

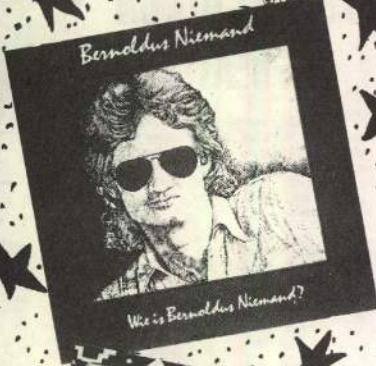
# SHIFTY records NEWS!

Good Evening, as we get to the end of '85 (year ONE on the Shifty calendar), we look back and see we've pretty much kept up to our original goal of one release a month. There's been:

1. *Sound Future* by the HAPPY SHIPS (LP);
2. *Own Affairs* by the KALAHARI SURFERS (LP import);
3. *A Naartjie In Our Sosaatie* (LP compilation);
4. *SANKOMOTA* (LP & cassette);
5. *Wie is Bernoldus Niemand* by BERNOLDUS NIEMAND (LP);
6. *FOSATU Worker Choirs* (LP & cassette);
7. *Voice of Nooit a retrospective on the works of CORPORAL PUNISHMENT & ILLEGAL GATHERING* (cassette). *Out before Christmas* are:
8. *THE CHERRY FACED LURCHERS Live At The Jamesons*; 9. *Whiskey Straight Up*; 10. *Forces Favourites*; 11. *Whiskey Straight Up*, a 7" single, believe it or not, by TIGHthead

FOURIE and the LOOSE FORWARDS.

More of these new releases shortly. Our main problem funny enough, has not been one of producing the records, but selling them. Our various attempts at a wider distribution and promotion have been thwarted by lack of finance and problems getting radio play. We are, however, servicing the more specialist record outlets in the major centres and have a reliable mail order service - so please make the effort if there are records you want, rather than run to your nearest tape deck, contact us - we need your support to continue our work. The price of our stuff is cheaper than any other, at R13.00 through the mail, R10 to R12 at the various morning markets and R13 to R15 at retail outlets. We have had very positive and friendly press, which has greeted most of our releases with an excitement and enthusiasm, although the SABC and the so called independents have ignored us. These are all factors that should make anyone really interested in SA music want to run out and buy a copy or eleven. Anyway we are not **disillusioned**, there's a new year coming up and lots of exciting projects on the horizon, one of which being the launch of the SHIFTY TOURS, starting hopefully in March/April '86. More news of these in the new year. On to the new releases:



**"THE CHERRY FACED LURCHERS LIVE AT THE JAMESONS"** (LP), was recorded during the LURCHERS 2nd residency at the Jameson Bar, September '85. The recording captures the atmosphere of the band and their large motley following at their drunken best. Sink a six-pack, approach maximum volume, and DO THE LURCH, BABY!

**"FORCES FAVOURITES"** by MAPANTSULA, AEROPLANES, STAN JAMES, THE FACTS, THE LURCHERS, KALAHARI SURFERS, THE SOFTIES, IN SIMPLE ENGLISH, NUDE RED, ROGER LUCY, and last but certainly not least, JENNIFER FER-GUSON. Put together at the behest of the End Conscripton Campaign, this album speaks plainly about these disturbed times.

Finally a totally undisguised plot to keep our mail box full. If you wish to carry on receiving this newsletter, please drop us a line with your address & name, **OTHERWISE YOU WON'T GET IT ANYMORE.**

If you are feeling more verbose, any ideas on what we're doing wrong gladly read and digested. Undiluted flattery and compliments welcomed. And remember Shifty records make excellent Christmas presents.

PS. Look out for the 1986 **FULL COLOUR PICTURE CALENDER** from Equaliser Productions, available at all leading bookshops.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



SHIFTY records



PEA TEA Oo



# SOME REVIEWS TO PERUSE

## Stirring songs from the shop floor

YOU'VE heard about the union — now listen to the record: Shifty Records and Fosatu have put together a recording of original worker songs, featuring the Sizana! Banda Lucky Stars, the Umbrella Choir, the K-Team and seven other trade union choirs.

The choirs and their songs have grown out of the day-to-day work of Fosatu trade unions around the country. Shifty Records is the product of a strong commitment to South African music.

Shifty co-founder Lloyd Ross and

film-maker Brian Tilley first heard Fosatu choirs while filming them at last year's workshop. They felt the music had to be recorded.

"South Africa has a music culture that isn't just black disco or white overseas rip-off," said Ross.

Fosatu readily accepted the idea. "The choirs show that workers themselves can create their own culture," said Nelson Mthombeni who is involved with the Braitech choir.

David Mashele, manager of the K-Team, which is made up of workers

**MUSIC**  
**FOSATU WORKERS CHOIRS**  
 (Shifty Records)  
 Reviewed by JOHN PERLMAN

at Kellogg's in Springs, said: "The choirs make workers aware of the advantages of joining Fosatu and tell them about current events."

K-Team songs on the record tell of fellow Fosatu unionist Andries Radinela, who died of head injuries

after being taken into police custody, and of the workers at Sasol who were fired after the November stayaway, and won their jobs back.

Most of the songs praise Fosatu and urge workers to join trade unions: "Can we please come together and build a union," sing workers from the Frame factory in Durban, where the local branch of the Textile Workers (NUTW) has battled for recognition for 10 years. "The employers are making us fight among ourselves."

Others sing about problems in the

factories: "Beware of this informer. He's the one who's carrying the news to the employer"; and about politics: "You drive us to the homelands. Government, what have we done? We're aware of those sell-outs who want to share with us."

Mthombeni said: "Messages get across more strongly in song. Everyone can understand because they get involved, they sing themselves."

At union meetings, workers sing songs which they know well, and then the choirs perform original material. "But the choirs' songs will soon become the workers' songs," said Mashele.

Fosatu choirs perform all over, at contests, at union meetings and in the factories. Shifty happily went along with this. "We prefer to record where people are," said Ross. "Most of the choirs would have felt uncomfortable in a studio."

At Braitech, NUTW invited Shifty to the factory and 100 workers gathered in a packing shed during lunch-hour to record traditional worker songs. Other songs were recorded in hostels, church halls and at union AGMs.

WE'RE living in a country that is angry, wild, frightening and exciting. So it's not exactly surprising that there's always been an undercurrent of pop music that has determinedly reflected that and to hell with commercial considerations.

You'll find agit-pop in abundance on "A Naartjie in our Sossatie: Rebel Rhythms" (Shifty Records), a collection of 10 artists/hands who uncompromis-

## A raucous musical shout against injustice

MAILBEAT: NIGEL WRENCH

ingly shout out against injustice.

You're not going to find any love songs about the boy/girl/cat next-door here. What you will find is a line-up of quasi-classics

that not only scream their audacity but dazzle musically, too.

Take the opening track "The Promise," by Transkeian Timothy Makhalma. Against a rippling

stark reggae background, his clear voice: "Where is that change now/where is my share now/down the town hall the writing's still on the wall/Across the cafe the wall is still dividing".

Lyrics on this record are not, um, subtle. Corporal Punishment have their 1979 punk classic "Darky's Gonna Get You" here. The title alone lets you know that James Phillips and his boys were not aiming at a Masters degree with this record. And God is it marvelous. Raw, raucous and quite fantastic.

But there are more sophisticated tunes, too. Stan James' "Cara Monia" and Roger Lucey's "Storms and Fires" — both recorded at Lucey's classic Afro, the Thunder concert two years ago — are each quietly apocalyptic, if that's at all possible.

Don't get the impression this record is a collection of songs. There is the immediate but raucous, street records. Or, best of all, meet the Shifty Shifs are Fun and Downright dangerous.

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VOICE OF NOOIT!

US LONGER TO BE WORLD CHLO!

HAPPY AS PIGS IN SHIPS

The Happy Ships make me want to finger-paint. Alternatively, the Happy Ships make me want to stick my fingers in my ears. Why? To spread the paint around, of course.

Red, blue, yellow and loud, the Happy Ships can be heard on "Sound Future" (Shifty Records), a deliciously scrambled and deliciously stir-fried compost of fingernail scrapings and stainless-steel shavings and whatever else — lemon rinds, naartjie pips, nicotine and cement — happens to get caught up in the foistam of urban decay.

Put this in your wok and smoke it, baby. Not so much Dada as Gaga, and not so much a pop group as a kibbutz, the Happy Ships succeed in making music that is both graceful and ugly, both friendly and aggressive, both joyful and manic-depressive.

In other words: we are dealing with a bunch of schizophrenic nuttos here, children. They splash their canvas with prima-

ry colours — Brass! Drums! Bass! Guitars! — and then they curl up and go crazy when the colours start to run.

Red and blue makes purple, red and yellow makes marigold, red and yellow and blue makes the sun go down. The result: a magnificently loony effort that recalls the spirit, if not the abrasive agit-pop ideology, of early- or sound-collage experiments by Frank Zappa and Henry Cow.

But these homegrown happy sailors are more of a collision between Piggabag and David Byrne. Like Frankenstein's

monster, a lumbering concrete riff emerges from the labour pangs of shoulder-shrugging saxophones and corrugated percussion and mad tongues licking guitars, dogs bark, cars hood, tapes loop, and suddenly we have a voice: I don't wear gloves, I walk about nude, you speak about love, I think about food.

On "Making Out", a chorus of synchronised puffing horns draws breath for a guitar that cuts like a butcher's knife. On "Egg and Bacon Plantation", a puk-pukking saxophone spirals

into the American national anthem and lands on its head in the pig-troth.

On "We're Not Important", a chorus of "So wah, wah, wah," finally elevates these existentialists into infancy. But wait a second. The Happy Ships are important.

More important, the Happy Ships are Fun and Downright dangerous.

By GUS SIBERS



## BANNED BAND STILL ON THE BEAT

The other day — you came down to the mad-house  
 Intending to do a song or two for us  
 But they closed the door in your face  
 Too much music they say no good for mad-case

I watched as you turned your back on us  
 With a sad smile on your face  
 As they closed the door in your face  
 Seems to me this madness is a serious affair

Another day you came down to the mad-house  
 Crazy! No, ridiculous, they must be mad  
 So where's the big difference my friend  
 Seems to me there's not much sense around anyway  
 There's one great big mad house

clubs in Lesotho.

This year the band cut its first album, Sankomota, which features a soft mix of jazz, reggae, mbanga and funk.

Recorded in Lesotho at the mobile studio used by Johannesburg's Shifty Records, the album was produced by Lloyd Ross.

It had to be recorded in Lesotho because of the SA "ban" on the musicians.

The album is an interesting blend of music, with lyrics in English, Sotho, Zulu, Swahili and Tswana, and is sure to do well.

Other musicians on the album are:

LESOTHO: Sushine Mokoena — keyboards, backing vocals. Spunky Thabalela — percussion.

JOHANNESBURG: Rick van Heerden — sax, brass. William Ramay and Eisothe Gillam — sax. Stompia Menana — trumpet. "Warrior" — trombone. Lloyd Ross — guitar, keyboard, percussion.

But guitarist Leapa and drummer Nkolo didn't give up — they linked up with bass wonderboy Maruti Selate in 1982 to form Sankomota, and started to light up



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## Riding the wave of repression

SURFING in the Kalahari Desert probably sounds pretty bizarre — but it's nothing compared to some of the things the SA Government gets up to.

That's the drift of what the Kalahari Surfers have to say.

The Surfers — an anonymous group of "jazz prated poets" — have just released their album, "On A Fair".

It's one of the most mature expressions of rhythmic resistance this country has seen, and is sure to become a few brains up in the Union Buildings.

It's the ultimate South African record. No multi-mouthed chants or "Freetown Nelson Mandela" here — the musicians realise more sophisticated protest is needed in times like these.

Take "Independence Day", a brilliant comment on the hantamant politics of the SA's something so bizarre as Kalahari surfing.

Instead of slogans and such, the Surfers just play President Pritz-

By CHRIS VICK

Mphahlele, address at Venda's 1984 independence celebrations.

Retayed over a kwela backing track, the president's words hit home much harder than any musician. That's one of the reasons why Peter Koenhof on the "role of the stack man" and you've got a chilling reminder of what this government is up to.

As the Surfers say, "you get a casino with armed bandits, a national flag, coca cola for the masses and dirty movies for the businessmen who've come to help you build your nation."

Oh how about their dance track, "Don't Dance": "The SADF's there to see that we all enjoy democracy..."

Or "September '84": "Something on page three caught my eye, small print... '37 die in township, unrest

police used teargas and bullets. Small news items — the headlines celebrate the birth of British royalty."

In "Hippo in Town", No lyrics, just this scary jazz line of a meek bird stalking the streets, eye-piercing. The occasional hiccup — an outburst, the session builds, a scream, and the patrol continues. An ambulance approaches to remove the victims.

And then there's "Prayer for Civilization", which featured on the rebel rhythm compilation "A Naartjie jaartjie" in our society. This jazz poem remains one of the finest contributions to SA'S REAL culture.

"On A Fair", pressed in Britain as it was presumed "too hot" for local record companies, is available from Shifty Records, PO Box 27513, Robertsham, or Hiltrow Records at Johannesburg. Copies cost around R15.

But keep it under your bed — you never know who might come looking for it.