

Of Raging Pervs and Sapphic Delights

Pre-Packaged Lesbianism Goes Tits-Up

by Basil Joe Rocker
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tATu's Faux-Lesbian schtick went stale
toute-suite

They are young, they are beautiful, they are divine pop product as leapt from the subconscious of dirty old men, or at least their manager and producer - a Psychologist and the producer of such lights as Yes, Art of Noise and Frankie Goes to Hollywood,¹ respectively. From Russia with Love they come,² Sapphic³ delights heaped with all the wayward proclivities of their packagers- blank screens for the projection of male desire run riot. Why this product is being marketed to pre-teen and teenage girls is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. Perhaps the notion that such an audience exists was also based upon the creators' projection of desires - be it economical, sexual,⁴ spiritual, or on some other level.

As would be expected of such contrived notions, Tatu were fast burning stars. Having gone red and cold last year, they are now but a ravenous cultural black hole. As bubble gum pop of the Avril LaVigne⁵ League, they have become trapped in the maze of their creators. The audience has tired of the act, quickly seeing through the charade. The recent cancellation of Tatu's UK tour may be the death knell. Their show at the 10,000 seat Wembley Arena in London sold less than 1,000 tickets.⁶ To avoid the end of their fifteen minutes, the duo would require a complete reinvention.

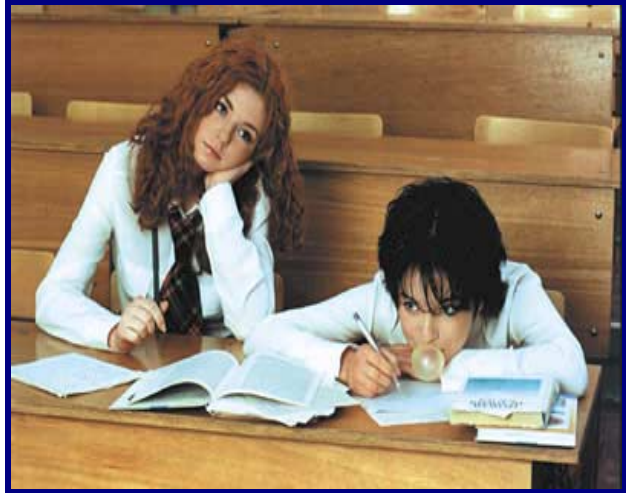
To give some credit to the ringmasters and performers, Tatu are not completely devoid of value in their present incarnation as faux-lesbian priestesses, though that value is small and specious at best. The duo best operate on two levels away from the pop plane: 1) Pop pornography for young boys, and dirty old men;⁷ 2) Specimens for academic inspection as icons of postmodernism, and the free play of signs and signifiers, not to mention the Jungian field day waiting to happen.⁸

If Tatu wish to transcend such a state of flimsy pornography/iconography and gain some real artistic stature, they must dig deeply into the very dark corners of the subconscious. Now, they are only scratching the surface, and are giddily amazed at just how many gold flecks lie just below it. If they just ram the shovels into the ground, they may strike lasting artistic success.

But this would mandate a radical departure from their current structure. They would need to stop kissing each other and kiss the manager and producer good-bye. Then the real

challenge will arrive. After committing such fraud, either alone or together, Yulia and Lena will require a great degree of assiduousness to regain credibility with an audience. Artists rarely rise from such ashes. But it has been done.⁹

In my many days of viewing and listening to the various media produced by Tatu, I have indulged in their offerings on both levels per above, and must report that I feel no shame for having done so, even for the second level. Despite all the overblown chutzpah of their piquant presentations, one cannot help but get the feeling that this Eastern European duo actually possess some real talent buried beneath the thick wrapping. Not just any performer, and especially a 17-year-performer, can feign masturbation ecstasy on camera.¹⁰ Looking back at this short-lived debacle, perhaps it has shown that Yulia and Lena are better as actors than songsters, and I must admit that I grant them many points in the latter department.



Bored Now..tATu redraft their resumés while looking oh so adorable and almost as excited as their audience.

But as they stand now, Tatu are, first and foremost, a fantasy - a fantasy of young nubile flesh tartly exposed. The girl-on-girl convention is merely a means of heightening the titillation by doubling the feminine in the throes of sexual desire, leaving the male part of the equation projected upon the viewer, be it male or female. In the viewer's effort to balance the equation, he literally becomes part of that equation. Yet, in order to balance the dual female side, he must double his own virility. This is why lesbian pornography - "women pleasing women pleasing men" - is so rampantly successful. It is subversive on the deepest level, not just by society's conventions, but to the deepest human collective memory. It is the lopsided subversion of the primordial mitosis, the first split cell, and the ingrained human need to reunify its male and female halves.¹¹

Whether or not Tatu are aware of this subconscious interplay is unknown, but the knicker twistings of numerous Russian MPs illustrate the madness that inflates in tiny conservative minds when the subtext cannot be seen for the text.¹² Yet anyone with a lick of sense can see that this is all an act, meant to shock on the surface, and not explore the vast wells of meaning that lie beneath and create any real awareness in the audience. To be shocked by this construct would be playing right into the greedy hands of the provocateurs. Controversy equals sales in the entertainment business.

As to the transparency of those pretensions, I cite the very end of Tatu's Jay Leno Tonight Show performance in February of 2003. Tatu did their usual "kinda lesbian" schtick with each other - deep eye contact, feelings up, and hand holding throughout what was a poorly done lip-synch of "All the Things She Said." At the end of the program, which was concurrent with the end of the song, during the usual end-of-show backslapping and

hubbub, as Mr. Leno was greeting the two members of Tatu, one of his male guests¹³ walked up to him and gave him a big embracing kiss on the lips right in front of the duo. It was perhaps the most succinct critique of a live performance, or any performance, in the history of the arts. Tatu just stood there smiling. They knew they had been called.

Tatu are a controversy and a danger to society no more than Teletubbies on holiday in Seychelles. They merely reinforce the dominant paradigm of men and money on top. Where the male creators of Tatu got the idea that the longings and desires of young girls are the same as theirs warrants a complete examination in itself. Perhaps the whole thing was some postmodernist idea of grand joke- a couple of playful and intelligent, yet very cynical men seeing how far they can take (i.e.- how much money can be milked from..) a contrived image before it disintegrates into so much shimmering pixie dust.¹⁴ It only makes you think- "What will strike their fancy next?"

¹ See, <http://www.trevor-horn.de/>, for more info on Mr. Horn's production curriculum vitae.

² Delight in the punnery or groan in misery and possibly your own orgasms. Yes, I cannot help but pun on this word when the context *arises*. Tee hee.

³ Webster's Dictionary defines Sapphic in three ways - 1) of or relating to the Greek lyric poet Sappho; 2) of, relating to, or consisting of a 4-line strophe made up of chiefly trochaic and dactylic feet; 3) Lesbian.

⁴ And rather pedophilic is this desire. But on such subject, I cannot preach. I must be fair and point out that these girls are 17 and 18 years old, young women, in fact, and of consenting age in their home country and most, if not all of Europe, and most US states.

⁵ I am walking on a delicate edge in referring to Ms. Lavigne as bubble gum pop. Despite her reputation as the anti-Britney, this Canadian lass, though unfamiliar with the correct pronunciation of "David Bowie" as she may be, is a very talented original. Her badass freak vibe, a la Sinead O'Connor or Bjork, may be offputting, but is most likely a sure sign of immaturity. I expect longevity for Ms. Lavigne's career as a solo pop act and performer. Tatu could do well to follow her lead.

⁶ I refer you to two (or rather, three) awesome articles at Guardian.UK -

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/features/story/0,11710,951152,00.html>

and

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/news/story/0,11711,886818,00.html>

as well as

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/columns/paterson/story/0,12234,752884,00.html>

⁷ Which is very funny- and deep in the i-word. The whole experiment was an attempt to tap into some Sapphic revolution as perceived by Tatu's creators, thus bringing together and ushering the dollars of what was thought to be an untapped youth market subset. Rather than tap that market, which may or may not exist, Tatu have gotten more mileage from aging males (like their packagers). Your scribbler is humbly included in the accidental audience.

⁸ See Tatu's video of "All the Things She Said," in which the girls run riot in the rain, making out for a crowd of voyeurs outside a fence. If this is not their very definition, I don't know what is. Also see Video for "Prostye Dvishen'ya" where one member of Tatu masturbates in the bath while pensive shots of the other sitting in a café imply that they are both thinking of the other in their respective milieu.

⁹ See Mel C, aka Sporty Spice

¹⁰ See Video for "Prostye Dvizhen'ya"

¹¹ My fave exploration of this subject is in Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*.

¹² Again, see the Guardian UK articles per above.

¹³ Indeed, this guest was Arsenio Hall of all people.

¹⁴ I do not expect any news soon about any upcoming Tatu releases.