

STORM

then that's what it is. Which is really refreshing.

"In England I think we're seen as a bit of an anomaly."
What, a cult band?
"No, a c—band."

KITCHENS OF Distinction are essentially a guitar band. They go about their business with guitars. They make stunning guitar music. And they've been making it for nigh on four years now, backed by the colourful and wily One Little Indian label, earning themselves Single Of The Week round here pretty much every time they put one out, and doing quite nicely in end-of-year writers' charts too.

Real people like them, too. "At Christmas, a fan sent us the remains of their Christmas dinner," recounts Patrick, with a measure of embarrassment, "a potato, some stuffing, and a mince pie."

Why?
"Cos he loves us! I don't know why."

And are you now starting to lose your grip on reality?

"I don't think we ever had one. We just create our own daily reality."

The Kitchens are in New York for the first time, because last August, A&M America heard their just-completed second album and bought it on the spot.

"It's going all by itself!" is how the band describe their current ascension, as if they are powerless to stop it. Actually, gift-wrapped and escorted by A&M for this short promo tour of the US, the Kitchens' destiny is pretty much out of their hands. All they can do is be at the radio station on time, and play their funky music whenever placed on a stage. The rest is somebody else's business. Three weeks ago they got a manager. That's how serious it is. But do they actually want to get bigger? "Yeah. But we're not in any great rush."

"We've been out on the West Coast where everything's mellow and laid-back," says Julian, when I ask for his first impressions of NYC. "It's a lot more pushy here. You can sense it almost immediately. Everyone's f—ed up. It's cold as well. And full of Americans."

"AND THANKS to A&M—for treating us like the rock stars we're not," grumbles Dan into the mic, between songs at CBGB's. This, I think, sums up the Kitchens rather neatly—they're not much

like corporate-trousered rock stars, but they're hardly the Manic Street Preachers attempting to bring down the system from within either. The Kitchens are too old for that.

"Yeah. I don't think anything could faze us any more," sighs world-weary Patrick, already on to his second career, being a qualified doctor.

"Apart from a few more beers," deadpans Dan, who hasn't got any hair at all, and pretends to be unimpressed even by the supremely impressive.

Speaking of which, the ancient trio make light work of the legendary CBGB's. Not since I saw Talking Heads doing Yardbirds covers here in 1976 (*This is Earth CBGB's?—Ed*) have I enjoyed myself so much watching guitars being played.

CBGB's is all at once an intrinsically 'Noo York' place and a thousand light-years away from the push'n shove of this most overbearing of cities. From the front, it looks like a textured wall that time forgot—once inside, you could be in the corridor of a completely wooden train. It's only the knowledge that Television, Patti Smith, Blondie and The Ramones used the place as their Bull & Gate in the olden days that flushes you with a tingly sense of excitement when you find out that the toilet is a damp patch on the floor.

Still, the door policy makes up for it—they let you in if your name is quite similar to one that's on the guest list. I got in as 'Alan'.

It's a real gig but it isn't. The crowd really get off on the Kitchens' distinctly '80s sound, whooping like only Americans can, and calling out for all the correct songs—and then it dawns on you. How come they're familiar with album tracks from an album that isn't released here yet? Easy. Two hundred out of the 300 'punters' are record company guests.

"They're all music fans... there's very little spiel..." remark the band, in defence of A&M America. It's only natural for a newly-signed group to see their bloated, sap-sucking US record company as exceptional, spiritually different from all the others—but I'll take their heartfelt claims with a line of salt, thanks.

It's great to be instantly famous—and that's how A&M make them feel—but let us not forget what the company's really interested in.



Julian: playing 12-breakfast-bar blues?

Kitchen units—and the shifting of said units.

"I'm not sure I'd buy a record by a band called Kitchens Of Distinction!" Patrick confesses.

Julian: "I wouldn't either! Bloody Hell! Not with those covers!"

Dan: "I'd tape them off my mates."

Julian: "I'd like to think we can get successful being the way we

are, a gay man, a Welsh man and a Jewish man with no f—ing bullshit or pretensions—our music is more interesting than other bands and we're interesting people as well. They're all full of shit, totally shallow and got no brain!"

It must be said that the Brooklyn Beer is talking here—it's a particularly dark and mysterious brew. But it's reassuring to hear

the usually humble and pathetic Kitchens sing their own praises so. They readily damn the 'Love Is Hell' LP nowadays, and reckon 'Strange Free World' is their first record. Produced by the ever-dependable Hugh Jones, it features—for the first time ever—live drums by Dan.

"The engineer wouldn't even let me use real cymbals on 'Love Is Hell!'" he shouts, whose input on that LP was, erm, streamlined by the use of computerised rhythms and triggered samples. Tellingly enough, the only track on there with real drumming was the acknowledged classic 'The Third Time We Opened The Capsule', a song which literally soars above the rest and spits. Hugh Jones, though, is pure 'old school', and he had the patience and faith to produce the band *au naturel*. ("It's actually got less guitars on it, but we recorded them better. Less guitars but more—which is quite a Zen thing really!") The results are fabulous, as already hinted at by the current 45 'Drive That Fast', a grippingly gentle, coolly frantic, scarily mellow passage that fittingly knocks 'em over at CBGB's.

AT THE risk of tarring the Kitchens with a 'retro' brush, there

is something very 1982 about them. Being top-line Bunnymen/Joy Division/Cocteau's fans to a man, the band aren't in the least bit worried by this accusation.

Dan: "Ooh, 1982, good year. Damned, Ramones—I always get into things too late!" Dan and Julian had left college and were busking round Europe at the time—bongos and guitar, covers of 'Like A Hurricane', you get the picture.

Julian: "Sometimes we'd get stoned and play avant garde music. I'll never forget that night in Seville..."

Patrick is equally reflective about 1982: "It was my year of thinking. I was thinking, 'What am I doing in this medical school, having a shit time?', and I was with my first and last girlfriend. It was a big year—a year of decisions. In fact, I made a major decision in '84, and followed it through in '86. As you can see, there's no big rush!"

Kitchens Of Distinction are in the potentially painful process of arriving; they're on a collision course with 1991, and, despite all the fashion points stacked against them, the no-great-rush policy seems ready to pay off.

If you can stand the heat, get into the Kitchens.



ocean colour scene
on tour march 1991:
friday 1st
london • the venue
saturday 2nd
cambridge • the junction
tuesday 5th
coventry • tic toc
wednesday 6th
newcastle • polytechnic
thursday 7th
edinburgh • the venue
friday 8th
aberdeen • caesars palace
saturday 9th
greenock • toledo junction
sunday 10th
glasgow • the sub club
tuesday 12th
leeds • the warehouse
wednesday 13th
leicester • university
thursday 14th
birmingham • goldwyns
friday 15th
northampton • irish centre
saturday 16th
wendover • the reaction
monday 18th
hull • university
tuesday 19th
brighton • zap club
wednesday 20th
buckley • the tivoli gardens
friday 22nd
norwich • the waterfront
saturday 23rd
london • ica



on 7", 12", cassette & cd
• yesterday today
• another girl's name
• fly me • no one says
on !Phffft



Julian: 4...erm...eternal