

Love Spirals Downwards

The following interview was done with Ryan of the Southern California ethereal band, Love Spirals Downwards in late September 1992. Suzanne, the singer, wasn't present during the interview because after she saw Ryan's comments they covered "most everything she would also cover." Love Spirals Downwards appeared on the infamous *From Across This Gray Land No. 3* and their debut album will be out in December '92 on Projekt as well. I can't wait, because I know this band will be one of the best in the country.

interview by Nathan Linscheid

What bands were you in before Love Spirals Downwards?

I was in several but none which you would have heard of. Love Spirals Downwards was the first band I had in which I really thought that the music was exciting and original sounding. I believe that all the different types of music that I have listened to throughout the years such as ethereal, ambient, East Indian Classical, psychedelic '60's, and tribal/percussive have been blended into our eclectic sound. Though, I'm not sure if you can hear all these things just from our two songs on *Gray Land 3*. Our CD/CS, "Idylls" will have a more all-inclusive representation of our sound. *You don't seem like the average Los Angeles, California band. What do you think of the gothic scene down there?*

Well, the last time I went to a gothic club in L.A. was in 1989. I hope this doesn't upset too many L.A. goths because I still have an affinity for that, but I believe that the whole gothic club scene here has grown lifeless; there's no new creative influx. Most bands I remember from 1989 sounded like they were still living in the early '80's. I remember myself and others leaving that whole scene for good in 1989 and headed for the then new 'Acid House' clubs such as the Alice In Wonderland themed Alice's House which had the life and energy that had been missing for so long in the goth scene. Colorful psychedelic lights, blacklight/day-glo rooms, and hypnotic trance inducing music were a welcome new treat for my bored senses and I met many wonderful people. Well that scene has grown pretty trendy and lifeless as well and has sucked since 1990. But, I still like to listen to music from some bands such as The Orb. Their music produces a strong hypnotic state in me. But, regarding the gothic, or should I say post-gothic scene in L.A., there are a few very good bands out here. I think that Human Drama are excellent and have always been so. So are Black Tape For A Blue Girl, although they are more of a recording/non-live performing band like ours.

What are your disappointments in life?

...having major "eras" in my life come to a close can be very disappointing. Life sometimes seems to be a never ending process of building, and abandoning what has been built, and beginning anew again.

What intrigues you the most?

As of late, I have been intrigued by mystical, religious, and aesthetic experiences/states of consciousness. Generally speaking, Western or Occidental art, philosophy, and music lacks such elements. Over the past few years, I have been saturating myself with different types of art, music, and rhythms that produce such affects in consciousness. For many people I know, listening to music is a light and non-spiritually involving activity similar to watching a network television sitcom. Well for me, music is a religion, that is a spiritually involving activity. I remember how blown away I was the first time I saw an Indian sitar/tabala/tanpura performance. To put it into somewhat understandable terms, the music took everyone on the same 'trip'. It was impossible to be there experiencing the performance and not have your

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consciousness taken on a journey by the power of the music.

What do you think of poser goth bands who dress up for their bands only, and look totally different in real life?

I think it's a bit strange, kind of split personality-like, if you dress up only when you play in your band and look completely normal at all other times. Having an image is fine, but when that becomes more of the primary concern rather than the music, something is wrong.

What are your feelings on love?

Do you ask that because of our name Love Spirals Downwards?

Yes, as a matter of fact...

There is no particular concept or philosophy about love behind our name. We are definitely not saying that love is bad or that love is problematic or anything at all like that. Personally, I feel that love of a romantic nature is one of the strangest things that humans ever encounter in this world. And contrary to our name, I believe that love has a much more positive effect than a negative.

What is organised religion to you?

I hate bringing up religion and politics but you asked the question. In themselves, religion and spirituality are fine. However, it is only when religion becomes organized and has power that it becomes destructive for humanity. For example, Christians historically persecute and oppress others who do not happen to share their religious views (ie: paganism, the crusades, and even the Gulf War to a lesser degree), as well as their political views (ie: Pat Buchanan bashing homosexuals on religious grounds). Well, we all know that Christianity does not provide the ultimate grounds for morality since its validity rests ultimately upon faith and is not plainly evident or rationally proven. For instance, what is the difference between the faith of a Muslim, a Christian, and an atheist? Nothing! Faith is faith is faith. All that said, I consider myself to be very spiritual, though. I don't see how I could be making the music that I do and not be spiritual. For me personally, the creative process is a mystical experience, surrendering my ego and rationality to something transcendental.

Is Love Spirals Downward a hobby or a full time job for you? (If not, what do you do for a living?)

Well, it seems to have been a very full time pursuit over the past summer. I have been putting a lot of work into finishing up the album; recording, mixing, getting artwork together, etc. But, the album is coming very nice. I am very pleased with all the songs and artwork so far. When I'm not doing music, I am quite busy as a full time student studying philosophy. I am interested in consciousness and the mind/body problem.

What do you think of the current radical state of "alternative" music?

I'm not exactly sure what you mean. I will say that the category of 'alternative music' has been perverted by the corporate music industry. It has become cool to be labeled 'alternative'. And once bands have reached the commercial success levels as The Cure, Depeche Mode, and Nirvana, I believe that they can no longer be called 'alternative' bands since 'alternative' music was originally intended to be an alternative to the giant corporate rock bands. To me, real underground alternative music is music like ours and the other Projekt bands, where one has to search a little beyond the mass consumer oriented convenience of MTV and Rolling Stone in order to find out about the bands.

When you were coming of age at 13 and/or 14, what were you doing?

Well, I don't think that I was doing a whole lot then...living in the Los Angeles suburbs as an early teen is awful since you can't drive anywhere and there is no public transportation such as there is in say San Francisco. I remember feeling isolated and wanting to do more. I guess I've overcompensated for that by doing and experiencing lots of different things when I became able to.

Do you collect anything?

Not really. Though, I do have the habit of buying psychedelic

blacklight posters whenever I make it up to the Haight in San Francisco. I put them up on the walls of our studio. I absolutely love the mood that blacklights create.

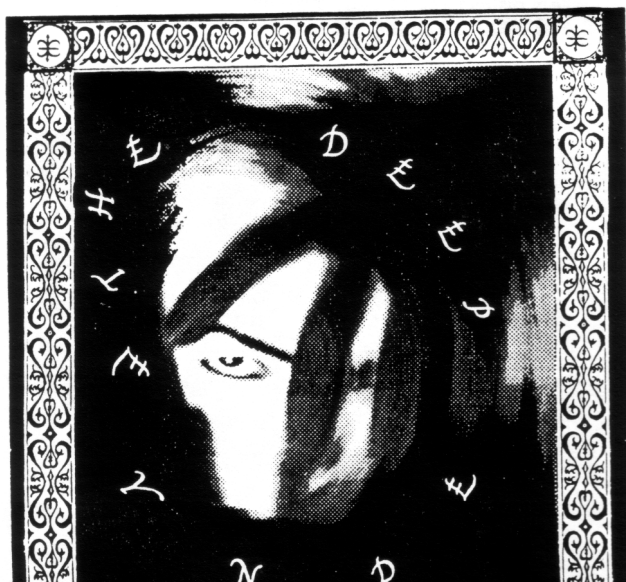
What do you dream about?

I dream about world peace and people discovering the essence of their humanity. I dream of what it would be like without greedy ignoramuses like George Bush running the world and having more aware and intelligent people running it instead. Just imagine that!

What is your ideal future?

On a personal rather than global level, inner peace, happiness, and a good experience-rich life are goals that I aim for. No matter what I end up doing whether I am a musician, teacher, or bricklayer, happiness is the end goal of life's aim. As long as you are happy, life is rewarding. If you are not happy, then change things because life is too short.

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