

The
Eraserheads:
(L-R) Marcus
Adoro,
Buddy
Zabala, Ely
Buendia, and
Raymund
Marasigan.



**"A lot of bands have been political, only they just haven't been this outspoken. *Kami* we chose to be apolitical."
—Buddy Zabala of the current national scene**

Back in 1989, four college dorm mates got together to form a band that they named after the 1978 David-Lynch movie *Eraserhead*.

Ely Buendia (lead vocals, rhythm guitar), Raymund Marasigan (drums), Buddy Zabala (bass), and Marcus Adoro (lead guitar) admit thinking that the band would get them some attention from the girls—which it did. But they were all also seriously interested in music—which is what eventually got them hooked.

Before they got anywhere, of course, they received a lot of rejection slips. Radio stations and recording companies just didn't think that this band of U.P. students, though

campus figures, were worth backing. boys didn't give up.

A professor-friend helped them better version of *POP-U*, their den year after, the tape found itself in tl of BMG Records Pilipinas.

By 1993, or four years after the they were finally signed to a three-contract. For their debut album, th *Ultraelectromagneticpop*, which tu to be a huge success. Special notic the controversial "Pare Ko," a cut album containing graphic street sl

"Since the first album came ou less it's been an album every year, Library Science major Buddy. "So

heads

Text by Kathrina Manalo
Photos by Rene Mejia

year of recording, then half a year of touring, then another half year of recording after that and touring, so *parang tuloy-tuloy na*, so we never did have a chance to get back to school."

The group spiced up its career in '96 with "Ang Huling El Bimbo," a music video that earned it the 1997 MTV Video Music Asian Viewers' Choice Awards. This made the Eraserheads the first Filipino band to be so recognized.

But after ten years and seven albums, the group was suddenly not seen around much. Meantime, Ely has produced a solo album, something he says he can imagine doing again, Raymund is in Sandwich, Buddy is producer for Ichy Worms, and Marcus is still at his guitar.

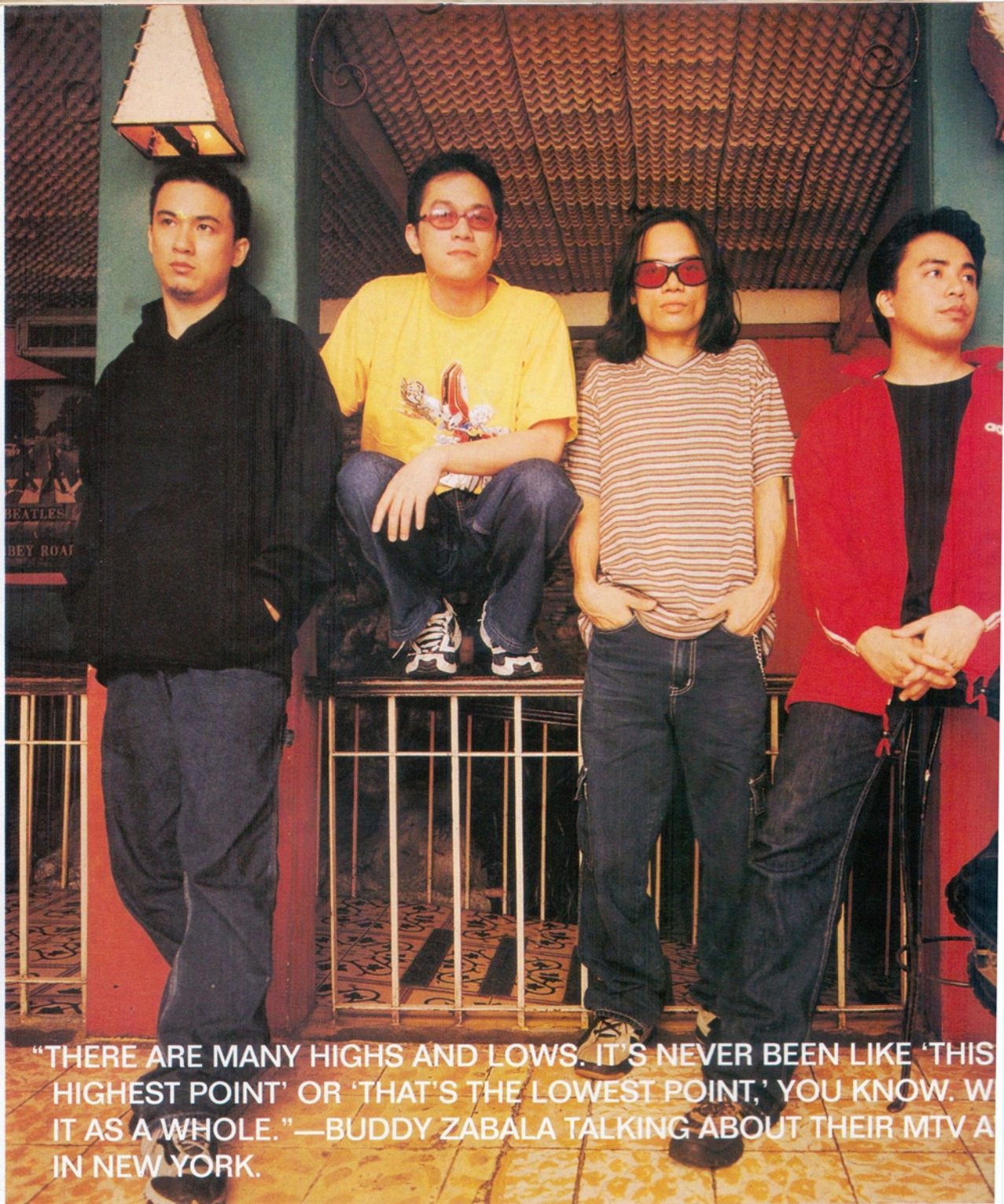
Bass guitarist Buddy explains, "We've been at it every year *na* since '93 so we had to slow down eventually."

But the bond, he insists, has never been stronger. "It's the music making. It's the process. We always liked what we produced. *Yung music namin* we've always enjoyed it, enjoyed recording it, and then we enjoyed performing it, we enjoyed touring it. People seemed to enjoy with us so it's a pretty wonderful arrangement."

He adds almost musingly: "Everybody has a sense of balance. It takes a long time to get a sense of balance of what you want to do as opposed to what others expect of you. Is that maturity? There you go. So probably everybody's getting mature."

Drummer Raymund puts it this way: "We've learned to respect each other's pace and musical ideas and trust each other's instinct. It comes with age. You learn each other's strengths and weaknesses and work around it."

Besides, all doubts about their longevity can come to rest. Their eighth album (untitled as of press time) is on the way. And the group has a definite new name by which to call the album's music: puck. That, the guys say, is the fusion of punk and rock.



"THERE ARE MANY HIGHS AND LOWS. IT'S NEVER BEEN LIKE 'THIS HIGHEST POINT' OR 'THAT'S THE LOWEST POINT,' YOU KNOW. WE SEE IT AS A WHOLE."—BUDDY ZABALA TALKING ABOUT THEIR MTV AWARD IN NEW YORK.

For the album, they enthuse, Marcus is singing again, everybody is writing stuff, and all are throwing in bits and pieces of music.

As they put it: "It's all come together pretty well."

Ely is revved up even about marketing the album. "We'll do it differently. We're not gonna do the usual interviews after the album is released. We can do more videos. And do it ourselves. Direct it ourselves—everything."

Finally, while everyone in the music industry is anxious about what 2001 will bring, the Eraserheads remains confident.

As Raymund sees it: "People always turn to the arts when they're down. When the country is in crisis, people turn to theater, to the movies, and to music. If you will notice, the healthiest artists' peak movements happened during times of crisis."

Lead vocalist Ely interjects: "I don't really

know if it's down or up. I just know it's fine. We get played sometimes on the radio. And that's all I want. And then they buy our albums."

Raymund adds excitedly: "People think we've got the best music in the Philippines. Where else can you find a club like where we can book reggae and pop and rock and hardcore in a month? Clubs are getting rock bands and it's like 1993 all over again except it's more diverse!"

Words of encouragement from those whose albums have all been declared platinum, some within as short a time as others immediately after release. Everybody's hoping that the band seems to do anything wrong is right. This one as well. **YES!**