<http://www.angbase.com/interviews/torben_tilly.html>

**NTERVIEW WITH TORBEN TILLY**

**1. Could you talk about The Garbage & The Flowers and how your experiences with that band relate (if at all) to what you are doing in Minit now?**

In The Garbage & The Flowers (TGATF) there's this crystalline structure of a song with its architecture of chords and idiomatic vocal melody. It's something quite arcane and folkloric, owing a lot to Yuri Frusin's song-writing and Helen Johnstones' sapphirine voice. Being a part of this 5-pronged entity has been something I have really enjoyed and has definitely been influential on my approaches to making music. If all the musical parts work together in an almost mechanical kind of way to create a song it can be really satisfying. Sometimes however, through our own hazardous doing as a band, or an anomalous black star, a schnoollee, these songs would become unhinged and collapse into fractured shards of noise and disunion, leaning heavily like wine. This was especially the case when playing live, even if it was intentional (the drugs and alcohol) or accidental (the drugs and alcohol). Part of its beauty was that almost at the same instant that it was falling apart it was beginning to fall back together again, creating a counterpoint of melancholy and joy. I quite like it when it is so chaotic and entangled. Somehow it feeds the imagination and the music takes on a life of its own, revealing secret patterns and ghosts in the recordings.

But it's hard talking about what is perhaps only implicitly there. I have a tendency to fantasize about things within music that perhaps don't really exist. Even talking about TGATF or Minit in this way I am worried that I am making it all up and its nothing of the sort. I don't know what to say.... I guess there is a relationship there to TGATF.... but maybe it is hard for me to talk about it objectively.

I suppose I can somehow relate this aspect of disintegration and integration to what Jasmine Guffond and I have been doing in Minit, though we have extended it into something more abstract and schematic. TGATF is primarily song and lyric. I guess when I moved to Sydney in 1993, I became interested in exploring other processes and forms of music. Minit came about naturally from that shift in interest. Hearing the music of Oval, for instance, which had evolved from a pop-rock band into something quite experimental and abstract was a big influence on both Jasmine and myself. I am often looking for accidents, for a moment of collapse, for the interplay between regularity and irregularity and that psychedelic moment when repetition slips or shifts. And we continue to explore the nature of an implicit harmonic or melodic ghost borne out of the internal architecture of the music. And even though it is at times extremely minimal and unerring it can also be quite dulcet and ornamental.

**2. What are you working on now (musically and otherwise) outside of Minit?**



Actually, as it turns out, I have been playing again with Yuri Frusin and Helen Johnstone along with Jasmine. Three or four guitars, sometimes keyboard or harmonium or drums, and vocals. This actually started about two or three years ago when we performed live in Sydney a couple of times under the name Flabergé. We were playing TGATF songs as well as a few new ones that Yuri had written since living in Australia. Recently we have been recording stuff onto the computer in a small studio that Jasmine and I rent in Chinatown.

I have a short solo piece for harmonium and stereo gate in an exhibition in Melbourne called 'Gating' later this year. Minit has a track called 'IJmuiden' coming up on a compilation on local label Preservation. Minit will be doing a 12" release (hopefully, if they haven't got tired of waiting) with Chicks On Speed records, which will actually consist of separate solo works by me (Droszkhi) and Jasmine (Mysterious Girl).

Over the last year Jasmine and I have been involved in some sound design commissions, producing surround sound works for exhibitions and public installation. I am pretty interested in writing some new Minit material specifically for DVD 5.1.

I have a visual art practice which intermittently rears its head in the context of site-specific and gallery-based installation.

**3. How did you (and Minit) come to be associated with Sigma?**

I think I vaguely met Rosy and Dion in New Zealand in about 1996 when Thela played at the Wellington Town Hall with Sonic Youth. We ended up in someone's living room in the early hours of the morning drinking and listening to Rodriguez records. A year later I was involved in organising the What Is Music Festival in Sydney and Melbourne and invited several NZ groups to participate including Pit Viper, Dress, Empirical and Thela. Because Paul Ling (other member of TGATF) was part of Pit Viper, and Yuri and Helen were part of Dress, TGATF were also re-united for a couple of gigs.

I first heard Parmentier play live in Wellington supporting Keiji Heino in late1997 and I remember Marcel Bear saying afterwards that he physically left his body during their set and hovered above the audience for a while. Parmentier's live shows can be very intense and hypnotic. They were the perfect guests for the first Sound Particle concert that Jasmine and I organised in 1998. By the end of their set I thought I had metamorphisized into being just an arm.

It was during this time (when they were living in Melbourne) that they would have heard Minit - probably just some CDRs we'd played them, but maybe also this limited edition 8" polycarbonate we did for a Snawklor record exhibition in Melbourne. I can't remember exactly. Anyway, the next time we saw them they told us they were starting a label, were going to release Rosy's 7"s on CD and a Parmentier album, and were we interested in doing something for the label. I think in retrospect, this was really great encouragement for Jasmine and I to keep composing together. I am grateful to be involved with a label that supports what I do artistically and one that I appreciate, aesthetically and philosophically.

**4. Was there a particular reason why 'cc/bb' was issued as a vinyl record? Was the music composed to fit the vinyl format at all?**

Yes, after the CD album, 'Music', we really wanted to do something specifically for vinyl. Although 'CC' and 'BB' had been initially written without that in mind, they do share a complimentary compositional premise and form. They are both built upon one diminutive sample (from a Cornelius Cardew piano piece called "Charge" and Béla Bartok's string quartet # 2, respectively) which lies intrinsically within each piece. The duration of each composition amasses out of the samples' manipulation and arrangement. In 'CC' it is there in the beginning and never really goes away - a Steve Reich kind of architecture. In 'BB' the sampled refrain emerges right at the end of the piece, expanding and contracting a couple of times before the whole thing fades to an end. I think you can hear the respective timbres of the original instrumentation in the pieces, the a-side being quite light and percussive, the b-side dark and resonant. When it came to actually recording them, we decided it would be for the 12" format, thus the respective durations of 17 and 15 minutes. I think that being on vinyl accentuates the (reversal) relationship the two pieces have to each other. I kind of like the idea of isomers and symmetry.

**5. What about live performance - what does a Minit live show consist of, music-wise and gear wise. Do you get a chance to perform live often? How do you approach the idea of playing live.**



We don't play that often really. We play live most of the pieces we write. We don't really improvise freely, but the pieces we play are improvised upon live and might change radically in structure from show to show. We have pretty much used the same gear from day one: a sampler, sometimes a sequencer, a mixing desk and outboard effects. We have on occasion introduced live instrumentation, such as harmonium for a piece we wrote using samples of my harmonium. Our pieces tend to go through quite a metamorphosis before they get recorded and released and this usually occurs through playing live. This can make it important to record pieces before they change too much, in order to keep a record of that particular stage it was in. We don't do this often enough and the anomalous black star seems to often appear whenever we try to record live gigs. I tend to be a bit superstitious that we perform better when its not being recorded.

Website: [www.sigmaeditions.com](http://www.sigmaeditions.com/)

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