

# Poetry, substance and Kitchens

An interview with  
Patrick Fitzgerald,  
singer/songwriter/  
poet for Kitchens  
of Distinction

by Kimberley McGee



Dan Goodwin, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Julian Swales (from left) of Kitchens of Distinction.

The crackle of the phone line carried the Vegas sunshine into the "cold and miserable" Minneapolis hotel room where Patrick Fitzgerald waited, watching MTV and waxing woeful moans to the "cock-rock" it displayed.

"What is this—Mega-deth?" shouted Fitzgerald into the phone. "Appalling. It's cock-rock, the glorification of men—backwards, futile music."

Obviously, the Kitchens of Distinction feel they have more substance in its version of alternative. The band is currently on tour with its third release, *Death of Cool*, and is shoving its poetry and lulling guitars into the audiences' upturned faces.

And the audience is smiling, bopping and buying this

relatively new band that is continually on the Top 10 college charts. The band will bring its brand of beat to the Huntridge Theatre Tuesday, opening for Suzanne Vega.

The Kitchens have a solid sound for having been together only five years and that can be attributed, said Fitzgerald, to the fact that "we enjoy what we do."

"We've had three albums and now we don't have to have a job," joked Fitzgerald saying they want to do for "alternative what De La Soul did for rap."

It all began one Sunday afternoon in Tooting, England when Fitzgerald met guitarist Julian Swales at a party.

"He had been at college with Dan (Goodwin, drummer). I played him some of my music...he hated it," and after hearing Swales' style, Fitzgerald said they "became drinking buddies for a while." They later tried it again and "it seemed to go."

And so it went. The band's latest album is only a progression of a band that is transcending into its own sound.

"The last record was mostly personal stuff," said Fitzgerald of *The Death of Cool*. "It's all a bit strange, like reading your diary everyday."

After the loss of his lover and the languid hues of mild depression, Fitzgerald began to ooze the albums poetic lyrics. "I couldn't write about

anything else." The result is the reaffirmation of a cool band hitting it right on the musical button with *Death's* hits such as "4 Men" and "Gone World Gone."

"Gone," influenced by Patti Smyth's *Horses*, was put down in one drunken night.

"Julian and Dan went out for a drive," began Fitzgerald. "I got really drunk... and with mic in hand put all the lyrics down."

His inspiration for the song comes from the movie *Angels Over Berlin* in which an angel decides to "try being human" and "she likes this guy," tells Fitzgerald, "but tells him you have to be controlled by me."

He goes on to explain the "incredible" feeling of being absolutely, passionately "comforted and controlled by someone."

This is the third tour of America for Kitchens and they have watched the latest turn of events with interest to say the least.

"(American) culture is insidious," he said, "you export capitalism...but need to export culturism. America is a world leader and people think that if America does it then its ok."

When Bill Clinton became the U.S. president it was a "big relief, that good things can happen yet," said Fitzgerald. Although he doesn't "understand why anyone gay

would want to be in the military, it sounds a bit redundant," he realized that it was a step for gay rights, the acceptance of a global "lack of fear."

Recently, Kitchens played a benefit in Oregon against amendment No. 19 which would outlaw gay rights. "They can sack you if they find out you are gay!" said Fitzgerald. "Anything like that we will help."

For the band's fourth release, with a tentative schedule for January '94, Fitzgerald wants "to explore."

"I'd say we are very ambitious," said Fitzgerald. "We want a new area. Acoustic works well, get rid of the bass, the guitars and throw out the drums."

"No limits, no fear."

The band's influences for this ethereal music comes from Sonic Youth, Ella Fitzgerald ("truly wonderful"), and poetry.

"You go through shit and then you read Yates or Sylvia Plath and it makes sense," said Fitzgerald. "So few words make sense." As a song writer he feels he has "to live up to it."

"People are tame, lyrically tame. They should take more time with what they write. Let yourself go, freaking out with words."

Tuesday will be the beginning of a live sensory sensation for those who have yet heard the Kitchens.

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