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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

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

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 clasping 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, she screeches 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 "Whooah!" 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



# HEY! HO! LASGO!

The fans speak their minds...

## ■ Dream

"Club kid", New York

Trance is like, the biggest thing in America tonight. Lasgo have been all over the radio recently. I think Evi is great! They make me dance so much. As for drugs, ecstasy is soooo passe. K is

"all the rage now. What's a club kid? Well, none of us have jobs. We just sleep all day and then party all night, come wind, snow or rain."

## ■ Nick

Sales Assistant,  
New York

"Forget Fatboy Slim and all your Ibiza rubbish. They can't do shit in America. This music is

where it's at. I LOVE trance. Paul Oakenfold's great, as is Ian Van Dahl. But Lasgo are the best. And hell, is that singer cute!"

## ■ Laurence

Record store worker,  
Brooklyn

"Lasgo are very good. They have a raw energy about them that reminds me of the early hip hop records."

## ■ Bianca Jenn

Student, Long Island

"Lasgo are cool! Their music really stimulates my mind!"

## ■ Alexa

Works in "visual merchandise", New York

"Lasgo are set to become massive here. I also listen to Oakenfold, Darude and DJ Extreme. Every time an act like Lasgo comes over, it's a big deal."

"Trance, like, totally rules, dude!"

Lasgo, with evil musical genius Peter Luts, centre

Deluxe and the crowd look bewildered, like sheep who have just been made to watch a performance art troupe.

It was all so different two years ago, during America's Summer Of Love. The USA finally fell in love with dance music, embracing the hard, melodic trance of Pauls Van Dyk and Oakenfold. But at Farmingville, the Candy Ravers (America's 'Crasher Kids'), are notably absent. But while Sasha might bemoan "Mickey Mouse trance music", acts like Lasgo and DJ Sammy are having Billboard hits because, as Evi puts it, "We're very commercial and easy to sing."

Backstage at Abyss, Dave is countering Muzik's assertions about a lack of famous Belgians by invoking the Smurfs. "That's the band that really influenced us," he chortles. "Absolutely! I can even sing some lines from 'The Smurf Song'. They seem just like Lasgo tunes..."

We can't quite work out if he's joking or not.

kind of music is so easy to make, then have a go!" challenges Dave. "Have a Top 10 hit every week! The snobbery doesn't annoy me any more - I think of my accountant at the end of the day!"

Two days later, the group are at the PARTY 105.3 radio dance festival, held in an amphitheatre in the soulless Long Island town of Farmingville. It's like a municipal dump full of vest-wearing, slack-jawed yokels with crew cuts. The DJ spins Tim

in Manhattan's Millennium Broadway hotel, Evi Goffin sighs. "A lot of foreign people associate our country with paedophiles or being boring. It's very difficult for Belgium to be cool..."

Clearly not a man too bothered about 'cool', Dave McCullen, who only two years ago was working as a truck driver, is a shameless fan of the Vengaboys and DJ Otzi - much to the Tiesto-loving Peter's chagrin.

"People criticise us - but if our

Excellent buttock-cupping technique demonstrated at the Abyss club, New Jersey