

In Summer 1993 I was recording a single with the band Peru which was eventually released on the WAAAAAAAAAH! Singles club as a split with Mary Queen Of Scots. To do this Brian of Peru had borrowed a 4-track recorder for a month and as I would be recording the single as well as appearing on it, I offered to look after the machine.

At the time, Brian, Giles and myself were in a band called The Millers who had done some recordings for the Norwich-based Wilde Club record label but nothing was happening - the recordings themselves are pretty bad and are very po-faced - we wanted to sound like Fugazi or Slint but ended up sounding like the Wedding Present. Suitably disillusioned The Millers had all but split up, and hadn't rehearsed for a long time.

Having the 4-track spurred Giles and myself into action - we'd been listening to a lot of lo-fi stuff, especially the first Palace Brothers recordings and decided to record some stuff the way they sounded - like they'd got their mates round and banged through a few songs in a rough and ready fashion. Also, our experiences in a professional recording studio made us determined to capture some of our sense of humour. We got mates in as and when we needed their help and the first batch of recordings was released through Brian's fanzine - we got some interesting mail from France, Greece and Germany.

Once the 4-track we'd recorded the first batch on went back to it's owner we had to make do with a totally knackered Teczon 4x4 machine that my old piano teacher had given me (see inner sleeve). It didn't erase tracks properly, which made for some interesting bleed-through on many of these songs – sometimes it just sounded plain weird (see **Europop**, featuring our mate Albert on bass and 'French').

To be honest, the noises we made within our limitations are part of the charm these recordings hold for me. We didn't have a sampler, we frequently didn't have a bass guitar (see **New Pink Shirt**) and we didn't know any drummers (we excelled in the two-man-kit – one on floor tom and snare, the other shaking plastic maracas and hitting a cymbal). Sometimes (particularly with the Teczon, which was "retired" in 1994) we didn't even have four tracks to record on. But we still managed to record songs that were interesting to us. Frequently, the songs we just knocked together invariably overshadowed the songs we slaved over.

We eventually invented alter-ego band 'Jimmy Dorito'. What we would do (typically on a wet Bank Holiday) was write a load of song titles down on a piece of paper and write and record them as quickly as possible. At the first session we wrote and recorded 8 songs in 4 hours. **Reachin' For A Reason** is possibly a bit *too* good – it sounds (and was intended to sound) like a Scorpions cover version – but still features the guitar playing I'm most proud of.

In 1996/1997 we decided to expand and actually play some gigs (something that people still complain we don't do often enough). Jim joined, followed shortly after by Marc, and we spent a lot of time doing gigs and recording what would eventually become the RABBIT THEMES CD – our version of **Forever In Blue Jeans** is one of many outtakes awaiting the Rhino reissue treatment (*ahem*).

The Shithouse Masters is the name we've always given to the archive of Johnny Domino 4-track recordings from 1993-1998 (up to the release of RABBIT THEMES). If you had all of the songs recorded they would make a lavish box set of 10 60-minute CDs – any takers?

Steve Domino