

OXBOW / Tour Diary / Europe: 1996



Eugene, Marianne Faithfull and Niko in Dublin after recording Insylum for their 1997 release, Serenade In Red

Music Is Murder: Oxbow's 1996 Serenade in Red Tour in One Act

I tried to keep a diary but the bone-numbing cold, the nut-numbing 14 hour drives, and the advanced case of bronchial pneumonia interfered. There were fun/funny times that were left out in the brief following account, to wit:

1) The following exchange with our intrepid tour manager and sound man, Manuel:

"What's this body of water we're driving by?"

"What?"

"What's it called?"

"What?"

"This body of water, what's wrong with you? What the hell is it called?"

"A river."

"You know I can see that it is a fucking river. Does it have a name?"

"The river?"

"No, that dog over there...of course, the river, what else are we talking about?"

"I don't know."

"Okay...what do people who live around here call that big river we are driving by?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"I'm not from around here."

This was repeated several times over several different things. Manuel was, I had figured out, trying to drive me insane.



2) There was also the dog I almost murdered in Dresden at The StarClub. The bar back's dog was wandering around the club (a recurrent motif in Europe it seems...from a porno store to various clubs to a bakery we went to...savage, growling, menacing dogs wandering around...their conception of retail leaves a lot to be desired as I usually buy a lot more withOUT large dogs sniffing my crotch) I said "Guten Tag Hund," missing my dogs and thinking that I had some universal dog skill that transcended national borders. The dog IMMEDIATELY began attacking me. However, being a long time dogowner I immediately retaliated with the stark boot of reprisal kicking his little dog ass under the soundboard while reaching for my knife. All of the stage hands started screaming at me in German before the owner came over laughing and said, "hohoh, did she try to bite you?" I said, "if she HAD bitten me I would have stabbed her to death." This quieted him a bit but for the rest of the evening I kept following the dog around to give her another chance so I'd have another chance but she wisely stayed away and eventually got tired of being shadowed by me and left. Bucket of laughs.

3) The guy we stayed with in Wuppertal...a great guy with the completely great name of Frank Bolz. This was pronounced Frank BALL-Z. My puerile sense of humor caused me to enjoy this beyond all reason.

4) The woman who cooked for us in Diksmuide, Belgium telling Manuel after seeing us play "he does something only blacks can do."

5) Finally getting Belgian Waffles despite a nation's attempt to thwart my desire the previous year.

6) Yoshida from The Ruins singing with me in Hannover.

7) The light guy in some place in The Netherlands who after talking to me for a few minutes, paused and looking deeply into my eyes said, "It's a shame about what's happening in Somalia, no?"

8) The place we played in Arnhem called Goudveshal where the entire support staff took an immediate dislike to us at first glance and spent the rest of our time there being really rude to us. We still have never figured this one out. We asked the guy if he had some blankets, he gave us dusty curtains. We asked for dinner (per the contract) and they brought us french fries. We asked for breakfast (per the contract) and they brought us a single loaf of bread to be shared between 5 of us.

Oh, yeah, that's right, they also refused to unlock the front door of the club so there were 10 people in attendance...those outside after screaming to be let in and standing in the cold went home. DESPITE this we played very well and met a couple of decent people ONE of whom was a GOTdamned AMERICAN! Not a surprise...he was in a great band, another Albini-child called Deerheart. His quote about the entire evening was the best (he having seen it all occur as I've mentioned it) "most bands from america give them a little bit of america. I think you guys just gave them TOO much of america." Genius.



9) The girl who came up to me in Groningen and said "Can I ask you a question?" And I said yes. And she said, "what are sloppy seconds?"

diary image

10) The pot-smoking, fume-huffing, sandal wearing maniacs who run the club in Krefeld called SPUNK! Despite our first impressions this ended up being a good show and an amusing time from the german punk rocker who had a bad fake english accent who kept muttering about "mein herz," to the heavily stoned doorwoman who when people came in and actually WANTED to pay to get in she just waved them inside telling them "pay when you leave," forgetting that the club's exit was on the other end of the club.

11) To all the guys that let us stay at their apartments who had closets full of women's clothes and claimed to have girlfriends that we just NEVER managed to see. And this includes Thomas in Hannover, whose appreciation of tranvestites warmed the cockles of my heart.

12) And finally (for the sake of not boring you) the drunk who I strangled at our last show in Berlin...going to an Oxbow show is like going to a Hell's Angel party, don't get too drunk or pass out too close to the stage or you are fair game.

But it was great and everyone who was part of it we feel fondly about. See ya next time.

The Damage Done



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In between the small spaces that fit between the smaller spaces I sneak a glance at my watch...as though this might stand the faintest glimmer of a chance of letting me know where the fuck I am. I have no idea, no country, no city, no place, no nothing. This is the latest in a long line of failed stratagems to figure out where I am, who I am...and my watch isn't helping. Still set to California time like it is it offers nothing but reminders of what my life had been like before the great and glorious rock and roll windfall that had befallen me, namely Oxbow's Serenade in Red Tour. Like some kind of latter day Billy Pilgrim, I've become unstuck from time, and float from show to show of the 30 shows we play in some kind of fugue state with the throb and constant gnaw of the will to fuck grinding away inside of me like a buzzsaw that spins at two speeds: hot and hotter. The body starts to break right away--the back, the leg, the neck, my balls, my head--each show devolves into a litany of the ways I hate myself and the audiences seem to be most thankful, maybe because by comparison their own lives aren't that bad, and after many of the shows I'm guessing that this isn't a guess...when people like us, they tend to love us, and when they hate us, it seems, they just don't care. Both are okay with me, as long as the party stays polite.

I want to show you my apartment, she says.

Uh hunh, I say.

But you're not going to be one of those guys that's going to try and fuck me, are you?

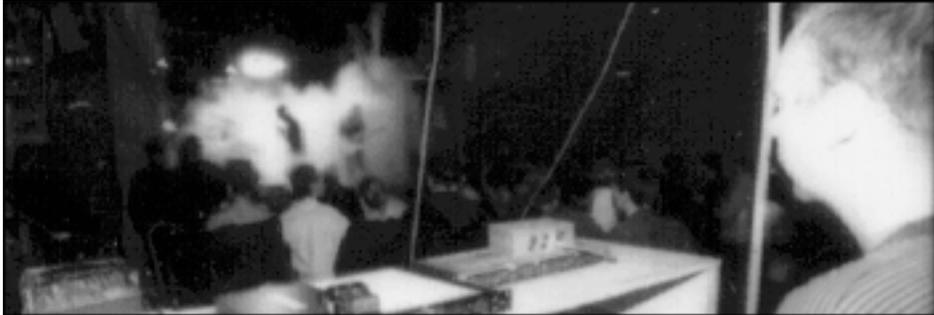
Oh. No. Why would I do that?

You're an asshole.

She smiles at me, I smile at her, and the conversation scrapes to a halt. Sitting on the edge of the stage, wisps of steam curling from my skull, and sweat running down my chest into my shorts, I think I like her because anybody that would have me in their home in the condition I'm in has got to be okay. Really. Either that or completely insane. That's okay, like Ginsberg once said to me, Dharma gates are endless, but the logistics of love lose out

to the logistics of fealty and loading equipment, and this we do. The last thing she said to me as she walked off, "You don't know what you miss." Maybe. I don't have a real good idea of what's going on with the things I'm not missing either though. I tried to hold the same note from the same song (La Luna) that makes me pass out every time I've done it before in the past and not surprisingly I pass out except this time I crack my head on the monitor. I think it was in Vienna.

Add that to the damage list.



We play Koln and a television crew shows up. Apparently we're going to be the hosts of a show called WahWah on VivaTV. Mark Sikora is the director...up until 5 minutes ago I thought his name was actually Maxi Core. But I've seen these shows before and I know what they want us to do, I also know what most bands actually do when they're on and it seems like a toss up between being foolishly cool and coolly foolish. We choose neither and go for REAL. Or at least as real as we're likely to get with television cameras pointed inches from our faces. We talk about our new record Serenade in Red, we talk about Albini producing it, we talk about Marianne Faithfull singing on it, and we talk about the tour.

We refuse to answer any of those Red Hot Chili Pepper questions about dick size, porno movies, and groupies.

Since our segment will go hand in hand with a segment with one with The Melvins, we end it by waving good-bye to The Melvins. The film crew stays afterward and decides to film our live show. We open with La Luna, I hold the same fucking note that I always hold and pass out, falling off the stage and on to the floor. I make it back to the stage. It takes me half the show to remember both where I am and who I am as I draw hard on the wine of forgetfulness. These days immediately following the end of the tour I'm still not sure I got it straight.

Add that to the damage list.

Tour Dates

18.10.96	friday D	berlin tacheles
19.10.96	saturday	D hannover cafu glocksee
20.10.96	sunday D	hamburg heinz karmers tanzcaf
22.10.96	tuesday	DK aalborg 1000 fryd
23.10.96	wednesday	DK kobenhavn loppen
24.10.96	thursday	NL groningen vera
25.10.96	friday NL	amsterdam arena
26.10.96	saturday	NL arnhem goudvishal
27.10.96	sunday NL	hengelo metropool
29.10.96	monday	D krefeld s.p.o.n.k.
31.10.96	thursday	B diksmuide 4ad
01.11.96	friday F	paris chavires
02.11.96	saturday	F lyon pese nerf
03.11.96	sunday F	st.etienne mistral gagnant
04.11.96	monday	F nancy radio pop corn
06.11.96	wednesday	F rouen chez emilie
07.11.96	thursday	F rennes tontons flingueurs
08.11.96	friday CH	luzern sedel
09.11.96	saturday	D v-schwenningen canape trossingen
11.11.96	monday	D nurnberg desi
12.11.96	tuesday	D leipzig conne island
13.11.96	wednesday	D dresden starclub
14.11.96	thursday	A wels schlachthof
15.11.96	friday A	wien chelsea
16.11.96	saturday	CZ praha 007
17.11.96	sunday D	munchen juz peissenberg
18.11.96	monday	A innsbruck utopia
20.11.96	wednesday	CH basel warteck, sudhaus
21.11.96	thursday	D kuln herbrand's
22.11.96	friday D	wilhelmshaven kling klang
23.11.96	saturday	D berlin die insel