



LOZENGE

FIRESIDE BOWL, SOMETIME IN THE MIDDLE OF 2001

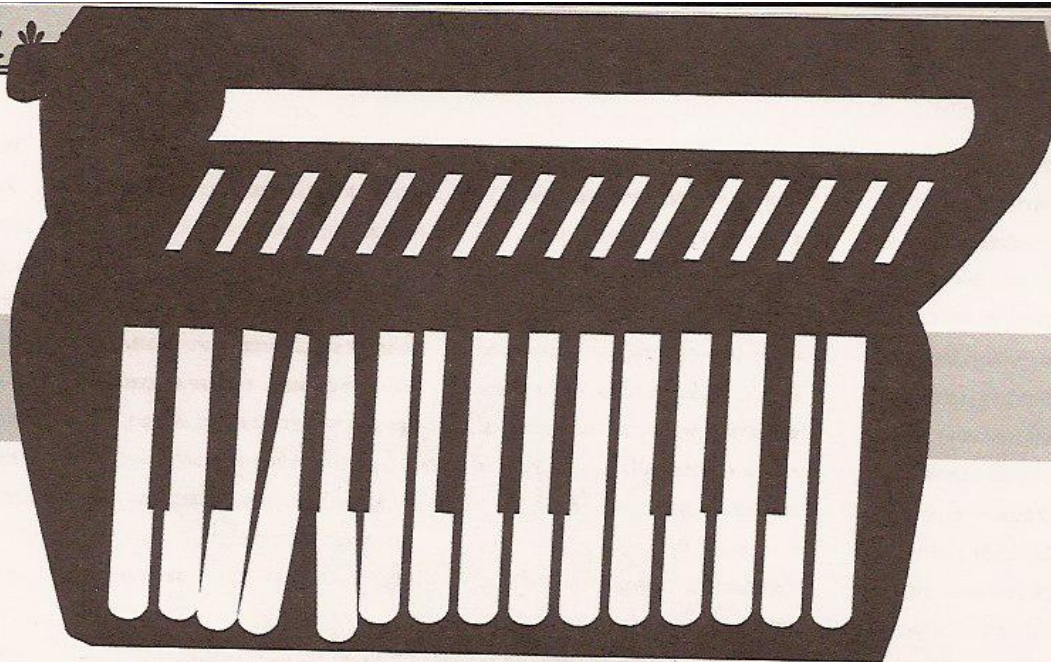
KYLE BRUCKMANN IS THROWING HIMSELF AROUND THE STAGE. A LURCHING CONTRAPTION OF ELBOWS AND KNEES MASHING THAT BATTERED ACCORDION WITH THE NEUROSIS STICKER ON IT THAT WHEEZES AND ROARS IN BETWEEN THE DUELING RHYTHMS OF TWO DRUMSETS. WELL, ONE OF THE DRUMSETS ISN'T ACTUALLY A DRUMSET. AND DAMNIT, NEITHER IS THE OTHER WHEN YOU GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT. PHILIP MONTORO, STRIPPED TO THE WAIST, IS BRAWLING WITH TWO OIL DRUMS, CYMBALS, PIPE, SKILSAW BLADES AND A WOK; AN UNHOLY MENACING CLATTER THAT'S SOMEHOW METICULOUS AT THE SAME TIME. MARK STEVENS IS SORT-OF SITTING BEHIND A SORT-OF DRUMSET — THE SNARE RARELY HAS ANY SNARES, THERE'S NO BASS DRUM AND THE THRONE'S POST SHEARED IN HALF YEARS AGO. HE IS SMILING LIKE HE JUST FOUND THE BEST BOOK OF JOKES IN THE WORLD. HE BOUNCES UP AND STANDS AND THEN FLOPS BACK ONTO HIS WOBBLY AND DAMAGED THRONE OVER AND OVER IN A RHYTHM THAT PERHAPS RELATES IN SOME WAY TO THE PROPULSIVE RHYTHM HE'S POUNDING OUT ON THE DRUMS. KURT JOHNSON, APPARENTLY OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT'S HAPPENING ALL AROUND HIM, SHAMBLES AROUND, NEARLY KNOCKING KYLE OFF HIS FEET SEVERAL TIMES WHILE WRESTLING WITH WHAT LOOKS LIKE A BASS BUT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A CHORUS OF LOCUSTS THAT SOMEBODY'S TAUGHT HOW TO SCAT.

ALL OF THIS FRENETIC MOTION IS DIRECTED AT YOU.

YOU ARE IN DANGER HERE



PEN :: JOE CANNON
LENS :: TOBY MORRIS, SANDRA LIMA
DESIGN :: WE ARE COMPANY



KYLE'S ACCORDION BREAKS. HE STOPS IN MID-LURCH AND LOOKS DOWN OVER IT, TRYING TO LOCATE THE PROBLEM. HE CAN'T. EVERYTHING STOPS. KYLE'S ON HIS KNEES TRYING TO DO BATTLEFIELD SURGERY. FOR THE MOST PART THIS INVOLVES FRANTICALLY REMOVING AND REAPPLYING DUCT TAPE TO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT — PLEASE GOD — BE THE PROBLEM.

KURT STANDS STILL AND LOOKS DOWN AT HIS BASS FOR A FEW MOMENTS. HE THEN SHUFFLES SLOWLY, THE PICTURE OF ABJECT CONFUSION, TOWARDS AN OPEN MICROPHONE. "I WAS ON MY WAY TO A WEDDING AND THEY TOLD ME THEY COULD GET ME THERE. WHERE AM I? WHAT'S GOING ON?" HE CONTINUES, UNWINDING A LAZY NARRATIVE ABOUT HOW HE WAS ALL DRESSED UP FOR A WEDDING BUT WAS KIDNAPPED BY LOZENGE AND FORCED TO PERFORM.

YOU ARE NOT IN DANGER HERE.

KYLE HAS LOCATED THE PROBLEM AND HAS FORCED A WAD OF DUCT TAPE DOWN OVER THE PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED.

ALL OF THIS FRENETIC MOTION IS DIRECTED AT YOU.

YOU ARE IN DANGER HERE

IF EVERYTHING WORKED FOR TOO LONG ALL TOGETHER AT ONCE, IT MIGHT KILL YOU, OR THEM.

LET'S BE CLEAR: LOZENGE IS NOT ALL CACOPHONY AND THINGS FALLING APART. THEY'RE ALSO CAPABLE OF QUIET AND TEXTURED GROUP IMPROVISATION, AND THEY HAVE A TENDENCY TO MATCH CROOKED, JAUNTY BEATS TO KYLE'S EXTENDED MELODIES AND WHEEZING CHORDS IN A WAY THAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'VE DISCOVERED A RUSTY MAN-SIZED MUSIC BOX THAT PLAYS THE FOLK DANCES OF SLAVIC COUNTRIES THAT DON'T EXIST. BUT CACOPHONY IS NEVER FAR AWAY. IN THE MIDST OF QUIET ATMOSPHERES AND BROKEN FOLK DANCES IT'S ALWAYS PEEKING OVER SOMEBODY'S SHOULDER OR WAITING IMPATIENTLY BACKSTAGE, AND IS NEVER GONE FOR VERY LONG.

A FOUR-PIECE FROM CHICAGO BY WAY OF HOUSTON, LOZENGE OCCASIONALLY FINDS A SAX PLAYER SKILLED AND SKEWED ENOUGH TO SKITTER QUICKLY THROUGH THEIR COMPOSITIONS AND BECOMES A FIVE-PIECE.

MOST RECENTLY THIS HAS MEANT INTERMITTENT LIVE SHOWS WITH BURLY GERMAN IMPROVISER BORIS HAUF. BEFORE THAT, AND UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE HIS UNTIMELY DEATH IN DECEMBER 2000, THEY PLAYED WITH JOHN ROBBINS, WHO RECORDED WITH THEM ON THEIR SECOND ALBUM, DOOZY. (KYLE: "HE JOINED LOZENGE WHEN WE MOVED TO CHICAGO... THEN HE LEFT."). THE CORE OF THE GROUP IS KYLE MASHING ON ACCORDIONS, A MOOG, AND AN OBOE WHEN ITS MIC ISN'T BROKEN, KURT PLAYING WHAT LOOKS LIKE, BUT RARELY SOUNDS LIKE, A BASS, PHILIP PLAYING WHAT HE AFFECTIONATELY REFERS TO AS "TRASH," AND MARK PLAYING HIS SORT-OF DRUMSET. A NEW ALBUM IS AVAILABLE FROM SICK ROOM RECORDS THIS FALL.

~~"IT'S SOMETHIN' AND IT'S NOT JUST A REGULAR SOMETHIN'."~~

IT'S DIFFICULT TO DEFINE THE KIND OF MUSIC THAT LOZENGE PLAYS. IN FACT, WHEN I BROUGHT IT UP DURING THE INTERVIEW, THEY COULDN'T AGREE. I CALLED THEM A ROCK BAND. THEY DISAGREED WITH ME. KURT CLAIMED THAT THEY'RE A PUNK BAND. PHILIP

EXPLAINED THAT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BAND CALL LOZENGE A PUNK BAND FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF ANTAGONIZING HIM. THE OTHERS CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE ANY IDEA WHY PHILIP FINDS THIS ANTAGONIZING, AND UNDER PRESSURED INTERROGATION, EVEN HE RELENATED A LITTLE:

PHILIP: I DON'T SAY WE'RE NOT EXACTLY, IT'S JUST THAT... WE DON'T WRITE PUNK MUSIC, BUT WE ARE A PUNK BAND, HOW'S THAT?

KYLE: OK, WHATEVER.

LATER ON KYLE SPOKE ABOUT LOZENGE'S MUSIC IN TERMS OF "RITUAL STRUCTURE" AND "OTHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS," SUGGESTING THAT IT'S AT LEAST PARTIALLY INSPIRED BY THE TRANCE MUSIC OF SOME EASTERN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. THE DISSENSION WAS PALPABLE AT THIS POINT:

KYLE: I REALLY BELIEVE IN SENSORY OVERSTIMULATION. THAT'S HOW YOU GET TO THAT OTHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. IT'S A CHEAP VERSION OF TRANCE WHERE WE DON'T...

PHILIP: (LAUGHING) PLAY THE SAME THING FOR THREE HOURS...?

KYLE: YEAH.

PHILIP: WE CAN'T BE TRANCE MUSIC, OUR SONGS ARE ONLY SIX MINUTES LONG!

KURT: IT DOESN'T HAVE TO DO WITH TIME... I'M HERE TO TELL YOU IT DOESN'T. I DON'T REMEMBER TOO MANY OF OUR SHOWS.

MARK: WE'RE NOT QUITE SURE WHY THAT IS.

PHILIP PERHAPS PUT IT BEST TOWARDS THE END OF THIS DEBATE:

PHILIP: I DON'T WANT TO BE IN MY REGULAR DAY-TO-DAY STATE OF MIND ON STAGE. AND I DON'T WANT ANYBODY ELSE TO BE EITHER. YOU CAN MAKE AN ARGUMENT THAT THAT'S THE SAME AS CREATING A RITUAL SPACE, BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY OTHER CONNOTATIONS WHEN YOU SAY "RITUAL." IT'S SOMETHIN' AND IT'S NOT JUST A REGULAR SOMETHIN'.

MY BEST ATTEMPT IS THIS:

LOZENGE PLAYS FRENETIC ROCK MUSIC (I KNOW, THEY DISAGREE) THAT'S STRUCTURED MORE LIKE JAZZ, BUT WHICH IS BUILT ON MELODIES THAT BEAR MORE OF A RESEMBLANCE TO EASTERN EUROPEAN FOLK MUSIC THAN ROCK OR JAZZ. ALL OF THIS OCCURS THUNDEROUSLY LOUDLY, THEN A LITTLE QUIETER

— OR PERHAPS ALMOST
SILENTLY — AND THEN
THUNDEROUSLY AGAIN.
RHYTHMICALLY, THEY RARELY
ONLY HAVE ONE THING GOING
ON AT ONCE. THE FOUR
INSTRUMENTS MIGHT
CONVERGE ON A JARRING
DANCE, DISSOLVE INTO CHAOS,
RECOMBINE INTO A DIFFERENT
DANCE AND THEN ONE OR TWO
MIGHT DIVERGE AGAIN FROM
THE REST LIKE A LAZY EYE,
MAKING YOU WONDER WHO'S
GOING TO START FOLLOWING
WHOM. NO OTHER GROUP I
KNOW OF CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY
MAKE YOU WANT TO DANCE
SPASTICALLY AND FORCE YOU
TO STAND STOCK STILL IN
TENSE EXPECTATION.

I SAT DOWN TO SPEAK WITH THE
FOUR OF THEM ON A MONDAY
NIGHT, JUNE 10, 2002, BEFORE
THEIR SHOW AT THE PRODIGAL
SON IN CHICAGO. THE
PRODIGAL SON ITSELF IS AN
UNUSUAL PLACE. IT'S A
LINCOLN PARK BAR, COMPLETE
WITH OVERPRICED PUB FOOD
AND A BEER LIST THAT
REQUIRES ITS OWN MENU.
HOWEVER, THEY DO HAVE PABST
IN CANS, AND FOR SOME
REASON OR ANOTHER THEY LET
BRIAN PETERSON, WHO'S BEEN

BOOKING PUNK AND ETC.
SHOWS AT THE FIRESIDE BOWL
AND ELSEWHERE IN CHICAGO
FOR CLOSE TO A DECADE, CRAM
PRETTY MUCH WHATEVER NOISE
HE WANTS INTO THEIR BACK
ROOM EVERY NIGHT. WE ARE
JUST ABOUT TO BE SUBJECTED
TO SOME PERFECTLY WRETCHED
BANDS FROM COLORADO BEFORE
LOZENGE GETS TO TAKE THE
STAGE FAR TOO LATE, TO FAR
TOO FEW.

I BEGAN OUR CONVERSATION BY
TELLING THEM ABOUT A
DESCRIPTION PHILIP ONCE
OFFERED OF WHAT THEY DO ON
STAGE: "WE'VE BEEN PLAYING
TOGETHER FOR ALMOST TEN
YEARS, SO PRETTY MUCH WHAT
WE DO NOW IS GET ON STAGE
AND TRY TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR
EACH OTHER." FOR EXAMPLE,
HE EXPLAINED, KURT MIGHT
PLAY A REFRAIN ONCE, BUT
THEN REFUSE TO PLAY IT
CORRECTLY FOR THE REST OF
THE PIECE AND FORCE THE
OTHERS TO WORK AROUND HIS
REWORKING OF THE SONG.
WITH LESSER MUSICIANS THIS
WOULD BE A DISASTER, BUT
WITH LOZENGE YOU JUST GET
TO WATCH THEM CAREEN
QUICKLY AND INTREPIDLY
THROUGH AN ONGOING

DISASTER, STUMBLING OVER
THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER
LIKE ONLY EXPERTS IN
SLAPSTICK CAN.

KYLE: THE DEGREE TO WHICH
THAT HAPPENS VARIES FROM
SHOW TO SHOW, BUT IT'S
PRETTY ACCURATE.

KURT: IT WILL BE VERY HIGH
TONIGHT.

KYLE: PARTIALLY BECAUSE WE
KNOW THE SONGS SO
WELL...PARTIALLY BECAUSE WE
PLAY AT A HIGH ENERGY LEVEL,
AND WE FUCK UP A LOT. AT SOME
POINT WE JUST CHOSE TO MAKE
THAT AN ASSET AS OPPOSED
TO...

MARK: NOT AN ASSET.

PHILIP: LIABILITY!

KYLE: THANK YOU.

PHILIP: BUT SOMETIMES IT'S
NOT A FUCK-UP. SOMETIMES I
THINK THERE'S SOME
DELIBERATE MONKEYWRENCHING.
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE BETTER,
BECAUSE WHEN YOU CAN TELL
IT'S ON PURPOSE... WHEN IT'S
CLEAR ENOUGH TO ME ITS NOT
A MISTAKE I'LL RUN WITH IT
INSTEAD OF TRYING TO HOLD
THE SONG TOGETHER.

KYLE: A LOT OF THE SABOTAGE
STRATEGIES ARE BUILT INTO THE
SONGS AT THE BEGINNING, BUT
MORE AND MORE OF THEM CREEP

THEIR WAY IN AS WE GO ALONG.

MARK: AND YEAH I THINK IF
WE LEARNED SONGS FASTER IT
MAYBE WOULDN'T HAPPEN AS
MUCH. (LAUGHS) AT LEAST
THAT'S THE DIRECTION I'M
HEADED NOW. SINCE I CAN'T
LEARN SONGS FASTER...

KYLE: YOU JUST DON'T WANT
TO LEARN THEM.

MARK: I PUT THE PARTS OF
THE ONES I SORT OF
KNOW TOGETHER IN
DIFFERENT WAYS.

KURT: AN IMPROVISER!

JOE: YEAH I'M TRYING TO
FIGURE OUT IF YOU'RE
DESCRIBING IMPROVISATION,
OR...

MARK: I DON'T KNOW WHAT
YOU CALL...

KURT: IMPROVISATION POSING
AS PREEXISTING MATERIAL.

JOE: SO WHEN YOU RECORD...

KURT: IT'S A PROBLEM.

JOE: I TAKE IT YOU CONSIDER
YOURSELVES MORE OF A LIVE
BAND.

KYLE: WELL, SEEING AS WE'VE
RECORDED THREE TIMES IN TEN
YEARS...

KURT: AND THE LAST TIME WE
RECORDED WE WERE DEAD SET
ON DOING WHAT WE DO LIVE
BUT THEN WE DIDN'T.

PHILIP: WE EXPLICITLY SAID WE
WERE GOING TO DO ALL OF THESE

THINGS, AND WE DIDN'T DO ONE OF THEM. WE WERE GOING TO DO WHOLE SETS IN THE STUDIO AND NOT STOP.

KYLE: WE GOT SPOOKED. WE PROBABLY WEREN'T DRUNK ENOUGH.

JOE: I'VE NOTICED THAT ON STAGE THERE'S THIS MORE THAN SEMI-STRUCTURED IMPROVISATION GOING ON BETWEEN THE FOUR OF YOU, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THERE'S A LOT OF AGGRESSION DIRECTED TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE.

KYLE: AGGRESSION?

PHILIP: IT'S NOT AGGRESSION, IT'S VIOLENCE.

KURT: NO!

JOE: WOW, I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU WORK THAT DISTINCTION OUT. IS IT LIKE THERE'S VIOLENCE IN A THUNDERSTORM, BUT NOT AGGRESSION?

PHILIP: EXACTLY! THERE'S ANGER IN AGGRESSION. IT'S DIRECTED AT SOMETHING... IT'S MEAN. WE'RE NOT MEAN.

KYLE: I DO FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT WE'RE NOT MEAN. THERE HAVE BEEN SHOWS THAT HAVE FELT REALLY... ICKY... TO ME BECAUSE THERE'S BEEN TENSION WITH THE AUDIENCE. BUT GENERALLY, I FEEL THAT

WHAT WE DO IS REALLY JOYFUL. AND WHEN THE AUDIENCE SEEMS TO GET THAT IT WORKS REALLY WELL.

JOE: I THINK I MISSPOKE WHEN I SAID "AGGRESSION." I WANTED TO SAY THAT THERE'S THE FOUR OF YOU COMMUNICATING WITH ONE ANOTHER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THERE'S A LOT OF FORCE DIRECTED OUTWARD TOWARDS AN AUDIENCE. I'M WONDERING HOW THE TWO OF THOSE RELATE IN THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU DO.

KURT: THERE ARE A LOT OF TIMES WHEN I'M PLAYING I JUST DON'T NOTICE ANYTHING. I SOMETIMES JUST KEEP MY EYES CLOSED. KYLE HAS KNOCKED ME ON MY ASS BEFORE BECAUSE I JUST DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS COMING.

KYLE: I DEFINITELY FEEL COMPELLED TO PUT ON A SHOW. I KNOW THAT SOUNDS HORRIBLE. BUT I FEEL LIKE IT'S PART OF...

PHILIP: HORRIBLE?

KYLE: I DEFINITELY GO CRAZY ON STAGE IN WAYS THAT I DON'T IN PRACTICE.

MARK: BUT THAT'S ALSO MORE FUN FOR US. EVEN IN THE PRACTICE SPACE IT'S MORE FUN IF EVERYBODY'S FREAKING OUT.

KYLE: I GUESS THAT'S WHY I HEMMED AND HAWED ABOUT "PUTTING ON A SHOW" BECAUSE I DON'T FEEL THAT IT'S FAKE.

PHILIP: I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO WATCH THE BAND AND APPRECIATE THE BAND LIKE "BOY, HE'S CRAZIER 'N... 'N, LOOKIT THEM CRAZY WHITE BOYS!" I WOULD LIKE PEOPLE TO BE ENGAGED SO THAT KIND OF REFLECTION ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IS IMPOSSIBLE. THAT'S AS CLOSE TO AGGRESSIVE AS I THINK WE GET. IF WE'RE PUTTING ON A GOOD SHOW PEOPLE WON'T BE ABLE TO STAND THERE AND STROKE THEIR CHINS AND THINK ABOUT IT. THEY'LL HAVE TO DO THEIR THINKING AFTER THE SHOW.

~~"RIDICULOUS INSTRUMENTS"~~

JOE: THAT SAID, ON STAGE, HOW MUCH OF A CREATIVE FORCE IS YOUR CRAP BREAKING ALL THE TIME?

ALL: (LAUGHTER)

KYLE: WE'D PREFER NOT TO BREAK STUFF.

MARK: WE COULD USE SOME WORK ON THAT.

KYLE: WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO BREAK THINGS, BUT THE

EXTREMITY OF THE PERFORMANCE SEEMS TO HAVE A WAY OF MAKING THAT HAPPEN. AND WE'RE PLAYING COMPLETELY RIDICULOUS INSTRUMENTS. I'M PLAYING AN ACCORDION, WHICH WASN'T MEANT TO SURVIVE WHAT I DO TO IT.

JOE: SO IS IT AN APPROPRIATE QUESTION FOR ME TO ASK WHY YOU PLAY THESE RIDICULOUS INSTRUMENTS?

MARK: YES! YES! HAVE HIM ANSWER THAT!

JOE: SO?

KYLE: HABIT. WELL, PREVIOUS TO LOZENGE I WAS IN ANOTHER BAND...AND WE MEANT WELL BUT...

PHILIP: GUTLOGIC!

KYLE: YEAH, BUT IT WOUND UP BEING REALLY...

PHILIP: GUTLOGIC! HE'S EMBARRASSED OF THE NAME, AND DOESN'T LIKE TO SAY IT.

KYLE: ...PRETENTIOUS AND TAKING OURSELVES WAY TOO SERIOUSLY.

KURT: (SHAKING HIS HEAD SADLY) NOT EVEN LEGENDARY.

KYLE: IT KIND OF STARTED OFF AS THIS HORRIBLY TURGID INDUSTRIAL GOTH KIND OF THING AND THEN IT GOT SO THE DRUM MACHINE AND THE KEYBOARDS WERE KICKED OUT

OF THE BAND AND IN THE END
IT WASN'T FUNCTIONING
ANYMORE BECAUSE I WAS
BASICALLY JUST PLAYING A
FLOOR TOM, A METAL SHELF,
AND A PIPE AND TRYING TO
SING AT THE SAME TIME. IT WAS
THAT RETARDED.

PHILIP: AND?

KYLE: HUH?

PHILIP: AND?

KYLE: OH, AND A GUITAR, A
BASS AND A MUCH MORE
RUDIMENTARY VERSION OF
PHILIP'S DRUM KIT... AFTER
[GUTLOGIC] ENDED I WANTED
TO DO SOMETHING THAT WOULD
NOT EVER BE IN DANGER OF
TAKING ITSELF TOO SERIOUSLY
AGAIN. SOMETHING THAT HAD
SABOTAGE BUILT RIGHT INTO IT.
I NEVER KNEW HOW TO PLAY THE
GUITAR AND I WAS TOO LAZY TO
LEARN. PLAYING SYNTHESIZER
JUST DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A
WORTHY OPTION AT THE TIME.

KURT: ALTHOUGH THERE ARE
SYNTHESIZERS ON THE FIRST
ALBUM [PLENUM]. PRETTY
STUNNING, PRETTY STUNNING
STUFF. (CHUCKLES.)

KYLE: AND WHEN I WOULD JUST
SING I FELT LIKE A TOTAL
JACKASS. I NEEDED SOMETHING
IN MY HANDS SO I WOULDN'T
FEEL LIKE A TOTAL JACKASS.

MARK: (LAUGHING) SO HE GOT

AN ACCORDION!

JOE: SO YOU WANTED TO LOOK
LIKE A TOTAL JACKASS
WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE A
TOTAL JACKASS?

KYLE: RIGHT, EXACTLY. I
WANTED TO LOOK LIKE A
DIFFERENT KIND OF TOTAL
JACKASS.

KURT: FAILURE ON BOTH
COUNTS.

KYLE: AT THE TIME I WAS
LOOKING LIKE A TOTAL
HISTRIONIC DRAMA-QUEEN
KIND OF JACKASS... I ALSO JUST
LOVE THE KIND OF CREEPY
DECREPIT MECHANICAL
ASSOCIATION OF THE
ACCORDION. LIKE ONE OF
THOSE COIN OPERATED
ORCHESTRAS. THE SENSE OF
INCREDIBLY CONVOLUTED
MECHANICAL SYSTEMS FAILING
AND BREAKING DOWN AND
FALLING APART. THE
ACCORDION IS PERFECT FOR

THAT.

MARK: AND IT'S EASY TO BREAK.

KYLE: YES. AND WHEN YOU PUT
IT THROUGH THE RIGHT PEDALS
IT SOUNDS LIKE A FUCKING
HELICOPTER IN A WAY THAT A
GUITAR JUST CAN'T.

MARK: THE ACCORDION MAKES
GREAT SOUNDS, BUT IT'S HELL
TO MIX. (PAUSE) SO, ABOUT
THE METAL PERCUSSION...

(LAUGHS)

PHILIP: I DON'T ACTUALLY PLAY
ANY OF THE DRUMS I INHERITED
FROM GUTLOGIC ANYMORE... I
ADDED A KICK PEDAL AND A
SECOND CYMBAL AND ALL THESE
BARS AND PIPES AND SAW BLADES
AS I BECAME PROGRESSIVELY...
SOMEWHAT LESS INCOMPETENT
AS A DRUMMER.

KYLE: THE ROLE OF THAT
INSTRUMENT HAS EVOLVED
SIGNIFICANTLY.

PHILIP: OH, I DON'T KNOW, I
HAVE MORE PITCHES NOW. I
DON'T KNOW, WHAT DID I USED
TO DO?

KYLE: MORE WANGING.

PHILIP: MORE WANGING?

KYLE: YEAH, IT'S MORE
INTEGRATED NOW.

~~MACHINES BREAKING DOWN~~

ONSTAGE TONIGHT, LOZENGE IS
A CLATTERING WRECK. IF I
WERE TALKING ABOUT MOST

ANY OTHER GROUP THAT WOULD
BE AN INSULT. BUT IN THIS
CASE IT'S ALL ACCORDING TO A
PLAN. NONE OF THEIR
INSTRUMENTS SEEM TO BE
BREAKING, HOWEVER, WHICH
IS UNUSUAL. IT MAKES ME
WONDER IF THE PLAN IS GOING
ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO PLAN.
KYLE IS STOMPING AROUND AND
WOBBLING BACK AND FORTH,

FORCING ANGRY SOBS OUT OF
HIS HAPLESS AND BATTERED
ACCORDION. BUT HE'S STONE-
FACED, AND HIS EYES ARE
LOCKED UNWAVERINGLY ON
PHILIP. HE'S WAITING FOR
SOMETHING. PHILIP FOR HIS
PART IS ALTERNATELY STANDING
UP BOLT STRAIGHT AND
HUNCHING DOWN INTO A
CROUCH, DEPENDING ON
WHERE ON THE OIL DRUMS,
LENGTHS OF PIPE, AND
ASSORTED BITS OF SCRAP METAL
HE'S BEATING. I AM REMINDED
OF THAT OLD BILLY CRYSTAL
GAG ABOUT A DOG HUMMING
YOUR LEG WHILE HIS FACE
LOOKS LIKE HE'S READING THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL. THAT
AND KAFKA. NOT THE GLOOMY,
PARANOID CARICATURE THAT
HOBBLES AROUND UNDER THE
TERM "KAFKA-ESQUE", BUT
THE SLAPSTICK KAFKA WHO
READS LIKE CHARLIE CHAPLIN
CAREENING THROUGH THE SET
OF METROPOLIS, SENDING PROP
MACHINERY, MAN-SIZED
CLOCKS AND SULTRY ROBOT
TEMPTRESSES FLYING IN HIS
WAKE. APPARENTLY, KYLE GETS
WHAT HE'S WAITING FOR FROM
PHILIP BECAUSE SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING CHANGES. HE
TURNS SHARPLY ON HIS HEEL
AND THE PREVIOUSLY REPEATED

stompstompstompwheeeeeeeeeeeze!
VANISHES INTO A BEWILDERINGLY
PRECISE FLURRY OF METAL AND
SKINS WITH KURT'S BASS
RIDING ABOVE IT IN A
MELODIOUS DISTORTED WHINE.
THEY CALL THIS ONE "STUMBLOR."

AS THE SHOW CONTINUES, THE
PLAN BECOMES APPARENT. IT'S
PHILIP'S TURN TO FLY APART
TONIGHT. HE ROCKS BACK AND
FORTH, STARTS AND STOPS, AND
OCCASIONALLY PRODUCES FROM
THE BOWELS OF HIS BELOVED
TRASH A RANDOM PIECE OF
METAL THAT HAS DISPLEASED HIM
IN SOME WAY AND FLINGS IT TO
THE GROUND. THE MACHINE IS
BREAKING DOWN, AS PLANNED.

JOE: I LIKE THE WAY YOU TALK
ABOUT YOUR COMPOSITION AND
PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF
COMPLICATED MECHANICAL
INSTRUMENTS BREAKING DOWN.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WANT TO
EXPAND ON THAT, BUT I'D LIKE
YOU TO SAY SOMETHING MORE
ABOUT HOW YOU COMPOSE.

KYLE: WELL...

JOE: BECAUSE YOU DON'T
WRITE NORMAL SONGS.

KURT: WELL, NOT QUITE. KYLE
DOES SORT OF WRITE NORMAL
SONGS. THEN HE BRINGS THEM
TO US...

KYLE: IT'S CHANGED. AT THE
BEGINNING I USED TO WRITE
EVERYTHING AND KIND OF
SHOVE IT DOWN EVERYONE'S
THROAT. KURT WOULD RESIST
THE MOST. HE'D UNLEARN AND
"FORGET" THINGS AND CHANGE
THEM, AND WHAT HE DID
ALWAYS ENDED UP BEING MORE
BRILLIANT THAN WHATEVER
THE HELL I HAD THOUGHT UP
IN THE FIRST PLACE. AND AS
IT'S GONE ON, THAT PROCESS
HAS EXPANDED AND NOW
EVERYONE HAS MORE INPUT. WE
NOW HAVE SOME SONGS WHERE
WE'VE ALL CONTRIBUTED PARTS...

MARK: I THINK THE SONGS
HAVE DEVELOPED THE LONGER
WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER...
WE'VE HEADED MORE IN THE
DIRECTION OF ELEMENTS THAT
ARE DESIGNED TO FALL APART.
PARTS WHERE TWO OF US ARE
TOGETHER AND THE OTHER TWO
ARE COMPLETELY FREE, OR
THREE PEOPLE ARE PLAYING
TOGETHER IN TIME, BUT IN
DIFFERENT SIGNATURES, BUT
ONE IS FREE. WE'VE ADDED
MORE ELEMENTS LIKE THAT AS
WE'VE GONE ALONG.

KYLE: WE'RE DIXIELAND, REALLY.

MARK: IT'S JUST ICING ON THE
CAKE WHEN THE INSTRUMENTS
BREAK.

KYLE: THE HOPE HAS ALWAYS

BEEN THAT WE'RE NOT WRITING
MUSIC THAT "OOH, WELL
THAT'S VERY COMPLICATED...
CONGRATULATIONS." WE'VE
ALWAYS TRIED TO... MAKE
MUSIC COMPLEX IN ORDER TO
DISORIENT... AND TO OVERWHELM.
MARK: AND TO BE CATCHY.

KYLE: YEAH, AND THERE'S
ALWAYS SOMETHING, THERE'S
ALWAYS A REFERENCE IN THERE
SOMEWHERE. ALWAYS
SOMETHING THAT'S VAGUELY
FAMILIAR, BUT IT'S WRONG...
IT'S TWISTED, IT'S WARPED IN
SOME WAY.

PHILIP: YOU GET A LOT OF
MATH-Y BANDS THAT SOUND
LIKE ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
EQUATIONS. I FEEL LIKE, "I
REALLY APPRECIATE HOW
DIFFICULT IT MUST HAVE BEEN
TO LEARN THAT, YOU MUST
REHEARSE A WHOLE LOT MORE
THAN WE DO," BUT I DON'T
LIKE IT.

MARK: IN PROG AND MATH
ROCK THERE ARE A LOT OF
COMPLEX THINGS GOING ON,
BUT IT'S VERY CLEAN AND
INTERLOCKING. I SEE US
HEADING MORE TOWARDS MANY
LAYERS OF COMPLEXITY, AND
MANY DIFFERENT THINGS
GOING ON BUT NOT REALLY
INTERLOCKING TOGETHER. IT'S
A LITTLE HARDER TO PULL THE

INDIVIDUAL PIECES APART. IT'S
MORE CHAOTIC.

PHILIP: AS OPPOSED TO OUR
INSTRUMENTS, WHICH LARGELY
BREAK DOWN DUE TO ABUSE
AND NEGLECT, WHEN THE
SONGS COME APART IT'S
BECAUSE... I THINK THERE'S
BEEN A TENDENCY FOR US OVER
TIME TO TRY TO KEEP
GENERATING MATERIAL THAT'S
SLIGHTLY TOO DIFFICULT FOR
US TO PLAY, WHICH MEANS
THAT THE SONGS ARE GOING TO
GET MORE AND MORE ROUGHED
UP AS WE GO ALONG. AND THAT
PRODUCES A MUCH MORE
INTERESTING... IT'S NOT JUST
SHIT THAT'S DECREPIT OR THAT
WE CAN'T QUITE GET THROUGH
IT, IT'S MORE A SENSE OF
WINDING SOMETHING UP TOO
TIGHTLY, OF ELEMENTS
PROLIFERATING UNTIL THEY
BECOME UNINTELLIGIBLE.

MARK: THERE'S JUST A CERTAIN
AMOUNT OF FUN... PLAYING A
SONG SO MANY TIMES THIS ONE
WAY AND THEN JUST INTRODUCE
SOMETHING COMPLETELY
NOVEL, OR FUCK UP BY
ACCIDENT. THEN EVERYONE'S
LIKE "WHAT THE FUCK'S GOING
ON?" AND THEN JUST TO SLIDE
BACK IN.

JOE: THAT'S SOMETHING THAT
I'VE ALWAYS NOTICED. MOST

BANDS TRY TO FIND THE
QUICKEST AND MOST EFFICIENT
WAY TO GET BACK ON TRACK IF
THEY SCREW UP. LIKE A GOOD
BAND IS A BAND THAT DOESN'T
FALL APART WHEN THEY FUCK
UP... BUT YOU GUYS FUCK UP
AND THEN... FIND OUT A WAY
TO BREAK IT WORSE.

KYLE: AWW SCHUCKS... I LIKE
HOW IT CREATES THIS FEELING
OF, "OH MY GOD WHAT'S
GOING ON? THERE'S THIS
THING AT WORK AND I DON'T
QUITE UNDERSTAND BUT
THERE'S THIS THING ROLLING
DOWN THE HILL OUT OF
CONTROL AND I DON'T KNOW
WHEN IT'S GOING TO, WHEN
IT'S GOING TO GIVE." I FIND
THAT...

PHILIP: WE DO A LOT OF
FANTASIZING, WELL KYLE
MOSTLY. HE LIKES TO FANTASIZE
ABOUT THE EFFECT WE CAN
CONCEIVABLY HAVE ON SOME
MAGICAL AUDIENCE THAT'S
SIMULTANEOUSLY COMPLETELY
OPEN TO EVERYTHING WE'RE
DOING AND COMPLETELY NAÏVE
ABOUT STRANGE MUSIC.

KYLE: IS THIS WHAT I
FANTASIZE ABOUT?

PHILIP: SO THAT THEY'RE SO
FREAKED OUT THAT THEY PASS
OUT OR SOMETHING.

KYLE: I WAS WONDERING WHAT

THAT WAS.

PHILIP: IT SEEMS TO ME THAT
THE PEOPLE THAT COULD
POSSIBLY BE AS SCANDALIZED
AND DISORIENTED BY OUR
MUSIC AS WE SOMETIMES WISH
THEY WOULD BE ARE LIKELY TO
BE SLIGHTLY TOO
SOPHISTICATED LISTENERS TO
REACT IN THAT WAY.

KYLE: OK, I'M NOT SAYING
THAT WE'RE SO BRILLIANT THAT
NO LISTENERS CAN COUNT FIVES
OVER SEVENS, BUT I JUST LIKE
THE FEELING OF "I ALMOST
UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING
ON, BUT OH MY GOD, WHERE'D
THAT COME FROM?"

PHILIP: IT'S MORE LIKE WHEN
YOU SAY "OH MY GOD! WHAT'S
HAPPENING!?" IT'S LIKE
VENTRILOQUIZING AN AUDIENCE
MEMBER. I DON'T THINK
ANYBODY REALLY THINKS THAT.

KYLE: WELL, THAT'S HOW I
FEEL WHEN I'M PLAYING.

PHILIP: ...I WOULD LIKE IT IF
PEOPLE REACTED THAT WAY TO
OUR SONGS.

