

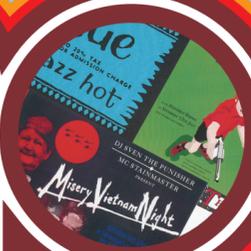
THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF LEMON JELLY

When we asked Lemon Jelly for an interview, they agreed – but they famously don't like to be photographed. So they illustrated our article with their own graphics. Follow the numbered boxes to read their story. Words by **Dorian Lynskey**

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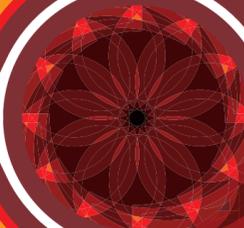
Fred Deakin and Nick Franglen meet in north London in the early 1980s through their mutual friend Will. Fred's favourite band is the Buzzcocks, Nick loves The Damned. They bond at a gig by influential punk-funkers 23 Skidoo but part ways when Fred moves to Edinburgh to study design. Fred: "Without knowing it, we unconsciously said to each other: Go away, amass the tools to make a decent record, and meet you back here in 15 years time."

BUZZCOCKS



6

2002 welcomes Lemon Jelly's first proper album, *Lost Horizons*. An informal concept record about travel, it roams from green fields to asteroid belts and taps into the tradition of quirky, ever-so-faintly disturbing English psychedelia epitomised by The Beatles' *All Too Much*: "Show me that I'm everywhere and get me home for tea." Fred: "We've embraced the bad trip as well as the good trip. If people want to see us as happy-go-lucky psychedelic whimsy boys then that's fine. We're not, but people can extract the bits they like."



"We used to have a rule that if anything made us laugh in the studio it had to go on the record. That doesn't always make it cool but it always makes it interesting."

2

Fred starts running clubs in Edinburgh; he DJs and designs the fliers. "The clubs that I really liked were the ones where you went, Oh my God, what the fuck is happening?" With his friend Murray he launches *Misery*, "the worst club in the world" and tells DJ magazine that it's all about "a load of people with their hands in the air, all screaming for a refund". One night, they put raw onions on the floor, so the more people dance, the more they cry. Another night is Vietnam-themed, with a smoke machine on full blast and Murray shouting, "The horror! The horror!" In the 1990s, he returns to London to teach at St Martin's College and reunites with Nick...

"We often have ideas that are too pricey but we do them anyway."

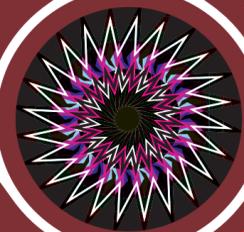


"We know this could all end very quickly and we're not scared of that because all the great things we've been involved in have a natural lifespan. If we were 19 and this was happening we'd be terrified and desperately needy."

3

While playing in various bands, Nick has a series of jobs: decorator, despatch rider, door-to-door salesman and landscape gardening. One of his gardening clients is singing drummer Phil Collins. "I had to dig the longest hole for the longest time." He becomes a session musician, offering his programming skills to bands including Blur, Primal Scream, Hole and the Spice Girls. "I always learnt something from the process. It focussed me on what I wanted from music, which was to make my own music." In 1997, Fred reappears...

"We're still astonished that we're releasing records at all, to be honest."



7

Lost Horizons is an unexpected hit with TV programmers. Fred: "We got pretty mercilessly plundered. If they're doing up the bathroom in *Home Improvements* – hey! – it's *In The Bath*. Not what we had in mind when we made the track." They perform a series of playful live shows. At one, the ticket is a T-shirt which everyone has to show up wearing. Another one is specifically for children, with Fred and Nick dressed as Flintstones. Nick is asked to produce John Cale's *Hobosapiens*, the Velvet Underground legend's best album in 20 years. Nick: "He doesn't ever look backwards – he's always looking at the next thing. I was with him for 14 hours a day for six weeks and I didn't hear a single anecdote about the old times. Not one."

"You have to emerge with something that's uniquely yours, then the next challenge is to move on from that, otherwise you're stuck with it for the rest of your life."



4

One day, they get together to make a track and five hours later they've got *In The Bath*. The Bath EP appears in a lovingly crafted screen-printed sleeve produced by Fred's design company, Airside. Nick: "It could have been the only record we ever put out. We wanted to be so proud of it. We wanted to say, Look at our motherfucking record. It even smelled lovely. You just wanted to caress it and take it to bed."



8

Fred and Nick decide each track on their next album, '64-'95, will be based on a sample from a different genre (heavy metal, soft-rock, house) and a different year. Fred: "Sampling is the musical artform of the end of the 20th century. You know Stesasonic, Talkin' All That Jazz? The whole lyric is about defending the art of sampling. The problem is that it can be incredibly unimaginative. You can follow the Puff Daddy route where you just take an old hit and beef it up to make it a bit more modern. Our criteria was to get a certain distance from the original. It's like doing a cover version – it has to have a life of its own." The album will appear as a DVD, with a video for each track.



5

Lemon Jelly release two more vinyl EPs – *The Yellow EP* and *The Midnight EP*. When they sign to XL in 2000, they compile all three on their first album, *LemonJelly.ky*. The cover resembles sperm cells in a lava lamp. Fred starts a club called *Impotent Fury*. Every half-hour he spins a *Wheel of Fortune*, which dictates the style of music he plays for the next 30 minutes. The following year, they put out a limited-edition seven-inch called *Soft Rock*, which samples Chicago's AOR weepie *If You Leave Me Now* and comes in a denim sleeve (complete with condom in the back pocket) created by fashion designer Laura Lees. Nick: "We said here's 250 pairs of jeans. Now will you make them into 1000 sleeves? She thought it would take three or four days. It was *weeks*. She wouldn't speak to us for a while after that. She had to go away to a quiet place."

"If you make a plan you've only got to go and change it. We'll settle for instinct."

"You criticize our method of how we make records / You said it wasn't art, so now we're gonna rip you apart." – *Stesasonic*

9

Stay With You, which samples 70s duo Gallagher & Lyle, is out on 18 November. The new album '64-'95 will appear in the *New Year*: "We were very keen that this would not be a dinner party album. Anyone in any creative sphere will tell you that if you try and second-guess your audience, you are fucked. If you're worried about your audience not liking it then that's why you should go and do it right now."