

Screamfeeder take their masterpiece on the road

Posted in [MUSIC](#) by [Marcus](#) on May 06, 06:00AM



One of the great things about becoming an incredibly influential, handsome, and well alright, deity-like music editor (*blush*), is that one finds themselves in the position of being able to spout off about stuff that somewhere in our early lives we foggily deemed "incredibly important". As any music aficionado worth their salt will tell you, it's those initial mysterious stirrings that form the foundations of a gig writing about music. For me, Screamfeeder's 1996 record *Kitten Licks*, (along with *Fear Of A Black Planet*, *Icky Mettle* and ~~the Titanic soundtrack~~ something or other by Joy Division), is one such building block.

In a time when You Am I had virtually locked the door to the annals of Australian "indie" music history from the inside, with a succession of killer number one albums (and that's back when [hitting Number One meant something](#)), bands *like* Screamfeeder were milling about the wings in their hundreds. (We can add groups like Pollyanna, Custard, Ammonia, Tumbleweed, The Fauves and Magic Dirt to the upper tier of this history.) After several albums of howling art rock and echoey pop songs buried under the weight of furious indie guitar wringing, Screamfeeder finally surfaced with perhaps the most singularly realised LP of - not just their own catalogue - but that decade of guitar rock.

With the band energised by incoming drumming powerhouse Dean Shwereb, *Kitten Licks* was the album that finally championed that twin vocal interplay of Tim Steward and Kellie Lloyd, with weirdly simple, circular three chord progressions, sugar rush choruses and the production that their concise new direction deserved. The result was one of the best - and perpetually underrated - summer guitar rock albums this country's ever produced. And dammit I'll argue about it with you 'til I'm worms in the ground.

Kitten Licks bore three singles that swamped the Triple J airwaves; 'Dart', 'Static' and 'Gravity', all of which were virtual "how to's" of effortless pop songwriting that still hold up today. There were deeper cuts on the record as well; the twists and turns to catharsis of 'Explode Your Friends', the crazy drumbeat backtrack of 'Bridge Over Nothing', the four to the floor of 'Bruises', the slow burn of album closer 'Pigtails On A Rock'...shit, the thing didn't have a dud on it.



Screamfeeder - Segment on Recovery, mid '90s

Riding high on the album's breakthrough, (relatively speaking; this was a time before stations like Nova cribbed from the youth network and Jet and The Vines made international success seem closer than it was) the band squeezed out another double A side in 'Hi C's' and 'Triple Hook' that would've made any pop punk peer smack themselves with envy. And then, like so many bands that blanket the airwaves for a time in this country, their moment receded into international label dramas, difficult follow ups and the slow but sure shifting of the musical landscape, from guitar rock to the initial embrace of dance, breakbeat and brit pop.



Screamfeeder - 'Hi C's' Live on Recovery

The band have never officially broken up, despite Shwreb leaving for a short time and all members playing in side and solo projects in the ensuing years. This is a good thing. The hands and minds that wrote such music deserve to keep playing it and we as partisan music boobs deserve to hear it. Fortunately then, in the spirit of the current spate of 'Don't Look Back' shows, Screamfeeder have decided to take their slice of history on the road this May, starting this weekend in their hometown of Brisbane.

You can currently listen to *Kitten Licks* in all its glorious '90s entirety at their [myspace page](#). It's being re-released by Low Transit Industries. Go see em.

Screamfeeder - *Kitten Licks* Tour May 2009

Saturday May 9th – Brisbane

The Troubadour

With guests: *Midget* & *The Butcher Birds*

Saturday May 30th – Sydney

Annandale Hotel

With guests: Midget, Further, Sounds Like Sunset, The Magnetic Heads, Richard in your Mind, Grand Fatal, OxMusic

Friday June 5th – Adelaide

The Edinburgh Castle Hotel

With guests: No Through Road and Suzanne Grae & the Katies

Saturday June 27th – Melbourne

The East Brunswick Club

With guests: Midget, & Sounds Like Sunset

Saturday July 4th – Perth

Amplifier Bar

With guests TBA

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