

= TISM =

TISM (an acronym of This Is Serious Mum) were a seven @-@ piece anonymous alternative rock band from Melbourne , Australia . The group were formed on 30 December 1982 by vocalist / drummer Humphrey B. Flaubert , bassist / vocalist Jock Cheese and keyboardist / vocalist Eugene de la Hot Croix Bun , and enjoyed a large underground / independent following . Their third album , Machiavelli and the Four Seasons , reached the Australian national top 10 in 1995 .

TISM were known for their hybrid of dance music and rock 'n'roll , high @-@ energy live shows and humorous lyrics . TISM 's songs frequently satirised modern culture , celebrities and the entertainment industry , classic literature and art , current affairs , politics and sport . The titles of their songs were often wordplays created by juxtaposing pop culture references with more intellectual ones (for example , " Martin Scorsese Is Really Quite a Jovial Fellow " , " Jung Talent Time " and the album Machiavelli and the Four Seasons) .

= = History = =

= = = Early years = = =

On 30 December 1982 , Damian Cowell (" Humphrey B. Flaubert " - drums and lead vocals) , John Holt (" Jock Cheese " - guitar , bass and backing vocals) and Eugene Cester (" Eugene de la Hot Croix Bun " - keyboards and backing vocals) , recorded a nine @-@ song session called Great Truckin ' Songs of the Renaissance under the name This Is Serious Mum at the home of friend Peter Minack (" Ron Hitler @-@ Barassi ") . Minack , Cowell and Cester were members of a group called " I Can Run " , which slowly evolved into This Is Serious Mum .

The band 's first concert was on 6 December 1983 . The Get Fucked Concert at the Duncan McKinnon Athletics Reserve in the small suburb of Murrumbeena was considered a complete failure which caused the band to split up . They reformed in February 1984 and returned to their recordings , experimenting with dark ambient and industrial music , before returning to their rock style . They consider every subsequent performance a " re @-@ union gig " .

By 1985 the band were playing regularly around Melbourne and soon released a 10 @-@ track demo composed of selections from their recordings followed by their début single , " Defecate on My Face " (1986) , a 7 " vinyl record packaged in a 12 " sleeve with all four sides glued shut . This song is also found (but is unlisted) on the EP Form and Meaning Reach Ultimate Communion as a country version . Their next single , " 40 Years - Then Death " (1987) , was released on transparent vinyl in a clear plastic sleeve with no cover art or labels . This Is Serious Mum 's first radio @-@ friendly single , despite the obscure packaging , was received well .

The début album , Great Truckin ' Songs of the Renaissance (1988) , is a double vinyl release in an embossed gatefold sleeve . The first record contained twelve of TISM 's most popular tracks , and the second was a pastiche of interviews , bedroom recordings and live diatribes . Despite this odd combination , Truckin ' Songs entered the lower reaches of Australia 's mainstream Top 50 , as did the single " Saturday Night Palsy " . Later that year , The TISM Guide To Little Aesthetics , a book compiling lyrics , interviews and press releases , was published . Even though the physical books were printed in 1989 , they could not be released until 1990 due to TISM being required to hand @-@ censor the book with a mixture of white @-@ out and permanent marker , as well as place " CENSORED DUE TO LEGAL ADVICE " stickers on each copy of the book . Some uncensored copies of the book do exist , however .

In 1990 , TISM entered negotiations with CBS Records and Phonogram Records and were signed by the latter . In April that year , the band began work on what would become their next album with producer Laurence Maddy . When Phonogram released Hot Dogma (1990) it failed to reach the commercial charts , and TISM were fired six months later due to management issues , despite owing the label tens of thousands of dollars . Hot Dogma is the first release to use the acronymic form of the band 's name exclusively .

Over two nights in May 1991 , the band were filmed live and released the video Incontinent in Ten Continents (1991) . These performances were the last for guitarist Leek Van Vhalen .

= = = Rise to fame = = =

In mid @-@ 1991 , independent record label Shock Records signed TISM and re @-@ issued Great Truckin ' Songs of the Renaissance , as well as the EP Gentlemen , Start Your Egos (1991) , a compilation of tracks previously unavailable on CD . TISM , with producer Tony Cohen , then released the EP Beasts of Suburban (1992) . A new guitarist , ' Tony Coitus ' (later ' Tokin ' Blackman ') joined the group onstage for the first time on 23 January 1992 .

The next EP , Australia The Lucky Cunt (1993) was TISM 's most controversial release to date . Courts issued an injunction order of the CD when the Ken Done Society threatened legal action over the artwork , which parodied Done 's signature style and depicted a koala sucking a syringe . The matter was settled for an undisclosed amount of money " fairly close to the amount that Radiohead spends on buying friends " and was re @-@ released with new artwork as Censored Due To Legal Advice . During 1994 , TISM sometimes played under the names " The Frank Vitkovic Jazz Quartet " , " Machiavelli and the Four Seasons " (which would later be used as an album title) and " Late for Breakfast " .

TISM 's biggest success was the 1995 album Machiavelli and the Four Seasons . The release was a shift from alternative @-@ rock to synth @-@ driven techno and dance which retained vocal melodies and loud guitars . The album was certified gold and won an ARIA Award for Best Independent Release . Three of its singles reached Triple J 's Hottest 100 , two of them in the top 10 . On 27 April 1995 the band appeared on the RMITV show Under Melbourne Tonight and performed " Protest Song " and " (He 'll Never Be An) Ol ' Man River " .

Success exposed TISM to mainstream Australian radio and television , most of which was perplexed by the band 's guerrilla approach to interviews and lack of interest in the music industry . A four CD box set of early albums was released and steady record sales allowed extensive tours of Australia and New Zealand . In 1996 TISM toured on the Big Day Out , during which Ron Hitler @-@ Barassi was either absent or wheelchair @-@ bound due to a detached retina and broken arm caused by a stage dive he performed at the Pacific Hotel , Lorne , Victoria prior to the tour . Later the same year , TISM toured England , the group 's sole Northern Hemisphere excursion .

Taking a year off from touring , TISM spent 1997 working on their next album with producer Lachlan Magoo . The album , www.tism.wanker.com (1998) was announced via a series of live Internet chats and webcasts . The first official music video for the album , I Might Be A Cunt , But I 'm Not A Fucking Cunt was rarely broadcast . Returned and Services League of Australia head Bruce Ruxton wrote a letter of complaint to Shock Records describing it as " ... Dropping [Australia 's standards] through the floor into the proverbial sewer . " The letter was published on TISM 's website at the time .

www.tism.wanker.com sold reasonably well , thanks in part to an extensive Australian tour with Regurgitator , then at the height of their popularity , and The Fauves ; however , sales were low compared to Machiavelli and the Four Seasons 's success and TISM 's contract with Shock ended by mutual agreement .

= = = After Shock records = = =

Following the 1998 tour , TISM signed with Festival Mushroom Records , which re @-@ released their entire back catalogue (except for Hot Dogma , their previous singles and the bonus discs for Machiavelli and [wanker.com](http://www.wanker.com)) on CD . Their first and only official album with FMR , De RigueurMortis (2001) , debuted at No. 24 on the ARIA chart and No. 3 on the Alternative ARIA Chart . Flaubert predicted on Triple J radio that the album would " plummet out of the top 40 like a stone " ; ? the following week , it was not on the list . Touring became less thorough than in previous years , though no less active ? at the closing of the Punters Club , the band ended up naked and tore the ceiling down during the gig . In early 2002 , the track " Honk If You Love Fred Durst " was

released as a single . FMR then released tism.bestoff. (2002) , a best of compilation which included their greatest hits , two new tracks and a disc of remastered Bedroom Recordings . The compilation was their third , and last , release with Festival Mushroom Records , as TISM 's contract had ended .

Finding themselves with no record label again , TISM returned to touring . In late 2003 , a special one @-@ off concert was filmed and released on DVD as The White Album (2004) by Madman Entertainment . A documentary and full length album were also included , making it a 3 @-@ disc set which received good reviews ; however , the release was not eligible for ARIA chart tracking . The concert DVD is presented as a telethon at which TISM breaks up . Ironically , TISM performed after that concert in order to promote the set .

For six years , TISM 's final release seemed to be the German CD @-@ single " Everyone Else Has Had More Sex Than Me " (2005) . It was TISM 's first non @-@ Australian release : Sony / BMG Germany expressed interest when the song 's animated clip was an Internet hit thanks to bloggers and sites such as YouTube . The single reached the German commercial charts .

At the band 's penultimate concert on 13 November 2004 , Ron Hitler @-@ Barassi delivered a diatribe saying that the band had " lost the election " and made references to Guy Sebastian winning the year 's season of Australian Idol . This opening remark can be interpreted as the band announcing their breakup .

= = = Current status = = =

In a 2006 interview with Triple J , when asked about the current status of TISM , Flaubert remarked : " we are slowly moving towards our deaths " . In early December that year , Flaubert contributed to the ABC 's " My Favourite Album " program , where he stated his favourite album as " Any album ? as long as it 's by Nickelback ! " Later the same month , TISM were inducted into the EG (The Age Entertainment Guide) Hall of Fame , at which they made an appearance and " a hilariously irreverent speech " .

TISM 's final concert was at the Earthcore Festival on 27 October 2004 . For all appearances , it had appeared that TISM had split , with no announcement or fanfare .

In early 2007 , a Melbourne country and western band called Root ! appeared on MySpace , with Humphrey B. Flaubert (now called DC Root) on vocals . Their debut album was released in December 2007 .

On 29 April 2008 , guitarist James Paull (Tokin ' Blackman) died of cancer . Initial news reports confused Paull with bassist Jock Cheese (the confusion stemming from Paull 's personal nickname of Jock) . He was survived by his wife Maddy and their daughter Ella .

In October 2009 , the majority of TISM 's back catalogue was re @-@ released on iTunes with bonus material .

In 2010 , their website (www.tism.com.au) was altered to show an older @-@ style TISM logo with TISM related mannerisms that altered when the page was refreshed . On 8 April 2011 , YouTube user " tismwebsite " uploaded a previously unseen video of Tokin ' Blackman improvising a guitar solo . It was added to the front page of tism.com.au on 29 April 2011 , the third anniversary of Tokin 's passing , prior to the site being revamped and relaunched .

In March 2010 , TISM released on iTunes , a " 21st century mix " of their single Shut Up ? The Footy 's On The Radio The 21st century mix had Humphrey B. Flaubert on vocals and Jock Cheese on guitars , and had wholly new lyrics . This is the most recent TISM release to date .

In mid @-@ 2010 , Flaubert 's project Root ! announced they would be playing their " Last Ever Show " on 20 August 2010 . Although the press release concluded with " ... is there a new project on the way ? All will be revealed soon . Stay tuned . " Following this , a Facebook page was sent out to friends of DC Root which promoted a new band named ' The DC3 ' ; itself a reference to ' DC Root ' and his real name of Damian Cowell . The band 's first single was released on 26 November 2010 titled " I Was The Guy in TISM . "

In early 2011 , a video of a TISM @-@ like band performing was uploaded , said to be of ex @-@ TISM members Les Miserables , Jock Cheese , Leek Van Vlalen and Eugene de la Hot Croix Bun

performing for Van Vhalen 's 50th birthday party . The songs performed were " ExistentialTISM " , " I 'm Interested in Apathy " and the country version of " Defecate on My Face " .

In October 2012 guitarist Sean Kelly (' Leak Van Vhalen ') teamed with " old friend and die hard TISM fan " Kieran Butler for two Melbourne shows as RealiTISM , performing TISM songs interspersed with Kelly chatting about " what went on behind the scenes ? and the balaclavas . " During 2012 and 2013 , the duo performed several shows .

In April 2013 , Kieran Butler talked with Damian Cowell , occasionally touching on his time in TISM .

In 2015 , Cowell crowd @-@ funded and launched his solo project and self @-@ titled album Damian Cowell 's Disco Machine , the album including notable entertainment personalities such as Kathy Lette , Tony Martin and Shaun Micallef , Lee Lin Chin , The Bedroom Philosopher , Kate Miller @-@ Heidke , Tim Rogers and John Safran - most of whom performed at the sold out show at The Corner Hotel in late February 2015 . This show followed the announcement that Australia would be invited to enter the Eurovision Song Contest and a petition was started on Change.org to reunite TISM as Australia 's representatives . The petition received national news coverage in Australia after amassing several thousand signatories on its first day .

= = Members = =

TISM members were pseudonymous and anonymous . They wore balaclavas during all public appearances . However , some of their names have been revealed (see below) .

Current

Ron Hitler @-@ Barassi (Peter Minack) - vocals

Humphrey B. Flaubert (Damian Cowell) - drums , vocals

Jock Cheese (Jack Holt) - bass , vocals , guitar

Eugene de la Hot @-@ Croix Bun (Eugene Cester) - keyboards , vocals

Jon St. Peenis (Aaron Cowell) - saxophone , vocals

Les Miserables (Andy Armstrong) - dancing , vocals

Former

Tokin ' Blackman (first billed as Tony Coitus) (James Paull) : Guitar (1991 ? 2008) (deceased)

Leak Van Vhalen (Sean Kelly) : Guitar (1982 ? 1991)

Genre B. Goode : Vocals (1982 ? 1985)

Les Miserables : (Andrew Miglietti) : Dancing (1982 @-@ 1991)

Jon St. Peenis : (Marco Fessey) : Saxophone , Vocals (1982 @-@ 1991)

St. Peenis played saxophone on earlier recordings . Cheese plays guitar on various recordings and live shows . Blackman arranged orchestral sections on The White Alburn (2004) . Flaubert programs rhythms and samples , and has occasionally played acoustic drumkits live . There has been more than one person performing under the Les Miserables name , as confirmed by Sean Kelly (Leak Van Vhalen) during the " RealiTISM " video .

= = = Identities = = =

TISM have used a variety of methods to conceal their identities . They have never officially revealed their names , instead choosing to use pseudonyms on their records and in interviews , all the while concealing their faces . Usually this involves the wearing of a balaclava , but outrageous costumes have been created for the purpose , including Ku Klux Klan uniforms made of newspaper , silver suits with puffy arms and legs to mimic an inflated cask wine bladder , giant foam paintings worn on the head , large foam signs bearing the name of a Beatle , fat ' businessman ' suits , and eight @-@ foot @-@ high inflatable headpieces among others .

Who TISM are beneath the masks has been the cause of much speculation by fans , with one theory contending that TISM is composed of members of other bands who do not want their fans to find out : popular targets of this theory include Painters and Dockers , Machine Gun Fellatio and even The Wiggles . A theory based on the band 's tour schedule 's roughly coinciding with school

holidays , and the fact that the Ringwood Secondary College Choir and Orchestra feature in the filmclip to Thunderbirds Are Coming Out , proposes that TISM are school teachers . Another common theory , based on the high incidence of football references in their lyrics , is that they are Australian rules football players in the AFL , however Humphrey B. Flaubert has stated that " We 're actually not AFL , we 're more violent and crappy ... so you 're looking at the VFL there . "

When asked why they wear masks , Flaubert replied :

The answer that makes me sound good is that we desired to circumvent the cult of personality that is inherent in rock music by choosing to remain anonymous . Unlike every other band in rock we chose to be anonymous . The answer that makes me sound good would probably also incorporate some lengthy discussion about Brechtian alienation techniques , about our post modernist grasp of ever cooling universe , and a dehumanising society encapsulated in the somewhat paramilitary aspect of our clothing . All of those things would make me sound good , but actually we ? re really boring guys . "

However , when TISM performed on John Safran 's Music Jamboree in 2002 playing " (He 'll Never Be An) Ol ' Man River " on instruments from Greece , the song writers ' names were revealed during the credit roll which read " ' (He 'll Never Be An) Ol ' Man River ' by Damian Cowell / Peter Minack / Jack Holt / James Paull / Eugene Cester ... Performed by TISM . " Up until then , the songwriters ' names were publicly available on the APRA / AMCOS database , but now the songwriting credits on the site just say " TISM " instead of the members ' real names . Damian Cowell 's real name is listed as one of the songwriters of ROOT ! ' s songs , however .

The song writers ' names were also published later , alongside information on " Everyone Else Has Had More Sex Than Me " when it hit success in Sweden and Germany in 2004 .

However , vigilant fans would have noticed the names years earlier . Hitler @-@ Barassi was photographed in 1993 at the opening night of Madame Butterfly , which was published on 4 April 1993 ; the book revealed the member to be Peter Minack , who later released a book of his own (Campaigning With Grant) in 2000 , which was about the American Civil War . The book contains thin references to TISM . In interviews about his book , Minack revealed he was a teacher , his father fought in World War II for the Germans and that he is fanatical about the Richmond Football Club , explaining his stage moniker .

TISM bassist Jock Cheese 's real name , John (Jack) Holt , can be found on a list of copyright owners on Mushroom Records circa the release of his solo album Platter (2002) . Guitarist Tokin Blackman 's real name is James " Jock " Paull . He died in mid @-@ 2008 of cancer .

Eugene Cester was revealed in an Age column as being the uncle of Nic Cester , lead singer of Melbourne 's Jet , however , it did not state which member he is ; it is believed that he is Eugene De La Hot Croix Bun .

On 28 March 2007 , a MySpace page opened for a Melbourne band called Root ! which the lead singer claimed to be " the friend of the uncle of the guys in Jet " . The page also lists James Paull as a " friend " . Humphrey B. Flaubert 's real name is Damian Cowell , who performs in the band as D.C. Root .

In the Jock Cheese @-@ penned song " Let 's Club It to Death " from Hot Dogma , Cheese drops his real first name in the first verse (" My friends call me John / But you can call me Breaker Morant ") .

== Timeline ==

== Style ==

TISM were distinguished from other ' joke ' or ' gimmick bands ' , by , among other things , their musical style . The band rarely in any seriousness stated actual influences on the type of music they played , except that The Residents were a band which TISM ' did ' notice and ' possibly ' took some influence from . A clear link can be drawn from The Residents ' The Third Reich ' n ' Roll video , in which that band wore Ku Klux Klan uniforms made of newspaper : TISM did exactly this at their first

gig . Another link may be drawn to early TISM tracks " The Ballad of the Semitic Nazi " or " I 'm Gonna Treat Ya to a Neitschze Double Feature " (sic) which use a similar naming convention to The Residents . Other bands which may have influenced TISM are difficult to pinpoint , although a Sydney Morning Herald article on the band described them as " a cross between Skyhooks , Dave Warner , Talking Heads and The Residents " .

The band were criticised as unoriginal for continually opting for standard pop song structures . One reason for this is clarified in their book , The TISM Guide To Little Aesthetics , in the following paragraphs , when asked why their ideas are post @-@ modern but their music is not :

" Give me a pop @-@ song , mate . Give me a fucking pop @-@ song . Not only is it more fun , it 's pretty fuckin ' hard to write as well . You can bung in as many out @-@ of @-@ tune oboes as you want , but putting chords together so they sound pleasant isn 't as simple as it might appear . It mightn 't be the Sistine Chapel , but what is ? Ollie fucking Olsen with his stupid feedback and cough mixture ? The Jesus and Mary Chain , with their stupid feedback , and their stupid stage show with 800 powerful stupid lights and enough stupid dry ice to enhance their stupid stupidity up its own bullshit crappy teenage pretentious one dimensional dick witted puissant artistic enigma ?

So ... what have you listened to for a good time that isn 't , after all , a ' traditional ' song ? Still playing the Mike Oldfield records , huh ? Still whipping Yessongs on for a good time ? Wanna count on one hand how many people have fun at a Sonic Youth gig ? I 'm not supporting The Choirboys , old man , I 'm just saying that the day some jumped @-@ up over @-@ paid self @-@ important post @-@ modernist cocksucker puts his foot upon his Fairlight computer in the middle of his 47 @-@ minute opus " The Silent Forgiveness of the Pig @-@ God " and belts out the chords to " Johnny B. Goode " is the day I 'll join you at the footlights of post @-@ modernism .

Besides which , pop songs sell more . "

As with most bands , recurring themes were present throughout TISM 's extensive output , the most common being death , violence , fame and prominent figures , drugs , including alcohol , and the Australian Football League . Many of TISM 's lyrics are tinged in fatalism , mocking both the superficial and the sublime side of the human condition and the desire for people to be loved and respected (even just in the titles of such songs as " If You 're Not Famous at Fourteen , You 're Finished " , " If You 're Ugly , Forget It " and " Everyone Else Has Had More Sex Than Me ") .

TISM 's keyboard sound was provided by an Optigan which keyboardist Eugene Cester ran through a flanger . They mainly used standard tuning ; however , Eb tuning and drop D were employed in some songs . Jock Cheese 's bass was prominent in the songs to a degree that head of Festival Mushroom Records , Michael Parisi , described the sound as " aggressive " and one fan , reviewing Cheese 's solo album Platter , described the basslines as being " heavy " .

= = Discography = =