

Gup is, left to right: Brian Riffel, Adrian Jones, Gary Sloboda and Jason Jones.

Gup ain't a fish, it's a band



Photo by Rob Weidenfeld

by Tricia Romano

The first time I saw Gup's lead singer Adrian Jones was over a year ago at a Q Public gig. From the onset, it was obvious that the frontman had definite charismatic qualities. With his talented brother Jason accompanying him on keyboards, they whipped through their set with a pounding determination that singled the two brothers out from the rest of the band.

Q Public has long been disbanded, and the singer-keyboardist team have formed a new, tighter, and more original band by the name of Gup. With drummer Brian Riffel and guitarist Gary Sloboda, the foursome have created a promising original sound.

Reminiscent of bands such as Primus and Faith No More, Gup hopes to probe the undiscovered realms of rock n' roll. They fuse several different styles of music together into one sound, and often, the style

of a song will change within each tune. The result is what Sloboda calls, "A diverse progressive groove."

The songs and the music have greatly changed since the inception of Gup nearly one year ago. When their original bass player left, the band decided to 86 the instrument entirely from their line-up. Adrian concedes that the current incarnation of Gup is a completely different band, saying that nothing, except for the four original members, was carried over from the first coming of Gup.

They decided to keep to the four member form because as Adrian stresses, "We're a much tighter band. We were a very sloppy band before. The four of us, we just click."

Although Gup is currently in the transition stage, they have managed to nail down the style of music they hope to create. As much as they dislike the alternative label, they all

agree that it is fitting.

"If you look up what alternative means, it means something different from the norm," states Riffel. Gup's songs are a fusion of groove, world beat, jazz and grunge. "Grasshopper," makes use of a conga, but then breaks into a grungy-style guitar lick, while "Rumble Fish" takes the laid back reggae feel throughout the song. Adrian Jones' lyrics take an inventive turn as well.

In "The Song of the Barfly," Jones takes the mindset of a drunk. "It's about the way a man thinks as a man get further and further into his intoxication," explains the singer. "Throughout the song it shows what he's thinking and kind of the way he changes, the way he starts philosophizing."

All four members are currently students at UNLV with majors ranging from film (Adrian), English, (Sloboda), to audio engineer (Riffel).

Adrian jokes, "We're an educated band." But, as his younger brother, Jason stresses, "This (the band) is the most serious thing we do in our lives."

With the atmosphere in the music business currently leaning toward the alternative part of rock, Gup's music looks to figure in easily. But, unfortunately, the current Las Vegas live music scene is suffering heavily, something the band readily agrees with. "It's just 'cause of the city. The city doesn't want

young people to have fun. They don't have 18-and-over clubs. It's just not conducive to a cool live scene," says Small.

Adrian agreed, saying, "Anytime when I hear people talk about the music scene in Las Vegas, I think what they're doing is they're looking more at what it was a long time ago. I guess at one time it was decent," he continued, "Right now, it just seems that it is trying to get going, but it doesn't have the support."

For now, the members of Gup say they want to focus on playing the local club scene, and they are planning to go into the studio at the end of this month to record a demo tape.

Maybe in a year from now, I won't be the only one who remembers the two talented members of that old Q Public band. Perhaps by that time, the fishy secret of Gup will be out.

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of our songs."

Then I asked them what's the deal with Brian Eno, who they thank in the liner notes. "Brian wanted to be the producer on the *Ferment* album. He wanted to sign us to his label." Pretty cool, since Eno is one of the most respected musicians in the music business today. "We thanked him for taking an interest. He's quite an icon

really."

Any future plans to work with Eno? "We are going to do our next album with the same producer. There might be later on if he's still around."

Now, Rob Dickinson is Bruce Dickinson's cousin. Bruce, of course, is the lead singer of Iron Maiden. Does Bruce influence the band? "Not really, no. He's been to see us once or twice. I

don't think he's well up on this kind of music. I'm sure he thinks it's very nice. He's glad that were doing a lot, but he doesn't take part in the tour. God forbid."

So then I asked if it was true that Bruce tells Rob that he should sing louder. "Oh he always does that. If you hear (Bruce) singin' it blows your bloody ears out. But not everybody has to sing 110 decibels. He might

think so." So no plans to open for Iron Maiden in the future? This gets a good chuckle and a "No I don't think so. It depends on how much money they offer us." Then some more snickering.

I finally get them to laugh and the interview's almost over.

They tell me they'll be in England through September and part of October

and return to America with The House Of Love. The Mercury label rep said he definitely wants Vegas to appear as a date. Now all of a sudden, Vegas is Catherine Wheel's second home. Not only have they played here twice over the summer, but Rob was a guest D.J. on KUNV's Luminous Basement a couple of weeks ago.