

MANSUN

Paul Draper (vocals/rhythm guitar), Dominic Chad (lead guitar/backing vocals), Stove King (bass) and Andie Rathbone (drums) created 'Six' - one of the 90's most unique albums. It often baffles critics but since its release, the formidable musicianship of this Chester quartet has caused fascination and excitement among music fans.

'Six' is a detonator. Mansun are an accident. A car salesman, two graphics printers and their barman. They were friends first then decided to form the band. There have been around ten members over their short history but it wasn't until Andie joined that Mansun gelled and has *serious* long term career potential. At the end of the 90's, while there is apparently "*nothing happening*" in music, deliriously happy pop fans have tapped into loads of underground-based maverick band, including Mansun.

Mansun are not "*the next big thing*", "*single of the week*" or "*day time radio*" favourites. Despite eleven Top 40 singles, and two gold albums, they remain officially not cool but their song crafting and live performances are of classic, timeless, innovative and influential standard. They don't need to be cool as they and The Mansun Family, a cottage industry and a unique relationship with their fans, has proved.

In only four years Mansun have released many albums worth of excellent songs at a more prolific rate than Lennon & McCartney (an output of 50 original songs since Summer '95). This itself is an unprecedented feat. Mansun's huge talent is tempting original 60's & 70's music fans back to their first live gigs since Hendrix/Zeppelin etc., and simultaneously winning new young music lovers to their cause. Their story is already rock mythology itself, with hundreds of anecdotes doing the rounds.

Mansun were thrown from arse-end-of-nowhere obscurity to rock'n'roll stardom so quickly that they have had to grow up in public. They will return, ready to take on all comers, with a third album which they are currently recording - already citing interest after the shock to the nervous system that was "Six".

1994/ 1995

It started in the North West of England. Jamming as a weekend hobby around 1994, by '95 Mansun's demo tapes (and two initial releases on their own label Sci Fi Hi Fi) caused an a&r circus that got so far out of hand that drugs, top footy tickets, limos, trips and prostitutes etc. were on offer. They went with Parlophone, "*the label with the least bullshit*". The same A&R man that saw Radiohead's potential, had seen theirs.

Radio 1's Steve Lamacq had been a constant supporter from Summer 1995's "Take It Easy Chicken", 1,000 copies of the 7" sold out in 36 hours. From then, the cult of Mansun was unstoppable, Steve's support has remained constant.

Autumn '95 Mansun start gigging. Early shows are wild. Around the North West, additionally often violent towards the "plastic scousers". Even then it is evident that whether Mansun play a blinder or are shite-one-song-feedback-punk-nightmare, they are ALWAYS unforgettable (and one of the loudest bands in the country!).

At this time there was more adrenaline than technical perfection on stage. Also, sex and drugs and rock and roll joined a growing bad boy reputation. (That Mansun did not burn out by the time Andie joined in 1996 is a miracle. By then Dominic Chad had discovered that an allergy was turning him into the wild man that peppers early Mansun legend. He is now teetotal, and Taoism more suits his drifter personality).

End of '95 they pick up support for The Charlatans tour (while walking off stage supporting Whale at Radio 1's Camden Live!) and sold out of t-shirts every night after their set.

1996

In March 1996 "The One EP" ("Egg Shaped Fred") made the Top 40 (37) and in June "The Two EP" ("Take It Easy Chicken") reached 32. During this time their line up got through a beatbox programmer (Mark), two drummers (The Hib, and Julian Fenton) and found Andie.

By The Three EP (lead track "Stripper Vicar") people were talking about Mansun in terms of eggs, chickens, vicars and image changes. With each EP Mansun made an effort to look as good as possible, like all classic pop stars. They've often received derision for the image changes and there are still many who find them absolutely LUDICROUS! Mansun retain control over the production of their music and the artwork presentation of their sleeves - they are no joke.

Early on they were labelled arrogant/ unsociable early on. (not unusual to find the words "wankers" or "arseholes" tagged on to the end of vitriolic reviews). Not only have they got under the skin of their fans, they have also got under the skin of their detractors! Luckily they now have more friends than enemies thanks not only to a love of their music and performances, but to their natural charm. Their fans adore them loyally, and the band get feedback straight from the horses mouth as they are in constant touch with their most ardent followers (which include a growing number of journalists willing to stick their neck out for them) who they meet at fans'n'band aftershows on tour.

Their first festival appearance was at T-In-The_Park July 1996. Steve Lamacq proclaims Mansun The Evening Session's best band of the weekend! (This year they headline the Evening Session Stage at Leeds and Reading Festival. Expect their set to be a highlight of the weekend!).

Back then, for their first TV appearance ("Stripper Vicar" on TFI, September 1996) the 90s fab four - Paul/ Steve/ Chad/ Andie - are complete and have managed not to self destruct.

The barred-from-hotels etc. stories have also started to calm down. Mansun became a force to be reckoned with in all seriousness. From that Autumn's tour, journalist Simon Price noted *"They are one of the most exciting live bands you will see this year. Their audience are the most possessively obsessive bunch I have come across since the Manics moved from clubs to stadiums"*.

The cult of Mansun started becoming visible and international, as their first trip to Japan that November proved. Outside of the UK they are adored by the press and their self-effacing charm when people actually meet them is starting to wear down would-be foes in their own country. (In Hong Kong for instance, Mansun are rated alongside U2 and Radiohead and started this year by sweeping the nominations for their equivalent of The Brits).

In Nov 96: The Four EP (lead track "Wide Open Space") is the anthem that introduces the general public to Mansun. There wasn't enough profile/ confidence in Mansun for shops to initially stock as many copies as in demand, but after it charted (15), apart from some frantic re-stocking/ repressing it was constantly on the radio. It also became an alternative anthem in USA and early in 1999 was No. 32 in Radio 1 Listeners Top 100 Anthems Of All Time. The Paul Oakenfold remix also figured in many dance charts.

1997

1997 started spectacularly. The Five EP (lead track "She Makes My Nose Bleed") a Top Ten and Mansun having the rare - if not unheard of - distinction of being nominated for a Brit (Best new band) before they had even released a debut LP.

"Attack Of The Grey Lantern" (an effortless peer of "Sergeant Pepper") was released in February 1997, and launched at "The Isle of Mansun" a gig/ shindig of rock legend proportions.

The album reaches No. 1 in the UK album charts, taking everybody except Mansun fans by surprise and has sold well over half a million copies world-wide to date. It will take the highly prolific Mansun less than a year and a half to write, record and release yet another masterpiece.

From day one Mansun have toured incessantly and continue to mix small venue tours between the large venues that they now sell out. While they are on tour on Japan (Spring 1997) they make a video for The Six EP ("Taxlo\$\$") by throwing £25,000 in five pound notes around Liverpool Street Station and filming the city workers desperately scrabbling for the cash. Railtrack were up in arms!

Through 1997 and especially while on tour in USA, "Six" evolves in the chronicle order in which it has now been recorded.

A one off EP is released, The Seven EP ("Closed For Business") is not from either album. Magazine's Howard Devoto co-writes a track "Everyone Must Win" and later duets with Paul on "Railings" a stunning track from The Nine EP ("Being A Girl"). This is the only 90s band that interests him enough to tempt him out of "retirement".

By now Mansun are a law unto themselves outside the music biz, industry/media "inner circle". The fans are a big part of the Mansun story, a large enough loyal fanbase to guarantee repeated chart success. They ended 1997/ started 1998 in the studio hard at work on the lunatic rock genius that is "Six". Fans were invited to the studio to hear work in progress, the band retain a close bond with their following.

1998

Summer '98 saw the release of The Eight LP ("Legacy"), their biggest hit to date and, like "Wide Open Space", another cross over to a wider audience as was The Nine EP ("Being A Girl") which condensed a punk fury and pop melody singalong live favourite into a song under two minutes and The Ten EP ("Negative") a holy bible of a rock anthem that kicked 'scenes and labels' into Emperors New Clothes territory...

... And that is nothing to what is Mansun's second album did. Released September 1998, at a time when Embrace set the musical, vocal and performance standards for "Next Big Thing", "Six" was too much of a roller coaster ride in pitch black for some...

... for others it was a revelation and was set to be a love/hate debating point from day of release. *"big bold, scary, soft, confusing and planet-quakingly ambitious music which will blow all your expectations of what guitars should sound like into orbit around Pluto"*. (Mark Beaumont, NME)

"Six" detonated the cult of Mansun from an underground scene to public attention and confused everybody even more. The intensity of the fan adoration sparked tales of stalkers, and the rantings of the band themselves sparked reports of their wierdness. The tip of a huge iceberg was being skimmed. The sleeve of the album is visual guide to the cult of Mansun.

As Mansun began to cross over, the fact that they weren't after all, "ugly", but were in fact pretty boys that their fans - whatever gender or sexual orientation - drooled over, became apparent. By now though, Mansun had lost confidence in their looks and '98 "dressed down", their natural willingness to be "exciting pop stars" dampened by being a source of constant hilarity. But as appreciation for "six" grew, so did the band's self confidence start to return.

"Six" is an album which, frankly, only Mansun could have made and people have taken them to their hearts; Following a healthy sweep of End-Of-'98 Readers Polls (including best band and best video by MM readers) they played possibly the most exciting rock tour of New Year 1999 (starting with an appearance at Edinburgh's Hogmanay watched by their biggest audience to date, 60,000 and world-wide on TV).

“Six” not only lit the excitement fuse about Mansun, it earned high respect for the quiet, unassuming quartet and placed them among the higher profile acts of the UK’s major league. They released The Eleven EP on February 1st, (11th consecutive chart hit) and then spent 1999 working on their third album, breaking from their intense industry to play the Reading and Leeds Festivals, and low-key warm up shows ion Oxford and Ross-On-Wye.

This is, of course, a mere fraction of the story of the most inexplicable/ unexplained rock band. They are pop kings in cyberspace, so a good starting point for then is their website.

Mansun UK Discography (some release dates missing)

June 95	Take It Easy Chicken	Double sided 7”	(Sci Fi Hi Fi)
Nov 95	Skin Up Pin Up / Flourella_	7”/ CD	(Sci Fi Hi Fi)

The following releases are all on Parlophone

25 Mar 96	One EP
3 Jun 96	Two EP
9 Sept 96	Three EP
25 Nov 96	Four EP
28 April 97	Six EP
	Seven EP
	Eight EP
Sept 98	Nine EP
1 Feb 99	Eleven EP

Albums

17 Feb 97	Attack Of The Grey Lantern
7 Sept 98	Six

For further information contact:

Caffy St Luce
Hall or Nothing
Tel: + 44 (0)208 740 6288
Caffy@hallornothing.com

The Mansun Family: Mansun’s Ansaphone 01244 675442, website www.mansun.co.uk