Swirlies

Formed from the shell of a Go-Go's cover band named Raspberry Bang (featuring the inimitable Rusty Nails), SWIRLIES began their life in Boston/Cambridge, MA in the summer of 1990. The original band featured Damon Tutunjian (guitar/vox), Seana Carmody (guitar/vox), Andy Bernick (bass), and Ben Drucker (drums). SWIRLIES played live for the very first time on 25 January 1991 at the Alcove in Allston, MA. In these early years, SWIRLIES wandered the Northeastern Megalopolis with other like-minded folks, releasing 7" records through the kindness of Slumberland, Pop Narcotic, Cinderblock, and other labels. Billy Ruane was there. And then SWIRLIES signed to the 'local' label Taang! Records in 1992. Our first two releases, the ’What to Do About Them’ EP (a collection of previous 7"s and new tracks) and ‘Blondertongue Audiobaton’ LP, were created and recorded by an amalgamation of the original members and other mysterious entities. Our dependence on sacred symbols (embodied by The Ostrich, The One Who Speaks Abstractly On Recordings, and other archetypes) began at approximately this time.

Then the chaos seeped in slowly...with the first of many churnings of personnel. In early 1993, Morgan Andrews (MADBOX, ROCK/PAPER/SCISSORS) took over bass-related duties and infused them with his own blend of irritating noise. It was this SWIRLIES that made a video for 'Bell' with Linsey Herman (CAKE AND COMMERCE) and went on their first US tour in a stinking minivan filled with fashion magazines. After school ended for the season, Andy returned to join Morgan and the band. Thus, SWIRLIES explored the sensual realm known exclusively to bands with two bass players. Morgan shortly became spent and disgusted and disappeared into anarchist puppetry oblivion. Ben Drucker was oustered (some say unwisely) and went on to use his mind more productively in other areas. Around the time that ‘Brokedick Car’ EP was released, Anthony Deluca (THE PLANTS) signed on -- mainly because Lenny Kravitz found an attractive lady to drum in his nascent band.

After some years with Anthony, and our first small tour of Europe in January 1994, Seana left to form the now defunct SYRUP USA, and guitar/singing duties were taken over by The Otter (a/k/a Christina Files). With this group, ‘They Spent Their Wild Youthful Days In The Glittering World Of The Salons’ LP was conceived/recorded over two years at various studios. Anthony departed with hybrid vigor in late 1995, and Gavin McCarthy (KARATE) took over the drum kit for two US tours and a handful of other shows....during which he went temporarily insane and (smelling like a Bowery bum) drove his fancy white van across the country and out of our lives forever. More chaos. The now Gavin-less SWIRLIES (e.g. Damon, Christina, and Andy) played a few liberating analog/digital shows, before somehow managing to absorb drummer Adam Pierce (IRIS, DYLAN GROUP, MICE PARADE).

In 1997, Christina left for glory (including VICTORY AT SEA, MARY TIMONY, and current recording/sound genius). ‘Strictly East Coast Sneaky Flute Music’ LP (our last for Taang!) was released at about this time. This record featured remixes of 'Salons’ LP material, and new pieces heavily influenced by Scituate, MA. Free from contractual obligations, SWIRLIES were blessed by Yahweh to find guitarist Rob '(The) Doctor Laasoko' Laakso (WICKED FARLEYS, THE MATHS, DIAMOND NIGHTS, AMAZING BABY).

Since about 2000, SWIRLIES have more or less maintained the "Damon-Rob-Andy-Adam" arrangement, while also taking on: Mike Walker (LILYS), Ken Bernard (WICKED FARLEYS, CERTAINLY, SIR, STRICTLY BUSINESS), Kara Tutunjian, our old comrade Seana Carmody, Deb Warfield (PUELLA), Doro Tachler (IGLOO), Avery Matthews, Kevin Shea (COPTIC LIGHT, SEXY THOUGHTS, PEOPLE), Junko Henmi (CANDYCANE) and so many others. All of the above helped to make and/or perform songs that became 'Cats of The Wild, Volume 2', the mini-album, EP, or whatever it was (Bubblecore, released 25 March 2003). Touring with a "Damon-Rob-Adam-Mike-Doro-and-rarely-with-bird-researchin'-Andy" arrangement continued for a few years, and briefly ended when Damon moved to Parts Midwest to find better living through psycholinguistics. A smattering of northeastern US shows (mislabeled "reunions") happened in 2009 (and will happen in 2011) with a "Damon-Rob-Andy-Adam-Deb-Shep-plus guests" arrangement.

photo of the sirlies in 2003Some examples of recent activity, also known as Grim Death Throes: 1) SNEAKY FLUTE EMPIRE, our special alter-ur-label with cassette and CD releases; 2) THE YES GIRLS, a sneaky-flute-music-playing group featuring Damon and occasionally some combination of Rob Laakso, Andy Bernick, and Ron Rege; 3) RICHMOND COUNTY ARCHIVES, a label with various tangential releases (like NEVAH HAVE I EVAH: A Sneaky Flute Family Album and BUCK WILD!); 4) SWIRLIES' MAGIC STROP, a series of old SWIRLIES sounds offered as free web releases on this very site.

Stay vigilant always and prepared anytime, and we shall see you at The Spit on the 4th of July.