



DURES ET GAYS

Dures et Gays is a band for weirdos, faggots, freaks or any other outcast of society. If you find yourself at one of their gigs, it may be an eye opening experience and will possibly make you question your punk paradigm. A straight-identified person and a queer-identified person conducted this interview. You should ask what we both have in common? Well, we both share similar beliefs like freedom of choice. But before we can bore you, let's chat with these queer punks! Interview by Alison Gaye and René Olvera. Photos by René Olvera.

MRR: Salut punks! Comment ça va?! Not many people outside of France know of your existence so I guess we will start with the obvious questions. Who came up with the band name? As something so explicit as its meaning, has it created any kind of positive or negative reaction among the public?

Thomas: I think that J-C, the bass player of Dures et Gays, came up with the name. The name is a French word play: Dures et Gays means "Hard and Gays" and it sound exactly like *du reggae* which means "some reggae." The reactions have been positive, it still makes me laugh when people ask if we play reggae because we don't look Rasta at all. Reggae music is so popular in France, that a lot of punks hate this music.

J-C: Actually Skalpel, our keyboardist, came up with the name in 2008.

MRR: How long have you been around?

Thomas: We started Dures et Gays in 2011. I used to play bass a long time ago when I was teenager in a straight punk rock band. I learned

how to play the guitar for Dures et Gays.

J-C: When we started the band two years ago, none of us really knew how to play music, we just told ourselves, "Hey let's make a punk band with only faggots in it!"

Cedrique: I started to scream songs since the beginning of Dures et Gays.

MRR: I think it's cool that punk is not only about music but also about ideology. Each person has the freedom to define punk for themselves; how did you guys come across punk and anarchism?

Thomas: When I was fourteen years old, I became fascinated with this photo in an English textbook of punk rockers with spikes and mohawks and all the classic British '80s punk stuff. I went in a mainstream record shop to buy a punk record and find out what it sounded like. I bought two records: Rancid's *...And Out Come the Wolves* and the Misfits *Legacy of Brutality*. That was my turning point, a few months later I discovered the DIY scene and bought my first

fanzines in a small record shop in Paris. I was then introduced to the notion that punk had politics. I started to attend punk shows in squats, but I have to admit I was pretty stupid at this age. Then anarchy to me meant drinking beers in the subway, smoking weed and wearing punk clothes. I am 31 years old now and more serious; I'm not interested in punk clothes anymore, just DIY music in general and politics.

J-C: I think everyone can create their own definition of punk (with some limits such as DIY, non profit, etc). It just pisses me off when some dumbasses definition of punk is going to a show to get drunk, dance violently and not even get into the music, but I think it's getting better.

Cedrique: My politics have changed over time. I used to define myself as an anarchist but never as a punk. My identity has been constantly misinterpreted and I've been mistaken for a punk. I struggle a lot with that in the band. I am unsure of my political position now, something between a feminist and a faggot, tomorrow we will see...

MRR: When I was living in France, the music that came from there seemed to be limitless in terms of genre. Even in some record stores I remember seeing sections tagged as "unclassifiable music." I think Dures et Gays totally falls into that, blending elements of punk, garage and who knows what else?! Is there any concrete goal the band has in terms of sound?

Thomas: We just play punk rock music, with an "old school" definition to what punk is—songs that are aggressive and high energy but

are simple as possible; and lyrics with something to say that embody a DIY spirit. To me, that's the definition of what punk is, regardless if we have a drummer or not.

MRR: In regards to the expressive side of Dures et Gays, how seriously do you take yourself?

Thomas: Well, I always try to take myself seriously, but I'm not sure if I am always successful.

MRR: Is there any humor or irony within the songs?

Thomas: Well we have a song against children, we just say obnoxious things, usually people laugh when they hear the lyrics. We also have a song called "Skinhead the Day, Drag Queen the Night" which is a humorous song about false love. A lot of people say that we are a funny band. However some songs are serious, for example a song called "Don't Integrate, Disintegrate" which is about our feelings against straight society.

MRR: What's your punk scene like? Is it a mix of queers and straight kids or are more things more divided?

Thomas: Toulouse is a small city but there is a pretty cool DIY scene. We have the TDB, a queer squat where we practice, a straight squat called Pavillons Sauvages, where there are shows with every kind of music. The scene is divided between people who identify as feminists and people who don't; there is a small amount of overlap.

MRR: How has your experience of doing drag and being queer in punk been like? What about France in general?

Thomas: Well I don't know, sometimes it seems that in France queer stuff is reserved for intellectuals or it's just a fashion thing, I identify more as a faggot than a queer.

J-C: Or queer punk rather than just queer.

Cedrique: Sometimes I pretend that I am queer when I want to make fun of the mainstream French queers.

MRR: What are your favorite places to play? I'm pretty sure you aren't going to mention Les Caves de la Note.

J-C: I really prefer playing in squats or non-profit spaces, in Toulouse there's les Pavillons Sauvages and our queer squat, le TDB. I never have been to Les Caves de la Note, and probably never will...

Thomas: I love to play anywhere where people are nice, it can be in a squat or in a pub.

MRR: Is there somewhere you haven't played yet and want to?

Thomas: Lots of places, anywhere with a queer audience!

Skalpel: Everywhere, I don't care if the audience is queer or not.

Cedrique: Every place where the stage doesn't

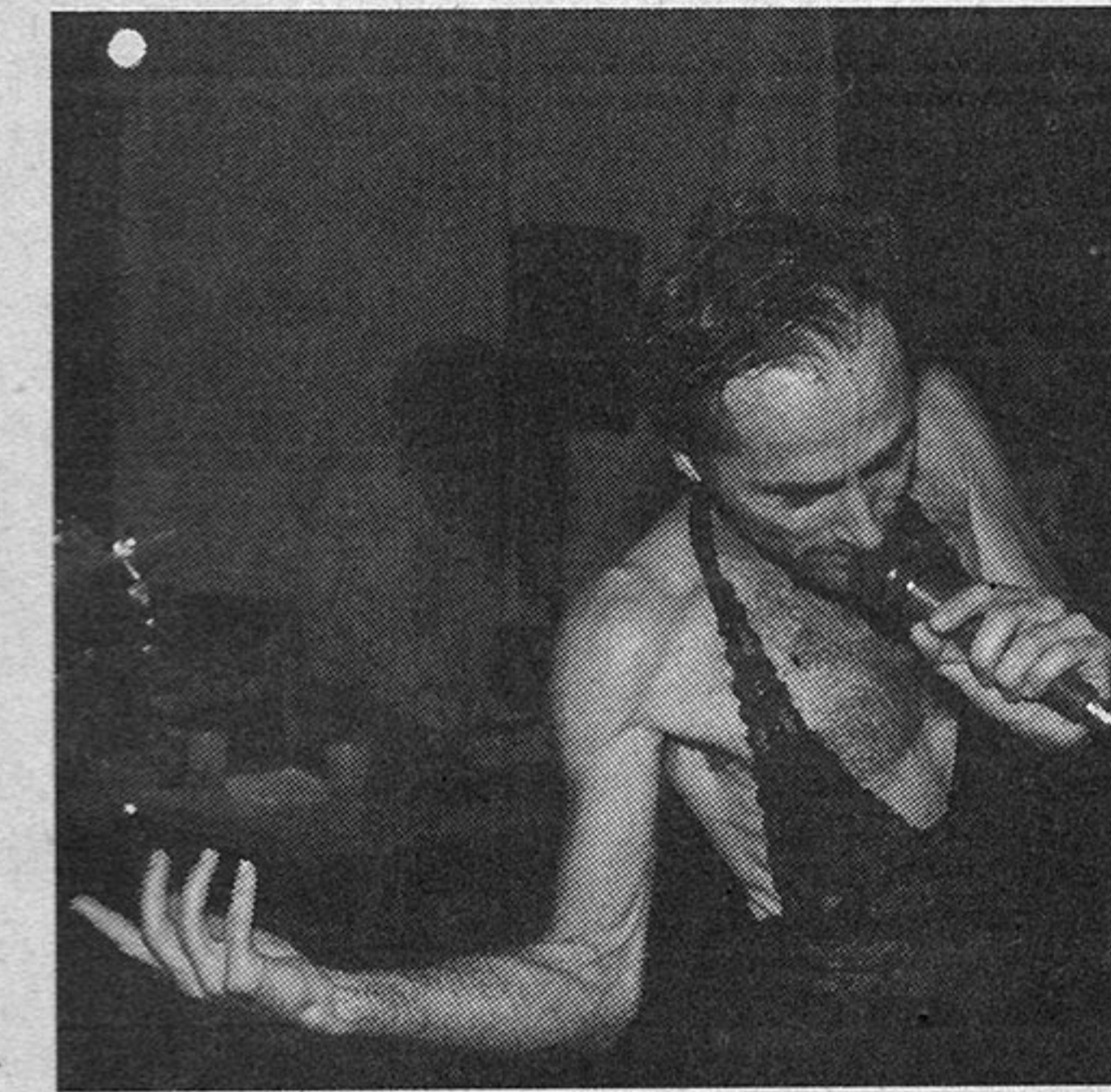
have holes in the floor, so I can walk in my stilettos and not fall through it.

MRR: What other bands you feel a musical or ideological kinship with?

J-C: Queen.

Thomas: We love Grace et Voluptée Van Van, two dykes from Toulouse who perform humorous feminist hip-hop songs, we went on tour twice with them. They are wonderful.

Skalpel: Grace et Volupté Van Van, Atomic Tango and Crête et Pâquerette.



MRR: In bigger cities like Paris or Lyon, bands like yours aren't very visible. Do you think Dures et Gays could have formed anywhere outside of Toulouse?

J-C: Yeah I think we could have formed anywhere.

Thomas: Well in Toulouse we have a squat with a free practice space. It's a great opportunity; I don't think that could be possible in any other city.

MRR: Girl, look at that black dress, you look great! Do you feel like you're subverting traditional beauty and gender standards?

Cedrique: No I am the traditional beauty and gender standard! Like my grandmother, that's why I fit in my dress and my stiletto heels so well.

MRR: I have never seen a band like yours; it was a total surprise considering the lineup, which was, punk, electro-industrial, experimental bands, etc. Getting into the visual aspect of Dures et Gays, how important is your visual representation?

J-C: There is no importance to the outfit for me. Thomas: I don't think it's very important; punk rock is not a fashion.

Cedrique: It's very important for me. If I wasn't in a dress and stiletto heels I couldn't play.

MRR: What was the best show you played?

Thomas: I loved playing in Paris. I'm from the suburbs of Paris, so a lot of my old friends came out to the show. Our first show in Toulouse was pretty wild, also when we played in a nice squat in Brittany with a wonderful Irish band called

Found on the Floor.

MRR: What is the craziest thing that has ever happened at your shows?

Thomas: In Paris, we played at this queer bar, a lot of dykes showed up and some went topless, the ambiance was crazy!

MRR: Have you ever been in a unpleasant situation with audience that didn't get what you guys were about?

Thomas: Not really. Once we played last at a show, late in the night, everyone was drunk except for us. People crowded the stage so much we had to stop playing. We should have been as drunk as the audience to have fun.

J-C: I really don't feel the same way about this gig; I was drunk as shit and it was crazy. I'm pretty sure it was our second gig.

MRR: As a faggot and a transwoman I feel simultaneously mothering of my community and snotty and pissed at straight people for having kids. Where do you all fit there?

Cedrique: Sure, I feel motherly with my communities but I am snobby with straight people with or without kids.

Thomas: I just hate them.

J-C: I don't understand why people breed children; maybe they're afraid to die.

MRR: I was just looking at this video about infanticide; do you feel that queers are oppositional to children?

Thomas: Well our song is a joke. I think that everyone can find a kid irritating at some point.

MRR: Sometimes I get the impression that the music is secondary in what you guys do. Is the idea around the band more important than the music itself?

J-C: Yes.

Thomas: For me the music is as important as the lyrics or the concept of a fag band. The aim of our music is to play punk rock.

MRR: Do you have any future releases in the works?

J-C: Like we say here, we just have to "pull our fingers out of our butts" but yes... maybe.

Thomas: Our plan is to make a split LP with our friends Grace et Voluptée Van Van.

MRR: It was cool to talk with you guys! Thanks for doing this interview. Is there any message you would like to share with our readers?

J-C: One last thing about unicorns—I hate them and don't understand why queers are obsessed with them, I hate them they all must die, our dark reign will come! Beware unicorns!

Thomas: Thanks for this interview! We are looking for shows everywhere!

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