

# Arts & Entertainment



Jim Jacobi

Photo by Dave Bentz

## EP attacks status quo

By Pat Higgins

*In a world unduly dominated by the ideals of Respect, Duty and Order, the sensitive man's reaction is explosive and rebellious. — credo of the German Expressionists*

That madman Jacobi is at again. A new six-song EP is out, containing maybe his best stuff yet. Along with his fine band the Crap Detectors (a term lifted from Hemingway), Jim Jacobi continues to make the aural equivalent of a punch in the eye — he means it, man! This is a full dose of rock 'n' roll, art and the plain-label experience. Also, you can dance to it.

The problem with Jacobi is that he cares too much. Why doesn't he wise up and become desensitized like everybody else? This boy hates pretense and artificiality, which has the welcome result of threatening the status quo — yeah!

The new EP with no name has six songs, all of which are rockers. He has been known to delve into electronics weirdness on his four previous records. Per usual, band members come and go — except for reliable sidekick Craig Kingery who plays Mr. Spock to Jacobi's Captain Kirk.

Kingery is an impeccable bass player and helps old reliable Phil Hammar on the production, making for the best sound of any of the Crap Detectors' records. The sleeve says, "Warning — This is almost commercial."

Well, not exactly, but Jacobi is a lot like a .300 hitter in baseball who could be woken in the dead of night and get a base hit. Jacobi can write

catchy riffs at will — no problem. However, the message is the medium with Jacobi, even though he craftily buries the lyrics so you have to make an effort to figure out what this sucker is up to.

The song titles can clue you in somewhat. "I Want To Survive a Nuclear War" — how timely can one get — with the lunatics running the asylum. A mutant like Jacobi would find a way to live through apocalypse now. Remember kids, when nuclear weapons are outlawed, only outlaws will have nuclear weapons. "Equal Opportunity Paranoiac" — as somebody once said (maybe Richard Nixon), even paranoids have real enemies, and Jacobi casts a jaundiced view toward every bandwagon that's rolling down the street.

Remember in the middle of "Absolutely Live" when Jim Morrison screams, "Wake up" — Jacobi is trying to put across the same concept. Be yourself, and do something with it. Turn off your TV and get into reality therapy, Crap Detector style.

Jacobi doesn't want to be the Rolling Stones. He is closer to being the Cornhusker Sex Pistols, or maybe a Lou Reed who cares.

Is this the age of narcissism? Well, if the '70s were the Me Decade, the '80s look like the me-myself-and-I era. People like Rod Stewart and Foreigner are comparable to soap-opera figures for all that they matter. Jacobi is worth a million of those fools.

"No one is ever ahead of his time, everyone else is just behind it. — Edgar Varese

Jim Jacobi — not insane.

## Ripchords back in action, this time as 'Singles'

By Pat Higgins

Singles in Action — great name if not concept, right? Three of these four guys previously were in the beloved Ripchords, and were able to fill clubs in a single bound. The question today is, "Can they do it again?" The returns aren't all in yet, but last weekend at Larry's Showcase the potential was as apparent as watching Jeff Smith going around right end.

"Our influences are eclectic, and Elvis Costello is the pop god," guitar player Dave Fee said. Fee, Wade Maurer on bass and drummer Jim Robson are the Ripchords alums. The new kid on the block is John Cudlacek on keyboards and synthesizer. As an indication of how hot Cudlacek is, you can't figure out who he's stealing from. Now, that's class. Former leader Danny O'Kane is gone but not forgotten.

"The Ripchords owed a lot of their success to Danny's personality and a lot of luck," Fee opined.

"It helped that we smiled a lot," Maurer added.

The name Singles in Action comes from watching the audience at play, the boys in the band said.

"What we want to know is where are the girls," Fee said.

Don't ask me.

"I'd like to give this town a kick in the butt and get something going," Maurer said.

"I really don't care about the scene. I just want to rock," Fee said.

What motivates a clean-cut bunch of lads to become rockers?

"We're all social misfits. We're old enough to be cold, but young enough to have fun," Fee said. "Actually our songs are about the usual emotions — aggression, fear, spite."

"There are a lot of dynamics in this band because everybody is writing," Robson said, "except they won't let me sing."

"One thing people don't realize," Maurer said, "is how hard it is keeping four guys together making music without

beating each other up."

The foursome wants to make a record, and they want to make it now so they can beat the posthumous Ripchords release.

"We're ready to be put on vinyl for the annals of history," Fee said. "This is a great chance for any college entrepreneurs out there."

The trying economic times have had an effect on Singles in Action. Nobody can afford to buy records anymore.

"John is lucky because he works at Pickles. He's able to hear all the new stuff," Robson said.

"There are all kinds of good new bands out there, but who can keep up with all the records," Maurer said with a shrug.

"I've been watching a lot of MTV, and what it shows me is how innocuous and fatuous rock music has become. When I listen to FM radio I get sick," Fee said.

"Wait a minute. What about Dave Meile's show on KZUM?" Robson asked.

"Yeah, but that takes a certain amount of civic responsibility to listen to," Fee said.

"Even if you can't hear all the records, if you have the right attitude, you know when something is good," Maurer said.

"Yeah, but people can build up such misconceptions," Fee said. "I mean people used to think that the Ripchords were punk, but we were actually preppies. You can print that."

OK.

What is the difference between Singles in Action and the Ripchords?

"Well, it's not like the old days of milk and honey financially, but then it's not as much as of a business, either," Fee said. "Success for us would be making records and the rent."

"John really makes a big difference because he's a music major. He translates a lot of stuff for us," Robson said.

The late Ripchords used to be well known for their rendition of Eddie Cochran's "Teen-age Breakdown" tune. Yet Singles in Action has said good bye to the teen-age idol.

"We left those songs in the dancehalls



Photo by Craig Andresen

Singles in Action: (from left) Jim Robson, Wade Maurer and Dave Fee

of the past," Fee said. "But they're still great songs. We'd still do them on request though."

"We had to move on and forge a new identity," Maurer said.

"People are more into the dance beat, instead of hearing the words," Fee said. "They'll hear the words when the

record comes out," Robson said.

Just what is the future of Singles in Action?

"I want to play Greek parties. Those guys know how to party," Fee said.

"We're doing a lot of our own tunes now," Maurer added. "The old Ripchords hands are stronger and better."