

# THE RETURN OF e'Void

**B**efore Polisiekar, before the Nudies, before even Koos Kombuis went Voelvry... There was Rock in the S of A. In the dark years of the Groot Krokodil (PW Botha), bands like Circus, Suck! and Rabbit were keeping the flame of Rock alive and wailing.

e'Void was one of SAs biggest bands in their time, with their '83 eponymous debut exploding their funky, ethno-infused Pop-Rock into the limelight.

But almost as swiftly as they'd arrived, the band packed up for England, leaving mega-hits like *Taximan* and *Shadows* as permanent residents of the SA Rock canon. We spoke to founding brothers Lucien (guitars and vox) and Erik (keys and vox) Windrich, about their brand new album *Graffiti Lounge*, and e'Void's lasting impact.

**Mick:** What was it like rocking in the time of the Groot Krokodil - was there a community, a camaraderie born out of the mutual enemy that was the Government's social and artistic censorship??

**Erik:** What bothered us most was that rock excluded so much of SA society; and we desperately wanted to connect with a wider audience and heritage - to define ourselves through African roots. We were frustrated that we had a 'little Europe' in SA, rather than an undeniably 'African' identity. Picture this - 1984 and we play at the University of Pretoria on our Campus Tour: Lew (Lucien) launches into a Hendrix version of *Die Stem* and within minutes we are pelted with toilet rolls and verbal abuse! - Good times those!! Despite genre differences there was definitely an 'ethos' that we all (SA Rock musos) subscribed to,

although we were probably all aware of our duality. We were chasing success. but in a system that was abusive and that we all abhorred. Living with that contradiction was both an incentive and deeply frustrating.

**Mick:** You and Erik moved into separate directions after e'Void, with music still central to both your lives - what was it like getting back together for *Graffiti Lounge*?

**Lucien:** Well, we didn't have any major fights or arguments. We got on really well actually. Once we started working together again it was like we had never stopped. It felt completely natural. As musicians we are very productive together, and working on the songs was a real joy. We have similar musical aspirations and goals, and we instinctively knew in what direction we'd like to take the music. We wanted a guitar-based album with few overdubs, to feature the vocals more prominently, and to just go with simple grooves and great songs. There were considerable financial pressures on Erik who had to put in his own money to keep the project going, but other than that we loved doing it. We bring out the best in each other musically, and that's a wonderful thing.

**Mick:** Are you taking the album out on the road?

**Lucien:** Yes ... just a question of when. We were hoping to tour around December, but it's looking more like February next year.

**Mick:** For a band that was only active locally for a handful of years, e'Void's left a remarkable impression - how do you feel about e'Void's enduring legacy in SA music?

**Lucien:** I feel immensely proud to have

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## ETHNOTRONICS AND THE NEW FADGETS:

been part of a successful band like e'Void. As for the enduring bit I suppose good songs live on ... The songs stand up in their own right regardless of who wrote them. The fact that Wonderboom play *Shadows* in their set must also help to keep it alive. On a different note, we owe a lot of our success to being in the right place at the right time. During the early eighties in Jo'burg, we were part of a musical movement along with Via Afrika and Juluka (mainly) that deliberately appropriated and experimented with African cultural idioms and musical styles; and then fusing them with international rock and pop music. In my teens I remember seeing a South African prog rock band called Hawk who sang about an African dawn, and looked like Deep Purple. It was great! And look what happened; we end up singing about urban warriors and a Taximan whilst looking like Boy George! We were all trying in our own ways to put South African pop music on the map of the world, I guess. When *Shadows* was first released, people thought it was Bryan Ferry singing; they couldn't believe it was a South African band. Such complimentary comparisons have of course happened to many artists throughout the history of South African pop music (perhaps more so now), but in the early eighties we were one of the bands who embodied international popstar quality - great pop music, great image and good management. We made it cool to be young, white and African. We were new and exciting. And then, almost as soon as we had arrived on the scene, we left for London. And left behind an enduring mystique ... I suppose.

Check out e'Void's *Graffiti Lounge* reviewed on page 21.

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