

# Clinic

New album: *Visitations*

Ade Blackburn - keyboard, autoharp, vocals

Brian Campbell - bass, flute, vocals

Hartley - guitar, drums, clarinet, keyboards

Carl Turney - drums, guitar, piano, backing vocals

HARDLY ANY bands make it to their fourth album these days. And fewer still get there sounding as individual as Clinic.

Clinic are distinctive in the way that The Fall, The Residents or Missy Elliot are distinctive, it's hard to mistake their sonic fingerprint for anyone else's, yet because they keep exploring the outer limits of their thing, they always sound fresh.

This time, they have made a party record they're calling *Visitations*. Granted, it would be a chuffing peculiar party, but memorable: Screaming Jay Hawkins mixing cocktails, Sly Stone doing the lights and Joe Meek running the cloakroom. The music, of course, would be our heroes' signature bad-dream bubblegum, Bo Diddley playing Rowche Rumble and To Know Him Is To Love Him, produced by Lee Perry and Martin Hannett.

"The rule is: surprise yourself," says Clinic's singer Ade Blackburn. "We went for something direct and primitive - surreal ballads next to subhuman riffs.. I think it's the most consistent thing we've done."

Indeed, there's a definite sense that Clinic are having a gas here. And that may be because they recorded *Visitations* themselves at their own recently completed

studio in Liverpool. The new space allowed them total freedom to experiment and try wild stuff without worrying about the cost. The renewed sense of independence seeped into the lyrics, some of which are among their most upbeat and optimistic yet.

*Visitations* was mixed by Gareth Jones who worked on their debut album, *Internal Wrangler*.

If this is your first time at the Clinic ball, here's the story so far:

This quartet from Liverpool exploded into life about 9 years ago, making an instant impact with a homemade single IPC Sub Editors Dictate Our Youth and a clutch of EPs. Signing to Domino, they released their brilliant debut long player, *Internal Wrangler* in 2000, toured with Radiohead and appeared at Scott Walker's Meltdown. In 2002, second album, *Walking With Thee* earned them lavish praise in the US, where they appeared often, before recording the dense and spooky *Winchester Cathedral*, released in 2004.

Clinic are currently planning to make an album a year and have already completed some of their next.

This is how they roll on *Visitations*:

Family – a ferocious Beefheart-flavoured ballroom stomper. Fuzz on max. Ade singing like he's chewing liquorice and spitting rivets. Ends with everyone but the conga player exploding.

Animal Human – gothic barber shop quartet tussling with Eddie Hazel in a Cairo nightclub.

Gideon – you are lost in a mausoleum and pursued by the shivery ectoplasm of an autoharpist.

Harvest (Within You) – an ancient gong summons a laid-back tribal groover. The spacious first single from the album.

Tusk – an intense punk episode. About people’s need to lie, pop pickers!

Paradise – mellow but emotional ballad with a hint of the Stingray theme.

Children Of Kellogg – a steam calliope fanfares the arrival of the album’s lynchpin tune. The marriage of malevolent Seeds proto-punk and an easy-listening coda with sawing wood captures, they say, the mood of the album in microcosm.

If You Could Read Your Mind – Stones circa Satanic Majesties star in a Hammer horror set in the Middle Ages. A great future single, just you watch.

Jigsaw Man - acoustic pagan celebration. Brings an appealing new dimension to the band’s sound.

The New Seeker – pounding church-hall fuzz-fest with shades of ‘50s electronica

Visitations – “One more offer/One more Lie/Are temptations in your life.” The closing, title song, with its amalgam of melodica, jawbone and battered spring reverb feels like the closing, title song of a tragic ‘60s kitchen-sink movie.