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'TALKING HEADS' FROM PAGE 20
with the return to the smaller lineup of *Little Creatures*?

"I don't know what we're going to do and I don't want to speculate."

... Big Business

Between *Remain In Light* and *Speaking In Tongues*, the band agreed to take a sabbatical to allow time to complete their various solo projects. In that period Harrison released *The Red and the Black*, the Frantzs, the *Tom Tom Club*, Byrne, *The Catherine Wheel*, and there was a live double band album, *The Name of This Band Is Talking Heads*.

The break was meant to revitalise the band, so how was the chemistry after they reformed?

"It was a little different but we found it was good. Whenever you spend time apart you wonder what it's gonna be like but I think it's worked out quite well."

Of the solo albums, the Tom Tom Club's proved the most successful. Tina Weymouth's child-like vocals and the summery funk of the band led to two hit singles from the album, 'Wordy Rapping-hood' and 'Genius of Love'. What would have happened to Talking Heads if the other solo efforts had met with the same success?

"There's always the pressure to tour by yourself. The Tom Tom Club when we played in Japan and England opened for us and they might have pushed that a little harder had Tina not been pregnant at the time. But she went on working on *Speaking In Tongues* right up to the eighth or ninth month. In fact, we were working on the album when Robin, their son, was born. It wasn't a damper on their career, but it stopped them from keeping on charging with the first *Tom Tom Club* and it delayed the second one a little bit."

"But we all believe in Talking Heads and we saw our solo stuff as something added, not as something divisive."

How do the Frantzs manage to combine their parental responsibilities with the touring demands of being in Talking Heads?

"Quite well. On many of our tours they bring him and they have a nanny. When we were in New Zealand last year it was Robin playing with Chrisie Hynde's daughter and the nannies chatting away."

That domestic interlude aside, it's time to look at the unexpected commercial impact of *Speaking In Tongues*, an album that didn't really cover any new ground as it was largely content with consolidating the busy celebratory funk-time of *Remain In Light*, but added more precision and unity. But why has it sold so well.

"For one reason or another 'Burning Down the House' was the biggest single we've had and that alone can propel an album. Also anyone who discovered it through that single would then find lots of material on the album that was exciting."

Speaking In Tongues was released two years ago when we were all dancing ourselves stupid.

David Byrne's Lyrics:

"I don't feel comfortable analysing someone else's lyrics. The band act only as editors to his lyrics by saying this verse doesn't work or this verse is great."

In a way Talking Heads were reaping rewards from a trend they helped create with *Remain In Light* three years previously:

"I suppose that's true. I think now you see that most everyone in one way or another is influenced by that kind of music. I think that's why with *Little Creatures* we decided to show that we had other influences as well."

On its release, *Speaking In Tongues* was welcomed in the States but received a lukewarm reception from factions of the English press who felt that Byrne's presence was too pervasive and over-the-top:

"I'm always suspicious of anything the press says as they kind of jump to conclusions. I'm happy that we've tried various things and they sound different and that's the most important thing."

Pushing a point, Byrne's mannerisms and phrasings did become too predictable:

"Yeah, well maybe that's why we felt it was necessary to go off on a completely different direction with *Little Creatures*. I was happy with *Speaking In Tongues* but we certainly didn't want to do another album like that."

Any regrets about producing the album yourselves?

"No, the sound quality was amongst the best we've done. Ever since we've been producing ourselves the sound is much more crisp and brilliant and that's what I prefer. We work well with an engineer so we felt we didn't need a producer. With an engineer and the four of us we felt it was crowded enough in the studio and that we were perfectly capable of handling it. There was a time when we felt that a producer's major function was to settle disagreements between the band, but by the time we finished *Remain In Light* we realised that we could do that as well ourselves."