

Lasgo: Dave McCullen (left) and Evi Goffin. Dave thinks a light shines out of his arse – and it does!

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# ECSTASY POP

It's the additive-laden sound invading a million kiddies' bedrooms and filling their heads with thoughts of clubbing, hedonism and trance-like states. . . And Lasgo are its shock troops



It's Teen Nite at the Abyss club. Slouching in the crumby wilds of Sayreville, New Jersey, the Abyss is a sweaty, hormone-ravaged dive where an inch-thick veneer of disco-dirt covers every surface. Teen Nite is a liquor-free snog-fest, where swarms of shirtless Hispanic kids bump and grind with surly-looking adolescent girls. It's a bit like a school production of Mean Streets crossed with a Friday night out at Tramps in Pitsea. And it is where Lasgo are currently being introduced as "one of the biggest acts in the world," by an MC.

Big they may be, but Lasgo don't seem very cool. For a start,

keyboardist Dave McCullen looks like a constantly cheery hybrid of Gary Barlow and Tintin and waddles about onstage clapping a Level 42-style synth-guitar. Peter Luts, the 30-year old architect of Lasgo's sound, exhorts the crowd to "Clap your hands. . . Come on!" and to "Put your hands in the air! 1-2-3-4!"

But then there's Evi Goffin. The 21 year-old Eurovision veteran from Antwerp looks like every teenage boy's wet dream, and from the moment she sets foot on stage, the crowd screech louder and more scarily than the kids in the mass-murder-by-telepathy scene at the end of Carrie. As Evi launches into their indecently huge hit

'Something', the crowd mouth every word and begins to part-ay Noo Joisey-style, which means shouting "Whooh!" and making fishy shapes with their fists.

At 285,000 sales and rising, 'Something' is the biggest dance single of 2002 (Elvis remixes aside). Like Ian Van Dahl, Paffendorf and Dee Dee before them, Lasgo offer a saccharine distant nephew of the Van Dyk trance template of yore. The infernally catchy 'Something' has all the elements in place for Pavlovian worldwide domination – anthemic, mournful chords, an insistent Depeche Mode-inspired keyboard riff, and an Abba-esque power

melody. Hitting Number 4 in the British hit parade last March, the Dave Pearce Summer Anthem staple has gone on to spearhead a global ecstasy pop phenomenon.

The genre has its detractors, but as the crowd reaction at Abyss proves, this poppy update of Euro-trance is a nursery rhyme bridge into dance music proper. It's the sound of choice for a new generation of clubbers in the first flushes of their infatuation with dance music. Now it's started to conquer America. Lasgo are such hot properties here, there are even two bands currently touring, purporting to be them – including one fronted by a transvestite.

Post-gig, slumped into a chair

