



consonant

Clint Conley: guitar, vocals, songwriting

Chris Brokaw: guitars, vocals

Winston Braman: bass

Matt Kadane: drums

Holly Anderson: lyrics

In the winter of 2001 **Clint Conley** was surprised to find himself writing music again for the first time since **Mission of Burma** broke up in 1983. As bassist and co-songwriter for that legendary Boston post-punk band, Conley wrote some of their best known songs, including "That's When I Reach for My Revolver" and "Academy Fight Song." These and others would go on to be covered by hundreds of live bands and recorded by the likes of **R.E.M., Moby, The Catherine Wheel,** and **Graham Coxon of Blur.**



The whys and wherefores of Conley's musical relapse remain a mystery, but the output was startling. Conley wrote more in four months than he did during the entire four years of Mission of Burma. Working in the pre-dawn hours so as not to intrude on his real life as a television producer and father of two, Conley exhibited all the classic signs of a textbook midlife crisis or manic episode.

The initial gush of music was so startling and overwhelming, he called on old friend and colleague **Holly Anderson** for assistance with lyrics (she and Clint had collaborated on Burma's 'Mica'). Working from a collection of Anderson's poetry and prose, Conley set about nipping, chopping, extending, bending and, occasionally, torturing the poetry to make it fit into his music settings. Anderson amendments would follow, and eventually a happy outcome would be achieved. Clint has managed to write his own lyrics to a handful of songs, as well.

Most of the lyrics that Conley has fashioned from Anderson's poetry come from her "mesostics." A close cousin of "acrostics", mesostics are a succinct, visual poetic form in which internal letters are highlighted to form a vertical word. Unlike acrostics, the capitalized letter is mid-line & not flush left. 1 letter per line is capitalized with the subject/object of each poem running vertically, forming the "spine" of the poem. A given letter capitalized does not occur between it and the preceding capitalized letter. To impose a greater economy (in most of the poems)† Anderson has taken this one step further: nor does a highlighted letter occur again between it and the following highlighted letter. An example, from the consonant song, "What a Body Could Do:"

our dirt road was **H**ung, was draped
in necklaces **O**f wild grape.
pheasa**N**ts
quick grou**S**, too would flush
and jump**Y**
uS might
la**U**gh. dizzy and
swooning on it all. we **C**ouldn't
ma**K**e enough time ever
for **L**ips and hips and arms
to **tE**ach us what a body could do.

Honeysuckle = generous and devoted affection

The poems, which deal with themes of longings, appetites, and confusion, are based on a Victorian code of hidden meanings for flowers. Women of the late 1800's would wear dried flowers in amulets and charms to signify emotions considered inappropriate for polite society. Perfect material for post-post-punk, no?

In the late spring of 2001, Clint enlisted old friend **Chris Brokaw (Come, Codeine, Pullman, Steve Wynn)** to join him on guitar and help flesh out the music. Chris, in turn, recruited **Matt Kadane (The New Year, Bedhead, Silkworm)** to play drums, and **Winston Braman (Fuzzy, the Count-Me-Outs)** to play bass. They went into the studio in November, 2001 and recorded with **Bob Weston (Shellac)** at the boards. They emerged with 14 songs and a name: consonant.



Consonant performances have been rare, but should pick up with the release of their self-titled CD in April of 2002. They will be appearing at the All Tomorrow's Parties festival in the U.K. in April, and should be bringing some noise to your town soon.

