



The Economic Wizards didn't choose their name lightly. You may recall it was first conveyed on our former Prime Minister. His bubble may have burst, but the Economic Wizards haven't run short of targets. Just listen to 'If Anyone Can, The Vatican Can' on their debut EP *Starve The Lizards*.

"A friend of ours, who's an out-and-out atheist, wrote those lyrics because he wanted to get something off his chest," says lead singer Jim Steel. "It's meant to be quite tasteless, but I think it still makes some pertinent points."

Another Wizards song which has caused some controversy (Jayrem was apparently reluctant at first to release it) is 'Pakuranga Girl', a 50's-style doo-wop ballad, dedicated to Lorraine Downes.

Jim: "Landy, our guitarist had written this melodic pop tune and Flange (the drummer) had written these lyrics the day after the Miss Universe contest, like a croony love ballad. He gave me the lyrics and Landy played the tune and I just started crooning. It just melded, really. The song was born in one take."

"We just like being silly, we just crack up when we write these songs. Hopefully, the humour is conveyed to the people watching us."

Humorous they may be, but the Wizards take many things around them seriously, even if they don't have a similar attitude towards themselves. 'Short Arms and Long Pockets' is just one of their songs about hard times and inequality.

"I've always been a sort-of

socialist, I suppose," says Jim. "I always read things or hear about things that make you angry. The misery that people are put through, for no good reason, other than they're victims of a system that doesn't really care about them. So I like writing songs that will bring the attention of people to other people's plights without being preachy. People hate having a message rammed down their throats. I think a lot of our lyrics, although they're tongue-in-cheek, have a lot of anger if you sift through them."

Wizards music spans some three decades of influences. On a big night they'll cover everything from Buddy Holly, The Trashmen and Elvis Costello to Gary Glitter and The Buzzcocks, plus a bit of Country and Western thrown in (Jim reckons he can do fair versions of both 'Surfing Bird' and 'Muleskinner Blues'). Steel's stage costume can vary from quiffy greaser to the last time I saw him in tatty walkshorts, shirt open to the waist and what I swear were purple rugby socks. As said before, this is not a band which takes itself too seriously. Its origins themselves are about as unserious as you can get. Would you believe a converted pigshed at Waimauku?

The band got together on a farm which is actually a foster home, run by the parents of members John and Landy Brockie.

"It started up on payday nights," recalls Jim. "We used to buy a whole lot of beer and just make a racket. It wasn't going to be anything more than that, until we got offered support gigs for bands like The Neighbours, the Jive Bombers and

Slippery People: The Eelman Revue Economic Wizards

Economic Wizards (L-R): Sonny, Flange, Jim Steel, John, Landy.

Big Sideways, etc. It was never going to be that serious until that happened, but since then it's just carried on"

Steel hails originally from Wellington, where he mixed in Pelican circles. They gave the Wizards the support spot when they played in Auckland, and finally helped them get their first record down. It's taken two years, and in true Wizards fashion, that's been due to sheer economics.

"We just couldn't afford to get into debt," says Jim. "Then we got an Arts Council Grant and came second to Working With Walt in the Victoria University Battle of the Bands. That gave us a lot more money and really set our record up."

True to form, the Wizards have no masterplan, except to keep playing gigs whenever and wherever they can. Again, this is dictated by financial considerations, as half the band live out at Muriwai, so getting together for rehearsals tends to stretch the finances a bit. One thing they do want to do is record an anti-nuclear song they've written, entitled 'Yankee Go Home'.

"We want to get behind the issue, especially after that Oxford debate," says Jim. "I suppose the title is a bit strong, but it's basically quite a compassionate song. It's not totally anti-American, it's anti-their defence policy and anti-the President. I want to get it out as a single because it is topical and I think Lange needs all the support he can get, even if it's a bit nastier than he'd like."

"The nuclear thing is just so important, isn't it?" DC

At a time when New Zealand's long-suffering populace are being promised nothing but more hard times, it would seem to be the worst time of all for independent record labels. The independents (bless them) continue to get their product onto the market. Eelman was conceived in the early 1980's by Hulamen keyboards player John Niland, and is now distributed by Jayrem. Currently they have three new products on the market: *Krazy Legs* by the Pelicans, the Economic Wizards' debut EP *Starve The Lizards*, and the 12" single by top session saxman Andrew 'Clyde'



Clouston, entitled 'The Bag'. The label now has six releases, and if you haven't checked them out, shame on you.

Andrew 'Clyde' Clouston

Clouston has gained enormous respect in music circles as a thoroughly professional and highly skilful player. Most people will remember him for his work with DD Smash. He also designed the baldhead logo used by Eelman. His parting shot is a 12" single, 'The Bag'. It's his own composition, which he simply describes as 'a nice feel' (he's a man of few words). The horn riffs are very Allen Toussaint, also strongly recalling Little Feat's 'Spanish Moon'. The other side features a mellow Toussaint composition, 'Freedom', and Matthew Moore's 'That's What I Like', originally done by Joe Cocker. Backing is by most of the Pelicans and assorted others. The Pelicans recall it as being recorded sometime in July or August, a happy jam session with a lot of beer mixed in. Sounds that way. Relaxed, friendly music which deserves, as the sleeve says, to be played loud. DC

Eelman sights Pelicans with Krazy Legs!

"In 1984, we had the two best horn sections ever, we didn't have a practice room for three months, which was bad for morale, and we wrote some of the best songs we've ever written."

So speaks Pelicans frontman Bill Lake. Despite the ups and downs, they're still a very happy band, having successfully recorded and

released their second LP, weathered lineup changes and financial storms, and with still more ideas in the pipeline. One thing hasn't changed: the band's semi-professional status. Three of them are still doing postie runs and retain their aversion to the hassles of running a fulltime group.

Krazy Legs is actually a much bet-

ter record than the rather-mixed reviews it's received would suggest. Certainly it's derivative (there's more than one unabashed Lowell George disciple in the band), but the songs are well written, intelligently arranged and played with plenty of confidence.

"We've learned it's better to write

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Three Pelicans (L-R): Bill Lake, Nick Bollinger, Stephen Jessup.

Andrew Clouston

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