

PHOTO BY KERRY BROWN

RIP IT UP

No.88 November 1984



HERBS

Talking Heads Aztec Camera Car Crash Set Narcos

**CORUBA' WIN AN
ISLAND' COMPETITION.**
ENTRY FORMS ON EVERY CORUBA BOTTLE.



SHIPWRECKED

It was a surprise to everyone, the jolly old SS Caribbean going down like that, and halfway through the ship's ball too! Fortunately though, lifeboats were plentiful and tropical islands frequent.

One of which had not gone unnoticed by the observant Rupert. "I say chaps" he beamed, catching first sight of the sun soaked atoll, "I think we've struck lucky."

"Too right" said Tommy the sailor, as he encouraged his faithful dog Toby back to the lifeboat.

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CORUBA
JAMAICA RUM

While Dance Exponents' *Prayers Be Answered* went with most predictions in taking out the Album of the Year award, the band's single 'Heart and Soul' took both Single of the Year and (by popular vote) Most Popular Single. The Exponents' record were judged Group of the Year.

1984 MUSIC AWARDS

Justin Chills' *Chills* was finally recognised as the best Promising debut in the award band category. Chills' most promising debut. Other awards: Male vocalist, Jordan Luck; Female vocalist, Patsy Riggir; Video, Bruce Morrison for Dave McCartney's 'I'm In Heaven'; Top international performer, Tim Finn; Jazz record, *Southern Excursion* Brian Smith Quartet; Polynesian record, 'Aku Raukura' Patea Maori Club; Folk record, *Spring Time in the Mountains* Phil Garland; Country record, *You'll Never Take the Country Out of Me* Patsy Riggir.

'Heart and Soul' came in again with Best Producer and Engineer going to Dave McCartney and Graeme Myhre.

The Sleeve Design award went to Joe Wylie for the Patea Maori Club's 'Aku Raukura'; Most promising female vocalist, Meryl Yvonne.

Auckland studio owner Eldred Stebbing received a special award for his "lifelong contribution to the recording arts in New Zealand."

A Place To Go ...

Auckland's under-age rock cabaret The Venue closes down with a gig by crowd favourites the Mockers on November — but it won't have been a total loss. As the club closes, 11 young Auckland bands will get their first release on record.

All Dressed Up and No Place To Play is the name of a compilation album conceived and put together by the Venue's mainman, Russ Le Roq. From the dozens of young bands who played at the Venue, Le Roq chose the 11 to be on the album and take advantage of a Lab Studios offer of a day's recording for \$100. He produced and mixed all the tracks himself with the aid of Lab's owner Bill Lattimer and his staff.

The average age of the performers on the record has been worked out at 18 years, two months and most attacked their first recording projects with an enthusiasm which comes through on the record.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



UK & USA

Jimmy Page makes his post-Zeppelin debut with *The Firm*. Lineup is completed by Paul Rodgers (vocals, ex Bad Company, Free), Chris Slade (drummer, ex Heep, David Gilmour) and Tony Franklyn (bass, ex Roy Harper). Debut LP nearly completed ... exiled Clash guitarist Mick Jones has a new group called *Real Westway* ... David Bowie has been asked to play the part of Peter Pan in the Royal Shakespeare Company's Christmas panto ... Bono of U2 has been asked to write the sleeve notes for new Bob Dylan LP. He joined Dylan on stage at the croaky one's Dublin concert recently ... New Order in the studio laying down tracks for a new LP ... Aretha Franklin to play blues singer Mahalia Jackson in new film *Sing Mahalia, Sing* ... drummer Andy Anderson has left the Cure world tour after the last Japanese date and has been replaced for the USA by Vince Ely, ex Psychedelic Furs. Reasons for leaving unspecified ... blues singer Alberta Hunter died recently in New York, aged 89 years ... Elvis Costello has been repeating his solo concerts, this time in England and again with T-Bone Burnett ... Laurie Anderson has just released a five-LP recording of a performance in November last year entitled *New York Live*. She is also sticking with plans to play in the USSR as part of Performance Artists For Disarmament ... the Who's last LP is called, surprise, *The Who's Last* it was recorded on the band's last US tour and features four sides of live greatest hits ... General Public have found themselves as support on the UK Queen tour ... Spandau Ballet and Culture Club are competing to see who can book the most concerts at London's Wembley Stadium. Currently they're both tied on six each ... and residents of Thurles,



Jimmy Page and Paul Rodgers.



Economic Wizards

from whence the family of Boy George, the O'Dowds, sprang, have extended an invitation to the Boy to come back and visit with a traditional Irish air by the Saints and Scholars called '100,000 Welcomes For Boy George' ... Bauhaus' Pete Murphy and Japan's Mick Karn are now calling themselves *Dali's Car* (title pinched from Captain Beefheart's *Trout Mask Replica*LP) and have a new single called 'The Judgement Is The Mirror' ... Sky Saxon is back! The one-time Seeds singer is now calling himself Sky Sunlight Saxon and has an album of stuff recorded over the last seven years called *Masters Of Psychedelia* ... Wreckless Eric has returned as Eric Goulden and has a band called *Captains Of Industry* ... John Lydon has shifted to the desert in Southern California with his girlfriend ... reportedly a new Dexys album coming up soon, even though there are still lineup problems ... Jimi couldn't make it but his dad Al Hendrix was guest of honour at the recent UK Jimi Hendrix convention ... old Johnny Thunders is still up and running and touring the UK with Hanoi Rocks ... police have been raiding and closing down London pirate stations, including the highly popular soul stations JFM and Horizon.

Albums: Big Country *Steeltown*, Cocteau Twins *Treasure*, the Fall

The Wonderful and Frightening World Of ..., Eurythmics *1984 Soundtrack*, Art Of Noise *Who's Afraid Of ...*, Julian Lennon *Valotte*, Frank Zappa *Them Or Us*, Billy Bragg *Brewing Up*, Gregory Isaacs *Live At the Academy London*, Melle Mel and the Furious Five *Work Party*, XTC *The Big Express*, Visage *Beat Boy*, This Mortal Coil *It'll End In Tears*, Marc Almond *Vermilion In Ermine*.

Singles: Redskins 'Keep On Keeping On' (produced by Nick Lowe), Style Council 'Shout It To The Top', Shriekback 'Mercy Dash', ABC 'How To Be A Millionaire', Gang Of Four 'Is It Love', Sylvester 'Rock the Box'.

North

With lower Record Tax, all record companies dropped the wholesale price of LPs by \$1 the day after the Budget but some retailers will keep their prices the same, citing higher freight costs to be covered. It will be a matter of "aggressive discounters" becoming more active on a wider range of records, according to industry sources. The halving of the tax from 40 to 20 per cent will make it easier for companies (particularly indies) to cushion the blow of upcoming production cost rises.

Paul Agar of Marginal Era has moved to Melbourne for an indefinite period to further his songwriting career. The rest of the band may play the Split Enz support tour already booked with former Grammar Boy Simon Alexander on vocals and will then re-emerge under a new name and with a new singer ... expect a double live album from the Split Enz farewell tour ... Dance Exponents will stay in the country (they returned for the Music Awards) and forthwith base themselves here and not in Melbourne. They say it will be more financially viable to live here and play outside the country when necessary than it would to stay across the Tasman.

New Mockers guitarist is Brett Adams formerly of Venue faves the Bellboys ... the Venue is to close (see story in this issue) ... the 1984 Apra Silver Scroll Award for songwriting has gone to Hammond Gamble ... Wellington's Pelicans have an EP *Crazy Legs* out soon and are currently touring with saxman Andrew 'Clyde' Clouston, who released his debut EP, *The Bag*, recently.

Auckland recently defeated the Waikato lineup of bands in the inaugural **Rockfurly Shield** match recently and a Auckland v Wellington will be held mid Dec. The whole concept is a light-hearted way to generate the enthusiasm for local music that sport attracts ... **Legionnaires** have their first record for some time, the three-track 12" 'Nosferatu' b/w 'Shanty Town' and 'Waiting Room' (by Les White) out soon on Hit Singles Records.

Exploding Budgies recorded with Doug Hood for a Flying Nun release at the Lab recently ... both **Lab** and **Progressive Studios** are now 16-track ... Auckland's **K4** and Napier's **Five Year Mission** to release EPs shortly on a new independent label. K4 title is *Legs For Pensioners*, 5YM's is *UFO* ... the fourth **Tall Dwarfs** Ep, *Slugbucket Hairybreathmonster*, should be out soon in stunning fluorescent colours.

Quays nightclub is having a facelift including the construction of a piano bar and will in future be going somewhat more upmarket ... the **Big Wide World** debut single is now due out at the end of this month ... Ralph Bennett's **Fat 'n' Sassy** have just recorded two nights live at Hamilton's Hillcrest and will choose tracks for a record. They are also looking for a replacement drummer for Kevin Thomas who has joined Midge Marsden's band.

New in Wellington are: **Go-Go Yetis**, including former members of 1st XV, Freedom For Sheep and Unrestful Movements. Their music has been described as "sunny punk jazz" and they play old TV themes as well as originals ... **Glass** are a three-piece claiming to be like the Jam and the Verlaines! Drummer Gary Steele is not related to the editor of *TOM* mag — *TOM* has changed format in recent months and now incorporates more drama, film and other happenings as well as local music ... **Economic Wizards** debut with their EP *Starve the Lizards*, featuring the divine 'Pakuranga Girl' ... Jayrem's latest compilation is *This Island*, which features unreleased material by the Pelicans and Car Crash Set.

Aucklander **Giovanni Intra** is putting together a mag called *The Um*, specifically to help the NZ cassette scene. First 30-page **CONTINUED ON PAGE 22**

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RED SAILS IN THE SUNSET

FROM PAGE 2

"There was a lot of energy in some of the sessions," he said. "Actually, it was the bands with the most experience who were the most boring to record. They didn't try as hard."

He said most of the bands on the record were part of a loose community that grew up around the Venue.

"They all know each other, they help each other out, they're friendly in a competitive way. They'd get talking backstage, even exchange members."

Financial problems have forced the Venue to go under, nine months after it opened in the old SPAM premises in Symonds St on Feb 11. Le Roq said lower than expected audience numbers caused initial problems in covering overheads and when the Venue had to close down for two weeks in August because of violence from outsiders dealt finances a death blow, leaving him facing bankruptcy court — not a pleasant experience.

The problem had been with teenagers coming up from Aotea Square because of increased police pressure and coming to the Venue less for the music than to bother the existing patrons, he said: "It would be easy to become a racist running the Venue. Which would be odd, seeing as I'm part Maori myself."

But the Venue had its good

times too, highlighted perhaps by the final of its Liberty Stage band battle, which saw 560 people cram in on a Saturday night.

Russ Le Roq wouldn't be Russ Le Roq if he didn't have another scheme or two underway. And he has. He wants to get back into performing himself ("I still want to be a pop star — this has just been like a year off from that.") and has put together a band to tour in the summer, one composed of younger musicians rather than the experienced players he has used previously. He also has three tracks of his own, recorded at Mandrill Studios which will be released when he has the readsies to do it.

He won't be leaving his role as motivator behind, however. He's helping Wentworth, Brewster and Co. with a recording project and is considering an offer from the Waitemata Junior County Council to run an underage venue in Henderson.

All Dressed Up features Chinese Eyes, Stick No Bills, Broken Edge, Plastic Pegs, Autobahn, The In Crowd, Standing Joke, Third Wave, the Wait, Splitting Image and the Bellboys. So what will happen to all those bands now?

"I don't know, they'll probably all break up," he sighs. "But at least they'll have done it and found out it's possible — they won't be in awe of it any more."

Russell Brown

"The Axemen, or the new Beatles, as we call them." (D. Kilgour)

Take a cheap, plastic Japanese transistor radio. Assume it has a soul (it has, after all, a serial number). Take it to the top of a tall building. Turn it on. Drop it off the edge. Your control over it is gone. About halfway down the radio begins to realise it has no future. Nothing to gain by remaining under human bondage. From it bursts a joyful wail that is the noise not

of any radio station, of any programming, but of the radio itself. The sound of plastic and printed circuits and batteries. That is the sound of the Axemen. Maybe.

The Axemen: Steve "McCabe" (guitars), Bob "Brannigan" (guitars), Stu Page (drums) and sundry part-time accomplices like saxophonist Arthur Sheep.

History: Steve (17) has his roots in Christchurch's Gorillas, who revolutionised cassette releases by putting the tapes inside an LP-size cover, meaning they got noticed

and not just stuck on the wall or under the counter and ignored. He met Dunedinite Bob (similar age), they began playing together and, as 1982 was on the wane, Stu joined the band. Stu does all the great graphics. The Axemen have released five cassette albums of varying quality, all recorded either live or at "Peterborough Studios" (home).

Scene: (As pictured) Steve, Stu and your reporter gathered around table trying to get to the nub of the matter. Also present are Hyphen-Smythe (caught by the paparazzi at last) and various flatmates. Two people in the room are drunk. Guess.

Are the Axemen a rock 'n' roll band?

Steve: "At times. All the elements of rock 'n' roll are there."

Stu: "But it's also a jazz band, a soul band ..."

There are some glorious rock 'n' roll cliches on the Axemen tapes, done Axemen style. But the thing about the Axemen is they're capable of upsetting people — like rock 'n' roll used to. So they're a rock 'n' roll band. Sort of. It's not that they try to upset people. Quite the opposite.

"We just want to get those songs out," explains Steve. "You waste

too much time trying to sound horrible."

Live: Maybe what upsets people about the Axemen is that they don't sound the way anyone might expect. The last time I saw them they ran the guitars into a cassette player and from there through a graphic equaliser, which was used as an instrument in its own right. The result was a sound that wavered between muddy and tremendously assertive. The Axemen will use old stereos, borrowed speakers and so forth as the mood and opportunity arises. They don't actually own proper amplifiers. That means they sound different all the time. Bad one night, good the next. People won't always agree on what constitutes a good night, either.

Songs: Steve and Bob write the songs. They get together and jam, make up riffs and then put words on top. Their approach to lyrics seems similar to that of their music; they play around with language, use familiar words in unfamiliar ways, have fun. Lots of chaos, too. There is a high turnover of songs — don't expect to hear the same song more than once. But you might. They also have done "cover versions" of songs by Donna

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

LEGIONNAIRES



NOSFERATU TOUR

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DEC 3 DB MT MAUNGANUI Mt Maunganui
4 DB GISBORNE Gisborne
5 TAMATEA MOTOR INN Napier
6 MAYFAIR HOTEL Hastings
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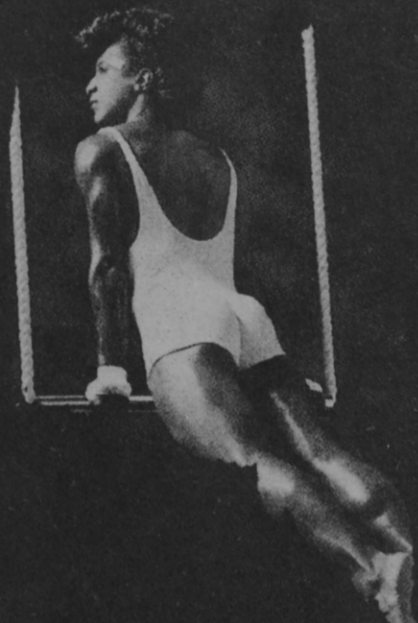
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Not Scared!

It is indeed Russell Brown's misfortune that he finds Peking Man's single 'Scared of a Sound' irritating. A look at the NZ music charts shows that many people don't hold this view. The fact that Peking Man have established a unique style is a credit to all members of the band and is refreshing to hear. I would suggest the reason you think there is something smug

about this single is because Pat Ulrich performs difficult phrasing with ease and shows exceptional talent, which you are not prepared to recognise. Perhaps a closer listen to this excellent single would prompt you to make constructive criticism instead of scathing comments.

An Avid Listener Auckland

When the Kids Had Killed the Man ...

The only way most of your critics seem to be able to "deal" with bands is to surgically remove the leader from his/her pack (preferably over a long period of time so no one notices). Stop it, it's really dumb and it encourages the worst

aspects of ego drool by the musician and the audience. Don't throw a band into a heap with the most important member on top, it's an insult to the band and often an embarrassment to the idolised/victimised individual. Concentrate on the music and the playing — the art not the bloody "artiste". It's a balance, quit trying to upset it.

Carol Blackler and Ian Stewart Christchurch



Singles bar

Chaka Khan I Feel For You 12" (WEA)

For my money Chaka Khan has already produced one of the year's highlights with 'Ain't Nobody'. This one stretches the imagination a bit more, spicing up the 'new soul' feel with snatches of street happenin' electro-rap. If you also consider that the tune was penned by none other than millionaire prat Prince. I'd say she can't really go wrong. Can we have the video now please?

Animal Nightlife Mr Solitaire (Island)

Animal Nightlife have been lounge lizarding around the London club scene for several years now. They debuted with a great but sadly neglected single titled 'Love Is the Great Pretender'. Subsequent releases failed to recapture that initial excitement until 'Mr Solitaire', their first British Top Thirty hit. Smooth and inoffensive, it crosses the Atlantic at the same point as Spandau, laundering its white soul lyrics over a bed of rich rhythm. Tasty.

Gil Scott Heron Re-Ron 12" (Arista)

A man with more credibility than Dixie Whitley, Gil Scott Heron has always been one step ahead of the pack. This is a marked departure from his usual style. Employing a hard electro

nest of tight programming, he raps his way through 'Death and Destruction' by Ronald Ray-gun. It's the neutron bomb from Lebanon. When you're wrong, you're wrong and when you're right, you're right.

Black Uhuru What Is Life 12" (Island)

I'm no great reggae connoisseur but I'm sure this one ain't the full quid. Black Uhuru are an ital dread band who have helped win many new converts to the Rasta cause, here they sound limp and uninspired. All is not lost, however. 'Party Next Door', one of the two tracks on the flip, saves face or off their faces or something. You gotta get up to get down!

Richard 'Dimples' Field Your Wife is Cheating On Us 12" (RCA)

Billy Jean Part 496, this thumps along in the M.J. groove thang but manages to beat the original hands down when it comes to lyrical content. All we need now is pirate FM stations to play all these records. Dream on.

Alison Moyet All Cried Out 12" (CBS)

'Love Resurrection' proved to be a real grower, I hope 'All Cried Out' does the same. Another Swain and Jolley collaboration, it lacks any initial bite but somehow leaves a sweet taste lingering. Maybe it's all those around, around, around, arounds.

Mark Phillips

1 Shake 2 Summation 3

The Chills

Dolebags (Flying Nun)

Mmmm ... a nice miserable song for Christmas. Martin Phillips laments the creepin' cancer of unwedness, staying in bed way too late, "Counting down the lonely hours / Drinking lots and taking showers". A considerably more sophisticated arrangement than previous Chills records, probably pointing the way for future recordings, and possessed of the same unforced creativity. If it's not quite the song that the two previous singles were, it's got a

helluva lot to live up to. I still defy you not to involuntarily sing it to yourself after three listens ... Martin Kean's 'Hidden Bay' is very short and very sharp. I don't know what it's about but it's great.

Netherworld Dancing Toys The Real You (Virgin)

Although this song is a stand-out live it obviously had to be rearranged for recording and, with the aid of Don McGlashan the Netherworlds have come up with their most sophisticated record to date. But the song's altered balance and mock-reggae feel do take away some of the song's tautness and impact. Still beautifully sung by Malcolm Black, even if he is only allowed to let rip for a very short time. 'Standing In the Rain' captures the band's live appeal but I think Nick Sampson has better songs ('This Town' for example) unrecorded. 'New Zealand Love Song' is just Malcolm and guitar and although some might find it just a bit too guileless, there's no denying its loveliness.

Katango, Pick It Up (Zulu)

Katango would like to be on the cover of *Smash Hits* and that's kind of a nice ambition in a way. They're certainly not going to do it with silly adolescent dross like the initial A-Side, 'Pop Boys'. But 'Pick It Up' is something different altogether. Well executed, with just the right sprinkling of pretension, it actually communicates something youthful in its grooves — and that's important, no?

The Expendables The Flower (Flying Nun)

Quite a change for the Expendables, 'The Flower' is a moody, beautiful balanced song. Michael Kime's bass defines the song's colour and takes it through its length, Jay Clarkson's guitar twinkles in and out and in the middle Robert Keys' drumming is all economy. Jay's singing sounds better than it ever has, now that she's relaxed it. 'Man With No Desire' is similar but can't quite manage the same grace. A wonderful single.

The Narcs

Lazy Susan (CBS)

The Narcs have long been very good at being the Narcs — certainly better than all the bands around the country who would like to be the Narcs. This is typical Narcs metal pop — low on redeeming artistic merit but high on eagerness to entertain. "Catchy"

would be the word.

The Rip Timeless Peace (Flying Nun)

The Rip had to hang around for a long time without the opportunity to record properly and in some ways this is a typical first record. There's a kind of bluntness which crops up here and there and which I think the band will deal with on their next record. Meantime, the four songs here are good and in 'The Holy Room' there are elements of something really excellent that hasn't quite been worked out yet. I've heard this record being criticised for being "too typically Dunedin" but the Rip have as much right to play their own way as anybody else. I look forward to seeing them live soon.

Working With Walt The Prophet (Jayrem)

I'm still having trouble making up my mind about this one. 'The Prophet' is Rob Hellriegel's personal perspective on Maori leader Rua Kenana and I think it has the potential to be stirring but there's something sluggish about it here, perhaps the rather standard rock arrangement and production (enlivened, admittedly, by the brightest acoustic guitar). I do suspect that Working With Walt will meet with success.

Economic Wizards

Starve the Lizards (Eelman)

Four tracks, of which only 'Pakuranga Girl' is really good. That's a sweet, tongue in cheek ballad addressed to Lorraine Downes and beautifully sung by Jim Steel. The others are pretty much unexceptional R&B, although 'If Anyone Can, The Vatican Can' has a devilishly clever lyric.

Andrew 'Clyde' Clouston

The Bag (A Funky Barp) (Eelman)

'The Bag' is an immaculately executed soul instrumental that's fairly enjoyable but comes across a little like an exercise in style. Clouston's sax is more upfront in Alain Toussaint's 'Freedom' (which is one of those tunes which really does communicate its title) and 'That's What I Like'. Great Eelart cover and I assume Andrew and friends had a lotta fun doing it all.

The Jumbies

Stuff Of Dreams (Flying Nun)

The Jumbies are in fact eccentric bass player Peter Arnold, who did it all here, with the help of Clare Timings on rhythm guitar and (very good) backing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Prince IN HIS OWN WORDS

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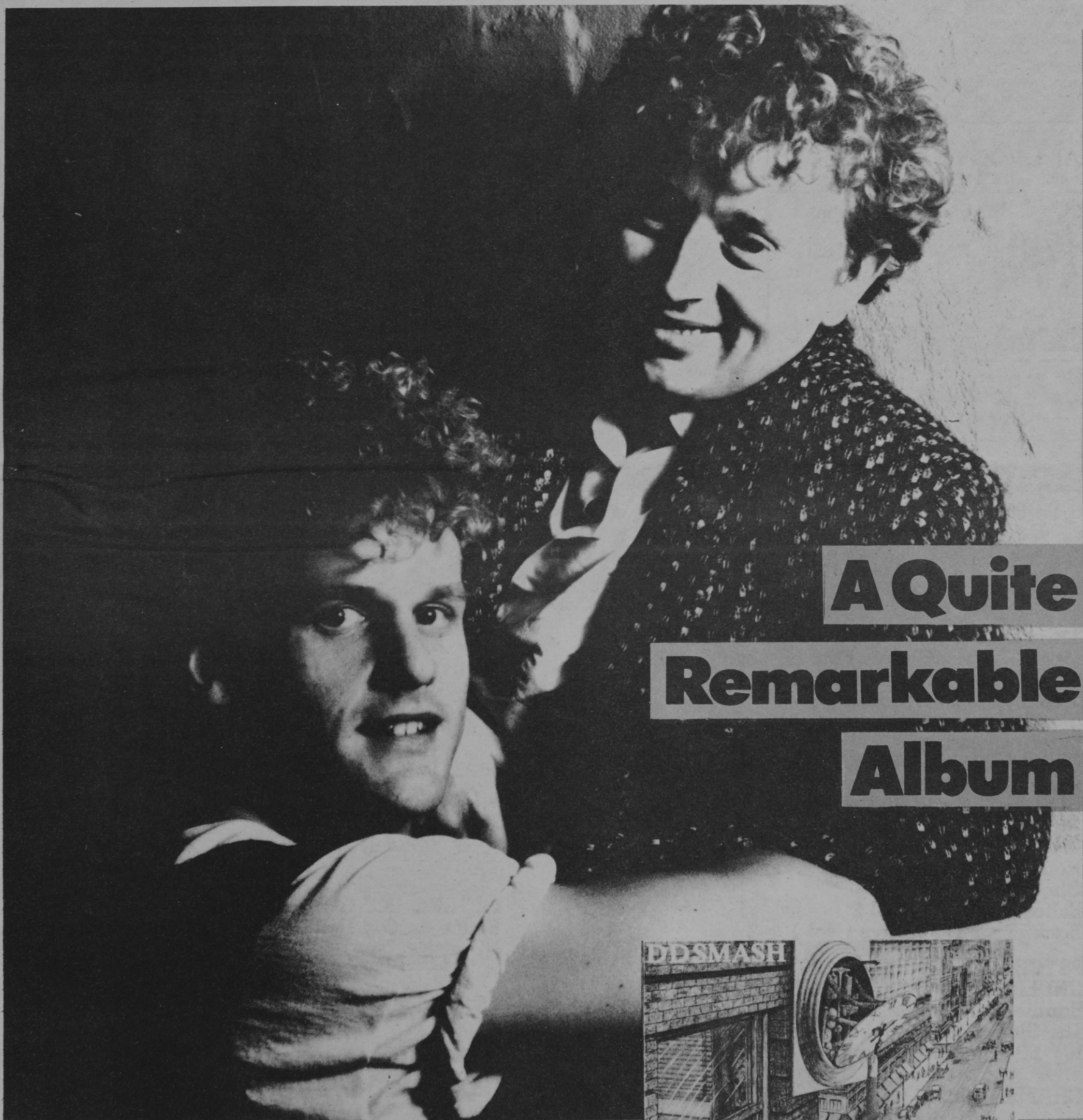
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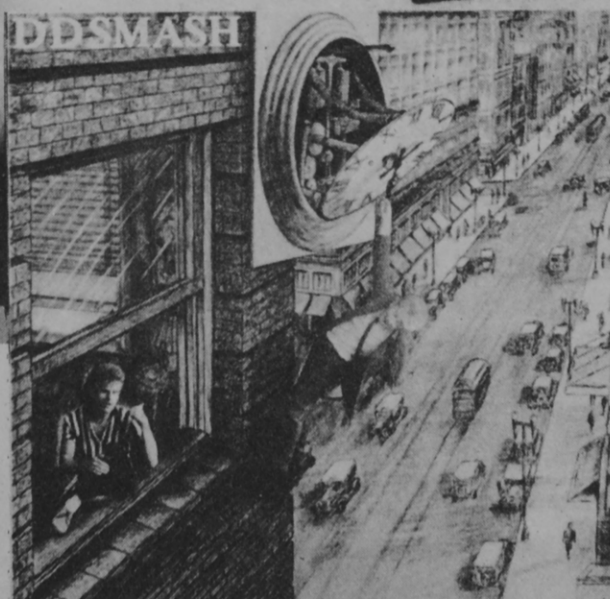
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S P K

J U N K

F U N K

"I'm Graeme Revell — I'm the New Zealander," the SPK interview begins.

Did you know that? And did you know SPK play the Gluepot on December 14 and 15? True facts!

SPK is Revell and his Chinese-born wife Sinan. Their story is an interesting one. Revell formed the band in Sydney in 1979, while working as a psychiatric nurse. The original second member (Sinan was yet to join) was a former patient of his, who died before SPK made the shift to England.

Once in England, SPK released a single on Industrial Records (Throbbing Gristle's label) and then more records on their own label, Side Effect. Through a world-wide informal network of letter-writing and word of mouth (similar to Psychic TV's Psychik Contacts) they found themselves able to sell 10 to 20,000 of each record, without the



SPK: Graham Revell, Sinan.

benefit of press or record company support.

The way Revell tells it, they were the virtual originators of the industrial-metal thing, which saw names like Einstürzende Neubauten and Test Department (who

filched SPK's ideas, says Revell) creep into the music press last year, becoming visible to the point where even wimpy old Depeche Mode got the requisite tools together and jumped on the bandwagon.

In a move presaged in interviews last year, SPK decided that enough of living underground was enough and signed a contract with WEA Records, with the stated aim of seeking fame and fortune.

"We felt that we had to move on really quickly, so it wouldn't look like we were copying Depeche Mode or something," Revell explains.

The first WEA album, *Machine Age Voodoo* is the first SPK record to reach Revell's home shores (it contains the earlier single, 'Metal Dance'). It may prove a shock to those few familiar with the Side Effect records — filled as it is with polite, dance-orientated songs — it requires considerably less chewing than similar recent Cabaret Voltaire releases. There will be those who cry "sellout?"

"Oh very much so. But I think the answer to that really is that why

should a band do the same thing for 10 years or whatever? That's not what we're on about, we're on about changing every time we come out. I mean the earlier stuff isn't all the same either, the first album is quite different from the second.

"And if people say we're selling out ... well you can do anything you like really in the indie field, the real experiment comes when you try and do something out of the ordinary in the major field, that's when the censorship comes down on you. We felt as if we'd done as much as we could in the indie field and that was the end of the experiment, really.

"This is like trying to get a much wider audience involved and then we'll go back to something harder again next time. I mean, Brian Eno did it didn't he? He started off in Roxy Music and then he started to do all his experimental stuff and a lot of people went with him."

Nevertheless, there don't seem to be many unconventional instruments on the album.

"Yeah, everything's been sort of cleaned up a bit. There's some stuff like diving tanks for percussion ... But in a way it's a shame that things that happen over here reach Australia and New Zealand so much later. For instance, it's a pity we couldn't have come to New Zealand last year, because the show was really over the top, violent, manic sort of thing. This year it's more high-tech. But I still think there's something in that, it's quite interesting. There can't be many bands that bring Fairlights there can there?"

Indeed, the Fairlight computer SPK bring in will be the first to enter this country. It and associated sequencers and other gadgets are mixed through 24 tracks by the band's engineer, along with noise from gas tanks, oil drums, angle grinders, welding torches and other metallic devices from the stage. Additional musicians are also brought in on conventional instruments like actual keyboards.

The first gig on SPK's current UK tour ended in a riot after the band walked off in protest at stringent fire

regulations which all but obscured the audience's view of the stage. The story at other venues has been similar and Revell again expresses disgust at the state of things in merry England.

"It's getting to the stage where we decide to just come on like a really boring pop band like everybody else or we leave England. The situation's getting quite boring in England anyway, the music scene's in a pathetic state. About half a dozen middle-aged producers run the entire cultural output for the nation. People like John Peel, who's the one hope over here — he's been cut back to three hours a week and on BBC TV you can't get any slightly hard videos shown, all they want is Wham. One producer wouldn't play our new single 'Junk Funk' because he thought the title was something to do with heroin! It's laughable but it stops you from doing anything."

Nevertheless, Revell says the live show can get quite carried away at times: "People can start cutting themselves up on the metal and that sort of thing. In England, anyway, I'm not sure whether New Zealanders get into that, do they? They didn't in the past — I remember being part of really reserved audiences. You don't get too excited, do you?"

There are occasions ...

"Oh yeah, I remember, after about 13 jugs of DB ..."

No, things are different now. Everyone drinks Steinlager.

"Oh yeah, Steinlager ..."

SPK songs are getting played in dance clubs on both sides of the Atlantic at present, a fact at which Revell is obviously quite chuffed. He has hopes for the second single from the album, 'Flesh and Steel'.

"To get what is basically an FM love song through in the American scene, if it hits it'll be quite a coup really. It's almost as if they haven't listened to the lyrics or they haven't understood them."

SPK will probably shift to the USA next year and Grace Jones' manager is already interested in handling them (at present they still do all their own management, production and press). Revell's taking

things as they come, with more of a sense of humour these days ("I've been too serious for too long"). There's a possible deal with Paramount pictures doing film soundtracks, Sinan would like to do some more acting and he also writes (he has just finished an interview and a chapter for a book on J.G. Ballard). "We'd like to try and get a hit in America, I think. And to gradually go back to something harder musically. But you've got to do things more slowly in the mainstream scene — what we're trying to do is speed up the possibilities of change and still maintain our integrity."

There's nothing dishonourable in Revell's desire to make some money out of his career, (anyone who believes in their art should demand the right to make a living from it) but *Machine Age Voodoo* is, at best, a mistake, an aberration. It's a story of horribly standard use of standard white technofunk instruments behind quite unremarkable singing from Sinan. The lyrics are full of half-baked metal age concepts, made all the more incongruous by their musical setting. It's not even a good pop record; its pretensions make it empty and stupid. Sorry, but it's true. *Now please* let the live show be great.

Russell Brown

'45s' FROM PAGE 6

vocals. Let me say here it's let down by a wretched mix which throws the cheap drum machine into the foreground and which must be forgiven. 'Stuff Of Dreams' is a personal declaration of independence, delivered with twisted, slightly familiar phrasing. The re-arrangement of 'Tears Of a Clown' displays real insight — someone could actually make this version a big hit. 'Trouble Sleeping' is an old My Three Sons song, I think, wherein lies lots of funky bass, a clever, wordy lyric, a chorus that reminds me of the Axemen for some reason and the best production.

Patsy Riggir

Laying It On the Line (CBS)

Perennial Patsy, who really does sing this MOR ballad to perfection. I assume it will be a favourite on the *Tonight Show*.

Russell Brown

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Yay! Issue 1 is here — with the fancy colour pictures, the flash design — a modern 80s visual music magazine. *Shake!* has its own style — full page photos (24 in colour), two colour posters (**Simon Le Bon** and **Billy Idol** — backed with black & white posters of **Ian Curtis** and **Johnny Rotten** — true!); a spacious news section (with Dance Exponents scoop news!); a *Shake!* Lowdown on **Dance Exponents** and **Mockers** likes, faves etc; in depth interviews with **Robert Smith** (Cure), **Spandau Ballet**, **Ian McCulloch** (Echo & the Bunnymen), **Boy George**, Holly of **Frankie Goes To Hollywood**, Terri Nunn of **Berlin**, **Joe Strummer** (Clash), **Pseudo Echo** and kiwi bands **IQU** and **Katango**. Plus there's **Street Fashion** photographed by Kerry Brown, **Soul Style** (good and bad taste in 60s & 70s black music), **Tina Turner** talks to *Shake!*, **Grace Jones** fronts the film news, there's an intro to synthesiser ownership, **Bob Marley** ... and if ya wanna know more, buy it.

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CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE

(The Narcs Negotiate the Chasm between Ashburton and Austin)

They call themselves a band for the eighties. They call themselves the Narcs — unless you happen to live in Australia that is, where they are about to be launched as the Great Divide, which is the title of their album. Confused? You won't be after reading this story.

Basically the Narcs came from Christchurch. Well, sort of ... I mean the drummer is really from Auckland and Liam Ryan is a North Island boy; but Tony and Andy started there with a different drummer back in 1979. In terms of Christchurch chronology, that puts them between Pop Mechanix and Dance Exponents. "We used to go and check out Pop Mechanix when we were just starting out as a covers band," explains bass player Tony Waine. "We were playing a lot of stuff by the Police, so just for a joke we called ourselves the Narcs."

Jokes aside, the band now takes itself extremely seriously. They are not content to see themselves as just another pub band. As Liam Ryan puts it: "We will always be the Narcs in New Zealand, but when we had to think about releasing records in Australia, we all sat down and thought about the name and any connotations or limitations it would have over there. Hence if Flowers or Alistair Riddell can christen a band from a record title, why not The Great Divide?"

"I'm sure a lot of people think of the Narcs as a three piece," explains Andy Dickson. "We have a great live act going for us, and we are a great pub rage ... show us any live audience and we can get up them, get right up them ... but we wanted to show that there was more to the band too."

"Heart and Soul" was a bit of a punt in a way," says co-writer Liam Ryan. "It shows the band as serious songwriters, capable of ballads. In a way it was a different thing for us to do, but with Dave McCartney producing, to me it cracked the ice."

Liam joined the Narcs last year, originally as a guest for five weeks during the tour to promote 'No Turning Back'. But after about three days in, everything had gelled to the extent that he was considered to have become a permanent fixture. He had previously been in the States playing country with Gray Bartlett and done three years in Midge Marsden's band prior to that.

"The thing that appealed to me about joining the Narcs was the songwriting possibilities. Publishing and recording my songs was what I most



The Narcs: Tony Waine, Andy Dickson, Liam Ryan, Steve Clarkson.

wanted to do with my music."

On *The Great Divide*, all band members write or co write songs. Nowadays the live sets don't contain covers either. "There have been lots of great songs over the years that we have done," says drummer Stephen Clarkson. "I suppose we should have released them before we moved on; we could have done a kind of Narcs greatest hits albums first."

All the songs on the album were written this year — in fact the band sees their record as a very forward looking project. "We're writing all the time now. Gone are the days of getting out of bed to watch the soaps on television then wandering down to the Gluepot for a few beers. We actually recorded 14 or 15 songs before we brought it down to a final 10 for the album. Some we found work better in a live situation, and others again come out amazingly well on tape."

Fellow CBS stablemate Dave McCartney produced the album; in fact he is much in demand as a producer at the moment, having been asked to work with Marginal Era and as the guiding light on the Mockers' new single.

"We actually approached a lot of producers," says Liam. "In Australia, Vanda and Young, Ross Wilson and Mark Opitz all indicated that they were keen; but there is the scheduling in of time to work with other people, so in the end we decided to go NZ all the way. Dave was already a friend, he had done a great job on 'Heart and Soul', and so we had evolved a great working relationship as well."

Dave McCartney is also a keen skier, which makes it a lot easier to convince your record company to allow you to take four days off in the middle of recording to go listen to what you have done on a Walkman and a ski slope. So the boys

all went down t Treble Cone, where they jacked up a most elaborate deal involving alpine helicopters, TVNZ and Nordica ski wear, and then four mornings in a row found them being airlifted and filmed for their video, in the travelodge to end all band clips.

"We really wanted to use NZ backdrops and views, rather than the 9 o'clock in an Avalon studio approach. This country has such great scenery from the coastline to the mountains, and now there is a chance that we can get MTV in the States interested in the clip — especially if we get some backing from the Tourist and Publicity Department."

Sponsorship. Today it is really the name of the game. Ever since Citizen Band first strapped on a wrist watch, bands have looked at ways to underwrite the cost of touring, and even their day-to-day existence, by linking their name to that of an advertiser. Things have yet to come to the level of grand prix drivers; where every stitch of their clothing is covered by a logo or decal; in fact a total sellout of a band to a plethora of firms would present an amusing sight on stage; but if you look at posters these days, more often a brand of liquor or soft drink is being incorporated into the bottom corner next to the radio station logo. Can you imagine the Narcs bouncing on stage at The Cricketers Arms with "hey alright let's hear it for Palmolive for that fresh scrubbed Narcs look"?

"We are out knocking on doors in our own subtle way. With the Nordica promotion, we each helped the other, and it was no big hassle. We met a whole new industry. People who might normally not come to see a rock band. You don't change what you are about, you sell what you are into."

The cover of *The Great Divide* reflects this upmarket thinking. Four little figures in silhouette in the snow; caught in the dawn as the sun comes over the top of the mountain. I bet it looks great on television. And this is probably the Narcs most important message. Life in the rock business is all about hustling. Don't despair is The Arts Council doesn't want to know about you. Seek other sources of revenue. Trading a television appearance fee for the airfare to Avalon to make the clip is just the start. Look around and make a deal. And by the way, the Narcs haven't really approached Palmolive — so there is one up for grabs to start with!

Bryan Staff

PHOTO BY BRYAN STAFF



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FRAME UP

The Boy Wonder Takes A Knife

Life hasn't been too hard on Roddy Frame. A few years back he and his band, Aztec Camera, surfaced on Glasgow's very fashionable Postcard Records, a label that harboured other Velvets' offspring in the shape of Josef K and Orange Juice. From there Frame and band were snatched up by Rough Trade, which issued their first album, last year's *High Land, Hard Rain*.

Since then they've signed with WEA and their first instalment for that label, *Knife* is imminent. And that's the chief reason behind this interview with Frame. It was originally scheduled for the previous week but "a tummy bug that only lasted a day" prevented him from reaching the phone.

Lineup Changes

Always a good place to start, any news is good news:

"We're rehearsing a new keyboard player, Eddie Kulak, he's Polish. He's doing really well, it's only taken him 12 weeks to learn everything we've done."

Frame's is a lightweight Glasgow brogue speaking from London. He's probably a little sleepy because it's before noon over there. And there's more lineup changes:

"We've got Malcolm Ross from Orange Juice on guitar. He's really great; I've wanted him in the band for ages."

Because he suits your style?

"No, because his style is at odds to mine. He plays like Bob Quine from Richard Hell's band. He had this band called Josef K and he's played with Paul Haig."

Why take on Ross? I thought you regarded yourself as a good enough guitarist?

"Yeah, but I'd rather hand it over to Malc as he does it in a much more uptight way. I sing more on stage and he plays more, so Aztec Camera has a different approach to what it was last year. It's a bit more aggressive. Some people say we've sold our souls to rock 'n' roll."

And talking of selling souls, what's this about Van Halen's 'Jump' being on the flip of your latest single?

"Yeah, that's right. It's a sort of 'Sweet Jane' version flip of 'All I Need Is Everything', a track from our new album."

That's an unusual choice of single from *Knife* — there are songs on the album that are much more commercial.

"Yeah, but that's good because it's in keeping with what Aztec Camera have been doing. I don't want the band to become part of the pop treadmill like Madness and Haircut 100. I just do what I want."

We Could Send Postcards

Postcard Records was always described as a refuge for young Scots completely besotted with the Velvet Underground.



Roddy Frame, Aztec Camera

"That's completely true; I don't see that as a criticism. That kind of New York music appealed to us because it sounded like they were describing what was happening in Glasgow. Their music sounded more believable, sweeter and melancholy and that's good."

Is there any such thing as Glasgow music?

"I always think of the Scottish scene as being us, Josef K and Orange Juice and that was the Postcard scene and it was very exclusive, unfortunately. People like the Bluebells and Lloyd Cole and the Commotions were never a part of that, so now the scene has become much broader. Now the Glasgow sound has become a deteriorated, wimpy sub-generation sort of Orange Juice sound and it doesn't appeal to me as much."

Aztec Camera's move from the cosy independent home of Rough Trade to the heady heights of WEA must have been a big transition and a restriction of past freedoms?

"No, it's not. You've got to try and work within the space that you've been given. I'd like to think that I could come up with at least an album a year and that's all that's asked of me. I write the songs and put them on an album and they seem to be doing quite a good job. Plus I wanted to get my records to more people and I didn't want to see Rough Trade sacrificing finance that could've kept a few bands putting records out just to try and make one of mine a hit. Rough Trade didn't have enough resources to make us such a priority that we are at WEA. I don't work for the record company in the same way that Nik Kershaw does."

We Could Write Songs

Last year Elvis Costello described Frame as the only British songwriter that he feared or respected.

"He was probably being quite generous. He's a great collector of old records and so I'm sure he stands much more in awe of somebody like

James Brown than he does of me. Elvis was very good to us when we went across to the States with him and he was doing all the promotion that Warner Brothers should've been." (Laughs)

Both you and Costello are similar in that you are both old fashioned songsmiths who can write songs in isolation from the social and political climate.

"It seems to be that way. I don't do it deliberately as I actually like to take part in pop and not be too far removed. It's quite exciting getting back into it as I've been away from it the last eight months writing and playing for no one but myself. I wouldn't like to be seen as some quirky character that was completely aloof. I want to do tours and make records but we should give my music a few years before we can say whether or not it has survived fashions and political trends."

Listening to Aztec Camera requires patience. Frame writes songs that are delicately understated, melodies that are unassuming and initially elusive. He seems to avoid the old songwriting formulas.

"Yeah, but I have my own little formulas although I don't like to use verse-chorus all the time. It's nice to put something different in and I like to make little historical references in my songs in the same way that Julian Cope does, by using parts from older songs that symbolise things for me. For instance, 'Old Man' by Love — I've used some guitar and vocal lines from that on the new album."

"Eccentric things like from people like Arthur Lee, Bryan McLean and Tim Buckley have been lacking in pop music — they had a more sensitive approach and I'd like to bring some of that back, although in a very deliberate fashion."

What inspires you to write songs?

"Division. The whole of *Knife* is about that. It's been a subconscious thing, but in retrospect I think a lot of my songs have been about division, either division of the brain, ie, left and right or the whole idea of two lovers who have split or the idea of self-division. You can see it in titles like 'Backwards and Forwards' and 'Pillar To Post'. I like opposites."

Do you find songwriting difficult?

"No, I seem to be quite good at it. I'm so aware of what I don't want to the extent where I can force myself into a corner — that's on my worst days. On my best days I can come up with something good. I don't want to start churning out riff after riff. We're not the kind of group who says, "Oh wow, that's a great bassline, let's jam around and see if anything comes out of the air, man." Some people can pull it off — Echo and the Bunnymen, for instance — but it's very hit and miss. What I do is much more to the point. I write songs, rehearse them, play them live and on record, rather than collaborating in some sort of democracy. I don't have that idea at all. I'm a songwriter and I work with a bass player, a drummer and a guitarist."

As a writer you're improving but rock 'n' roll seems to be getting worse.

"I don't think it's getting worse but there's not many things around just now that I'd want to compete with. I'd like to have the respect that someone like Scritti Politti's Green has here rather than have the 10-minute ride of someone like Nik Kershaw which doesn't seem built to last."

As a live band Aztec Camera have a reputation as being low-key. There's no flash or theatrics, just the band and their music.

"It doesn't have to be low-key but the Postcard thing wanted to be different from what was going on at the time, which was people running around in new wave outfits with exploding guitars and this big rock sound was coming back and we wanted to be removed from that. And

now everyone's got their acoustic guitars out and myself, Malcolm and Edwin are getting back to the old electric sound of rock 'n' roll."

Paolo Hewitt of *NME* accused the band of lacking style, in an interview he did with you last year.

"Yeah, but he seems to be some sort of Jam fan (disgust evident on those last two words) and I think we've got style. Our style is such that we can just stand and play and sometimes it really comes off and people want to stand and sing along with us a lot of the time rather than punch their fists in the air. Our style is something that transcends the current trends and I've always been happy with the way the band's performed on stage. I don't see it as a problem."

Knife

Last year's *High Land, Hard Rain* album served as the collecting place for the early Aztec Camera singles like 'We Could Send Letters', 'Pillar To Post' and the later 'Oblivious', as well as revealing Frame's deft and deceptive talents in the likes of 'Walk Out To Winter' and 'Down the Dip'.

"It took us a long time to get round to making our first album. It suits us as it was very much in keeping with the way we sounded then. I'm not ashamed of anything that's on it and *Knife* is a continuation of it really."

Knife is definitely a second album; few bands could have made an album this sure on first attempt. It has a unity of sound, approach, philosophy and assurance that bypass the formative charms of *High Land*. But that's to be expected. *Knife* is produced by Mark Knopfler and although he doesn't play on it his influence and guitar sound are evident.

"Yeah, but he's got a nice idea of guitar sounds that I wanted to use. I love the sort of classical thing I used on 'We Could Send Letters' but this is more a Fender album, as I was much more into Fender guitars and that was an influence of Malcolm's and Mark's. The album's consistency is a credit to Mark as he's a good hard worker who wouldn't have let something go if it wasn't right. He's very aware of his profession."

The new single, 'All I Need Is Everything', tapers off with some tasty guitar runs.

"Yeah, that was fun to do. The keyboard player had these great chords and the band just played around them. We don't do that very often but it was great, it was much looser."

The first track, 'Still On Fire', which is an obvious single, sounds Orange Juice-ish.

"I think it's more like a much rougher, more British 'Young Americans' — that guitar sound, it's very white."

Speaking of America, what about 'Just Like the USA'?

"I went to New Orleans for 10 weeks and I wrote it there, in fact I ended up writing about 10 songs there. I spent the whole time in my bedroom with this little Portastudio. That track sums up a lot of things about America for me, even down to the way I've played and arranged it."

It's full of cliches.

"Yeah, I like cliches. I took the middle eight from Otis Redding's 'Try A Little Tenderness'."

You've said 'Head Is Happy' is like the Velvet Underground. In what way?

"The piano figure is like the Velvets and the horn section is like Love. The song has different themes in it and the way the first line ("I recall the biggest beach") is sung reminds me of the Velvets. These things just seem to come out, they're not premeditated."

The most important songs on the album seem to be the title track and 'Backdoor To Heaven'.

"Yeah, they're very stark, they hinge on atmosphere. The one I'm particularly pleased with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

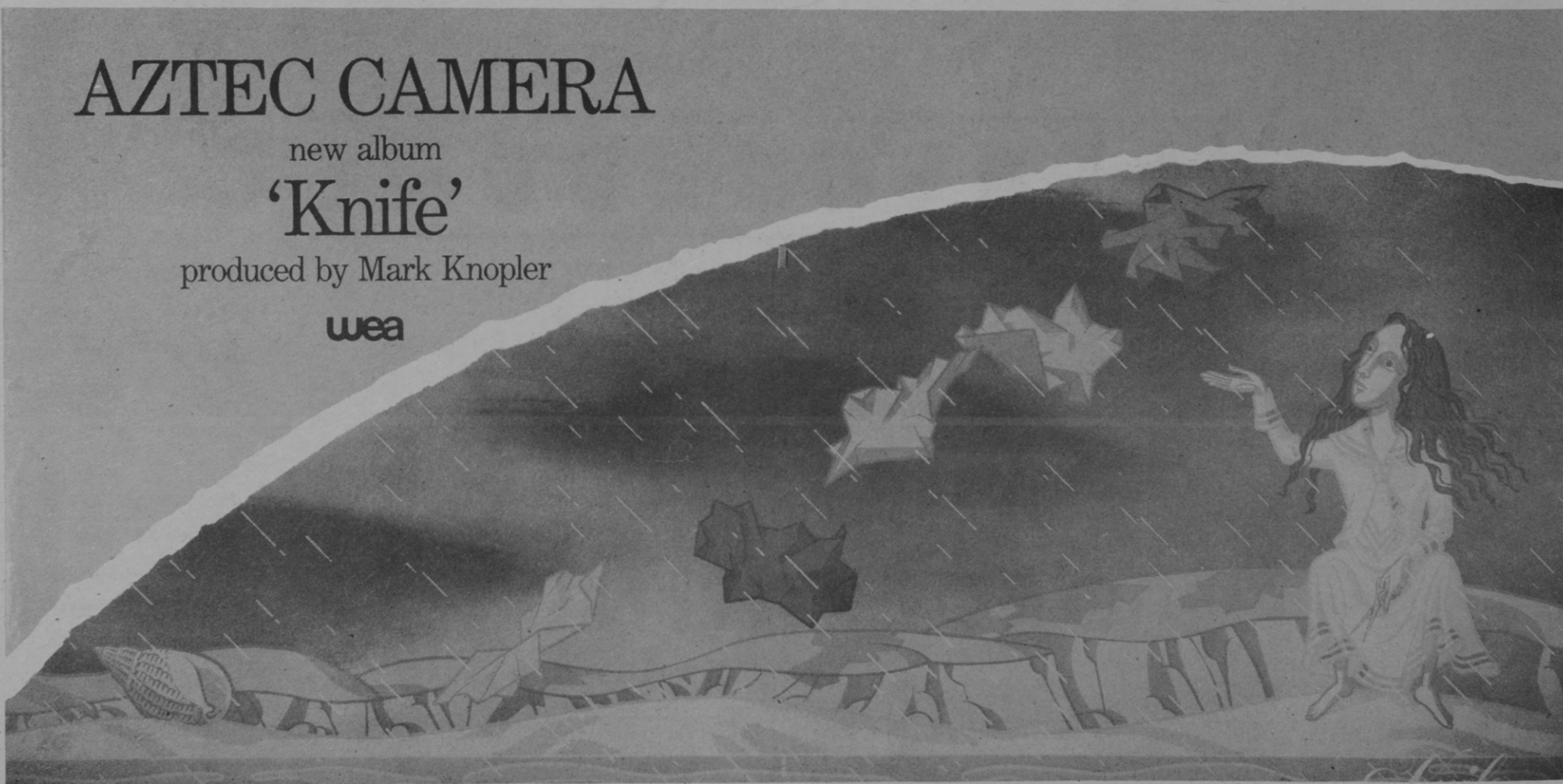
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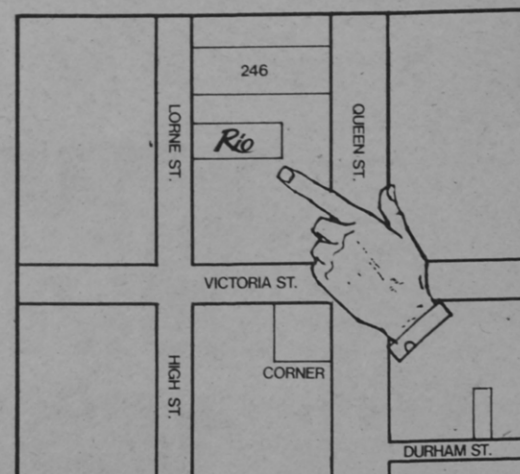
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TALKING HEADS START MAKING MOVIES

As a band whose art school roots still show through, Talking Heads will surprise nobody with their current foray into the world of film. What is a surprise is that their first major cinematic venture, *Stop Making Sense*, turns out to be a relatively conventional in-concert movie filmed in Los Angeles during their last North American tour.

The digitally-recorded live album of the same name has already become a big seller internationally, thanks to its accurate depiction of America's most influential new music band in full flight.

While it rarely strays from the realms of the orthodox, *Stop Making Sense* is a superior example of the concert film genre. When a movie audience applaud after every song, you know you've done a fine job of convincing them that they really are at a show and that is exactly what happened when the movie was screened as a gala premiere at the Toronto Film Festival recently.

"When it was shown in Germany, the audience were dancing. The theatre smelled like a gymnasium, it was great," drummer Chris Frantz told a festival press conference that also featured his wife, bassist Tina Weymouth, their young son Robin, Heads mainman David Byrne and film director Jonathan Demme.

As the man behind such films as *Swing Shift*, *Melvin and Howard* and *Citizen Band*, Demme has earned a reputation as one of America's best young directors, but it is clear that he views this film as a real labour of love. He is a fan first, a film maker second.

"I have such affection for every part of the show and the band," he states with unquestionable sincerity.

"Jonathan approached me with the idea of the



film," explains Byrne. "Because of the nature and scale of the show, I felt it would look better on film than video. The film shows what the band and its staging is like. When we began our tour we played a lot of open air places in semi-twilight, so we couldn't use elaborate lighting. We wanted something that would use it."

Remaining in light, indeed. David Byrne is credited with conceiving the striking stage lighting and his elaborate schemes are precisely recorded by cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth, responsible for the visual power of *Altered States* and *Blade Runner*.

Jonathan Demme saw his role as director as a straightforward one: "The show itself is so cinematic. My role was discreetly interpretive, to present the band's values without messing it up."

Why is *Stop Making Sense* such a literal film? "There was enough going on onstage, enough interaction, that there was not much of a need for other things to be imposed upon it," Byrne responds.

There is some symbolism in the opening sequences of the movie; Byrne sings 'Psycho Killer' alone on a sparse set and is joined piece by piece by the other members of the ensemble.

"The way the concert takes place traces the evolution of Talking Heads. It was part of the concept to have a rehearsal hall atmosphere early on," acknowledges Demme.

Stop Making Sense is being compared in terms of quality to another concert film, Martin Scorsese's tribute to the Band, *The Last Waltz*. Why do so many young American directors feel compelled to make films with a rock 'n' roll theme?

"Most people I know of my generation have a love for the music. What better way to marry the two obsessions — music and film — than to make a film like this?" says Demme.

In turn, Talking Heads and Byrne in particular are being drawn into the media of film, live theatre and television.

"David and I shot a half-hour comedy, *Survival Guide*, for Public Television three months ago," informs Demme. "A little over the top, but promising," is the way he rates the head Head's TV acting debut.

"I grew a moustache and got to play a jerk," is how Byrne describes his role.

Byrne is currently scoring a new feature film, *True Stories*, and if this project gets off the ground he will both act in and direct the movie, with the other Talking Heads also appearing and singing in the picture.

His best known move into live theatre was his *Catherine Wheel* collaboration with noted choreographer Twyla Tharp and he recently wrote the music for and helped with the staging of *Kneeplays*, a theatre piece by avant-garde playwright Robert Wilson (*Einstein On the Beach*).

"I did it in Minneapolis and they hope to tour it. We recorded a score that will become available on record."

As director of the last two Talking Heads videos, 'Burning Down the House' and 'This Must Be the Place', Byrne has already shown a flair for film-making. The band funded *Stop Making Sense* themselves (on an \$800,000 budget) but the fate of future projects will depend on their ability to raise the readies required.

"Just how much money do these people think we have?" sighs Byrne at one point. "John Waters (director of bad taste classics *Pink Flamingos* and *Polyester*, among others) was once asked what he'd do if he had twice as much money to make a film and he said he'd make two movies. I don't feel much differently. Figure out what you want to do and do it that way. Don't use extra money just because you've got it — put it in your pocket!"

The odd flash of humour occasionally comes from Byrne, but his standard pose/persona as the twitchily neurotic intellectual does get tiresome. In contrast, Weymouth, Frantz and Demme are outgoing and amiable; the kind of people you'd far sooner invite to a party.

Fortunately for the sake of Talking Heads concerts and for the sake of the movie, Byrne has discovered he can move and his patented mad marionette dancing is one of the highlights of the film.

"I think when we began we reacted to the excesses of the rock shows around us. We pared everything down to the basics and that meant

reducing all movements down to a twitch. As the years have gone by, I've developed some intuition about moving and the staging ideas I believe in have been brought in as appropriate," he stresses.

"A lot of rock groups go for a really heroic stance. In our own way, I think we're doing the same thing, but in a very different way."

This new emphasis on film and TV projects perhaps does not augur well for those Heads fans after some new sounds rather than new images. After all, the release of the *Stop Making Sense* soundtrack album means that two of the past three Talking Heads records have been live/greatest hits packages.

Byrne's curt response — "I wrote the day before yesterday." — doesn't inspire too much confidence either. Similarly, the band won't consider touring before new material has been recorded.

"Realistically, we can't tour again until there is another Tom Tom Club and Talking Heads album out. We're not really that prolific, y'know," Chris Frantz claims euphemistically.

But let's not get pessimistic. When the band members last returned from solo diversions, the result was *Speaking In Tongues*, the band's biggest album to date.

Byrne: "Everyone seemed refreshed by having worked on their own projects. It meant we were kind of excited about playing together again."

Kerry Doole

'FRAME' FROM PAGE 14

is 'Knife', because I wrote that guitar part with Malcolm completely in mind and I think I used the elements in the group better than ever before."

Does the band contribute anything?

"Of course, much more so than before. The rhythm section is, I think the rock 'n' roll term is 'shit hot', they're really tight and soulful. Campbell and Dave play like a machine sometimes and that's something the old Aztec Camera lacked."

Back to 'Backdoor To Heaven' and 'Knife', they seem to be about chance:

"There is that idea of chance in that certain things are outside our control, the idea that a child could have the trigger and the idea of understanding that we can't dis-invent nuclear weapons. They're here and they could rip the sky wide open if somebody incapable is in charge."

If 'Down The Dip' was the acoustic finale to *High Land* then the nearest thing on *Knife* has to be the catchy philosophies of 'Birth Of the True':

"It occurred to me that the acoustic intro is really the first thing that most people play on an acoustic guitar. I can remember playing things like that all the time when I couldn't really play very well. Neil Young springs to mind. My favourite chords used to be things like B flat diminished but now I like things like G because they ring so well."

"I didn't spend a lot of time writing that song as you've got to be careful you don't labour things too much. That used to be one of my criticisms of Costello, that some of his stuff sounded too clever and it shouldn't be too far removed from the idea of someone talking to you."

"The 'Birth Of the True' is a sort of vow and I didn't want to become too bogged down in the cleverness of it. There's millions of people who can think up something clever but the important people are those who say something meaningful."

Frame fits into the latter.

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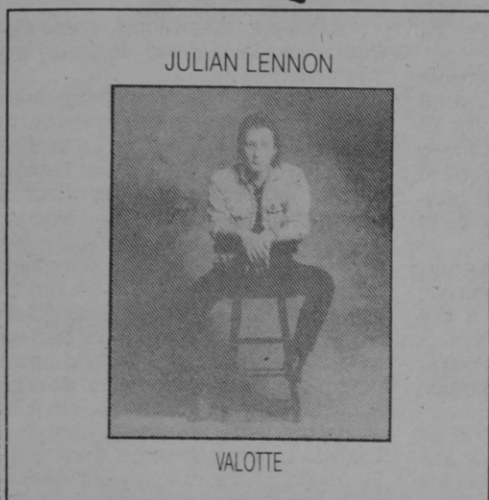
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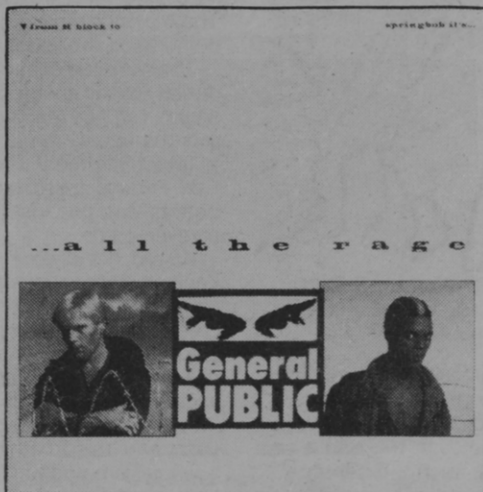
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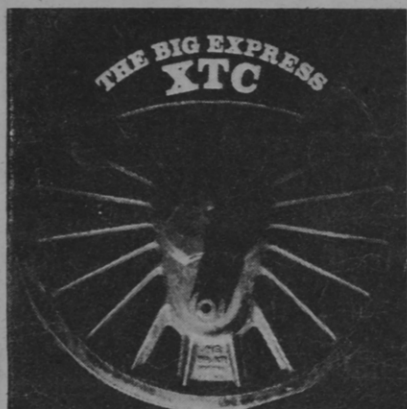
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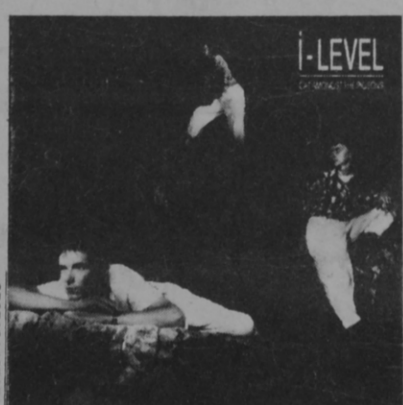
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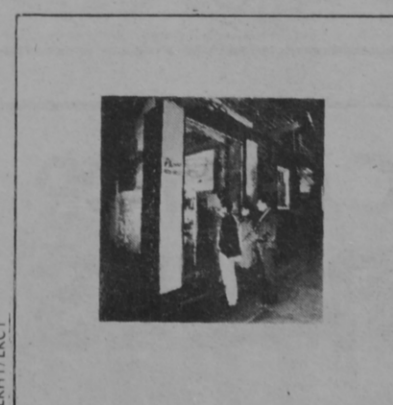
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HERBS

Herbs floated into my London bedsit last summer via a tape a friend sent. The bitter, plaintive single, 'French Letter', its anti-nuclear sentiment woven with big splashes of cymbal and nifty accordian, suited the summer's mood perfectly. Out on the streets people were on the march. It was a song that stirred the emotions and galvanised the conscience. That summer in Europe, meeting a Frenchperson was never the same.

Late last month, a few days before the band's third album, called *Long Ago* and dedicated to a nuclear-free Pacific, was released, another bomb was exploded at Mururoa.

Guitarist Dilworth Karaka is sitting in a Dunedin motel at the start of Herbs' two week national tour, speaking in a resigned tone.

"They (the French) are shooting them off all the time. When we were in Tahiti for a week we stayed next door to the French legionnaires. So you can imagine the friction. But the locals are great. Most of them have colour pictures of the bomb tests on their walls."

Willie Hona: "The trouble is the French presence there keeps them alive. It brings in all the money. Our anger isn't so much directed at the people as to what is being done to the environment. It's wrecking everything up there."

Karaka: "We will keep making people aware of it, too."

The second single from the album will in fact be 'Nuclear Waste'. Its message is wrapped in a jaunty sound — former Blockhead Geoff Castle guests on synthesizer — and there are plans to release it as an extended dance mix to the clubs. Rather ironical.

Hona: "Let's put it this way — get them to listen to it first and then let them analyse it. They are up there dancing around and then they start to listen to it. Faaar out! ... what am I doing jumping around up here to something like that?"

Long Ago was recorded at Auckland's Mascot Studios, owned by Hugh Lynn, who also established the band's label, Warrior. It was done over several months by musicians who have to hold down part-time jobs to keep families afloat and mortgages paid. They're working to change that.

"Our main aim with the album is to attract interest overseas. We've got a couple of people in Australia who are really interested. The thing about recording studios in New Zealand is that the answer you usually get back is — 'Yeah, it's good, but the production isn't together enough.'"

"When we are in the studio we try and get as



Guide to Herbs Cover:

1. Willie Hona. 2. Dilworth Karaka. 3. Carl Perkins. 4. Mori Watene. 5. Tama London. 6. Jack Allen. 7. Fred Faleauto.

close to a 'live' sound as possible. The recording started off in 10 to 12 hour sessions."

Drummer Fred Faleauto: "I spent two days just perfecting the drum sound. In the end it was worth it because it made such a difference."

Hona: "There's a 30 second guitar solo I do on 'On My Mind' that took several hours to do."

Karaka: "But the hardest people to get across to are New Zealanders. I mean if we were the same type of band from New York playing the same music as us we'd generate a lot more people. They'd rather see acts from the States yet we have musicians here who are just as good, if not better. It's like a band is not good until they have been acclaimed overseas, like the Enz or something. We'll be happy if we can sell five to six thousand albums."

The first two sold around the 3000 mark.

While the pop equation — boutique clothes, swish videos, shallow radio tunes — still has all the appeal of a dose of the clap Herbs are getting more professional. For the first time on tour they have their own road crew and set, distinctively Polynesian and embellished in Dunedin with ferns foraged in an afternoon on the Otago Peninsula. Hona, with a history in cabaret, has apparently had an influence here.

"Never mind the 'she'll be right' attitude, it's got to be right. If you play one song then laze around, pass a bottle of beer across stage, the whole thing goes. I know at the start of the night you usually get a few people saying 'oh no, not the same old thing'. But by the end of the night they are leaping around. That's the buzz of the whole thing."

Karaka: "Last year we were offered a month's tour with Split Enz of the east coast of Australia and everybody was busting their arse trying to get

it together but we never had an outfit to look after us to go through with it."

On *Long Ago* Herbs have by no means entirely slipped their reggae moorings, but it does see them working more and more with rock overtones. There's the soft-rock of two introspective ballads, bordering on Mathis. On other tracks, much harder, the guitar assumes Santana-like proportions. There's the obvious Polynesian influence as well. But Herbs have never professed to peddle a pure form of reggae. Rather, they consider what they play as 'Pacific reggae'.

Hona: "There's always been that basic Herbs pulse. And it will be there as long as these two (gesturing at Karaka and Faleauto) are in it. They're the only originals left. This album is just colouration around the basic beat."

The widened scope of the music is put down entirely to the lineup changes since the second album, *Light Of the Pacific*, was released over 18 months ago. Gone is former vocalist and lead guitarist Spencer Fusimalohi. New on board are Carl Perkins (percussion), Tama London (keyboards) and guitarist Hona, extending Herbs to a seven-piece.

Karaka: "It's all down to our individual influence. Each album has had different members and has sounded different for it. To me it's like a real creative thing, several minds contributing (songs are multi-credited). We have a keyboards player now and a synthesizer and it opens up a much wider range."

"We had been playing at parties and stuff for years and it's something that just came naturally when I jammed with people like Jack (Allen, the bass player). From reggae we stemmed into what we do now."

"We've found our music can capture people from grandmothers to grandchildren. People in New Zealand generally like ballads — New Zealand is really known for its ballads — so we thought why not put one or two on the album. We were lucky to come up with two."

What music do you listen to?

Silence. Then from saxist Mori Watene: "Anything that's on the way to number one."

Suddenly a room that previously contained big, reticent men is rocking with laughter, stirring shapes from Sumu wrestler to test rugby lock. Even if you've never liked the Herbs sandwich, it's always had meat in it — the political sentiments of the lyrics.

Karaka: "Once 'French Letter' did get some radio play the jocks that picked up on it called it 'Letter To France'. If we'd run off a batch of a thousand singles calling it that, who knows? Even for the cover of the first album (*What's Be Happen*, which featured an aerial photograph of the Bastion Point eviction) the comments were that it was too strong. But our answer to that is these things fuckin' happen. We've got things to say and we don't make them up in our heads."

A provoking moment on the new album is the track 'Lonely Faces', written by Samoan Faleauto about his native land. He explains:

"Basically we wrote the song here but when we went to Samoa it really hit home. What we found out was the younger people in Samoa, those

under 20, were committing suicide by jumping off trees and hanging themselves. Some were drinking this very potent weedkiller which burns out the insides and kills them over three days or so. Most of it's caused through embarrassment."

At what?

Karaka: "Say we were brothers and on the way home from school I saw you kissing a girl and said I was going to tell the parents ... they get embarrassed."

Faleauto: "It has just started happening in the last five years. They need some sort of release thing because life over there is very hard. There's no jobs. It's just pick up the knife and go to the plantation."

Apart from the cover of *What's Be Happen*, Herbs haven't touched on Maori land rights. Why's that?

Karaka: "It's almost something I feel too bitter about. The nuclear thing is bearable because it involves the whole world but for land rights there is only us and it's right in our backyard. Once people understand how important land is to Maoris then they'll understand Maoris. I'd rather just go out and do something like blow up the Air New Zealand building or something. There's a lot of organisations in this country that I don't agree with but I support them, even the ones that are anti-white. It's their way of expressing their frustration. It's always our land and the issue never deviates. All they have to do is give it back and let us decide what to do with it, not tell us."

"Half my family is European. My grandmother, she was brought up to be, think and act like a European. That is exactly what she is today. You tell her she's a Maori and she says 'No, I'm not'. I feel for her because she was told to be someone else instead of being herself. But there's a lot of people in her age group like that. It's even worse for the young today."

Cultural alienation is dealt with on the track 'Repatriation'. But it wasn't written by any of the band members, but by an English friend, Peter Stretch and it tells of the difficulties he had in assimilating himself into the way of life here.

Karaka: "It's something a lot of people don't appreciate. You leave your own country but you take its ways with you and that causes problems."

The night Herbs played Otago University the students were apparently all busily studying for exams and the crowd was meagre. It could just about have fitted back into the band's motel.

But Herbs gave the impression they'd have played the same in front of 40,000 screaming hooligans at Western Springs.

Hona: "Herbs to me is not just a band. We have all been in bands where you get up there and play for your half hour and sit down, have a drink and get paid at the end of the night. Here we are performing our own stuff and actually performing a show. We've still got a long way to go, but it's a family thing more than just a band."

Karaka: "We'd all like to do this full time."

Watene: "We all started doing this really young. We've got to the stage now where there's no turning back."

Richard Langston

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'RUMOURS' FROM PAGE 2
 issue should be out soon and features articles on Axemen, TV Eye, Portobello, Rites, ROIR, etc. Interested? Write to 3/475 Onehunga Mall, Auckland 6 ... **Campus Radio** finished recently with what will hopefully be the station's last AM broadcast ... **Flesh D-Vice's** inaction cost them the opportunity to go on a USA compilation LP but **Five Year Mission** have landed a spot on a Norwegian cassette and **Armatrak** are on a USA tape ... Compos Mentis (Wgtn), Armatrak (Akld) and Boner (Nelson) are among the names on new Rites Tape *Rising From the Ashes Vol 2*, which will be sent to over 20 countries, courtesy the tireless Neil Cartwright.
 Hamilton's eccentric **Ha Ha Ha** mag assures everyone it's still alive and kicking. Or something ... **Radio Active** 89FM battled an objection from Radio NZ to extend to breakfast hours near the end of its transmission. Its success lay in convincing the Broadcasting Tribunal that it was continuing to provide a truly alternative radio service ... **Ether Relay** is now bringing in the following New York and London mags: *East Village Eye*, *Beat* (reggae, black music), *Details* (fashion, style, interviews), *ZG* (contemporary culture, art

theory), *Raw* (the high chapel of comics, ltd supply) and *ID* (fashion). Latest outlet is Auckland's Corner Bookshop.
Russell Brown
South
 That funny little L-shaped bar called the **Star and Garter** will now open irregularly due to lack of support from the fickle ChCh punter who was no doubt confused by the variety of acts offered up there. Only major acts booked for next month are **Freudian Slips**, **Wayward Witches** and **Sam Hunt**.
 If you live out of ChCh your gas bills could mount up, with tours lined up featuring **Mockers**, **ND Toys**, **Fetus Productions**, **Martial Law**, **Peking Man**, **Beat Souldiers**, **the Rip**, **Doublehappys** ... and that's not even getting into the big overseas acts more or less likely to grace these shores; see calendar page for more hot rumours ... and after Peter Cooke's desolate interview in the *Star* there is doubt that the **Wastrels** have really broken up just yet. Bookings have been made for December, singer Anton Jenner doesn't go overseas until March and there are recording possibilities in the city Cooke described as "full of bland, uninspiring pop music," Auckland.
 Summer's underway and the

Band Rotunda has already seen the **Great Unwashed**, the **Axemen** and the **Connoisseurs**, but they didn't draw quite the 6-7000 that the Legionnaires gig there did. Resident band from the Marine, **Louie and the Hotsticks**, also did well. Lots more gigs planned ... with **Segovia** in Auckland the rest of the Connoisseurs have formed a loose ensemble with the Axemen and entertain Friday night shoppers in the City Mall, outside Ballantynes, any donations gratefully accepted ... and the Axemen's fifth cassette, *A Scar Is Born*. It's 2xC60, has 30 songs and four different covers and can be got from PO Box 2764 ChCh for a trifling 10 bucks ... the cassette scene in Dunedin is also very healthy and among recent releases is one from **Pink Plastic Gods**.
 On the recording front **Scorched Earth Policy** are still working with Eric Johns at Tandem ... and over at **Nightshift** Arnie Van Bussell has a brand spankin' new 16-track recorder. Arnie has put more than his neck on the line over this one so hopefully local bands will support him by using the thing ... already recorded at Nightshift are **Wayward Witches**, who's four song cassette is out, **Unwanted Aliens** from Blenheim,

Naughty Thoughts from Timaru, the **Untouchables** and **Legless Brownies**, who are also planning a cassette. **Maiden China** also hope to release an EP from their work there ... the fourth **Krypton** cassette is out from Onset-Offset and the **Haemogoblins** LP is nearing completion.
 After another spell, **Roco Coca** have another new lineup, some more new material, want to record and have plans for a summer tour ... Timaru band the **Punch** plan to add a brass section for two special performances in early Dec. One will be at the Caroline Bay soundshell ... **Lions and Tigers** are looking for a permanent drummer as Stephen Birss is already involved in two other projects ... Maiden China continue their search for a guitarist; ph 791-394 if you can play more than three chords.
 Latest fave around town (and with good reason) are **Tan Zen Jungle**, who will perform in ChCh only a few more times before going to Auckland. Guitarist William Stewart (currently on loan from the Haemogoblins) will probably not travel with them and instead they are planning to add another trumpet player. They also want to incorporate films, slides and tapes into their performances in future.
Alister Cain

Car Crash Set: Trevor Reekie, Nigel Russell.



PHOTO BY RICHARD LUDLUM

We Are Driven

Car Crash Set make their first LP and walk away without a scratch

Nigel Russell admits he doesn't have a clue about what kind of people buy Car Crash Set records.

"I mean, we hardly ever see them," the singer smiles and shrugs. With their debut album **No Accident** out on the streets any day now **Car Crash Set** have played a grand total of six times this year, mainly at clubs not noted for their capacity to squeeze in hundreds of potential consumers.

In fact launching an album with that kind of backup in this country might seem foolhardy were it not for the fact that **Car Crash Set** have managed to sell respectable quantities of their first two singles already.

"Here you're expected to play live, do it all first, before people can say 'I like that song' and go out and buy the record," he says. "I think we've been pretty successful in getting away from that. After all, people will go out and buy a Rolling Stones record or one by the flavour of the month English band when their chances of ever seeing either live are pretty slim."

Car Crash Set songs come from a nucleus of Nigel, keyboardist Dave Bulog and guitarist Trevor Reekie — additional musicians are brought in for live performances or for recording. Would it be true to say that the band as a whole is still learning to play live?

"Yeah, that would be right. We haven't played very much but we finally seem to have settled into a lineup now so it's going to be easier to rehearse. I think our last gig at the Windsor was the one where we really started to find our feet."

It's also been suggested that the band should put on more of a show live ...

"I don't know, if we were putting on a show it wouldn't be us. At the moment I see it as being fairly honest. We're not putting on airs and graces when we get on stage. I've had a lot of people say to me things like 'why don't you get Dave to jump around a bit more?' — well that's just not Dave. It's the way it is and I don't think a "show" as such is necessary. I think we'll probably loosen up on stage the more we do."

No Accident utilised the talents of Trevor's workmate Sharon Tuapawa on vocals, Ryan Monga on bass and Roddy Carlson and Henri Downes (who hit things with the *Machinations* for a while) on percussion. But Simon Mark-Brown has now firmly settled into the live lineup as percussionist and Pat Roxborough (who was called in at the 11th hour before the Windsor gig) may replace Ryan, who is committed to his own professional band, *Ardijah*.

Songs basically come from the three core members, who will come up with ideas individually at home and knock them into shape as a threesome and it was through some fiddling about with potential rhythm tracks for a single that **No Accident** was born:

Nigel: "We had to use the 16-track studio at Mandrill because the 24-track was busy and by the time the 24-track became free we had the basic skeletons of six songs worked out and decided we might as well go ahead with an album."

The album, recorded between March and August (with a late addition, 'Heart Of Stone', recorded at Echo Park Studios), presented an obvious opportunity to stretch out technically.

"I think we found out a lot more about the gear and about getting something from our heads into a usable sound. It was just a matter of the different ways we could connect things up and use pieces of equipment," Nigel explains.

They're happy with the production of the album — which isn't to say they wouldn't change anything given the chance to rework it: "I couldn't put my finger on any one thing for the whole album but just things song by song. There are ideas we tried which I don't think quite worked — which doesn't necessarily mean anyone else is going to notice it."

With 'Breakdown' (the single) the oldest song on the record apart from last year's 'Imagination' B-side 'Those Days', Dave describes the album as marking a period of transition for the band.

"I think the album is part of a change for the band, it's sort of a move across to what the band will be like in the future, sort of half old and half new," he explains.

"On several tracks we've mixed the synthesisers back. They're still there but we're not a synthesiser band any more."

"I don't think we ever were — that was just a convenient term," adds Nigel.

"So we want to dispel the tag totally," Dave continues. "We're as much a 'synthesiser band' as, say, Hunters and Collectors — they were using a Fairlight two years ago. That was the ultimate in synthesiser technology and no one classed them as a synthesiser band. The songs are just songs."

Nigel: "The songs would work regardless of what they were played on and I think that's always the bottom line, the songs. It doesn't matter so much how they're played, what they're played on or even how they're recorded."

As if to prove the point, guitar dominates their most recent recording, 'East and West', which took a mere five hours to put down at Echo Park. Nigel describes it as one of three or four songs in the set that can "go either way, fail or succeed live because they're open to spontaneity. We still haven't really made 'East and West' work live."

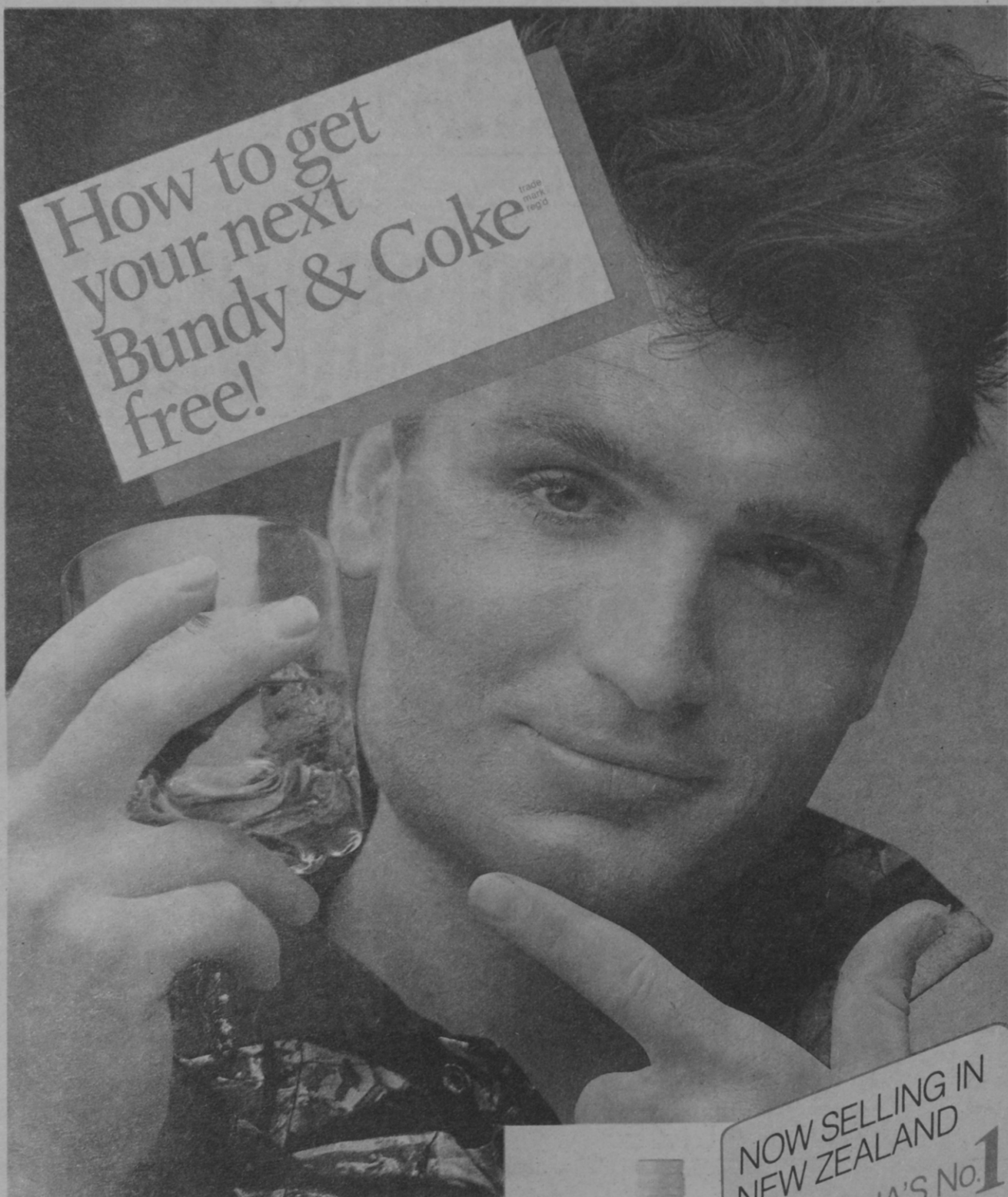
'East and West' won't be out until next year and between now and then **Car Crash Set** would like to play live a little more, perhaps out of town. A major problem is that it's hard to make sufficient money to reimburse professionals like Pat.

Like every synthesiser owner both Dave and Nigel have their eyes on new and better gear. Nigel has sold all his and will be looking at possibilities while he's overseas on holiday and Dave has his eyes on a digital machine that will not only play real sampled sounds but has the capability to play itself what he plays now, leaving him free to play, say, a guitar.

They're also looking at overseas support and a tape of 'East and West' has been despatched to New Order's Bernie Albrecht for comments and perhaps an offer to mix it.

And musically? Dave: "Rhythmically, we want to become a lot freer, because I find that a lot of the English stuff is very tight but I think Australasian rhythms are a lot looser and that's what I'm interested in working towards. And I'd also like to write songs with a certain emotional quality — something that people can get something out of."

Russell Brown



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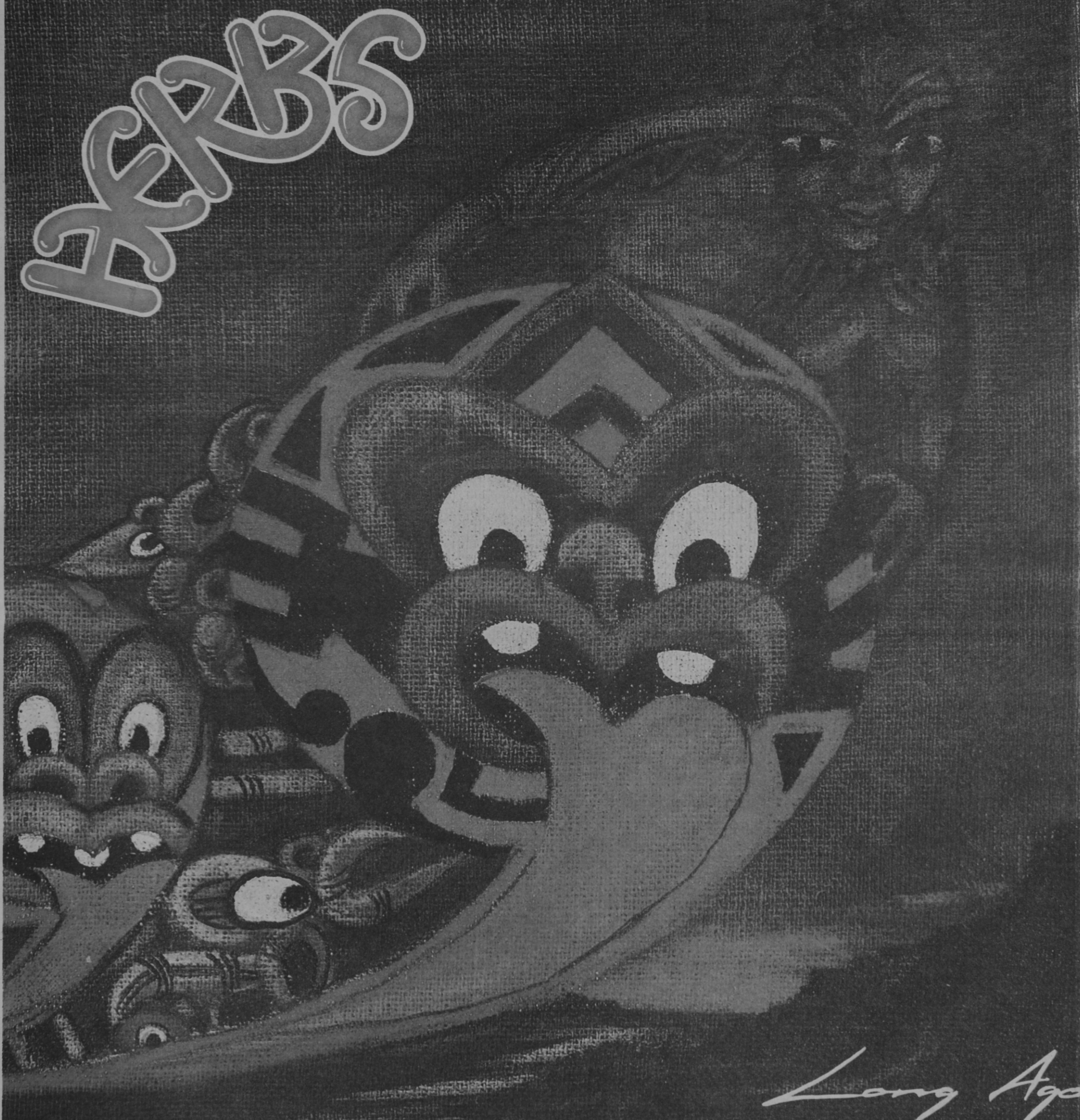
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Records

DD Smash The Optimist Mushroom

When Dave Dobbyn moved to Sydney last year he had no illusions about the challenge facing him. But he also had enormous faith in himself, a lot of guts, a lot of humour and a formidable musical talent. It's these attributes which have produced his best work to date. He said he was growing up and *The Optimist* is proof positive.

The biggest shift has been in Dobbyn's compositions, which have taken on a strong soul flavour. The only non-original here is a jaunty cover of Luther Vandross's 'She Loves Me Back', which fits in perfectly. The Vandross influence continues in the slick 'What A Day', where Rex Goh's guitar recalls Carlos Alomar on Bowie's *Young Americans*.

Even more soulful are the album's two ballads, the Memphis-sweet 'Surrender' and the climactic 'Guilty Through Neglect', a 3am

through-the-bottom-of-the-glass lament. This and the summery reggae song 'Don't Give Up' feature Dobbyn's two best vocal performances, one tortured, the other grinning all over its face. Lyrically, he can play delightful word games or bare his heart with equal aplomb.

Dobbyn the romantic sings an unashamedly sweet love song in 'Magic What She Do' and is equally sentimental on 'Whaling', an oh-so-memorable single. 'Open Up' and 'Tobacco Indian' are both destined for outstanding live performances, the former an up-tempo piece of funk a la Lowell George, the latter a heavily synthesized, dramatic powerhouse. The title song asserts the values which have seen Dobbyn through many lean spells and also displays the confidence he's attained in writing one of his most polished songs. Then, just to be different, he wraps the whole thing up with 'Head Start', a cheeky piece of Dixieland.

The only track which doesn't fit is 'The Actor', which sounds dated and heavy-handed in this company. Far better to have included 'I Met A Loser', which was consigned to the B Side of the 'Whaling' single. Still, it shows just how far he's progressed.

The long wait has produced a mature, self-assured album that can hold its head up in any company. Get behind a thriving optimistic.

Duncan Campbell



Bono, U2.

U2 The Unforgettable Fire Island

In the space of three albums this band was in danger of becoming a self-parody. The bold sentiments and tranquil contrasts of *Boy* became exaggerated gestures on *October and War*. Satire seemed to be the band's only future, victims of formula; the Edge waterfalld guitar lines, Bono howled romantic protest songs, banners flew, hearts opened, wallets emptied and cynics yawned.

Time for a change, somebody said, it might've been a band member. And the change is *The Unforgettable Fire*, a blow for integrity, as it would've been easy to milk all of those *War* loving legions by sticking to the tried and true slogans. And with Eno as producer the development that has come over this band is like going from J.P. Donleavy to James Joyce.

Remnants of the past remain — and that means 'Pride', but even it sounds clean, reborn. The core of the album lies in 'A Sort Of Homecoming', the title track, 'Bad' and 'Indian Summer Sky' and these songs reveal lessons learned from Simple Minds as Bono's vocals are restrained by atmospheres, couched in instrumental



Billy Bragg

depth and not just in the Edge's lone guitar. Remember, this is a fourth album and any change is radical, but close your eyes, play 'Promenade' and the verbal improvisations of 'Elvis Presley In America', then distinguish them from Echo and the Bunnymen. Not possible, but fine songs and proof of Bono's willingness to adapt.

It's good being a fan of this band again, because, despite their past excesses, U2 have meant every note, believed in every gesture. And now, with *The Unforgettable Fire*, even the cynics can believe in them again.

George Kay

Talking Heads Stop Making Sense EMI

Talking Heads' greatest hits, this — it's got 'Psycho Killer' and 'Swamp' and even 'Once In A Lifetime'. Neat! Sorry? What's that you say? Talking Heads sound-track to a Talking Heads movie? Wow! Weird old David Byrne on the big screen in his funny glasses and big suit? What'll they think of next?

But seriously punters, this is quite a good record. The live recording is excellent and the track listing will please fans and

the uninitiated; 'Swamp', 'Burning Down the House', 'Life During Wartime', 'Take Me To the River'. If you buy the limited edition cassette you'll get longer mixes of six of the album's tracks and there's a limited edition record with a booklet too.

But heck, what d'ya say about it? No tracks stand out, but none are bad. It gets your toes tapping and the crowd noise isn't too obtrusive — just enough to get that live feel, y'know?

Oh well, Talking Heads say: "People will pay to watch people make sounds."

Fiona Rae

The Mighty Wah! A Word To the Wise Guy Beggars Banquet

Bold, soulful and committed, automatically recommending itself above the production-line emptiness of most pop. Pete Wyllie even turns rapmaster to deliver a four-lesson diatribe on the malice of capitalism — the Wise Guys he's yelling in the ears of are the "shyster priests of capitalism."

But ...

Musically, Wyllie continues to show a heavy leaning towards the epic. His voice, coming out of a full, swirling aural backdrop, comes on too much like a choir. Adds up to an overdose.

The stronger songs here — 'Comeback' (the single), 'Weekends' and 'The Lost Generation' — are unfortunately overblown, an ailment that also weakened the better tracks ('Sleep', 'Seven Minutes To Midnight') on the first album. He was eight months in the studio cooking this up (release was then further delayed by record company hassles and an eventual label change) and the cover promises the inner sleeve notes read "like an Eagles album" — but who knows, we haven't been given inner sleeve notes ...

Wah! have never made rock albums in the sense that other Liverpool bands like Echo and the Bunnymen have. Where they brim with guitar, today's Wah! use it sparingly — the album owes more to soul than anything else.

But Wyllie does share the egocentricity and garrulousness of fellow Liverpoolians like Julian Cope and the Bunnymen's Ian McCulloch. Even now, five years after these crucial three gave Liverpool its second coming, they

still make some of the best reading in the music press (not everybody in Liverpool is funny, but they are all TRYING to be).

There has always been, however, a chasm between what these characters have talked about, said about themselves and what they have delivered (McCulloch to a lesser degree). You'd think Cope would be making some of the greatest stuff around with his psychedelic infatuations, but he isn't.

As for this album — laudable sentiments but overall I still prefer his interviews.

Richard Langston

Billy Bragg Life's A Riot With Spy Vs Spy Chrysalis

Life's A Riot is huge in its native England. Released late last year, it has sat obstinately in the upper reaches of the independent charts ever since and received the Peel/Jensen seal of approval, not to mention much printed praise. The accolades are truly deserved.

In his hoarse barking brogue and with only guitar for accompaniment, Bragg pours out his soul in the best busking traditions, setting in stark relief all that's glossed over in the cheery confines of the Rover's Return. 'A New England' sets the perspectives. Bragg's got no desire to change the world or the country, he just wants a new girl. In 'To Have and Have Not' he rails against the qualifications-equals-mealtickets fallacy and 'The Busy Girl Buys Beauty' is about the daily drill of a consumer clone. Where's it get her?

But Bragg's not all politics. 'The Milkman Of Human Kindness' and 'The Man in the Iron Mask' are love songs. Pure but never simple.

In Bragg's hands the guitar is worked and worried. Chunks of rhythm are split by shard-like pickings, distorted chords and the occasional gentle strum.

Life's A Riot is a minor classic and a major triumph for Bragg. But be warned that these songs are even better live, that Bragg plays till he runs out of material and clowns with the audience between songs. After a gig in London last January he told me he would quite like to play in New Zealand. Here's hoping.

David Taylor

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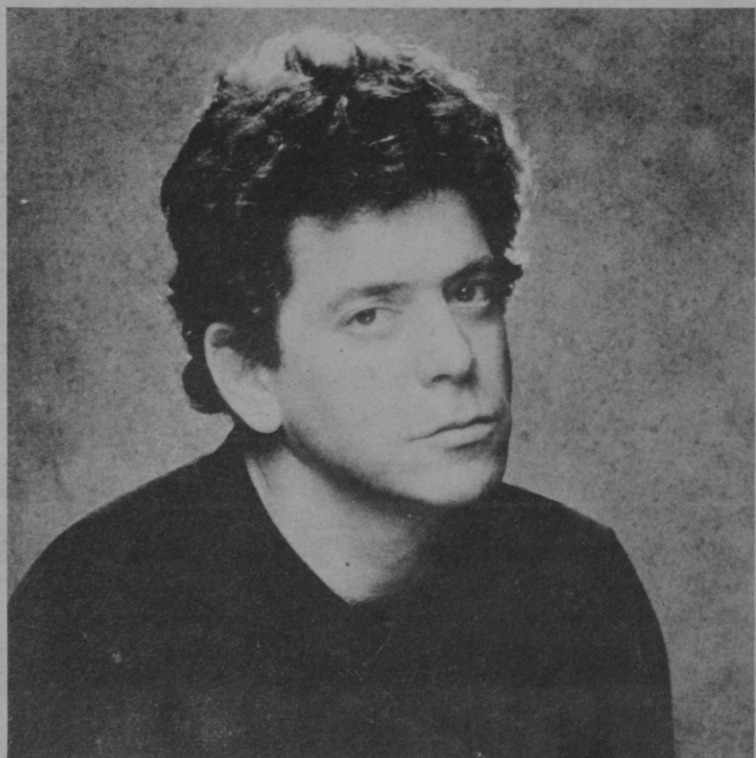
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Records

David Bowie
Tonight
EMI

Last year may have been international Bowie year, what with his money-making world trek and the

mega-sales of *Let's Dance*, but from a critical point of view it was probably his worst ever. No arguments, the Serious Moonlight tour was an over-rehearsed, preening circus and at least half of *Let's Dance* tried too hard to make a popular comeback and so sacrificed Bowie's usual strengths of depth and durability.

At first glance *Tonight* seems to suffer from the same artistic laziness, since five of the nine songs are covers, three of them lifted from Iggy Pop. Bowie may have defused *The Idiot* version of 'China Girl' for his own purposes on *Let's Dance* but Iggy should

have no complaints about the brash showbiz swing of 'Neighbourhood Threat' or the easy, reassuring reggae of the title track, both originally on *Lust For Life* and co-written with Bowie. From *New Values* comes 'Don't Look Down', the Iggy Pop-James Williamson advice on living on the edge and Bowie adopts another reggae temper, nice and cool, making the song deceptively casual.

Looking at the other covers and his treatment of the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* number 'God Only Knows' is as assured as the heady ballads on *Station To Station* and



The Bluebells

that only leaves 'I Keep Forgetting', a Leiber-Stoller standard roller recorded in 1962 by Chuck Jackson and Bowie cranks it up the way it has to be.

The originals may be outnumbered but they all hit the target. The crucial seven-minutes-plus opener, 'Loving the Alien', is a spiritual and musical cousin to 'Ashes To Ashes', a great song. 'Blue Jean', the single as a cheap shot, fits perfectly into the album's scheme of things, as does a new collaboration with Iggy. 'Tumble and Twirl', the last chance to dance before 'Dancing With the Big Boys', a song that ironically recalls the tenor of *The Idiot*.

Bassist Carmine Rojas wasn't far wrong when he jokingly told *RIU* last year that Bowie was so unpredictable that his new album could be swing-time. With the Borneo Horns tightly laced through most of the songs and a nightlife production engineered by Hugh Padgham, the album is a blaring, blinding trip through the bright lights and precarious nature of pop and life. So those people who thought — and maybe hoped — that he was down and out with *Let's Dance* better think again, because *Tonight* is Bowie back on form.

George Kay

Box of Frogs
CBS

After forming out of the famed Marquee Club 25th anniversary in mid 1983, Box Of Frogs held a tonne of promise as an overview of the 60s blues boom 20 years on.

Comprising three ex Yardbirds (Jim McCarty on drums, Chris Dreya on rhythm guitar, producer/songwriter Paul Samwell-Smith on bass) and former Medicine Head multi-talent John Fiddler on vocals and guitar, this debut should have torn the lungs out of most of the competition.

Unfortunately, however, it

comes across as a characterless collection of tunes performed by a mid-70s style old boys club (with the addition of another ex Yardbird Jeff Beck on guitar for four tracks, and famed Irish tenor Rory Gallagher for two) unhampered by anything so simple as a direction.

The vocals could be almost anybody you've never heard of, and the whole shebang only really works on the opener 'Back Where I Started', a boogie in the vintage John Lee Hooker style. A good production, but even with all these reputations behind it, this record is less than memorable.

Dave McLean

The Bluebells
Sisters
London

Not too long ago you could classify Scots bands into two main categories; the Postcard clan of Joseph K, Orange Juice and Aztec Camera, united in their belief of garage and the Velvet Underground, and the opposing Big

Sounds of Simple Minds, Big Country (nee Skids) and the Associates.

These days things aren't quite so clear-cut, with the emergence from Glasgow of the likes of Lloyd Cole, James King, Friends Again, the Blue Nile and the Bluebells, who all fall somewhere between the two extremes.

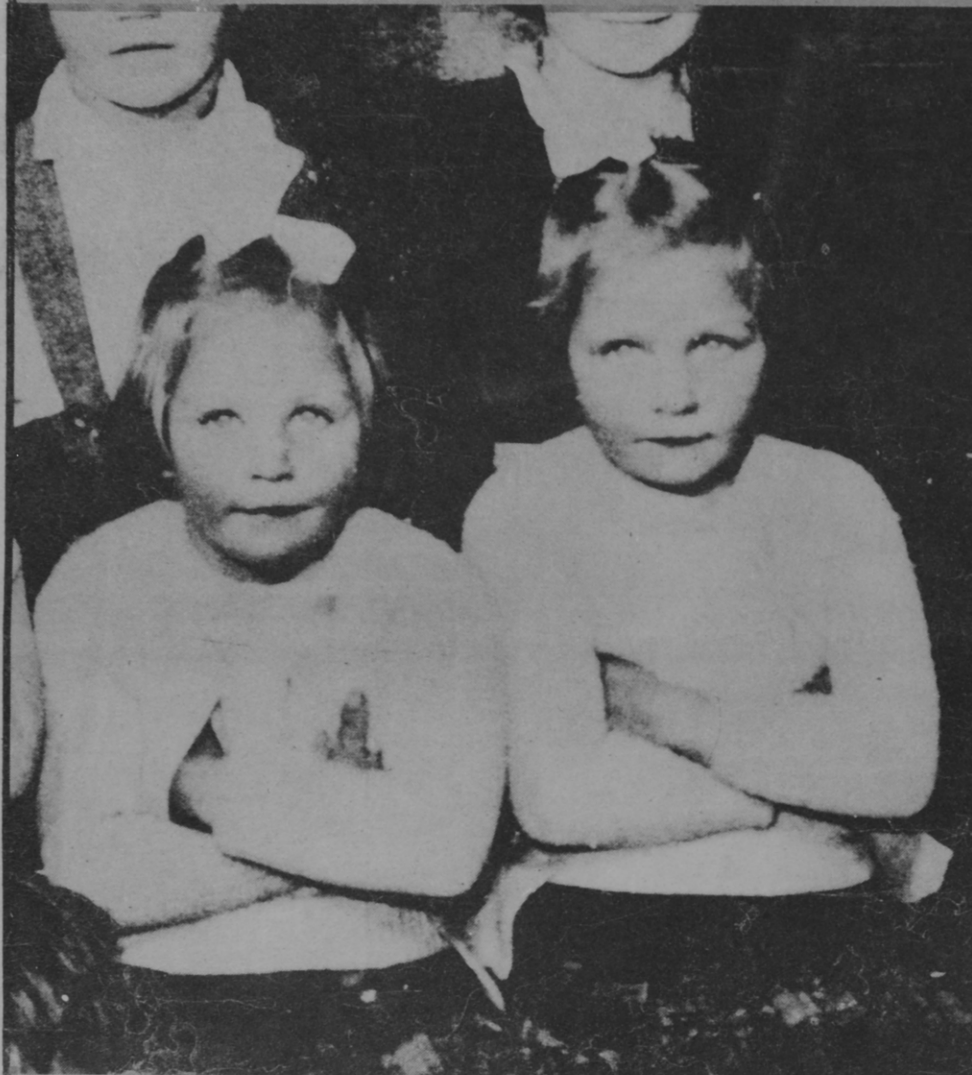
Take the Bluebells, who've often been compared to the Postcard people because of their jangling guitar sound and unpretentious approach to the world of song. And that's a comparison borne out by the likes of 'Red Guitars' and 'Syracuse University' on their debut album, *Sisters*. But the band, based around the nucleus of chief songwriter Robert Hodgkins and the McCluskey brothers, owes more to the 60s pop harmonies of the Hollies and the plaintive style of those other brothers, the Sutherlands, than to the vague secondhand influence of Postcard Records.

Love songs like 'Everybody's Somebody's Fool', 'Cath' and their new single 'I'm Falling' are a cut above the average boy-girl romance hard-luck story, not only in lyrical honesty but in catchy melodic hooks. The Bluebells also dabble in politics, sometimes too explicitly, as in the Falklands plot of 'South Atlantic Way' and the Celtic lilt of 'The Patriot Game', a song written by a friend of theirs, Dominic Behan. But on 'Learn To Love' their point is more veiled and therefore more effective.

Although they scale no great heights or set new standards in songwriting, the Bluebells have a fresh-faced sincerity that avoids tartan sentimentality and new image hype.

George Kay

TWINSET THE Pearls



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CORUBA CALENDAR

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Look out for ...
Plenty of minstrels on the road competing for the punters' attention this month — **Split Enz** say goodbye to the nation wit their *Enz With A Bang Tour*, which is already proving highly popular, with bookings opening for a third show at Auckland's Logan Campbell Centre ... we'll be among the first to see the reformed original **Deep Purple** lineup, which plays Dec 2 at Auckland's Western Springs, Wellington's Athletic Park Dec 3 and QEII Park in Christchurch on Dec 7 ... **Cliff Richard** makes yet another visit. His two Wellington concerts at the Fowler centre are sold out but Auckland's Mt Smart stadium (Nov 24) should hold a few more rock 'n' roll desperadoes ... the new **DD Smash** lineup debuts at a free *Thank God It's Over* end-of-school party in Auckland's Aotea Square. The concert is a present from 89MMM FM and also features **Mockers** and **Herbs** ... English cult act **SPK** are the mystery tourists and tales of their bizarre stage act have left expectations high for their Gluepot performances on Dec 14 & 15. **Fetus Productions** play in the country for the first time in about 18 months, after touring through Australia, Japan, Europe and America, at Campus Radio's goodbye-AM-hello-FM party at the Gluepot on Nov 28. They will also play the Windsor and Christchurch's Gladstone.

NOVEMBER 16
Split Enz Nelson
Verlaines Windsor
Topp Twins Napier
Bats Polytech
W.C. Handy, "Father Of The Blues" born, 1875.

17
Verlaines Windsor

18
Split Enz Dunedin
All Stars Gladstone
Mockers Rotorua
Kim Wilde born 1960.

19
Split Enz Dunedin
Mockers Rotorua
Crook Straight Cricketers

20
Split Enz Christchurch
Mockers Mt Maunganui
ND Toys Wanganui
Narcs Windsor Park
Crook Straight Cricketers

21
Split Enz Christchurch
ND Toys Palmerston Nth
Mockers Gisborne
Narcs Onerahi
Mike Farrell, Royal Tambourines Globe
Crook Straight Cricketers
Dr John born 1940.

22
The Rip, Doublehappys Gladstone
Mockers Napier
Narcs DB Northland
ND Toys Palmerston North
Legionnaires Birdcage
JFK cops it, 1963.

23
Split Enz Palmerston North
Great Unwashed Gladstone
Topp Twins Hamilton
Legionnaires Onerahi
Mockers Terminus
ND Toys Cricketers
The Punch Oamaru
Vague Secrets Cook

24
Split Enz New Plymouth
Cliff Richard Mount Smart
ND Toys Cricketers
Legionnaires Onerahi
Great Unwashed Gladstone
Mockers Terminus
The Punch Oamaru
Vague Secrets Cook
Campus Radio's (hopefully) last AM transmission ever.

25
Netherworld Dancing Toys Band Rotunda ChCh
Narcs Trillos
John Lennon returns his MBE, 1969.

26
Cliff Richard Wellington
Sam Hunt Gluepot
ND Toys Timaru
Pelicans/Clouston Palmerston Nth
Narcs New Plymouth
Tina Turner is 46 but who's counting?

27
Split Enz Napier
Cliff Richard Wellington
Sam Hunt Hillcrest
Pelicans/Clouston Wanganui
Mockers Masterton
Narcs Wanganui
Jimi Hendrix born 1942.

28
Fetus Productions, Freudian Slips, etc. Gluepot
Split Enz Napier
Mockers Palmerston Nth
ND Toys Ashburton
Peter Haeder, Graeme Gash Globe
Pelicans/Clouston Napier
Ex-Beatle George Harrison and publicist Derek Taylor in Auckland to promote their book.

29
Split Enz Tauranga
Narcs Napier
Mockers Wanganui
Able Tasmans Windsor
Sam Hunt Tauranga
Fat 'n' Sassy Streets Ahead
Pelicans/Clouston Napier
John Mayall born 1933.

30
Split Enz Whangarei
Mockers Bellblock
Pelicans/Clouston Gisborne
Sam Hunt Rotorua Art Gallery
Narcs Gisborne
Fat 'n' Sassy Whitianga
Old Crow Windsor
Mark Twain born 1825.

DEC 1
Narcs Hamilton
Mockers Bellblock
Old Crow Windsor
Fat 'n' Sassy Whitianga
Bette Midler born 1945.

2
Deep Purple Western Springs
Split Enz Hamilton
Sam Hunt Whakatane
ND Toys Greymouth
Mockers Hamilton

29,30,1
Netherworld Dancing Toys Gladstone
Dialogue With Swimmers Star & Garter
Vague Secrets Cook

3
Split Enz Hamilton
Mockers Gladstone
Legionnaires Mt Maunganui
Montreaux Casino burns down, 1971, inspiring *Deep Purple* to write 'Smoke On the Water'. Well there y'go ...

4
Deep Purple Athletic Park
Split Enz Auckland
Sam Hunt Gisborne
Legionnaires Gisborne
Dennis Wilson born 1944.

5
Split Enz Auckland
Sam Hunt Wairoa
Legionnaires Napier
Mike Harding, Shoeshine Boys Globe
A Fog, Maggoty Anne and the Cot Death Babies, Dead Fish Windsor

6
Split Enz Auckland
Legionnaires Hastings
Fat 'n' Sassy Opotiki
Sam Hunt Hastings
A Fog, Maggoty Anne, Dead Fish Windsor
Thomas Edison makes the first sound recording ('Mary Had A Little Lamb'), 1877.

7
Deep Purple QE II Park
DD Smash, Herbs, Mockers Aotea Square
Fetus Productions Windsor
Dorothy Marshall's Dance Band Oamaru
Legionnaires Taita
Fat 'n' Sassy Waihi
The Japanese pay a visit to Pearl Harbour, 1941.

8
Fetus Productions Windsor
Narcs Pukekohe
Legionnaires Terminus
John Lennon is shot outside the Dakota, 1980.

9
Narcs Warkworth
Legionnaires Wellington
Joan Armatrading is 34.

10
Sam Hunt Cricketers
Legionnaires Palmerston Nth
Otis Redding's plan dives into an icy lake, 1967.

11
Legionnaires Masterton
Narcs Mt Maunganui
Sam Cooke shot dead by a motel proprietor, 1964.

12
Legionnaires Wanganui
Narcs Mt Maunganui
Acoustic Confusion, Ted Chapman Globe
Frank Sinatra born 1915.

13
Legionnaires New Plymouth
Narcs Rotorua
Fat 'n' Sassy Morrinsville

14
Mockers Windsor
Sam Hunt Star & Garter
Narcs Birdcage
Legionnaires Rotorua
Mick Taylor quits Stones 1974.

15
Great Unwashed The Pulse
Mockers Windsor
Sam Hunt Star & Garter
Narcs Birdcage
Legionnaires Hamilton
Fats Waller dies, 1943.

16

A number of bands on the road with records to push; The **Narcs** (who will gradually become known as the **Great Divide**, a monniker more suited to overseas sales) do the North Island with their debut LP ... **Netherworld Dancing Toys** take their debut single for Virgin NZ, 'The Real You' on a tour which includes another of the popular concerts at the Edmonds Band Rotunda in ChCh on Nov 25 ... the **Pelicans** and saxophonist **Andrew 'Clyde' Clouston** both have records out on Eelman Records and they venture out of Wellington together this month ... the **Mockers** 'Survival Tour' presages the release of their blue vinyl special, the single 'Forever Tuesday Morning' ... the **Legionnaires** undertake a tour named after their new 'Nosferatu' single. Poet **Sam Hunt** does his thing in not only pubs but alternative venues like the Rotorua Art Gallery ... **Ralph Bennett's Fat 'n' Sassy** play round the traps ... Dunedin's **Doublehappys** and the **Rip** venture as far away from home as Christchurch to play the Gladstone on Nov 22. The **Dole Day Afternoon Festival** on Dec 6 will feature **Herbs**, **Jive Bombers**, **Peking Man**, **Topp Twins**, **Freudian Slips**, **Ahurangi** and **Ghetto**. Albert Park will also be occupied by clowns, other performers and information stalls between 12 noon and 6.30 pm. The Unemployed Workers Rights Centre has organised the festival to help the unemployed get together and enjoy themselves without any feelings of guilt. **Coming up ...** Good ol' Uncle **Lou Reed** makes his third visit to these shores with a concert at Auckland's Logan Campbell Centre on Jan 19. Other dates are being discussed ... **Neil Young** plays Western Springs Jan 27 and the gig may be expanded into a weekend-long event to replace this year's absent **Sweetwaters** ... **Spandau Ballet** are down to play the Springs in early February ... other rumours of varying dependability concern **Alexei Sayle** (Jan), **Hunters and Collectors** (Feb), **Echo & the Bunnymen** (Feb), **ZZ Top** and **Americans Rubber Rodeo**.

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Records

General Public All the Rage

General Public are a group with a big past to live up to and a major dilemma to overcome. Not only do they have to build on the reputation established by the Beat, but they have to find their own identity. *All the Rage* fails on both counts.

Dave Wakeling and Ranking Roger are one of Britain's most distinctive vocal duos, so a radical change in sound is needed if General Public aren't simply to be thought of as a somewhat inferior Beat Mk 2. Most of the songs here just don't make the grade. They're aimless and General Public can't afford that at this early stage.

The whole of side one just drifts through without arousing interest. 'Hot You're Cool' is just a vocal refrain and old Saxa is recalled to dress it up a bit. 'Tenderness', the next single, sounds only half-formed and 'Anxious' is minor-key reggae with the accent on "minor". 'Never You Done That' has emotion-charged lyrics let down by another slight song, while 'Burning Bright' is almost heavy metal with the odd clever word couplet. The debut single 'General Public' didn't do much on its own but it sounds impressive in such bland company.

The two redeemers work because they sound like, well, the Beat. 'As A Matter of Fact' is a sprightly shuffle with some of the old elan and some sharp rapping, while Roger's toasting lifts up 'Are You Leading Me On?'.

Mick Jones guests on guitar but is no more than a namecheck. General Public still lack a sense of direction and will find it hard to survive unless they really pull finger next time.

Duncan Campbell

Heaven 17 How Men Are

Time passes, people change, rock 'n' roll moves on, some bands move with it, some bands don't. Some bands equate progression with time and money spent in the studio, input equals output. People should respect that, they say.

Respect for Heaven 17 is running out, they have hit a wall, a barrier between writing out of need, conviction, the desire to hammer home a point of view and that of creating something from the convenience of comfort, equating money spent with heart and soul given, effort replacing spontaneity.



General Public

That's *How Men Are*, six months in the studio, no live gigs, no wonder the album is lifeless. And yet this band had the world at its feet; 'Fascist Groove Thang' was the perfect song for an imperfect time. *Penthouse and Pavement* collided business chic with white intelligentsia soul, snobbery with violence. In the face of growing personal affluence the band tried to retain a conscience that became *The Luxury Gap*, a brave second side, but the hatchets were out.

And *How Men Are* is as bad as any fears. From the metaphorical images of fire that barely smoulder on the nuclear warnings of 'Five Minutes to Midnight' to the

fires of love on 'Sunset Now', 'The Fuse' and the dreadful 'Flame-down', the album barely wavers from the dynamics of tedium. Only the flickering guitar intro of 'And That's No Lie' attempts to break the numbness.

Advice to Ware, Marsh and co: tour, go bankrupt, join the miners' strike, get out of the dead zone of *How Men Are*. If you don't, Heaven 17 will never save the world.

George Kay

Branford Marsalis Scenes In the City

This promising debut by the sax player who has stood in his illustrious younger brother's shadow was actually recorded in April of last year. The liner notes start on the back, then read "continued inside". There is no inside. Another cheapo package and another spit in the face for jazz fans, who are getting tired, like all those whose tastes run slightly outside the mainstream, of being treated with contempt. Gripe Of the Month finished, for all the good it will do.

Branford Marsalis is an unquestionably gifted youth, already displaying a burgeoning composing talent, although his roots are still fairly plain on this album.

Thus 'No Backstage Pass' makes more than oblique references to Sonny Rollins, with its sparse but fluid approach, while 'Solstice' closely resembles John Coltrane's 'Spiritual'. He shows greater originality with a breathtaking soprano outing entitled 'Waiting For Tain'.

As an interpreter, Marsalis impresses more, in the tenderness of pianist Kenny Kirkland's 'Parable' and the intriguing title track, a Charles Mingus work. It's a monologue of broken dreams and tenement blues, smoky clubs and bustling streets, with Wendell Pierce's laconic narration linking snatches of tunes. Close your eyes and the picture springs out of the stereo.

Branford Marsalis is still emerging on this work and it would be interesting to hear what he's doing now, more than 18 months after the recording of *Scenes In the City*.

Duncan Campbell

Stevie Wonder The Woman In Red

Reactions to Stevie Wonder are becoming increasingly polarised. First 'Ebony and Ivory', his 1982 liaison with Schmaltz McCartney, and now 'I Just Called To Say I Love You' may top the chart for weeks on end but they nauseate equally large numbers of listeners. Of the

latter group it seems increasingly few remain willing to tolerate Wonder wallowing in his slop, even when the recompense is his fine upbeat and funk workouts. Okay, so 'Masterblaster' was four years back, but how many people discovered his magnificent 'What's That You're Doing' on McCartney's *Tug Of War* album? And even the *Musiquarium* package contained a new nugget in 'Do I Do'.

So what of the present? Again the extremes are present. Perhaps the best antidote to that gooey single is side two's opener 'Love Light In Flight', a catchy funkout that alone is enough to maintain this reviewer's faith. The other two upbeat numbers don't succeed to the same extent: 'Don't Drive Drunk' suffers from Wonder's usual clichéd didacticism and the album's title track is musically gimmicky.

Three mid-tempo tracks are lifted by lovely vocals from Dionne Warwick (and don't we miss her cool elegance from TV's *Solid Gold* even more now that dick Dees is mincing all over it). 'It's You', one of her two duets with Wonder, is the album's other very strong track. Add on a typically film score-type instrumental and that's your total. Eight tracks, predominantly MOR, may not sound great value at today's prices, but for those believers enough evidence of Stevie Wonder's profligate genius is captured there in the grooves.

Peter Thomson

Diana Ross Swept Away

Ms Ross returns with perhaps her best work since the Chic-produced 'Upside Down'. The title track here is a killer dance machine, kicked into gear by a great production from Arthur Baker and Daryl Hall. Other dance-orientated tracks are the calypso-tinted 'Touch By Touch' and a cover of Fontella Bass's 'Rescue Me', both great club tracks.

After a few listenings however, it's the ballad 'Missing You' that emerges as the standout track. Produced by Lionel Ritchie and dedicated to Marvin Gaye, it represents the numbing loss to black music that was Gaye's death this year.

Also worth listening to is Bernard Edwards' production on 'Telephone'; clean and sparse, acting as a good counterpoint to the production excesses of some tracks. Also included is that great schlock duet with Mr Iglesias, 'All Of You'. That should make you happy.

Kerry Buchanan

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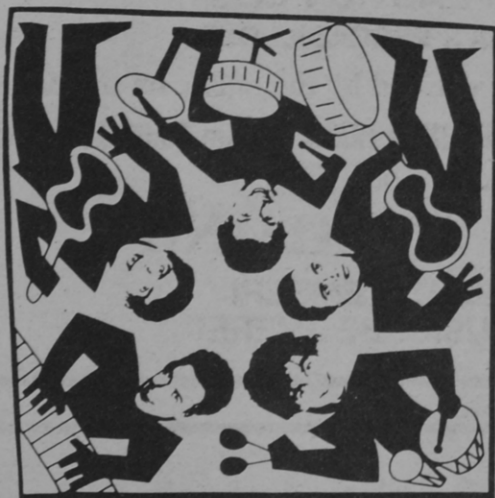
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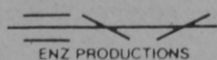
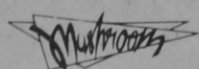
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Records

Jason and the Scorchers
Fervour
EMI

Country punk. Heeeeey ... it's the new thang! Yeah. It's not hard to fathom the appeal of a cowboy wave to American critics — it's indigenous, something the limeys are almost certainly incapable of. So far the names have been Rank and File, whose earnest left-wing injections into country style have resulted largely in dryness, the East Coast pretend of Rubber Rodeo and ... Jason and the

Scorchers. The first two haven't been able to give meaning to the genre that's been readybuilt around them. So how 'bout the Scorchers?

Well unfortunately the first side of this mini-LP can be more or less dismissed. There's an insensitive cover of Dylan's 'Absolutely Sweet Marie' and then 'Help, There's A Fire' and 'I Can't Help Myself', two unsatisfactory attempts at wacky rockabilly.

The band seems to recognise the above by only providing lyrics for the four songs on the second side. The opener, 'Hot Nights In Georgia', immediately features a much better vocal performance from Jason Ringenberg, even if the lyric does run out of steam as it progresses. It has a touch of the R.E.M.s about it and — surprise — a look at the credits reveals that R.E.M. singer Michael Stipe is in there on backing vocals.



Jason & the Scorchers

The next two songs, 'Pray For Me Mama' and 'Harvest Moon' (which bears the intriguing chorus line "Sickness has now become style") are attractive, if a little self-conscious mid-paced numbers, but it's on the closing 'Both Sides Of the Line' that the Scorchers really fall in behind Jason.

It's also the song that reveals the group for what it is — a rocka-boogie band that makes a pretty good fist of incorporating country. The song storms along, but loud and the players all sound much happier being allowed to let loose. Mr Stipe's in there again, this time as the author of a beautifully respectful lyric.

There's both madder and badder than Jason and the Scorchers (the Orson Family, Tex and the Horseheads) but this record has three good songs and one great one.

Given that they're all on the one side, it really ain't bad ...

Russell Brown

Rubber Rodeo
Scenic Views
Mercury

These six art students from Rhode Island have been mentioned in the same breath as Rank and File and the Gun Club because of their country rock ambitions. But Rubber Rodeo are another breed.

Although they try to capture "that high and lonesome sound, the wide open spaces and the lonely guy" in their marriage of country and rock, their glossy secondhand East Coast country influences prevent the music from reaching the dusty, aching solitude that is the hallmark of authenticity of life on the prairie.

Okay, they've fallen short of their stated ambition but they still have some good songs to offer and ace pedal steel guitarist Mark Tomeo (renowned for his playing on the Gun Club's *Miami* album) can sure tickle a few nerve ends with that haunted geetar when he gets a chance. So 'Need You Need Me' is spaghetti western country and on 'Anywhere With You' Tomeo's steel shimmers through a song fronted by Trish Milliken. But the best efforts are the last two, 'Mess O' Me' and 'Before I Go Away' — all tearful verse and climactic choruses.

You'd be struggling to find a bad tune on *Scenic Views* and as a first album that's no mean feat. But Rubber Rodeo are a long ways from being what they want to be and that's partly because they've overloaded the songs with too much contemporary hardware and partly because Hugh Jones' production is grand when it should be gritty. Still, they've got the ingredients, now all they need is a recipe.

George Kay

Tom Waits
Asylum Years
Asylum

The whisky-sodden voice can seem mere artifice, the post-Kerouac beatnik stance affectation, but Tom Waits writes some wonderful songs. They drip with hurt (and humour), and the pain of romance. I like him a lot, even when it's over the top, or because it's over the top.

This double album brings together an intelligent selection of 20 songs from Waits' seven Asylum albums. Some can't hear beyond the gravel in Waits' throat. This collection shows much more than that. The after hours piano, the smoky saxophone, there's playing of great purity here.

As for the songs, well, 'Ol' 55' and 'Looking for the Heart of Saturday Night' are almost worth the price of admission.

Unless you are that rarity, a Tom Waits collector, this is the place to start.

Ken Williams

The Gun Club
Fire Of Love
Slash/Big Time

It seems a shame *Fire Of Love* has taken three years to reach these shores. A natural introduction to the Gun Club, this debut stands as their best shot so far.

The Gun Club hail(ed) from Los Angeles but their hearts are firmly set in deep Southern tradition, out-Yanking even the Cramps in being unmistakably American. The dominant figure throughout the band's chequered history has been singer Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Described by one unkind review as a "bleached, beached whale", there are times when Pierce is more blubber than bluster. However, on *Fire Of Love* he positively revels in his image as the bad 'n' boozy brawler.

The band are at their most concise on 'Sex Beat' and 'She's Like Heroin To Me' but it's only when Pierce loosens up that they start to get maaaaan. Best example is 'For the Love of Ivy', an ambling tale of an appointment with hell that explodes and settles with evil regularity. Jeffrey Lee's obsession with the Delta blues leads to treatment of two old standards, with

varying results. The version of Robert Johnson's 'Preaching the Blues' is decidedly irreverent and the Gun Club are more on target with 'Cool Drink Of Water'.

Fire Of Love has little of the composure that marks the second album *Miami* but it's in that sneaking hint of a lack of control that its real power lies. Besides, anyone who comes up with a line like "you're looking just like an Elvis from Hell" has to get my vote on confidence.

Shayne Carter

Ritchie Pickett
and the Inlows
Gone For Water
RCA

I'm really pleased Ritchie Pickett has made an album. There is a whole host of country rock fans in New Zealand who rave about the likes of Gram Parsons, Commander Cody, Joe Ely, Michael Nesmith et al, yet don't seem to realise that there are people like Ritchie Pickett, Punk and the Cartel and Al Hunter actually out there playing this sort of material locally.

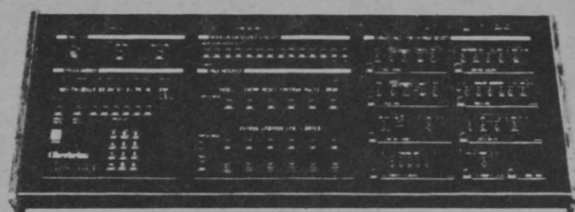
But what puzzles me about this album is the overall sound. Fans of Ritchie's regular appearances on *That's Country* will appreciate the way this record seems to come at you through a two inch television speaker. Perhaps producer Ray Columbus has fondly remembered recording techniques from his own heyday and used Stebbings' computerised multi-track studio to curiously emulate that effect.

The best way to listen to this record — and believe me, it is worth listening to — is to turn it up really loud and stand in the next room.

Bryan Staff

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Records

Prince For You Warner Bros

The genesis of his royal badness — the seminal first album from 1978, produced, arranged, composed and performed by Prince.

A case of self indulgence perhaps, but Prince's work is always a struggle between ego and id — it's what generates that edgy beat. In many ways *For You* is more interesting than *Purple Rain*. It's like a blueprint for his later work. The ballads show just how good a gospel voice he has (just as good as Little Richard) and they have a more soulful edge than the later stuff. The dance tracks like 'Just As Long As We're Together' prefigure bits off 'Dirty Mind' and 'Controversy' and 'I'm Yours' has the hard guitar sound of 'Let's Go Crazy'.

An historically important album, but also one that hasn't dated in any way. It still sounds fresh and exciting, which is more than most current releases can manage.
Kerry Buchanan

Dragon Body and the Beat Polydor

In the often mediocre world of rock 'n' roll there is only a fine line between the genuinely good stuff (Dragon) and the crap that people soon wake up to.

The fact that many wrote off Dragon some years ago has made their return all the more pleasing. Not that much has changed for them, they are still strutting down that fine line but they do it with such confidence and inspiration that they make rock 'n' roll sound fresh again. Of course they don't make any startling revelations but once again they prove it isn't what you say, it's the way you say it.

Dragon happen to say it very well, especially on the superb single 'Rain' (ignored in this country), the slow, soothing 'Cool Down' and the well constructed 'Magic'.

This release comes at the beginning of a world tour which will hopefully see Dragon succeed and Marc Hunter stay with the

band, because he has more chance with the band than he does by himself.

Especially with a world-class record to flaunt on the way, a record that defies the term "boring old rock music."

Alister Cain

Tim Buckley The Late Great Tim Buckley WEA

Tim Buckley was poised on the edge of being the next big thing. His second album, *Hello and Goodbye* (or the other way if you prefer), was in the Top 20 in 1969. But it never did happen.

Flirtations with avant-garde jazz (for want of another description; the intention remains) lost the audience, but he remained a cult figure. He died in 1975.

This compilation collects material from 1966 through 1974, although not all albums are represented. No doubt cultists will find reason to quibble with the selection, but the weight is towards his most widely known work, *Hello and Greetings From L.A.*

Years of Buckley albums in deletion bins and a faded reputation can't cancel out the good stuff here.

Ken Williams

Bruce Cockburn Stealing Fire Big Time

It may seem an odd comment to make about his 15th album but *Stealing Fire* suffers slightly from the follow-up syndrome. Cockburn's previous album, *The Trouble With Normal*, was replete with a variety of musical styles, memorable melodies, interesting arrangements and pungent lyrics. It was certainly his strongest album to reach these shores and, boosted by a personal performance tour, deservedly won Cockburn many listeners outside the Christian and folkie sets to which he'd been largely confined.

This time out his strengths are still present, his weakness for wordiness well controlled, but the musical peaks are not so high. In fact one or two of the tunes are only minimal vehicles for his words. All the songs rely heavily on the strong rhythms supplied by the five-piece band. Sometimes this means that lightness is lost. 'Peggy's Kitchen Wall' has ominous overtones, lacking the humour of its acoustic performance in concert. (Humour, in fact, is conspicuous in its absence from this album.)

In the best numbers however, the backing creates atmospheric

resonance to the lyrics. 'Nicaragua' and 'Dust And Diesel', both written from Cockburn's observations in Central America, sway gently on Latin-tinged rhythms. Yet strong as these songs are, neither is as masterful as 'Tropic Moon' on *The Trouble With Normal*.

Cockburn's political consciousness was evident in his live performances, a characteristic that disconcerted some of his more evangelical following. They will be even less happy here with the anger in 'If I Had A Rocket Launcher', as vehemently specific as the more spiritualistic 'Making Contact' and 'To Raise The Morning Star' are mystically vague. Still, if this album may slightly disappoint from certain perspectives, Bruce Cockburn is not one for compromise. *Stealing Fire* maintains his considerable integrity.

Peter Thomson

Iron Maiden Powerslave EMI

State of the art British heavy metal 1984. With the world's number one metal knob twiddler Martin Birch in control and a stable lineup for two consecutive albums this one hits the bullseye.

An album of furious riffing in which tunes and lyrics take a backseat to overall *sound*. Aside from the instant metal classic 'Two Minutes To Midnight' the standout track is the opus, 'Rime Of the Ancient Mariner', an extended workout that'll leave not just your eardrums but your speakers exhausted as well.

A full 52 minutes down no nonsense mindless metal — buy it for your mutha.

Chris Caddick

Sahara (featuring Martin Winch) RCA

Martin Winch is probably the most sought-after jazz-inclined guitarist in the country. His grounding, however, is in rock groups (like Sylvester Winchstyle in the early 70s) and his work ever since has maintained a distinctive attack. Here he performs 11 self-penned instrumentals (two with female scat vocalising) backed by a bunch of New Zealand's top jazz and session honchos. The musical styles vary, as does Winch's tone, but all fall within that hybrid category, jazz-rock fusion.

All of which means that Winch and co. are footing it in a league with such acclaimed 'heavy-weights' as John McLaughlin and Al Di Meola. No problem at all. And furthermore, although he's technically quite able, Winch doesn't stoop to such common Di Meola ploys as blustering through a lack of direction with blistering speed. All the riffs and solos here are intelligent and a good few are genuinely exciting. The basic guitars, bass, drums lineup is occasionally complemented by judicious touches of brass or synth. The album is crisply produced with the presence we expected from good overseas product. Guitar fanciers should check this one out.

Peter Thomson

Scott Walker Climate of Hunter Virgin

Scott Walker is a person who appreciates the value of scarcity. Since his Male Pop Vocal records in the sixties, he's used his talent sparingly and, arguably, tastefully. He was last heard of on the Walker Brothers' reformation album LP, *Nite Flights* released in 1978, but his name and earlier songs have been kept before the public by leading disciple Julian Cope.

Walker's voice disseminates cool, a man in charge of the cryptic and his approach and style implies a knowledge of the connection between the intellectual and emotional charge of rock'n'roll. This is something he's had since the early Walker Brothers' days when their pop hits hinted at something deeper and darker merely by the timbre of his voice.

Climate of Hunter is dictated by the purity and resonance of his voice but this time he's matched by a band of some old associates who use the shades and paces of the eighties to colour his music. So they empathise with his desolation on 'Dealer' and 'Sleep-walker's Woman', push his desperation on 'Track Three' and help him plunge into the pain of 'Track Five'.

As someone not completely bowled over by the Scott Walker vocal presence, I've got to concede that *Climate of Hunter* has an emotive power derived from a very rare soul.

George Kay

Various Artists That's The Way I Feel Now A&M

Subtitled *A Tribute To Thelonious Monk* and a case of the best intentions going astray. Thelonious Sphere Monk broke down barriers during his lifetime, a true eccentric genius of the keyboard and an inspired composer and arranger who influenced two generations of jazz musicians. Tributes have flowed freely since his death in 1982 — more, in fact, than he received in his whole lifetime. To describe Monk's music in words is a challenge in itself. "Quirky" would be an easy word for his melodies, yet they had a unique symmetry. The element of surprise was always there, but so was joy.

For this double album, producer Hal Willner has assembled a sometimes baffling variety of musicians to give their interpretations of Monk standards. Some, like Carla Bley, Steve Lacy and Bobby McFerrin, make sense, even though they add little to the originals. Others are just plain peculiar. Who the hell thought of getting Peter Dinklage and Chris Spedding to play 'Work'? Todd Rundgren smothers 'Four In One' unnecessarily in synthesizers, Donald Fagen does similar things to 'Reflections' and Was (Not Was) just make a mess of 'Ba-Lue-Bolivar'. Dr John plays 'Blue Monk' with love and Joe Jackson gets lost somewhere in a host of players on 'Round Midnight'.

The cover is also one of the messiest of the year and the whole package really can't be recommended to either aficionados or beginners. Buy the original works instead and do greater service to the man's memory.

Duncan Campbell

George Winston December Windham Hill Shadowfax Windham Hill

Windham Hill is a small, very select American label that presents its artists with loving care and quiet taste. Insofar as precise clarity of recording and the restrained sleeve designs are concerned Windham Hill begs comparison to Germany's ECM. And just as Keith Jarrett's solo work has provided ECM's greatest successes, so too does pianist George Winston support Windham Hill. But there all comparison ends.

Jarrett's eruptive and lyrical romanticism is predominantly improvised and occasionally spectacularly inspired. On the evidence of *December* however, George Winston's work is neither jazz-based nor exciting. Its essence is gentle simplicity and its sources are traditional (in this case carols) with a few original pieces of similar style. Certainly Winston has a beautiful touch, if over-heavy on the sustain pedal, but no more so than any decent graduate of Auckland's Janetta McStay. *December* verges on the pretty-pretty, the sort of ruminations with which a skilled pianist may indulge him/herself after making leisurely love on a balmy afternoon.

The band Shadowfax is misnamed. Its music definitely fits the pastoral fantasy of Tolkien's Middle Earth but in no way recalls the windswift gallop of Gandalf's stallion. Instead, this instrumental quartet's gentle, measured pace and blend of acoustic guitars, lyricon or soprano sax and various percussion would better suit after-dinner relaxation in the elven capital of Lothlorian.

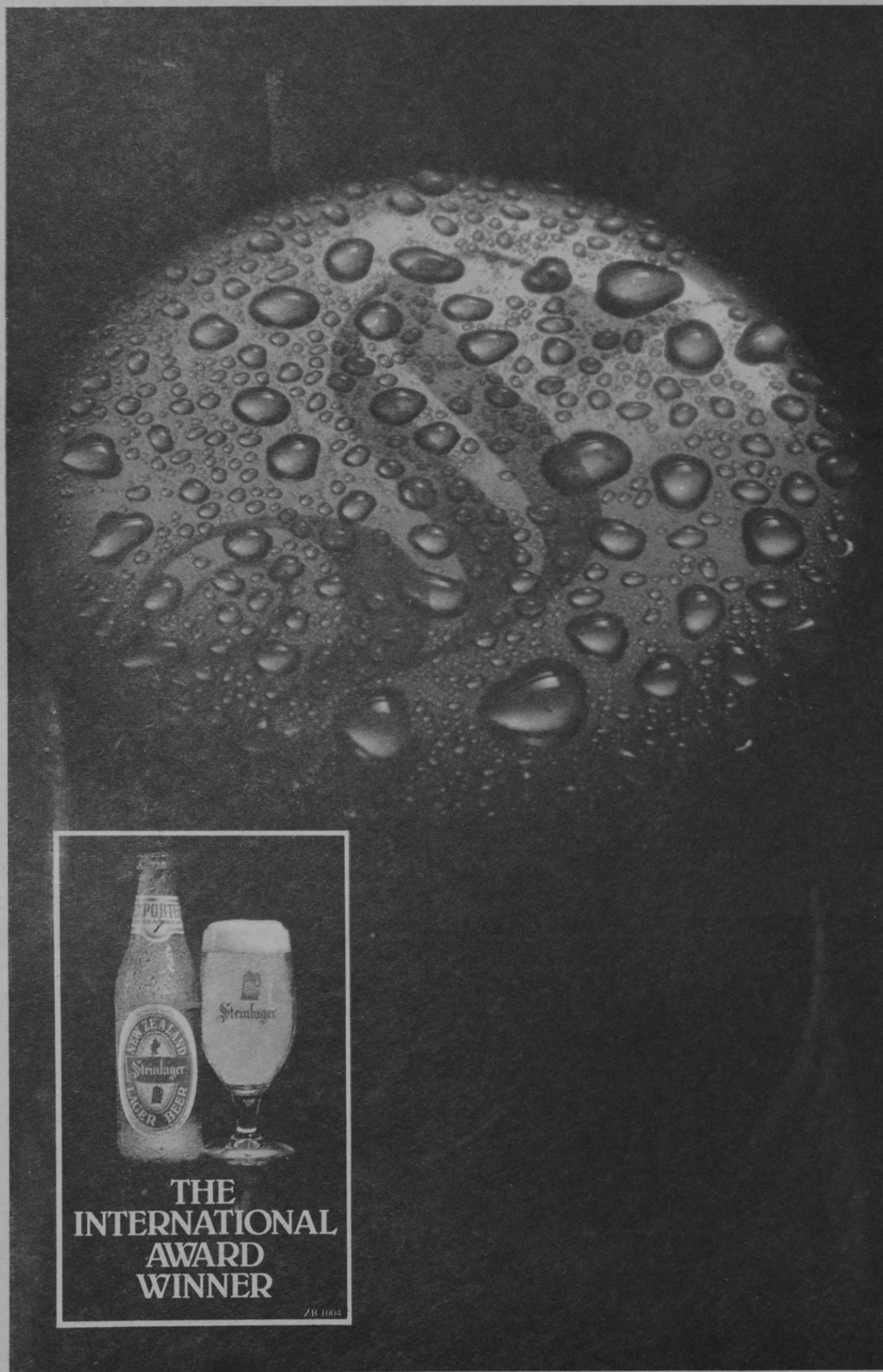
On the evidence of these two releases Windham Hill is, despite appearances, quite unlike ECM. Where the latter label is exploring various aspects of European jazz, Windham Hill is packaging background MOR for those who hate muzak.

Peter Thomson

The Modern Jazz Quartet Reunion at Budokan 1981 (Atlantic)

After a 22 year career the MJQ disbanded in 1974 with a highly acclaimed *Last Concert*. This *Reunion* includes many of their most well-known pieces and thankfully concentrates on the swinging, often blues-based side of their repertoire rather than the baroque or third-stream experiments. While Lewis, Jackson, Heath and Kay have now either entered their 60s or are fast approaching them their particular brand of subdued excitement hasn't suffered. The digital recording quality is first rate. As all the MJQ classics are unavailable this album makes a worthy introduction for the newly interested.

PT



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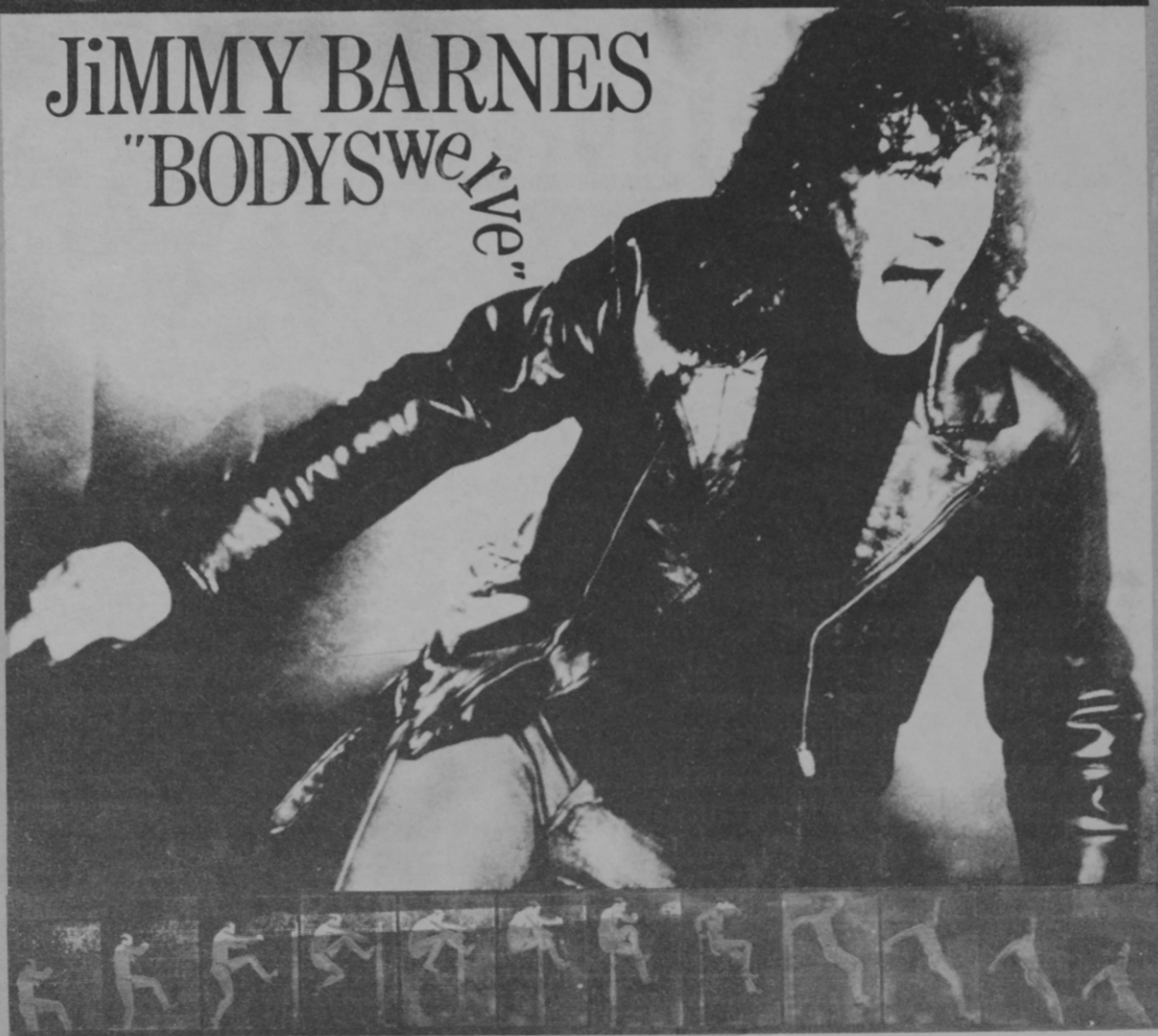


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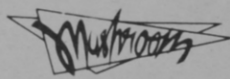
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Records

Devo, *Shout* (WEA)

Like hula hoops and skateboards, Devo have had their day. They thrashed their novelties over the first couple of albums, retaining a hard-core of support since by dint of clever videos and the innate conservatism of the general public. *Shout* is more formula fun. No brave horizons or experiments, the 10 tracks here are very pleasant. Even your Mum would hum along to Devo's version of Hendrix's 'Are You Experienced?'. Maybe the videos will add a more stimulating perspective. DT

Krokus, *The Blitz* (Arista)

In a field as limited as heavy metal it's all too easy for name bands to lay down an album of standard metal textbook clichés and hooks and expect to cash in. *The Blitz* is one of these albums — highly predictable and ultimately boring. Krokus have made no discernible progress on recent albums and reach an unimaginative low with this one. Even a cover of the Sweet's glam pop hit 'Ballroom Blitz' (presumably in an effort to emulate Quiet Riot's success with Slade remakes) falls flat on its face. Best ignored. CC

Jermaine Stewart *Finally* (Virgin)

After years of dancing on *Soul Train* and singing backups for Shalamar, Jermaine makes his solo debut with this confused collection of pop-soul. His voice is pleasant enough, especially in tandem with the backup singers, but the problem is the way it's presented by English producer Peter Collins. An over-use of Fairlight programming and a desire to fill up every space with something that goes "bang!" just obscures the vocals and produces a stodgy, heavy feel. Lyrics about jacuzzi pools and a cover boasting the names of the world's foremost clothes designers don't help. Jermaine really wants to become Michael Jackson but he simply doesn't have the talent or a producer like Quincy Jones to help him along the way. KB

Paul McCartney *Give My Regards to Broad Street* (EMI)

It's too easy to be cynical about McCartney and his trade. As a musician and tunesmith he's long since evolved into the role of safe, across-the-board entertainer, a position with more credibility than the bad-ass teenage degeneracy crap that the Stones have tried to live up to in their obvious middle age. Digressions aside, this album is the soundtrack to a Macca musical and it's a mixture of old and new, good and bad, maudlin and not so maudlin. Reverential treatments of 'Good Day Sunshine', 'For No One' and other Beatle ballads do no harm, while new stuff like 'No Values' and 'No More Lonely Nights' should please rocking mums. I can live without this album, easily, but maybe you can't. Make your own value judgements. GK

Lee Aaron *Metal Queen* (Big Time)

Spearheaded by April Wine and Triumph, Canadian metal bands

have always had a distinct sound; bordering on pomp, strong on melody, deliberate, chugging riffs and slick guitar playing. This second album from sultry Lee Aaron fits very neatly into this pattern. Aaron's multi-tracked voice fairly screams out above the superb guitar playing of Wrabit's John Alivani. If you enjoy class femme metale and have been frustrated by Benatar's wimping out since 'Heartbreaker', check this one out. CC

Rickie Lee Jones *The Magazine* (Warner Bros)

Back in '79 a lot of people, besides Chuck E, were in love with Rickie Lee Jones. But that street-smart, hipster cool of hers seemed to shield less art than artifice. The first album quickly reduced to three or four tracks and the two-year-in-the-making follow-up to even less. And last year's slap-dash EP presented cover versions that were an insult to their originals. *The Magazine* shows slight hopes of a turnaround. Her writing can still flounder badly in sub Joni Mitchell meanderings but, more positively, she's also re-employed the lazy, swinging funk that secured her initial success. The vocal mannerisms still irritate though. A minor talent. PT

Various Artists, *Beat Street Volume 2* (Atlantic)

If you're looking for hard core electro sounds don't bother with this sucker. Volume two of a continuing series that could prove to be endless. The best dance track is Rockers Revenge's chant over an Arthur Baker rhythm in 'Battle Cry'. The real goodies are Tina B's neat beat ballad 'Nothin's Gonna Come Easy' and Juicy's 'Give Me All' — nice, real nice. But the rest are fairly disposable. There's a terrible attempt at rap parody in Phony Four MC's 'Wappin' (Bubble-head)' and Jenny Burton's 'It's Alright By Me' sounding more like Las Vegas than the Bronx — but that's the breaks. KB

M+M, *Mystery Walk* (RCA)

Hey gang, anyone remember 'Echo Beach'? Boring, wasn't it? Martha and the Muffins plodded on bravely for a few years after that, but Canada never had much new wave credibility, so they fell by the wayside. Now they've ditched most of the name, picked up lotsa percussion and drum machines, made a clever-clever video, got slightly funky, and guess what? Mmmm. Yeah, let's do the dishes or something else exciting. DC

The Comateens *Deal With It* (Virgin)

So, Willy de Ville New York looks like the Comateens weigh in with another album. Last year they were smart enough with *Pictures On a String* and on *Deal With It* they clarify their target. Glistening velvet-assed little shakers like 'Don't Come Back', 'Ask Yourself', the title track and the premier pop of 'Jo-Ni' suggest that they're after *Solid Gold* land. If persistence means success in the States then they've still a ways to go, but *Deal With It* implies that they'll get there eventually. Another romp with business rock 'n' roll. GK

Various Artists *Streets Of Fire Soundtrack* (MCA)

The gossip is that this ripoff from the Springsteen legend has dropped a bundle at the box office. Quite understandable — that is, if the soundtrack's any indication. How the hell do you sequence Jim ("I-made-Meatloaf") Steinman with the likes of Ry Cooder or the Blasters? Not to mention the Fixx with Dan Hartman. Or even ... oh, forget it. PT

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Beatin Hearts is your most comprehensive record and probably the most widely heard. Were you happy with it?

"I didn't feel it was quite what it could have been. I was trying to make it the rough-edged masterpiece which would correspond with my fond memories of playing with the Vacuum and Kaza Portico, a couple of really good bands, in 1979 and 1981. And I think really it's not possible to do that. I can't really listen to it without thinking that it hasn't quite got it."

How did you choose the songs? The number of older songs on it makes it a bit like a "this is what I have done thus far" statement.

"There was quite a lot of material to choose from — and some of it is on the second album. But in choosing I looked for the

simplest songs, apart from 'Heartbeats A-Go-Go'. I think I had gone further, before the record, in other directions, but in the sense of the three-piece band with few overdubs, yeah, I think it was about as far as I could go."

It seemed quite appropriate that you used the words from Denis Glover's 'Magpies' for one song because there seems to be the same indigenous element in many of the songs as there is in the work of Glover and other New Zealanders who work in different creative fields. Were you conscious of that?

"Well no, not at the time. But there's a new breed of songwriter in New Zealand, as you're probably aware, that doesn't necessarily have to write like anyone they've heard overseas. But of course that has to be qualified with the fact the you can't escape your influences — in some cases there'll be a British element or a slight Americanisation. But I think a lot of people are becoming aware of the post-colonial stage of development that New Zealand is at. In, say, Australian art, a lot of the strongest work reflects a breaking out of post-colonial complacency. Many South American painters work in co-operatives and there's something similar here, particularly in Christchurch. Someone presents a painting or something and often they don't say who they are, but they say where they come from, what co-operative they work for. And the sharing of equipment and practise rooms in Christchurch is in a way similar to that."

But in rock music there's always going to be a conflict in that sort of area because it's much more of business than any other art form.

"I don't know ... I don't think it is any more than any other, it's just that the artist is the frontman. Which happens in painting or whatever as well. It's just that it's a prerequisite of rock music. For instance I've come to terms with the idea of, say, speaking to you because it's necessary, so that people know what you're about or want to know what you're about before they buy your record."

That's interesting because you have a

reputation for being difficult and obscure, notoriously so. That wasn't deliberate?

"Not at all, no. It's just that I haven't paid any lip service to the way that people go about things in America or Britain — or here if they're wanting to make a concert for *Radio With Pictures* or something. Perhaps if I'd been a bit more approachable I might have got a video paid for or perhaps even the video we made for 'Russian Rug' might have been shown on TV. And maybe if I'd been more forthcoming and so on perhaps I would have been asked to do some more recording and have some more recording paid for. And perhaps if I'd gone out to sell the bands some more they wouldn't have been received with such cynicism by a lot of people."

Cynicism?

"Well I think Above Ground was never really received as well as it should have been because the excitement of that band was the rhythm getting through. With rock music you can only go so far — once you've reached a certain level of expertise it's a piece of cake. And then you can do it every night and get girls or money ... the whole lot, whatever you like. But then there's no real excitement in it — and the idea of breaking ground in rock music is important and increasingly difficult the longer you play. And breaking ground for an artist is very important. That's probably why the life expectancy of most people in the rock world is probably four or five years from when they start playing — and why there should be a longer and longer gap between things, they shouldn't just come off like a production line."

"With Above Ground two of the musicians were almost completely new to rock music and they were discovering at an incredibly fast rate, the way a baby learns, and it was coming through in the music. It may not have been high-powered but it was exciting if people had opened their ears to it. That isn't a bitch, but ..."

Do you find yourself periodically losing enthusiasm for rock music?

"Oh yeah, often. I think the hedonistic aspects of rock music are becoming more and more

revolting to me. It is so closely akin to the sins of the flesh (laughs) ... without sounding prudish, it has just become a vehicle for all the nasties associated with commercialism. And it has become the victim, rather than standing up against anything as it used to be. It began attacking — but I suppose it depends on where you think it came from — say, the white, American middle-class ethic, but it's been progressively becoming that for years and it became that almost immediately for the people who supposedly founded it. I suppose it's just a matter of course but it's becoming increasingly a vital and defining feature of it."

"I also think a lot of the excitement goes out of it when the reaction of the audience is limited. Like when we're doing our plays part of the excitement goes out of it when the reaction of the audience is limited. Like when we were doing our plays part of the excitement of it is that you are opening yourself up to the criticism of hoonos — but they give it. There's a break in the thing and someone belches or yells out 'we've had enough' or whatever. They can say that and they do and often those things get more reaction from the audience than the actual play, a more vocal reaction anyway."

Why choose a mediaeval farce as the play to take into a pub?

"Because originally those plays were performed in a market place, a public place, and the players who performed them, *le sots* in French, were bald-headed travellers dressed in yellow and green and they would be ridiculed or entertain people, depending on what the feeling of the place was. If you're putting on a play you've got to think about what sort of reaction you want to get — are you encouraging complacency, which is what the Court Theatre does. I've just finished working with them and it doesn't encourage people to even think about their lives, think about the way things are at the moment."

"I don't think the play necessarily does that but at least by putting it on in a pub you're encouraging people to think 'this isn't usually what happens in a pub' and first of all, 'what are they doing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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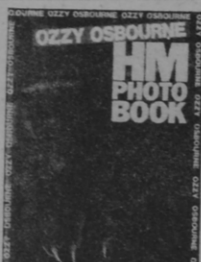
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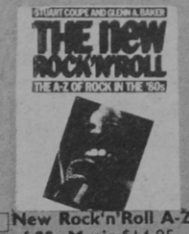
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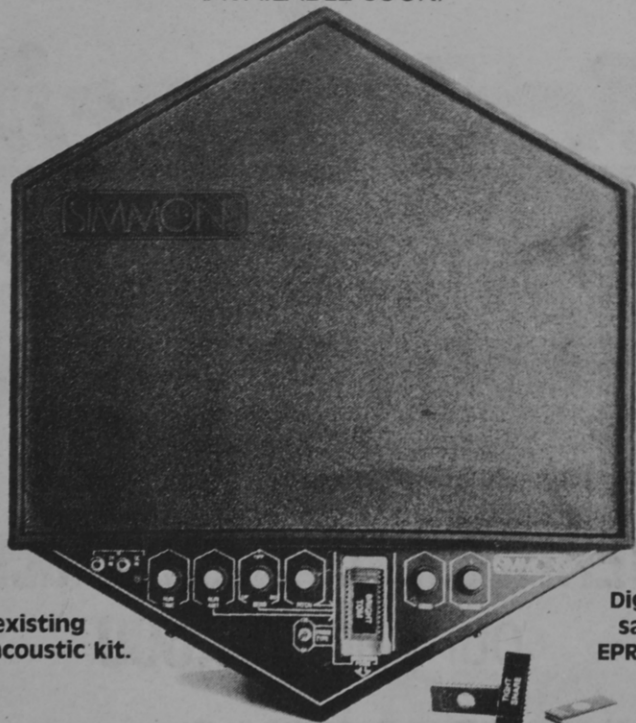
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'DIREEN' FROM PAGE 36
here' and maybe by the end of it 'what am I doing here?'

Many people, for whatever reason, feel obliged to draw a dividing line between rock music and other forms of performance but you obviously don't.

"No, I think it's mainly a matter of exposure for those other forms of performance. The more we perform with me playing acoustic songs or the Full Moon group performing farces, clowning and things like that, the sharper people's critical faculties will become and the greater their vocabulary of criticism and understanding of another form of performing art. Which I think is essential because rock music has painted itself into a corner."

We've spoken a lot about what rock music hasn't got going for it — what *has* it got going for it?

"It still has the power to change people's lives — and not necessarily work for the better but it can jolt them to that extraordinary space of mind where you are learning, where you are experiencing new things, where you can be like a new person. This is getting a bit ethereal but in that frame of mind you can come closer to a feeling of creativity in ourselves. And I think now creativity is very important, for people to either do it or experience other people doing it."

"Sometimes I Get So Lonely, I Just Put My Head In A Book

The publishing side of Full Moon (and, before

that, Prototype) isn't exactly high profile. But books by people who have been associated with the collectives have been available for some years. They are available at all the university bookshops but Direen admits that, in the absence of a true indie distribution network in the manner of records, there is a problem with outlets. So what about record shops?

"I don't think we should put them in record shops but that people who go into record shops should start going into bookshops — as a hell of a lot of them do anyway."

Flying Nun boss Roger Shepherd told of an excursion to Lancaster Park for a rugby test with Bill Direen. Direen loudly abusing the "neutral" Gallic referee — in colourful French.

A Reach As Long As Your Arms ...

Bill Direen has been described as a "one man concept" and you do seem to have kept everything you do well within your reach.

"I suppose that's true — it brings up the matter of control and how much power is involved in it all. The mediaeval farces are relevant because they're also related to this element of having things within reach, not unreclaimable, not getting out of your hands. They are very much akin to the mediaeval craftsman's products because the price charged for a craftsman's work couldn't possibly relate to the amount of time he put into it, the thought, the care and the actual manufacturing of the product ... which in many cases didn't correspond with the idea or concept but was nonetheless a valid representation of

quite a personal search for expression."

In terms of the control thing — in the eyes of the public at least, every band you've been involved with is Bill Direen's band. How do you feel about that?

"Well, I think that's true — for the first reason that the material has been 99 per cent written by me. The material is written by me, I have ideas about how I want it put across, so that impression is correct. But by the same token, in fairness to the people who play it, part of the excitement of the record is those people playing on it and musicianship is just as important a thing as songwriting."

Direen's dominance must also relate to his personality. I can recall watching the first Soluble Fish practice and almost all the drive and direction came from him. Ego certainly, but also the actions of a prime mover. Is that the role of an artist today, motivator?

"I suppose with people having more leisure time it is necessary for there to be people who are prime movers. What Carol, Julie and I are doing at the core of the Full Moon thing — realisation of what people can do, letting them get satisfaction out of it. Yeah, I suppose that is a part of creative work that there be people who develop other people. It's like developing a photograph, the skills and everything are there already."

It seems ironic that someone with Direen's creative drive and desire to influence people for the better should shy away from paths that would

place him before a greater audience. And a man who wrote a pop song like 'Bedrock Bay' certainly *could* reach many people. But then his logic would be that he will be more effective as his own boss, reaching those who are interested, and that's true. Sometimes his logic will also be skewed — he's undeniably eccentric, frustrating. But eccentricity is only the obverse of individuality.

"A lot of people who come in to work with us at the theatre, when we talk about money they say 'oh, I'll be able to get that on top of the dole', as if the dole was a cheat, because they're made to think that it *is* a cheat, that they are bludging and so on and therefore on the wrong side. But people have got to come around to the idea that they've got to get *off* the dole and they've got to make up that money somehow, and to *declare* it for God's sake. Say 'I've earned this much'. And as they gradually earn more and more they'll feel better and better and start doing better and better things."

"Okay, that's for the few who are able to work in a group like ours. But there are other groups people can get into — like doing their sport for spectacle — I don't know how many unemployed table tennis players there are, but that sort of thing. I really want that to get across because I think it's a terrible situation as far as creativity and our country's art goes that people are just stifling themselves with the feeling that they are useless and *not allowed* to express themselves in any way for any return. And that's *not right*"
Russe!! Brown

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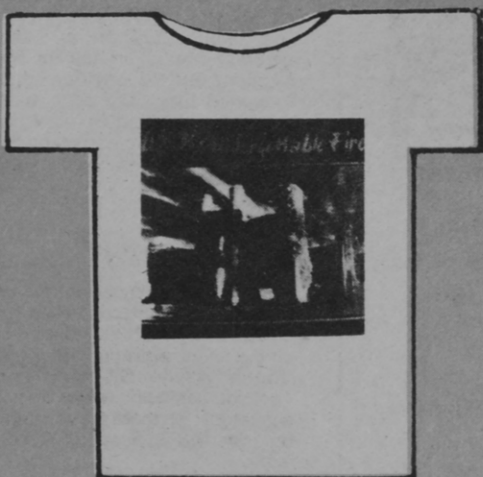
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Strange Language Jigsaw Breakfast (\$6, Industrial)

Alice Tik and Viv Acious are two British women who recently visited Aotearoa. They seem to have the same reference points as Marie and the Atom, without the immediate impact of said band, live anyway. Recorded on a Portastudio, they use a variety of instruments (sparingly) — guitar, synth, sax, clarinet — and both have very good voices which are used. Eight songs in total, each a woman's experience of day-to-day living in a man's world — 'Daydream Nightmare Litany' (scary), 'Juggle' (how to keep sane is ...), 'Walk A Crooked Line', 'So You Lost Thought?'. There is satire, naturally enough, in 'Tea For Two (version)' and 'Sloppy Romance'. Repeated listenings only make this tape sound better — and it's interesting how two women on the other side of the world can say the same things as New Zealand women do.

Various Artists

Seven In One Blow (\$7 Industrial)

An acoustic compilation, *Seven In One Blow* features seven exponents of folk; Siren, Mike Harding, Nexus, Kathryn Tate, Colin Spear, Wayne Gillespie and Acoustic Confusion. While I'm not a great folk fan there are some impressive tracks, notably 'Women

Are Smarter' (Siren), Kathryn Tate's two songs 'Go Go Go' and 'Women At Sea' and Colin Spear's instrumentals. The women on this tape really stand out — while expressing admirable sentiments, the men sound as if they should be travelling through Midwest America with Gordon Lightfoot. Whatever, it's nice to hear folk alive and shuffling in good ol' New Zild.

Fiona Rae

Psykke / Hexenhaus (Rites, \$5) Massacre (Rites, \$5)

Two tapes from Finland! Wow, I've never heard of Psykke before, but are they ever hot, a powerful brooding sound incorporating pounding drums, well used synth and very strong vocals. This is like Finland's answer to Children's Hour, it's that good. Flip the tape over and Hexenhaus aim for a similar approach but don't quite cut it. Never mind — worth it for Psykke alone.

Massacre, who have a cassette to themselves, go for a more straightforward punk sound. They're young and raw with a more mid-tempo feel than many Finnish groups but don't come up to the quality of some of their countrymen (Riisteyt, Terveet Kadet) although they are quite appealing — support the international scene.

Neil Cartwright

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



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- Split Enz on Road Part 1, Fall's Mark E. Smith interviewed, Altered Images, Randy Crawford, This Sporting Life, Cold Chisel.
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FROM THE ARCHIVES!



EXTRA 1 OCT 1980

Split Enz 2 page pic history, Cramps, Toy Love (pic; last gig photos, TL by Toy Love), Ramones (interview, pic, NZ favs), why Spelling Mistakes split, Zwines Family Tree (2 page history AK bands 1977-80, by Simon Grigg), Cure, XTC, Tom Petty, Life in the Fridge, ChCh band history.

EXTRA 2 DEC 1980

New Wave dates (75-80), Last Weekend in Auckland (Newmatics, Pop Mx, Penknife Glides, Techtones), Kinks profile, mod Ray Columbus, David Bowie pic, UK Scene by Jeremy Templar, Newtones, Heavenly Bodies, Chris Knox pic.

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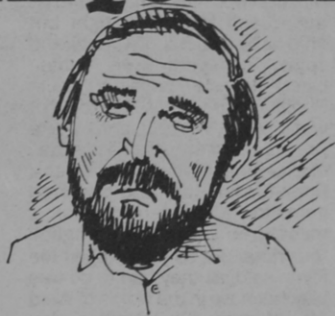
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FROM PAGE 4

Summer, the Rolling Stones, Bryan Ferry, the Beatles, etc, and, most notoriously, Michael Jackson.

Plans: They will eventually go vinyl but they're understandably reluctant to step away from the independence afforded by home recording and cassette release. The next project is a double album called *A Scar Is Born*. This, other tapes, posters and T-shirts are available from PO Box 2764, Christchurch.

Recordings: They record everything.

Concept (1)? Steve: "I guess ... the whole comes out as more than the parts."

Concept (2)? Steve: "If there's a concept it's independence within a whole."

Concept (3)? Steve: "Bob and Stu and Steve."

Concept (4)? Steve: "It's to get across that hurdle of ... prejudice. People are pre-judging things. If we change all the time people can't pre-judge us. And that's the best way to avoid becoming part of the rock 'n' roll machine you were talking about."

Russell Brown

Live

Wilko Johnson & the Blues All Stars

Gluepot, November 1

So wild-eyed Wilko was back, on his own this time. I think most of the people present would gladly have paid their money to see Wilko play but, whether you wanted them or not, you got the All Stars. I contrived to miss most of the All Stars' set; I understand it was business as usual.

Anyway, bad news first: the Gluepot Syndrome was particularly in evidence this night and I can't believe anyone could countenance standing behind the partition if they actually wanted to hear the band — from the bar the music was so much bassy nonsense. Still, you pays yer money ...

Wilko played with Dennis Ryan and Neil Edwards, the All Stars rhythm section. The pair did well enough, even though after only three practises it could only be blues-by-numbers rather than pub style R&B.

Everyone wants to see Wilko charge around the stage, see those eyes bulge — and he didn't disappoint. But when by default he had to be the sole object of attention there was an element of sideshow about it all — see *Wilko do his tricks!* Given that he's not a great singer, it was too much to expect a single guitarist to hold it all up on his own.

But now the good news! Wilko Johnson reminded us that he is a Bloody Great Rhythm 'n' Booze Guitarist. He cracked out rapidfire chords like a man with bionic wrists. Electric! And sweat! "He's okay within what he does," sniffed a blues buff. "But he doesn't do much lead work, does he?"

Me, I think he's smart. He knows it's gonna be best if he does what comes easiest. He owns the Wilko Johnson style of guitar playing and he always will.

And when everyone came back on stage for the inevitable final jam, it was Wilko that brought it above the ordinary, stabbing in a little wakeup every time he opened up. Yes, he's an original indeed.

Russell Brown

Car Crash Set
Windsor, October 24

Life's hard. Just when you get all

the machines under control, you find that things are getting laboured and just when you loosen up and start having a good time, your credibility slips through your fingers. Car Crash Set pick the best of both; the band have the time of their lives and Nigel Russell complains. Everyone dances and everyone's miserable. Maybe things aren't that complicated after all.

Okay, so much for cynicism. Car Crash Set have penned and performed three of the best ever: 'Those Days', 'Work' and 'Breakdown', the latter mixed live to a size way beyond vinyl. Given the remainder, the new album will be a box of goodies and rewards appropriate to the huge effort they put in to what they do.

And what they do, namely grind through a sweating live set of chic industrial dance, they do very well, far surpassing their efforts in the studio. The only question is why Nigel Russell, with such a good band behind him, is still singing lyrics from old New Order songs.

Maybe he just can't resist the ...
Chad Taylor

Soul On Ice
Zanzibar, Oct 4.

"Polished" is not a term that usually augers well for a "soul"

band. Polished means getting everything just right, even to the point of filing down the rough edges, losing the feel, the emotional contact, the "soulfulness" that the best music of the form has. Soul On Ice are polished, very polished, but they still have the feel.

Opening with dancers who got the crowd clapping and cheering, Soul On Ice came on to play an almost entirely original set, stopping to cover only two songs, the Jacksons' 'Walk Right Back' and 'Take Your Time (Do It Right)' by the SOS Band.

A great funky bass player and an amazingly successful single trumpet player expanded the range of the songs with the help of two very professional backup vocalists. The lead vocalist has a fine voice but needs to break out of a somewhat limited delivery that sometimes bordered on monotony. Still, she did deliver one of the few successful exhortations to dance that I've ever seen.

Just ask anyone who was there that night. This band is bloody good and they put on a damn fine show.

Barry Morris

Ra and the Pyramids
Cricketers, October 5

Ra and the Pyramids pay homage to the soul greats. And they're faithful. This isn't the full-tilt treatment of the Jive Bombers, it's a more subtle sound and style. Ra is every bit the showman and he's got a resonant voice that carries well the works of Al Green, Smokey Robinson or Sam and Dave. The Pyramids feature a fine horn section and contain voices male and female which harmonise with Ra.

Search these guys out. They're a little known (as yet) soul treat.

David Taylor

Human Lawnmowers, Ward 13, Worst Kind Of Art Snob
Left Bank Theatre, Hamilton, Nov 10.

Ward 13 made a promising debut in the stark confines of Hamilton's Left Bank Theatre. On the whole their musicianship was of good standard and the only irritating aspect was the vocalist's lapses into a low, monotonal drone. He also demonstrated his promising reading ability by singing the lyrics of nearly half the songs off sheets of paper. Their 11 song set had some less pleasant or inspiring moments, but there were high spots, in particular their closing number 'Winter', which ended Ward 13's performance on a strong note.

Between the two bands, poetry was provided by the Worst Kind of Art Snob, who, in a dazzling impersonation of a blind cripple in an old white wheelchair, reeled off a few lines backed by double bass and a slide show of the great cities of Europe.

Last on, the Human Lawnmowers received a tremendous reaction from the small crowd as they raced through a tight but enjoyable set, full of variety and spirit. Highlights were 'Fading Light', the slow-building 'Ghost Song' and the finale, an excellent version of 'White Light, White Heat'. Behind them flashed slides of everyone's favourite politicians, Ronnie and Rob, and assorted items including Marilyn Monroe, massacred Jews and Springbok tour riots. But as lead singer Joe Flynn said, all they had to do was play, because in the words of Ward 13's 'Winter': "Oh Hamilton, you really are so boring."

Paul McKessar

Tan Zen Jungle
Zanzibar (ChCh), Nov 2

For once our timing was perfect. The band hadn't even started when we got there. The lightweight funk that was the Trifids might have been expected to resurface but to bassist Mark Howe's credit this was to be an exercise in moving from the widely accepted, relatively orthodox beginnings of his first band to the slightly un-orthodox and considerably more evasive rhythms shown here.

Perhaps the other pleasing factor was the huge scope with which they have given themselves to work. That is to say the debut of Tan Zen Jungle was far from perfect, but there is so much they can do by way of improvements and additions that a near-completed project will only want to be on the awkward side of perfection for everybody's comfort and approval.

You have all seen/heard bands that are held together by their rhythm section — well that's never been truer than with this band. That is, of course, the whole idea, but Howe's wonderful bass playing

is, maybe, without equal — and when combined with Craig Guernsey's drumming it is really how a bass and drums should sound.

William Stewart contributes some ideal guitar playing but it is really only offered as garnishing. The vocals and trumpet of Simon Claridge are an uneasy combination, with lyrics almost non-existent. He is probably saying as much when he plays that trumpet. His frustrated little dance once again proves that Tony Drumm has a LOT to answer for but hell, if that's all I've got to complain about ... and it's pronounced "Tarn".

Alister Cain



The Rutles (Roadshow)

It's good to see stuff on video that was made for TV. It works right out to the edges — I mean you know that if someone disappears off screen that it's not because she's strayed into the Cinemascope-only area but she's supposed to not be visible. Good innit? Yeah. And Idle, Eric Idle, I mean, he used to be one of them Pythons then didn't he? Course he did. And this is sorta like the Beatles story but it's all a leg-pull with all the wrong names and stuff, but like George's in it but he's playing an interviewer. Other famous odds and sods like Paul Simon and Mick Jagger get to do their own lines so it's no expense spared and they've got that geezer Innes from the Bonzos to do the songs and he doesn't half take the piss with a fair amount of accuracy. All in all, a couple of bloody good laughs and I'd go so far as to say that here lies a labour of love. And love is all you need, am I right? I am! CK

Rude Boy (Video Classics)

Ray Gange directs and stars (as himself), while the Clash (as themselves) play the bit parts. Gange is a disillusioned London youth who hangs around the Clash and manages to get a job lugging on a tour. The frantic live excerpts stand out markedly against the rather laboured dialogues — the opportunity to see the Clash play material from their first three albums is the film's chief value. But Gange's ambitious attempt to contrast what he perceives as true (nihilistic) punk politics against the more traditional radical stance of the Clash isn't a total failure and the mixture of scripted and real events (as when Ray comes on stage at the Hyde Park RAR gig) is fascinating. A better director might have been able to tighten this into a very good film. RB

Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (Palace)

A gem. When Robert Altman's good he's unbeatable and this is great. It started life as a stage play (produced, I think, by Altman), an origin which is apparent throughout the movie in its one set splendour. Don't be put off — theatricality in a film can be a good thing and in this case it works to create a feature-length world that glows and shimmers with a gloriously intangible incandescence. Phew. Cher, Sandy Dennis and Karen Black head an almost exclusively female ensemble that doesn't put a foot wrong. Altman seems to work most comfortably with women (*A Wedding, Nashville, Images* and, most notably, *Three Women*, all feature female roles immaculately played). And the performances in *CBTTFADJD* are as good as any he has extracted in the past. Altman takes huge risks, which is how it should be, but there is no risk involved in shelling out a few bucks for this unique item. CK

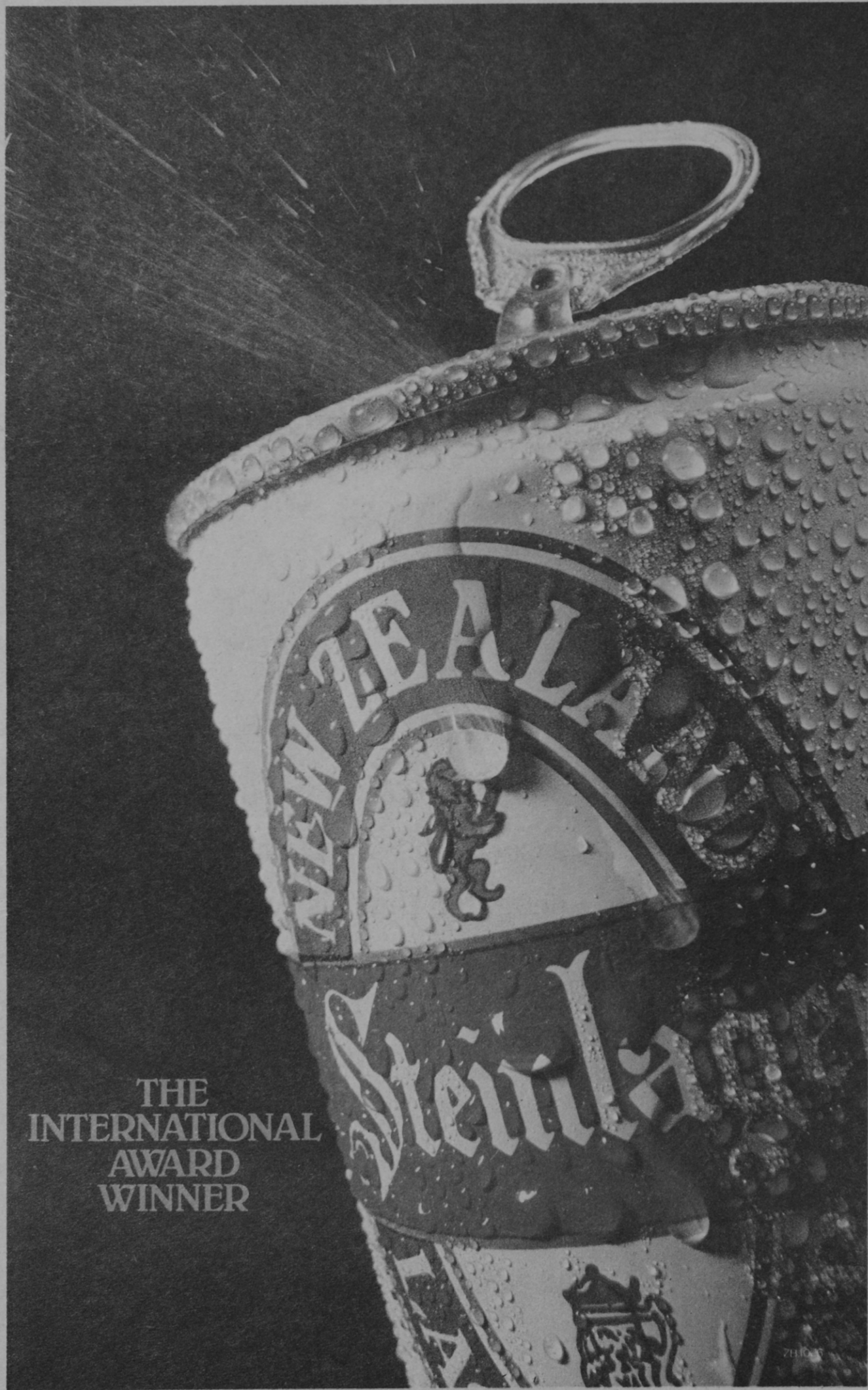
'TAPES' FROM PAGE 40

No Idea, Wotsoever (Twisted Tapes)

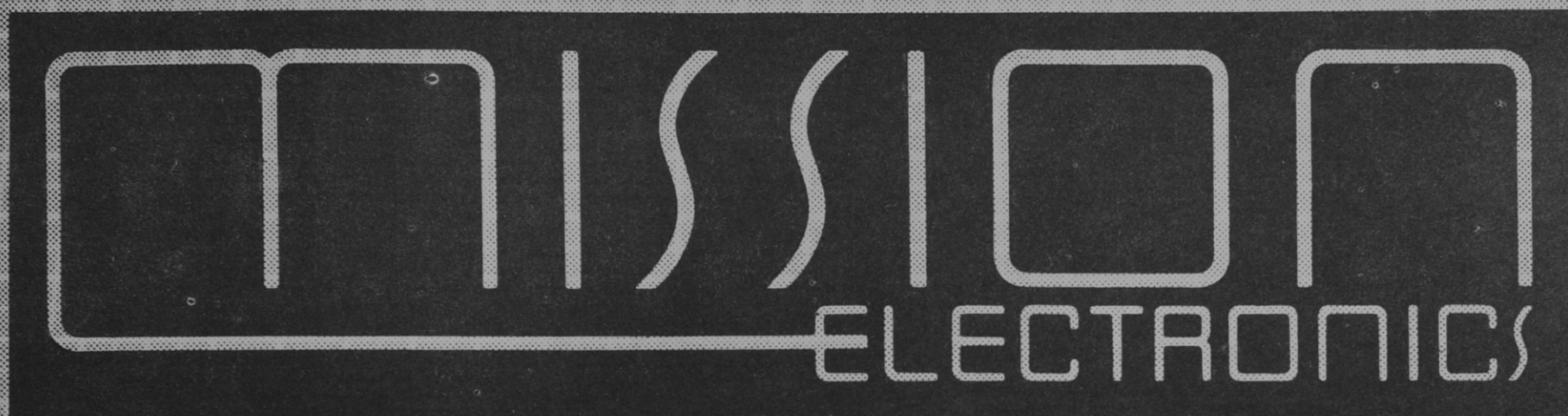
(\$7, PO Box 1297, Christchurch)

Somehow this tape has managed to avoid being reviewed, but it's far too good to be missed. What you get is 11 songs, fast and catchy and topped off with intelligent, convincing lyrics. Well worthwhile, and with the demise of Southern Front and laziness of Flesh D-Vice No Idea look set to lead the field but watch out, Five Year Mission, Compos Mentis and Armatrak are hot on their heels.

NC



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A black and white photograph of Madonna. She is lying down, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. She has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a light-colored, textured, possibly crocheted or knitted, top. She is also wearing a necklace with a large, dark, teardrop-shaped pendant and several smaller beads. Her right hand is resting on her chest, and her left hand is near her head. The background is dark and out of focus.

madonna

like a virgin

new album & single
'Like A Virgin'

produced by Nile Rodgers

on record and tape

wea