

LATE NEWS

In New York, **Sid Vicious** is recovering after attempting suicide by slashing his wrists. He told friends he wanted to join in death his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen. Vicious is charged with her murder, but denies all. . . . **Rory Gallagher** has trimmed down his band. He's retained bassist Gerry McAvoy, and brought in former Alex Harvey drummer Ted McKenna. The re-shuffle resulted in Rory completely re-recording his new album, *Photo Finish . . . the Vibrators*. . . . lead vocalist and founder member, Knox, is quitting to pursue a solo career. . . . British disc jockey and celebrated intellectual Tony Blackburn describes **Bruce Springsteen's** "Promised Land" as "the most boring single of all time" and **Elvis Costello** as "a silly little man who doesn't know what he's talking about". . . . **Pete Townshend** on the death of **Keith Moon**: "To be blunt about it, Keith's death has opened a lot of doors for us. After 15 years I was scared we were getting in

a rut. We will tour with a new band. Roger keeps on at me about touring. It's sad but I don't think Keith was a happy person. If he was ever desperate, really depressed, I don't think he felt he could talk to us. We were his heroes and he had to carry on the act without us." . . . **Peter Tosh's** new single on Rolling Stone Records is an old Temptations number, "(You Got to Walk and) Don't Look Back." Tosh duets with **Mick Jagger**. . . . **Bianca Jagger** is going ahead with a divorce suit. Lawyers tried to serve divorce papers on Mick at a West London hotel where he was staying, but were unsuccessful. Meanwhile, it's rumoured that Jagger girlfriend Jerri Hall is anticipating motherhood. . . . **Elton John** says he's thrilled with his \$1800 hair transplant. El admits it was "100 per cent vanity." . . . Johnny Rotten/Lydon's new band, **Public Image Ltd**, known as PIL for short, goes under the banner "a product of your society". . . . Jefferson Starship drummer **John Barbata** broke several limbs in a car crash. Barbata's passenger died in the crash when the drummer lost control of the vehicle and left the road.



DENNIS MASON INTERVIEWED

Dennis Mason is different to most musicians you'll find interviewed in these pages. While most local rock and rollers are scuffling for a shot at New Zealand's limited big-time, Dennis remains happily free of such ambitions: "I've got no desire to go overseas and be a pop star. Trying to get it together and make a name for yourself can be a bit of a . . . pressure. You can do without it, man," he explains.

Nevertheless Dennis has not been without success. He's featured in several of this country's more well-known bands — Redeye and Quincy Conserve for example — and his name recurs on the back sleeves of more than a few local albums.

In 1968 at age 21, after a mere 12 months of self tuition on sax, he walked into the newly formed Quincy Conserve as second saxophonist. Dennis recalls the occasion with amusement. "When I went down for an audition Malcolm Hayman the singer in the band said: 'You're a wee bit flat. Play a B flat and we'll tune to the piano.' But I didn't even know where a B flat was on the fingering of a sax.

Nonetheless he got the job. "It was more my looks than my sax playing," he chuckles. "Malcolm was trying to get something together with a modern image and most of the guys that auditioned were either a bit old or didn't look the part."

He lasted four years with Quincy Conserve, a period that produced the bands most successful recordings — two albums and the singles, "Aire of Good Feeling", "Alright in the City" and, particularly, "Ride the Rain".

Following Quincy came a couple of short-lived units, until out of various permutations of a floating pool of Wellington musicians emerged the band for which Dennis is probably best known, Redeye. The grouping of Dennis on sax, percussion and vocals; John O'Connor, guitar; Frits Stitger, bass; Tom Swainson, drums and Bob Smith, keyboards. As with Dennis' other bands, Redeye rarely moved out of Wellington but, by the magic of the little square screen, Redeye became known as "the band that does the backings on *Ready to Roll*". And an excellent job they did too.

But Dennis does not remember their TV appearances with good feeling: "I hated it towards the end." Throughout its run the TV production team showed scant regard for the music — "After about a month of the show we learnt that if you made a mistake in your playing, you stop. Cos if you didn't and what they'd filmed looked alright — they'd use it. We had our reputation to hang onto but they couldn't give a shit about what we were doing musically." But admits, "We stuck with it for the money but anybody who thought we were making a lot out of it is crazy."

The album Redeye recorded came about as something of an accident. As Dennis notes, "most things that happened to that band came about as the result of somebody else's initiative." One of the few original songs that Redeye performed, one of Dennis' titled "Who Said That", came to the attention of one of EMI's staff and the band was commissioned to record an album. At the time they had virtually no other material. "We wrote the rest of the tunes during the recording of that album," Dennis says, "It took about seven months off and on."

Should Redeye have been allowed to record an album when they had only a couple of original songs to their name?

Dennis thinks so. "We were getting a hell of a lot of TV coverage and nothing had come out of it. So we thought we might as well cash in on it since we were unable to move outside of Wellington because of the work we were doing."

The album, as many NZ LPs do, sank without trace — about 400 copies were sold. But Dennis remains relatively happy about the album itself: "It was O.K. I dunno . . . it's a long time since I heard it."

Dennis Mason quit Redeye last year. As he puts it, "Redeye became safe and I just wanted to get out and take a few risks." Since that time he's done some work as a carpenter (his trade) and session work on everything from jingles to the new John Rowles album. He takes lead vocals on one track on the forthcoming Mike Harvey album.

Currently Dennis is holding down sax duties in *The Rocky Horror Show*. And thereafter? His ambitions are characteristically modest. "If I can get a good, happy band together playing to a crowd we enjoy and who enjoy us, then you can go for as long as you like."

"My mother tells me that when I was a kid if I'd had a hard time at school, I'd come home, sit beside the radio and play along with a piece of silver paper wrapped round a comb. I just like to play and I want to keep on till I'm 75 . . . at least."

Alastair Dougal

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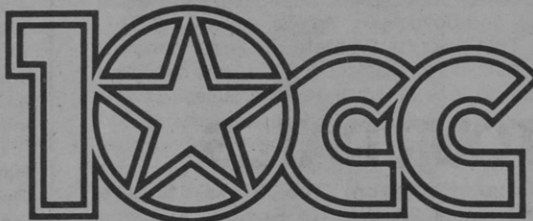
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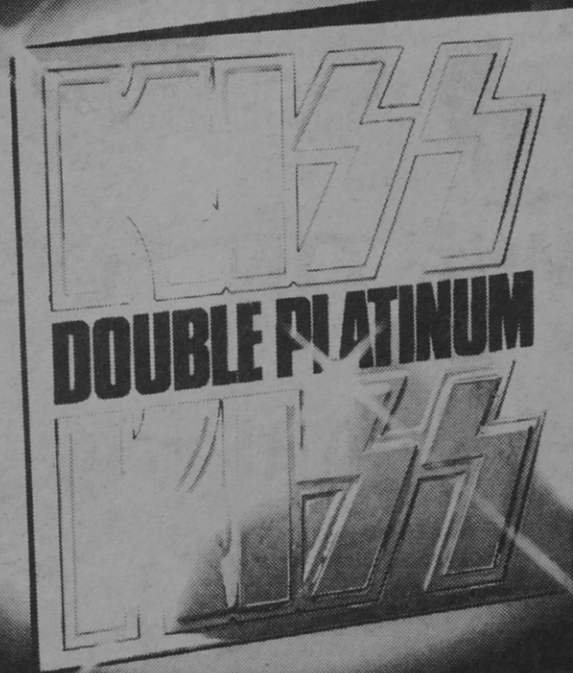
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Jazz On Radio

Jazz fans starved of their favourite music on the radio at last have an outlet. For the first time, a private radio station is putting the spotlight on jazz.

Auckland's Radio 1X1 (formerly known as Radio i) — 1330 kHz — is running a four hour jazz programme from 8 to midnight on Friday nights.

The *In The Mood* programme covers a wide range of jazz styles. Artists featured so far include George Benson, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Thelonious Monk, Glenn Miller and Oscar Peterson.

The programme is the brainchild of the station's news editor, jazz enthusiast Nigel Horrocks, who hosts the programme and picks the music, with occasional assistance from *Rip It Up* writer Ken Williams.

The initial response to the programme has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic and Nigel welcomes comment and suggestions on music for future programmes.