



*Reprinted from Fond Affections Version 1.2, Indian Summer 1993*

## IDYLLS

**Fond Affexions:** This CD of yours, *Idylls*, was your first recorded piece, and I was very impressed. As far as how it came out... Were you happy with it? Did it come out as you intended? **Suzanne Perry:** After working on it as long as we did, you really don't want to hear it anymore *(Laughter)*, so I think we stopped listening to it for a couple of months... then when we started listening to it again, it came out better than we thought it did. I mean, every time we finished a song, I thought, "God, what an awful song... Let's not use that one..." In retrospect, after that's worn off, we like it. I like it better now. **Ryan Lum:** After the CD came out (a couple months later ahead), I started liking it more. Even when I finished mixing it, it pretty much came out like I wanted it to, it wasn't a disaster or anything. **Suzanne Perry:** We didn't have a DAT machine before, so we had to mix it all at once. **Fond Affexions:** You mixed it all and then bumped it to DAT? **Ryan Lum:** No, no... over about three weeks we mixed it down... I guess that's a long time. I was kinda nervous having it for three weeks! *(Laughter)* **Fond Affexions:** Did you do this here or at your studio? **Ryan Lum:** No I did it here in the home studio; I just rented a DAT machine.

## GENERALLY SPEAKING

**Fond Affexions:** I understand that you started recording music solo, and then later started adding vocals to it. Is that how it went, or did you always have a vocalist in mind? **Ryan Lum:** No, I just made music. It's been an important pursuit of mine over the past several (sic) years, but I never had any intention of pursuing music as a sort of career, on a "professional" level. I just always made music for myself. It made me happy. **Fond Affexions:** Just to play your tapes for your friends and such... **Ryan Lum:** Well, that's as far as it got. You know, the music business is so weird... inside. **Fond Affexions:** Well that's been my experience... **Ryan Lum:** So yeah, I'd been doing that (music) for years, until Suzanne came into the picture. **Suzanne Perry:** Since he waited so long, I think his music and his talent developed so much... **Ryan Lum:** That's one difference, cos like most bands I know get together and they'll start making songs, right off the bat... Like us, I mean at least me, I had five plus years to mature in a songwriting and recording sense. I had a four-track back in 1986 and I got the eight-track in 1989, but I'd been doing music long before 1985. I've been playing the guitar for like 15 years. By the time Suzanne came along, the music had evolved. I'm not saying it's good, *(laughs)* just evolved. **Suzanne Perry:** I don't think he had vocals or vocal parts in his mind. Every time I get a song, it usually doesn't have vocals. In fact, all of them are hard to make vocals on top of, since he doesn't think about vocals when he's making them... so sometimes there's not a lot of obvious melodies left. **Fond Affexions:** how did you two meet? did you guys go to school together? **Ryan Lum:** We just met out here. I dunno... **Fond Affexions:** Kind of grew up in the same hood...? **Suzanne Perry:** We didn't meet in school though... **Ryan Lum:** The proximity effect, I guess... **Fond Affexions:** one of those parties... *(Laughter)* So how did you get onto the Projekt label? **Ryan Lum:** It was pretty simple, but not that easy. We sent out demo tapes... **Suzanne Perry:** We sent out three demo tapes. **Fond Affexions:** Why just three? **Suzanne Perry:** We didn't know where to send them. **Fond Affexions:** Did you try 4AD? **Suzanne Perry & Ryan Lum:** Yeah. **Suzanne Perry:** I don't think they even heard it, they get so many tapes. **Ryan Lum:** Who knows? **Suzanne Perry:** Since then I know they've heard our music... **Ryan Lum:** And they still haven't responded, so... **Fond Affexions:** I don't know what it is with that guy... **Ryan Lum:** He likes too many crappy American bands. **Suzanne Perry:** Well look at the new stuff. I mean, look at the new girl they've got... **Fond Affexions:** Heidi Berry? **Suzanne Perry:** Yeah... they've got that cactus on there... they want this American thing... really, really American. **Ryan Lum:** I don't think American bands are supposed to sound like us. If you sound like us, you're closer to like the Sundays, or other British bands. You have to be from there. If you're from America, you're supposed to sound American. **Suzanne Perry:** We're not trying to sound British... **Ryan Lum:** We do... Ivo didn't respond,

basically... **Suzanne Perry:** And we know he listened to it... **Ryan Lum:** ... and neither did Creation, but Sam wrote us back, and didn't say anything about signing us, but he wanted to hear more material, and after more time... **Suzanne Perry:** He asked us (sic) if we wanted to be on *Across this Grey Land #3*, and we sent him another song; then he asked us if we wanted our own album. It was over the course of six to eight months, from the time we sent him our first tape. **Fond Affexions:** So I guess you played and recorded initially to just satisfy yourselves, make tapes for friends, etc. I mean, you didn't play live. So you were just doing it to see what would happen...? **Suzanne Perry:** We didn't do too much though. We only did like five songs and we sent them off. I had never done that before. **Ryan Lum:** Well, I've never done that before, either! *(Laughter)* **Suzanne Perry:** We didn't write like 17 songs, just three... *(Laughter)* It was really weird. **Ryan Lum:** The first three songs we ever completely recorded. **Suzanne Perry:** We did it for fun, just to see what we'd come up with. What we came up with, we really liked. **Fond Affexions:** Do you find Projekt's rather limited distribution a plus or minus? I mean, do you like being on a cool "underground" label, or can you see yourselves "prostituting" yourselves, making a promotional video, etc. So does Projekt fit in with what you do, as far as promotionally, marketing-wise? **Ryan Lum:** It's not as limited a market as you might think. I mean, we both know it's kind of hard to find at stores, but it's there. I guess at what some would call "finer alternative stores".

## DRUGS

**Fond Affexions:** In Option, a couple of issues back, I saw this ad for "The 50th Anniversary of LSD" CD (the drug). Did you guys record a special "Lucy" song for it, or did you give them a song you already recorded... *(Laughter)* **Ryan Lum:** We gave them a song... It will be remixed for our new album... **Fond Affexions:** So it's a new song... **Ryan Lum:** Yeah. It's one of our new songs, a first glimpse of what we sounded like after *Idylls*. **Fond Affexions:** Well, I guess my next question is why did you do it? **Ryan Lum:** You got us. **Suzanne Perry:** Well, they didn't actually come out and ask us... **Fond Affexions:** Who is "they"...? **Suzanne Perry:** Kim Cascone of Silent Records. They asked Projekt if there's anyone on your label that would be interested in doing this, and I think that Sam and Kim talked about Love Spirals Downwards, and the LSD



## PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS:

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acronym, and he asked us... and we said "Yeah, we'll do it." I'll warn you, though, since you saw us in the ad, we did a little special interview thing for Option on psychedelics and music... **Fond Affexions:** you're right! I think it's going to be a two-part... **Ryan Lum:** my god... **Fond Affexions:** ... the next two issues! (*Wrong...—Editor*) So I guess I won't have to ask you about LSD, drugs, etc. **Suzanne Perry:** No, you can ask us if you want (*Laughter*) We didn't say that much! **Ryan Lum:** They were trying to get a definite angle on that story, get us to come out and say how we're big druggies. **Suzanne Perry:** They were putting drugs in our mouths... **Fond Affexions:** Oh really? (*Laughter*) So you guys don't bake every weekend, do you? **Suzanne Perry:** Well actually, and I told Option, I've never taken LSD, and from then on they weren't interested in what I had to say. And with like "LSD", we were "Love Spirals Upwards" and we decided to change it because it had a better ring, and it fit in better with the genre, which is cool. So we changed it to "LSD", and look at all the people who came and talked about it! (*Laughter*) **Fond Affexions:** Well, I've done LSD a lot, and after you've done it enough, you kind of don't need to do it anymore... **Ryan Lum:** It's a "go-nowhere" psychedelic... It doesn't have the shamanistic component the others do, I'll say that much about it. **Fond Affexions:** Ryan, as a philosophy major, you may be interested in talking to Mondo 2000 about maybe DMT or something like that... **Suzanne Perry:** He's already talked too much about it... **Fond Affexions:** Do you have any poisonous toads back here somewhere? (*Laughter*) **Suzanne Perry:** We had some mushrooms over there... We weren't sure what kind... His father removed them; I think he thought Muffy was going to eat some! (*Laughter*)

#### LYRICS

**Fond Affexions:** The only song on *Idylls* whose lyrics I understood, is the one in which you provide the lyric. **Suzanne Perry:** One, yeah. **Fond Affexions:** Is that the only one in English? **Suzanne Perry:** They're all different. I mean, some of them are in English, and they make some sense, and some are in English and they make no sense. And there are others that are in a "make-believe" Italian, and then there's kind of a "make-believe" Latin, but I don't know Latin or Italian. And then there's some French too... **Ryan Lum:** (*looks puzzled*) French...? **Suzanne Perry:** ...and some Indian too, make-believe Indian... **Ryan Lum:** There's no French words, they're just gibberish... (*Laughter*) Just nonsense French words that just sound nice. **Suzanne Perry:** So the key is what sounds nice... **Ryan Lum:** ...For the song in question. **Suzanne Perry:** Most of it doesn't make any sense. **Fond Affexions:** Well, the one song that did make sense in English, "Strir About the Stars", is a very pretty song. Did you write that? **Suzanne Perry:** Actually, the vocal parts, yeah. **Fond Affexions:** So are you going to pursue that a little further? I mean, that is probably my favorite song on the CD, not just because of the discernable lyric, but I thought it was a very pretty lyric. Are you going to do more writing like that, or are you more concerned in using your voice as an instrument? **Suzanne Perry:** I'd prefer to use it more as an instrument. I don't see myself as a writer or poet, and usually I'm very insecure about the things that I write... **Ryan Lum:** Plus we are not concerned with messages, or poetry... I mean, that's another art form entirely, and it doesn't necessarily belong in music. **Suzanne Perry:** And not that it has to be that way, but sometimes it can be kind of distracting. **Fond Affexions:** Well I know Brian Eno gathered quite a following for his older stuff; I mean he attracted a big cult of fans who were seeking the hidden meaning in songs like "The Paw-paw Negro Blowtorch" and stuff... **Ryan Lum:** We're not into standing on a soapbox... **Suzanne Perry:** ...preaching our views... **Ryan Lum:** Everyone's free to have their beliefs, and that has nothing to do with music. At least our music. **Suzanne Perry:** Some of the new stuff actually does have a little more meaning... **Ryan Lum:** (*Looking puzzled again*) Ohh? (*Laughter*) **Suzanne Perry:** Still, even if it does, I don't pronounce it well enough so that you can tell. I mean, "Drops, Rain and Sea" makes some sense... **Ryan Lum:** It does? **Suzanne Perry:** Well, not a lot... **Fond Affexions:** How does one write "make-believe" English? It would seem harder to do that than to put together something that made sense, to me. **Suzanne Perry:** For Me, it in-

creases your choices, because anything that sounds nice, fits in right away. So you don't have to worry about it. **Fond Affexions:** And then you obscure it with reverb, or something? **Ryan Lum:** Not really... **Fond Affexions:** Cos I couldn't hear any English, other than... **Ryan Lum:** There's reverb on her voice, but not to where it obscures the clarity of what she's saying. I don't drown her in a huge tank of reverb. **Suzanne Perry:** When I'm singing it, I'm not concerned with pronouncing it so you could understand it. I guess it's not meant to be understood. But there is more English in there. Some of the Italian words are just things that I have, and I know. And then I'll insert some words that kind of sound like an Italian word, that aren't really Italian. I mean, have you heard "Mediterranea"? **Ryan Lum:** The first song on *From Across This Grey Land #3*. **Fond Affexions:** Yeah. **Suzanne Perry:** We said, "That kind of sounds like an Italian song, a Mediterranean song..." **Fond Affexions:** And that's why you called it that? **Ryan Lum:** Yeah, pretty much. **Suzanne Perry:** And I just thought I'd use words that kind of sound Italian. **Fond Affexions:** I'll have to go back and listen to that. **Suzanne Perry:** And then the last song, "And the Wood Comes Into Leaf" is an anonymous poem... **Fond Affexions:** Is it like olde English? **Suzanne Perry:** Yeah. It's olde English or middle English, an anonymous poem done verbatim.

#### PLAYING LIVE

**Fond Affexions:** So you guys played live one time? **Suzanne Perry:** Once. **Ryan Lum:** We weren't even Love Spirals Downwards, it was something kind of hacked together. **Fond Affexions:** With "The Moonwash Symphony"? **Ryan Lum:** Yeah, we just got together with some friends. **Fond Affexions:** That's what the Moonwash Symphony is? **Ryan Lum:** Yeah. **Suzanne Perry:** We just did a few songs, opening for them. **Fond Affexions:** Did any of these make it onto the record? **Suzanne Perry:** "Forego". **Fond Affexions:** How did you do it? Did you use backing tape? **Ryan Lum:** Yeah. **Fond Affexions:** Was it a pain in the ass? **Ryan Lum:** Yeah, especially when you use these moron soundmen that don't do soundchecks. (*Laughter*) It really pissed me off. **Suzanne Perry:** I couldn't hear myself. **Ryan Lum:** You couldn't hear yourself, they didn't put any reverb on the vocals. **Suzanne Perry:** It's just such a hassle. **Fond Affexions:** Did you get off playing live? **Suzanne Perry:** That time we didn't; it was pretty hellish, actually. (*Laughter*) **Ryan Lum:** Three songs in a hellish situation, because of incompetent sound people.



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS:  
SCREEN: ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ  
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**Suzanne Perry:** It did whet our appetites, let's put it that way. **Fond Affexions:** So will you ever consider doing it again? Providing everything was as you wanted it? **Suzanne Perry:** I think it would be important to, yeah. Right now people are asking us, "Would you play live?" We kind of figure the amount of effort we put into it, we want to get out of it. Right now it would be hard; maybe if we had more time it would be worth it. I mean, I'm not against it. I think it would be fun. **Ryan Lum:** I wouldn't mind doing it. **Fond Affexions:** With a backing tape, or digital sequencer? **Ryan Lum:** I still have to think about it. **Fond Affexions:** Would you use additional musicians...? **Ryan Lum:** In addition to backing tape...? **Suzanne Perry:** We talked us playing live, with my sister singing... **Fond Affexions:** Not your sister again, not the sibling rivalry again... (laughter) **Suzanne Perry:** I know, I know. But we have people who could sing background vocals.

#### CLOSING

**Fond Affexions:** What are your thoughts on music today? **Suzanne Perry:** I don't know, I haven't thought about it too much. There's not... I mean, I don't have a lot of music to listen to. **Fond Affexions:** You listen to older stuff, you don't go out and buy the new stuff coming out? **Suzanne Perry:** I used to (buy new stuff). I don't anymore. A lot of our friends go out and buy the new stuff, like Suede, or what's that other band, you know... "Creep"? **Fond Affexions & Ryan Lum:** Radiohead? **Suzanne Perry:** We have friends that go out and get that, the new Frank Black, Heidi Berry... **Ryan Lum:** I wish I could get the new Slowdive. **Fond Affexions:** Yeah, but that's another story altogether. **Suzanne Perry:** Then you look at MTV... **Fond Affexions:** Do YOU look at MTV? **Suzanne Perry:** We watch it, but I think 90 percent of the time we're laughing... Like "What is this?" **Ryan Lum:** It's not a goal of ours to get played on MTV. **Suzanne Perry:** Honestly, we think a lot of stuff is just "Corporate" rock. Even... **Fond Affexions:** Even "Alternative" music is just another form of... **Ryan Lum:** If it's that big, if it's on MTV, you're on labels like Capitol, I mean that's corporate rock... **Suzanne Perry:** We're in the clouds as far as, "What's the new single from this band..." I worked for college radio when I got my bachelors, and it's all "Who Capitol signed," or whoever signed... **Ryan Lum:** Buzz, hype, a lot of pedantic stuff... **Fond Affexions:** So you don't think the state of popular music today is very good? **Suzanne Perry:** I don't think so. **Ryan Lum:** You're looking at the financial side of it, the corporate side of it. There's a lot of good music out there, it's just kind of hard to make that kind of music available to the general public without having to search, like with some of the Projekt stuff, and now 4AD stuff you can find anywhere. **Suzanne Perry:** But look at it, the quality has dropped... **Ryan Lum:** Yeah, it's a tradeoff. 4AD used to be hard to find; you'd pay \$25 for a CD, and now they're \$11.99 when they come out, but it's crap for the most part. Sorry Ivo. (laughter) **Suzanne Perry:** His Name is Alive is ok, though... **Ryan Lum:** Like most of the people that loved 4AD when it was new don't like it now. When you have Warner Brothers to answer to like 4AD does now, they want some figures, they want some money. Us little esoteric, atmospheric bands are not gonna turn a big profit as would a more accepted, kind of punk sound like Frank Black, or something like that. Something that sells is a lot easier. **Fond Affexions:** So you don't think it's a very healthy time for music. Do you see it changing at...

(Interruption as interviewer literally breaks arm of chair he's leaning on...)

**Fond Affexions:** Oh my God! (laughter) **Suzanne Perry:** Oh No! **Fond Affexions:** Uh, you can send me a bill... **Suzanne Perry:** It was probably on its' way out... **Fond Affexions:** I think it's just a weld anyways... **Ryan Lum:** These chairs. (Wistfully) I can remember back when I was a child... **Fond Affexions:** By the way, I have a cousin that does welding (laughter) **Ryan Lum:** Don't worry about it... (Photographer takes several photos for insurance purposes.) **Fond Affexions:** Finally, I must ask—what was your favorite period of music? **Ryan Lum:** I guess the mid-eighties, '84... **Suzanne Perry:** Mid to Late Eighties. A couple of them were more gothic, to me at least. **Fond Affexions:** You were into gothic?

**Suzanne Perry:** I wonder if that had to do with my being a teenager... **Fond Affexions:** Like the Christian Death sort of... **Suzanne Perry:** Not that hardcore! (laughter) **Fond Affexions:** Like Dead Can Dance, when they came out? **Suzanne Perry:** 4AD, basically... **Ryan Lum:** I remember discovering Cocteau Twins, when *Lore's Easy Tears* came out. I guess in like '86 or '87... and then going back and hearing *Victorland*... It was so fresh back then, and knowing that they were putting out this good stuff and 4AD was in its' "Golden Age", and everything was so magnificent. I started finding all the Harold Budd, Brian Eno stuff I liked, Dead Can Dance, Cocteaus... Before that I liked some of the Cure stuff, their first three or four albums. **Fond Affexions:** So I guess you guys are about 25, 26 years old? **Ryan Lum:** I just turned 26. **Suzanne Perry:** He just turned 26; I'm 22. **Fond Affexions:** (Shocked Expression) You're 22? And You're working on your Masters? **Suzanne Perry:** I just went fast. **Ryan Lum:** She's got like a 207 I.Q.... **Suzanne Perry:** No, I'm more in the average. I took an I.Q. test last year. **Fond Affexions:** It wasn't that test, like which shape doesn't belong here...? **Suzanne Perry:** I did well on the visual-spatials...

(Visual-spatials, indeed. The interviewer thanks the band for a gracious interview, and begins a more private discussion. *Lore Spirals Downwards* current release is entitled *Idylls*, and is available through mailorder via Projekt Records, or through "finer alternative outlets". A new CD is likely to be released in the spring of 1994.)

—R. Ruslic



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS:  
ALL PHOTOS: ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ

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