

love

Spirals

downwards

**Interview and Photography by  
Ned Raggett and Daniel Bremmer**

**Additional Photography Courtesy of  
Susan Jennings**

It's a beautiful name, Love Spirals Downwards. It calls up so many wonderful images, but the name would mean little if the band wasn't so good as well. With Ryan Lum on guitars and other instruments and Suzanne Perry on vocals, LSD have created three excellent albums for Projekt Records over the past few years. The most recent, *Ever*, is quite something, a wonderful wash of Lum's layered, exquisite acoustic and electric guitar work and Perry's truly angelic vocals.

LSD played an acoustic set on KUCI on Friday, November 15, after which they sat down for a talk about many and varied things — and during which they proved to have, as a duo, one of the best repartees around!

**Ned:** Ryan has mentioned elsewhere that he was trying to experiment more with electronics on this album. As the singer, what did you try to do on the new album

**that was different from the past?**

**Suzanne:** I don't know if I ever try and aim for anything, I just see what comes out. The only aim is to do something different, or at least feels different. I don't necessarily make something be different, or consciously try to be different...I don't know if that makes sense!

**Ned:** I've heard stranger explanation!

**Ryan:** I lost her!

**Ned:** Well, here's another question for you, Suzanne...

**Suzanne:** Ask me a simple one, 'cause I'm really stupid!

**Ned:** A simple one it is! Who are your influences, singing or lyrically?

**Suzanne:** Oh... (pause)

**Ned:** Never mind, that's not so simple! Cancel!

**Ryan:** No, she's just a little slow in thinking right now; she hasn't eaten all night!

**Suzanne:** Yeah, I haven't had anything, and Ryan wouldn't let me stop on the way down!

**Ryan:** But we would have gotten here a half-hour late!

**Suzanne:** My influences...you know, I think that's the kind of question that everyone tries to ask me and I'm determined not to

this influence me?' Definitely I have things that I listen to because I like music, but a lot of people pick out a vocalist and try to sound like them. When you say 'influences' to me, that's what I think of.

**Ned:** Well, how about lyrically? Are there any writers you are fond of; do your lyrics simply happen?

**Suzanne:** That just happens too! I don't read as much as I wish I did, or would like to...

**Ryan:** She's still learning!

look at this...

**Ned:** To explain all this, Projekt, the band's label, had a big get-together in Chicago earlier this year, where a lot of the acts on the label got to perform. How did it go, and related to that, there is this label of 'a Projekt-style band' and the media assumptions thereupon, so how do you deal with that?

**Suzanne:** What did you say on the way over here? 'Guilt by association?'

**Ryan:** Well, 'guilt' is strong, but it is an association thing. Projekt carries this certain kind of implication about what kind of sound it is. All the adjectives you hear about Projekt best describe the owner Sam Rosenthal's band Black Tape for a Blue Girl, but doesn't necessarily describe us or the others all that well.

**Suzanne:** Implications or assumptions like that are never good for any band...well, perhaps in some cases, because it gets somebody to buy your stuff because you're in a certain genre. But that's how you start getting into being pigeonholed and being carried in certain magazines and having certain kind of people that wear certain kinds of clothes walk around and ask for your autograph.

**Ned:** Let me guess — these people have really dark hair, are called 'goths'...

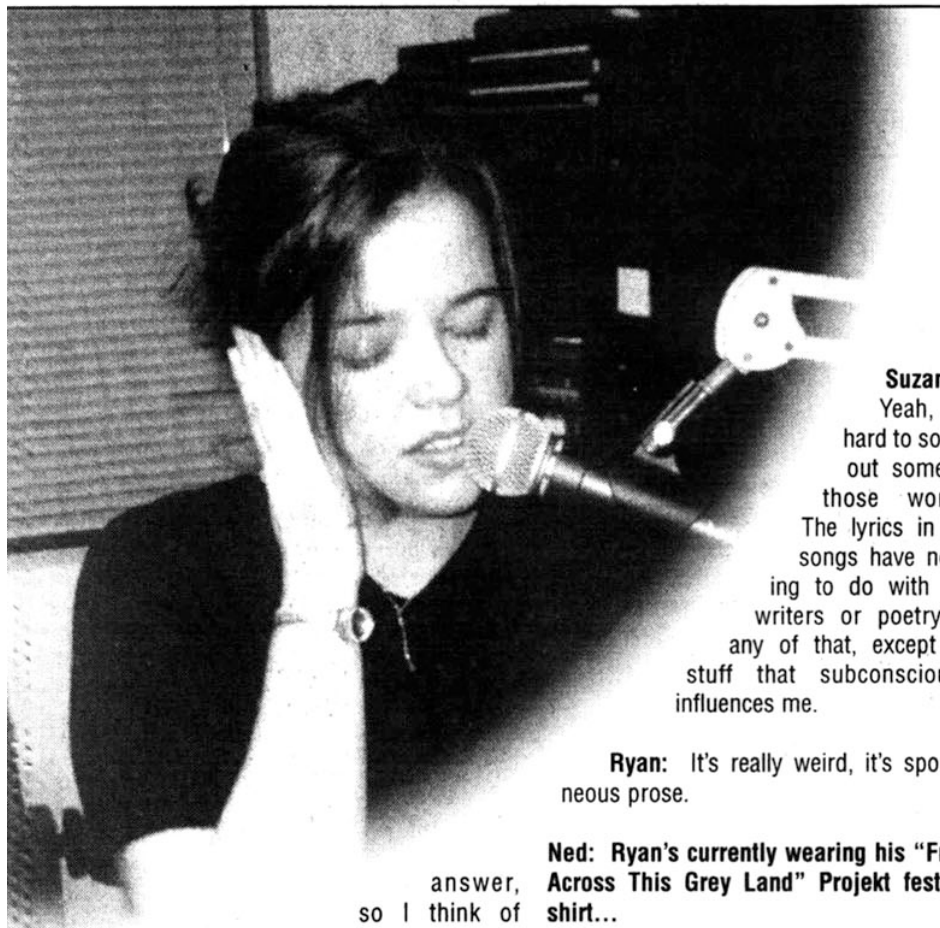
**Suzanne:** Nothing against that! Everybody should feel welcome, but in some cases, people feel excluded if you can't look a certain way, and that's never good.

**Ryan:** There was a certain vibe at the Projekt Festival; I don't think people realized we were the artists! When we walked out on stage I had this really trippy shirt on, and people laughed at me up at the front!

**Suzanne:** It was orange and has amoeba-like creatures all over it!

**Ryan:** Very psychedelic.

**Suzanne:** He got up there and people started laughing at him! And the interesting thing about that is, here's people who thrive off of being different, but when they get in a



answer, so I think of something else to say...

**Ryan:** (*sotto voce*) John Cougar...

**Suzanne:** I do like John Cougar Mellencamp! Tori Amos, Dead Can Dance...I used to like the Cocteau Twins! But I don't know if I have influences; when I listen to something, I don't think, 'How will

**Ryan:** It's really weird, it's spontaneous prose.

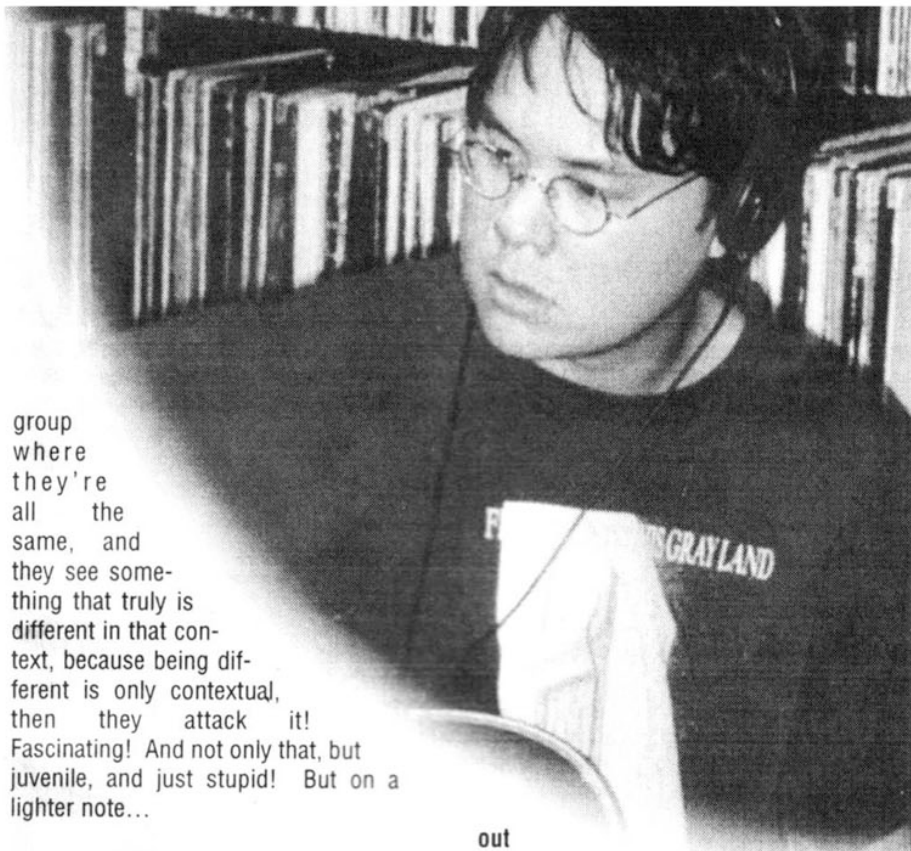
**Ned:** Ryan's currently wearing his "From Across This Grey Land" Projekt festival shirt...

**Suzanne:** Hey! Do you have two of those?

**Ryan:** I have three or four of them!

**Suzanne:** Good, because you've been wearing that for a while...(general laughter)...Really! I was sitting behind him and I was reading it and thinking, 'Oh, let's





group  
where  
they're  
all the  
same, and  
they see some-  
thing that truly is  
different in that con-  
text, because being dif-  
ferent is only contextual,  
then they attack it!  
Fascinating! And not only that, but  
juvenile, and just stupid! But on a  
lighter note...

**Ned:** On a happier note! I understand that when you perform in general you prefer just the acoustic set-up?

**Ryan:** I don't know if it's 'prefer,' it's just the only way we've done it. I think so far, it's probably the best option we have. I have been thinking about next year doing half of our set all-acoustic and the other half bringing more electronic stuff out or samplers and seeing how that goes, more groovy dancy stuff along with our acoustic folk! Who knows, though!

**Suzanne:** I've been getting tired of doing our sets in the same way we've been doing them. We've got to come up with something new.

**Ryan:** I agree! We haven't really played that many times, just a dozen or so times live. But yes, after you play the same song night after night, show after show, it does lose its charm a little bit.

**Suzanne:** That's why the Grateful Dead stopped doing all those favorites.

**Ned:** Hmm...weren't there other reasons? But more seriously, the idea of you going

out  
from  
spot to spot  
spot, doing the same thing over  
again, would be...well, equivalent to  
artistic suicide, or...?

**Suzanne:** It's not only time and time again, but it's...we've been performing the same set for about a year and a half's time, so it's the time, I think, that's a factor, not really the number of times you do the show. It's with us, that same show, over and over, and that, I think, is what tires you.

**Ned:** What is next up in terms of recording?

**Ryan:** I don't know what's happening next, but I can tell you what's happening right now...

**Suzanne:** Hmm...really visionary!

**Ryan:** Well, like you! Your lyrics just happen, my music happens, nothing planned! I've been making more dance-type stuff, with jungle and ambient-groove type rhythms...

**Suzanne:** Another thing that we did is that we recently did some stuff with the band Eden, so we did something with them.

**Ryan:** [Eden mainman] Sean Bowley came out from Australia this summer, partly for the Projekt Festival, and he came to Los Angeles afterward and stayed with us for about two weeks, for better or for worse, and we recorded about five or six songs. I mean, we do love Sean, it was just a long time to have a guest in our apartment! We're also thinking about next year releasing one more CD single, and there should be more of our dancy, ambient stuff on there.

**Dan:** How you'd get to be on the *Fifty Years of Sunshine* compilation on Silent Records in honor of the anniversary of discovering LSD, and what did you think of it?

**Ryan:** How we got on it — partly it had to do with our name! But other bands on Projekt were asked, at least one other one. How do we feel? I thought it was great; in fact, I think that was the favorite compilation that we've done. What do you think?

**Suzanne:** I think that if somebody asks you to do a compilation, you don't have many reasons not to do it. I think a lot of people assumed that we were these big drug-takers — maybe we are, maybe we're not...

**Ryan:** We're not saying!

**Suzanne:** Sometimes people think that when they listen to our music they should take drugs, but people have all kinds of crazy ideas! You never know! But we had no reason to say 'no,' and we knew Silent Records at the time, we respected them at the time...

**Ned:** At the time?

**Ryan:** I still like their stuff!

**Suzanne:** We can trash whatever we want! We're free!

**Ryan:** Anyway, our choice of band name didn't follow from our wanting to associate ourselves with the drug. We were aware of the abbreviation...

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**Suzanne:** I don't know if you know, but it was LSU — Love Spirals Upwards!

**Ryan:** For about two days! It's hard to think of a band name; we had to think of one rather quickly to send our demo tape out. We just should have sent it out as Ryan and Suzanne!

**Ned:** **Finally, while you're obviously some of the most happy and giddy folks we've had up at the station, your music has a deep emotional tug to it, not quite at odds with you as people, but a bit in contrast. How do you regard the impact of your own music?**

**Suzanne:** For me, I compartmentalize my music. It's something that I do as a hobby and a side thing, and I don't really mix it with my life. Even my everyday emotions I don't think I mix with it. But every so often, I think it seeps in. It's interesting, because it truthfully makes me uncomfortable. In some ways, I think it's kind of sappy and too expressionistic to put your life in your music like that, and I always wonder maybe that makes a good writer or a good artist

too. I haven't really fully sorted out all that. As far as its effect on other people, I don't know. Mostly I think people think of it as sort of sad, or sad and happy both.

**Ryan:** I actually hear 'beautiful' a lot!

**Suzanne:** Beautiful, melancholy...definitely not angry! Definitely not crash your car music, more soar off a cliff, maybe!

**Ryan:** I guess it shows if anything that we're healthy people, we can be happy and giddy and still make something, at least for me, that's very powerful, very spiritually moving, like the kind of music I like to listen to.

*Love Spirals Downwards can be contacted at [spirals@projekt.com](mailto:spirals@projekt.com).*

**Ned Raggett** hosts *Ned's Musical Dustbin*, which airs Sunday afternoons from 12-2pm.

**Daniel Bremmer** hosts *Space Disco for Fish Tacos*, which airs Wednesday evenings from 7-9pm.



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