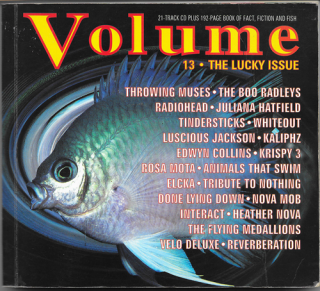


Volume

31-TRACK CD PLUS 192-PAGE BOOK OF FACT, FICTION AND FISH

13 • THE LUCKY ISSUE



THROWING MUSES • THE BOO RADLEYS
RADIOHEAD • JULIANA HATFIELD
TINDERSTICKS • WHITEDOUT
LUSCIOUS JACKSON • KALIPHZ
EDWYN COLLINS • KRISPY 3
ROSA MOTA • ANIMALS THAT SWIM
ELCKA • TRIBUTE TO NOTHING
DONE LYING DOWN • NOVA MOB
INTERACT • HEATHER NOVA
THE FLYING MEDALLIONS
VELO DELUXE • REVERBERATION

GAMES WE PLAY

New recording
Produced by Elcka
and Sam Wetmore
engineered Giles Hall
at Roundhouse and
Protocol, London

ELCKA

Harrold vocals
Marcus Sanford-
Casey guitar
Rhoades bass
Matt Barker keyboards
Baron Berry Drums

Feature Ian Gillies
Photos Jeff Davy

E LCKA

REALISE THAT this isn't going to be the usual rock interview when the father of one of the band picks me up from my South London home in his Mercedes and explains that he had a minor spot of bother on the way to my gaff. "I accidentally cut up this other driver when I overtook a bus," he explains. "So the geezer jumped out of his car with a hammer and caved my back window in!" ➤

Elcka
(clockwise,
from left):
Matt, Marcus,
Harrold,
Rhoades
and Baron





Elcka parade their quality glamour

not the usual rock band. They play a luxurious, opulent music, heavy on dramatics and flamboyance, a rich and textured string-laden sound, which nods as gracefully towards theatre and opera as it does *The Marquee*.

Elcka are five well-heeled, swaggering young things and they have a (tall) story to tell.

"We were brought together by a mysterious benefactor, a shadowy figure," explains singer Harrold, a silk handkerchief hanging loosely from his jacket pocket. "We can't



It's not the usual opening, but then Elcka are

really hardy matters: such flights of entertaining fiction are entirely



true to the spirit of their (capital A) Art. The dapper five-piece united via a shared love of theatre, dance

say who he is. He wants to remain anonymous. He talked to us about, ah, cultural necessities, then he hoted us up in this castle so that we could invent some music..."

Elcka's low-profile sven-gali may (or may not) be a mythical figure, but it



and what *The Sunday Times* terms 'The Culture' and decided to strike out into the world.

"I don't want to sound pretentious," says Harrold, without success, "but we're influenced by a lot more than just other bands. We've studied radical theatre, classical music, dance, art, literature..."

"But we're not all artists' sons who've grown up going 'Yah' around Belsize Park," Murray hastens to explain. "We all grew up in South London suburbia. We just share... a passion."

ELCKA ALSO appear to share a particularly traditionalist, if flamboyant, tailor, judging by the neatly cut suits and waistcoats they wear as we sit drinking a rather fine vintage red in a Greenwich wine bar. They invariably take to the stage in such garb. So what's with the threads?

"Well, we spent many years clad in jeans and T-shirts – rags really," reflects Rhoades, sagely. "But then

one day we shared a revelation. I mean, we don't spend a fortune. We buy our suits from Odam, then have them tailored – but we like to prove that you can look smart on the dole."

"It's all about the search for glamour," Harold explains. "That's the main thing our, um, mystery benefactor has shown us. The importance of grandness. I mean, Pulp are admirable, but they're mainly interested in the kitsch side of glamour, the laughable aspects. We're not. We're after quality glamour."

"And we're very aware," says a ruminative Matthew, "of the importance of entertaining people. So many artists, such as all of the grunge and shoegazing bands, forgot about entertainment. Well, we embrace the idea!"

SO HOW will Elcka, live, go about providing this multi-faceted stimulation? After all, standing on stage in a suit isn't necessarily any more interesting than doing the same in jeans and a plaid shirt.

"Oh, absolutely!" agrees Harold.

"It's all
about glamour
...the importance
of grandness.
We're after
quality glamour"

HAROLD

"We're aiming much higher. For example, much more interesting than selling out The Forum, or whatever, would be... we know this beautiful art deco hotel down in Devon. Why not sell 300 tickets and take a party down there for a weekend? We'd play a gig there, but there'd also be some film experience, some theatre experience..."

"Or why not have an Elcka concert in three acts?" enthuses Marcus. "With 14 scenes? And costume changes?"

Hold on there, boys. You're for-

getting that punk killed off such imaginative experimentation. Rick Wakeman has been a long time gone (thank fuck!).

"Well, punk killed off too much," states Matthew. "It had to happen to kill off that very weak, flowery vibe and let music explore darker forces, but that doesn't mean we should allow it to limit our imaginations."

Elcka are young enough to freely admit that they discovered David Bowie mainly through the many namechecks he received as Suede trod their glam route to fame two years ago – yet Bowie seems an obvious precursor to their theatrical, correctly egocentric music.

Can they imagine Elcka going as far as Bowie and making use of Ziggy/Aladdin Sane-type musical personae?

"Oh, completely!" agrees Harold. "I think that possibly if a band gets very successful, it has to use personae... it's not enough to simply stand there being yourself. Already we're aware that we step into character on stage..."

Elcka love dramatic contrivance, yet they're not cynical chancers or scam merchants. A genuine

through their erudite and articulate interview technique. They believe that these days of Blur and Pulp and Suede are good for Brit pop because they involve "an embracing of life". They also believe that song lyrics are deeply important.

"Yeah, because look at Oasis," grumbles Rhoades. "All those words about doing what you want and being able to fly. So many people have done it - it's really very safe and shallow."

"Without being pretentious again," says Harrold, "I hope our words are poetry more than lyrics. They're another way of taking what we do very seriously. I like Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Dylan Thomas, people who use their language as a craft. I'm just reading a biography of Baudelaire and in his youth he was fascinated by the idea of unity. Everybody in this group is very aware of spirituality."

"Yeah, we recently went to a monastery on Holy Island, off the Scottish coast," says Murray. "It was our benefactor's idea. It was a really strange but fascinating place..."



Cigars: always read the instructions first

THE PRECOCIOUS and precious and impossibly self-assured Elcka have a song on *Volume* called 'Games We Play' about "human culture and dark game show hosts" and a stunning soon-to-come single called 'Leather Lips' about old people going to Eastbourne to die. If you're searching for a band to be screamingly, hysterically, over-weeningly

and utterly laudably pretentious in music once more... well, here's your boys!

"It sounds awfully pompous," says Harrold, "but this band will succeed. We know that. It's just a question of time. We have to play the game right now, but in ten years' time we want to be releasing an album and starting a tour which is like nobody else has ever done before."

