Challenge Anneka, where they ask Anneka to perform haemorrhoid operations and all things like that. And what happened was, they challenged Anneka to record an album with Kitchens Of Distinction in two weeks and the whole thing was done on this television programme. But it all backfired because basically she knows nothing about producing albums...

AFTER ONE week on the Continental circuit, Kitchens Of Distinction are feeling the strain. Drummer Dan is mildly delirious. Julian is wildly depressed. They're beginning to lie a lot, nonchalantly reeling off total fabrications with the devil-may-care air of people who are fed up to the back palate with vegetarian pizzas.

Sweden is already just another scrambled memory, a rapidly receding, fast forward blur of outrageously expensive beers, splendid saunas, discos playing Abba and a neurotic population. Not forgetting "a crazy promoter woman who was 17 sandwiches short of a picnic".

"But all the Scandinavians like *The Moomins* though," informs Dan with a manic glint in his eye. "So that's good, I've got something in common with them."

Moomins and Kitchens both, it seems, judging by the Swedes' reportedly crazed response to the band's fiery, flushed live performances, which in turn are promotional vehicles for last year's frothingly received 'Love Is Hell' LP and their recent 'Elephantine' EP. A Single Of The Week in your caring, daring *NME* (the Kitchens' third such award) 'Elephantine' is watertight evidence of the trio's cataclysmic capabilities, a four-track offering which spans breathtaking areas of soundscape with frightening brevity and delicious brutality.

The title track erupts from mild-mannered desperation into spittle-strewn frenzy, summing up a weekend in Patrick's life when he witnessed pointless examples of urban aggression and viewed a documentary which followed a family of thirsting elephants until the baby died and its mother, instead of continuing her desperate search for water, simply decided to stay and die with her offspring.

"I'd seen someone get stabbed in Vauxhall, someone smash up a car in Brixton, and then these

inadequate animals performing acts of love in Kenya. I thought, God that's lovely, wouldn't that be a fine thing, to be an elephant?"

Then there's the pulverising, pained pop of '1001st Fault', the AR Kane-coated shimmers of 'Anvil Dub', and the glacial growl of 'Margaret's Injection', which deals with "giving Thatcher a big dose of opium so that she slides off quite nicely".

But wouldn't you rather nail her down on a motorway and rip out her entrails with a fishhook, Patrick?

"I'd like to, but we're the pathetic Kitchens, aren't we? So we'd just give her a mild OD."

With its unexpected angles, blinding realisation of three vivid imaginations and scant regard for 'indie' rules, the 'Elephantine' EP magnificently encapsulates all that is intrinsically right about Kitchens Of Distinction. It also confirms their position as one of the most idiosyncratic and intriguing bands in Britain today.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE vast majority of Britain is yet to be convinced of the Kitchens' considerable attributes. Their 'Third Time We Opened The Capsule' 45 was voted seventh finest single of 1989 by *NME* writers, and One Little Indian records got more mail for them than anyone else on the label—including The Sugarcubes. But in a graffiti-splattered dressing room in Amsterdam, British acceptance seems infinitely further than a choppy cross-Channel ferry ride away.

'Y'see, Kitchens Of Distinction display a fascinating tendency to put off more punters than they attract. Incredibly, their moniker remains a burden of wooden cross-like proportions, much to Patrick's puzzlement: "It's just so inoffensive and non-attitude. It's like calling yourself The Fall ten years ago, it's just crap!"

Even more unbelievable in these supposedly liberated, educated times, is the number of would-be followers discouraged by Patrick's homosexuality and his seemingly insatiable desire to comment upon it on stage and in print.

"People come up to me and say, 'Why did you say that? Why do you bother? Shut up or no one will buy your records!'"

Nor is it just the audiences who take irrational offence—contemporaries sharing the same bill aren't adverse to the odd biting homophobic remark. The Tin Machine, however, didn't indulge, which is hardly surprising considering that when the Kitchens supported Bowie's bunch last year, they were told to leave the venue while the headliners soundchecked.

"It was the funniest thing in the whole world," gurgles Patrick, "because it was such a pile of shit, absolute crap! The Tin Machine were so bad that it made my year,

really. But we got paid 50 quid for playing to a load of people with their fingers in their ears, and that depressed the hell out of me, because I know they're wrong!"

While on one hand the Kitchens are considered noise extremists, Julian's scrawls being too painful for pop-smothered ears, on the other the trio are seen as too sensitive, too polite, never reckless enough to satisfy sound-savaged sorts. They're falling between two stools of thought and struggling to appease either of them.

"It's just ridiculous!" snaps Patrick. "I'm not interested in people who think like that. It's what I want, it's what I like. Even 'Holiday In The Sun' had a quiet bit in it, didn't it? Just for a second? Most people who are classed in the same bracket as us run along on one level. Except for the Pixies who just drop their fourth notes, telling you where to hit your head. I like them . . ."

Most bands classed in the same bracket as the Kitchens also flaunt an aura of mystery, whether it be deliberate arrogance, the dismissive onstage demeanour perfected by the Mary Chain and imitated by dozens, or the nerve-racked reticence of crowd-shy indie bands, non-communication adds a threatening edge which appeals to the thrill-seeking punter.

The Kitchens are the antithesis of this, Patrick bubbling between songs, while his colleagues don't even bother to look the part. Such normality is in itself an extreme stance in a disturbingly fashion-conscious field.

"It's not contrived, that's the problem with us, there is no 'attitude'," admits Patrick, glaring at my attire. "If you're in an indie band you have a leather jacket with a couple of badges on it, a tie-dyed shirt, a short haircut and a girlfriend. Or you're the girl who sings in the band and you've got blonde hair. If you conform to that image you're going to sell records."

Dan frowns: "People who are turned off the Kitchens either because we've got a silly name or because he's a faggot or because we don't wear dark glasses, I don't think we'd really want to have them as fans anyway. That's not meant to sound bitchy, but . . ."

"It doesn't matter a toss," decides a grinning Patrick.

"Look at Van Gogh, right," rants Julian. "Bums on seats now he is, he's hot property. And he never sold one record when he was alive, not one bloody record (*S'funny, I thought he was a painter - Ed*). After he dies, it's all Top Ten, mate. The Velvet Underground weren't that successful either when they were around, and now they're a cult band, and that's probably what we're gonna be."

"Shit, look we're here in

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K.O.D.

FROM PAGE 19

Amsterdam," gushes Patrick, indicating the graffiti-ravaged surroundings with a grand sweeping gesture. "We're being paid to play here, how can we complain? My only regret would be if we turned out to be one of those bands that was big in Austria and nowhere else in the world. THAT would depress me."

SUNDAY IS a rest day before the trek to France, before 18 consecutive dates around Switzerland, Germany and the aforementioned Austria. Dan has disappeared. Julian's hiding in the hotel. But Patrick's optimism remains undiminished in a dodgy downtown bar as he cheerfully reels off another list of anecdotal injustices and gig guide nightmares.

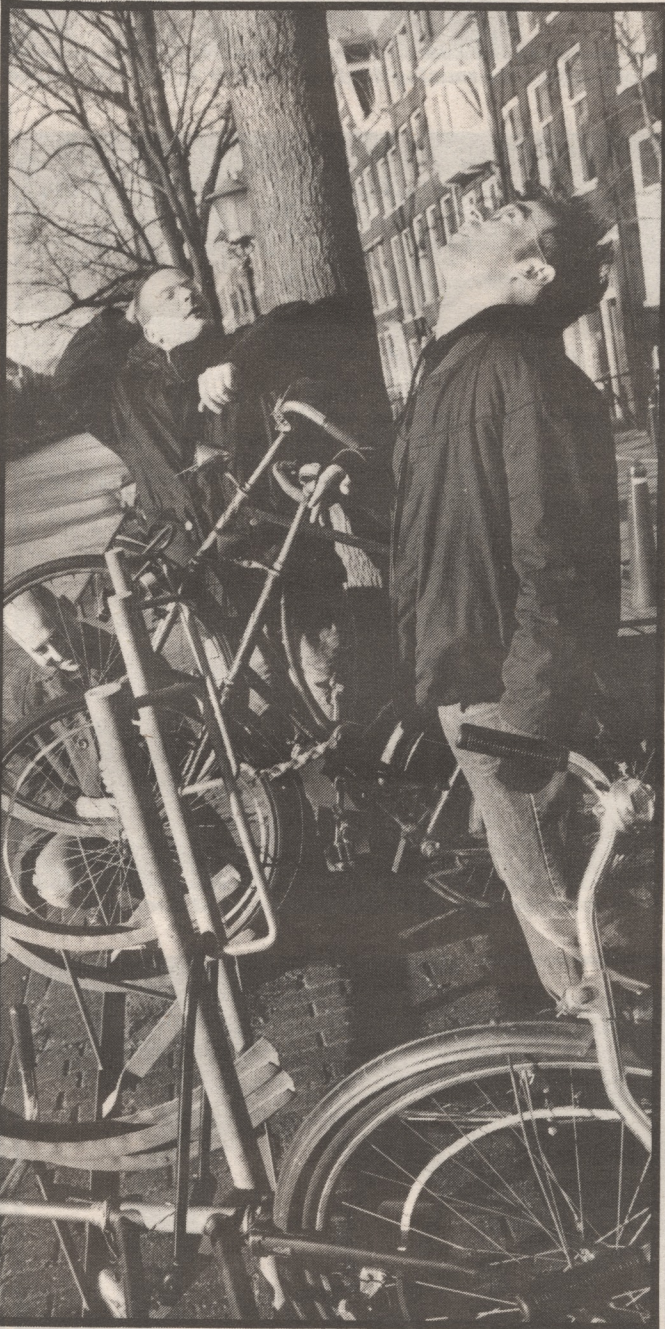
How they once played at The Timebox in front of six people; how they endured Hammersmith Clarendon, which didn't even have a lightbulb in the dressing room; how they're never going to play Fulham Greyhound ever again because they don't want to be the next Chelsea or UK Subs; how they can't get a Peel session ("Maybe he doesn't want to say 'Kitchens Of Distinction' four

times in one night!"); and how record company interest peaked with an A&R chap from CBS America flying over to see the band live and deciding that the Kitchens "need a rhythm guitarist, man."

In the midst of all these tales, one appreciates just why Kitchens Of Distinction remain unperturbed by their ridiculously minor status. Always look on the bright side, because things have been far worse in the past. Although there is one thing that Patrick wants more than anything else at this particular moment in time. A publishing deal.

"Once we've got that we're going to sell 'Time To Groan' to Frank Sinatra," beams Patrick. "Can you imagine Frank singing that? Work out the strings, work out the sax break in the middle, change the words and make them nice and smoochy... it'll be ing brilliant! That's our plan for the year, to get Frank to do that, to help him back. Liza's done it, Frank can do it. Liza needs the Pet Shop Boys, Frank needs the Kitchens. We can help him..."

Kitchens Of Distinction want to be liked by everyone. Especially The Queen Mother's colostomy bag. Dive in...



So that's where they put it. K.O.D. find the rest of their story nailed to a lamp-post in Amsterdam...

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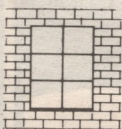
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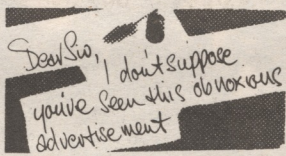
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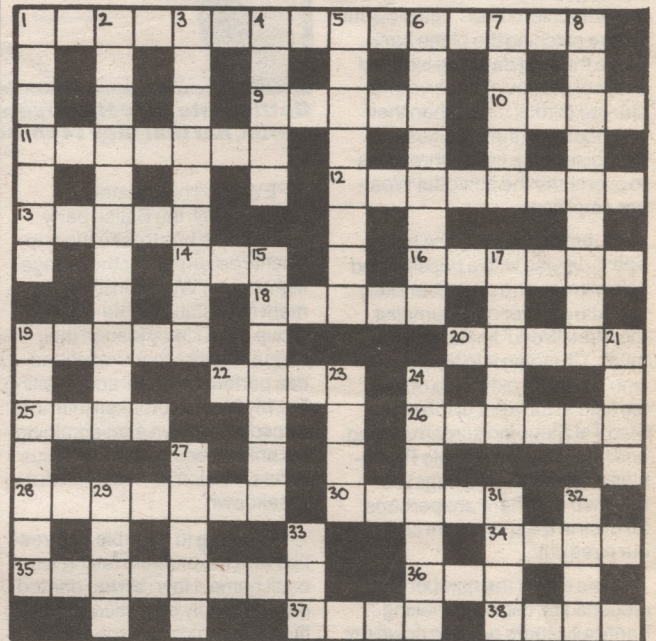
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Let's have some 'quiet please' for a new hit (5-3-7)
- 9 (See 15 down)
- 11 + 10A One of Simple Minds' first dates now becomes the first date for Ride (7-4)
- 12 + 23D Undoubtedly the most common title for an album (8-4)
- 13 (See 33 down)
- 14 Darryl McDaniels as he is better known (1-1-1)
- 16 + 22A He met the Jungle Brothers for the 1988 rap number 'I'll House You' (6-4)
- 18 (See 27 down)
- 19 Oscar for an old rocker and a blonde bombshell? (5)
- 20 — Johnson, formed the pub-rock R&B band Dr Feelgood (5)

- 22 (See 16 across)
- 25 'The Power Of...'; their own fatty substance analysed last year on Alternative Tentacles (4)
- 26 (See 7 down)
- 28 Would he badly run a DIY set-up? (3-4)
- 30 Heavens above, Lloyd Cole has got no blue ones! (5)
- 34 Owen —, who had a hit in 1986, with 'My Favourite Waste Of Time' (4)
- 35 + 21D Only drop gear untidily for a USA Country music programme (5-3-4)
- 36 'And That's No —' Heaven 17 single (3)
- 37 German singer found in the Rhine, naturally (4)
- 38 + 31D Punk band whose main constituent was that of Poly Styrene (1-3-4)



CLUES DOWN

- 1 Alice Cooper record? Strangely delete about a hundred (7)
- 2 A Snadragon with the same name as a doleful American singer/songwriter (5-6)
- 3 Sam Cooke classic. Personally I'd say it was his delivery (3-4-2)
- 4 Hum an old hit from 1986. I've given you the answer, in case you think the clue is hard (5)
- 5 (See 24 down)
- 6 Reggae artist who produced The Clash's 'Complete Control' (3-5)
- 7 + 26A "You listen to the spirits far behind, those things you hear are too much for your mind", Number Two in 1967 (5-2-4)
- 8 Real licks, almost, played by an old Bowie guitarist (4-5)

- 15 + 9A Irish singer/songwriter with a political stance, he formed the folk band Planxty (7-5)
- 17 Jimmy —, he charted in 1970 with Cat Stevens' 'Wild World' (5)
- 19 (See 24 down)
- 21 (See 35 across)
- 23 (See 12 across)
- 24 + 5D + 19D She's moving without speed and comes to a dead stop as the Telescopes set their sights (2-3-1-4-4-7)
- 27 + 18A As a kid Paul McCartney saw him on tour in 1958, and now owns his song catalogue (5-5)
- 29 Damned tidy by a third! (4)
- 31 (See 38 across)
- 32 1987 hit which was a UK hit in Los Angeles? (4)
- 33 + 13A His TV writing credits include *Happy Families* (3-5)



The Telescopes: title of the year, band of... ooh, the week

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 + 21D + 30D Bikini Girls With Machine Guns, 9 Rollin' Dany, 11 + 10A Lost Again, 14 + 20D Wet Dream, 17 Dafn, 20 Davy, 22 Art, 23 Guitar Man, 25 + 18A Blue Note, 26 Ace, 27 + 32D Rhythm King, 30 Gluck, 33 Shaun Ryder, 36 Nolan, 37 Nick, 38 Helen.
DOWN: 1 Birdland, 2 Kill Surf City, 3 Ian Brown, 4 I Can Do It, 5 + 13A Lay Down Sally, 6 + 24D What's That Noise? 7 That Lady, 8 + 25D Andy Bell, 16 Cameo, 19 + 12A On My Radio, 23 + 28A Girls On Film, 29 Lyle, 31 Ugly, 34 ABC, 35 + 15A Run DMC.