

Everything That Flies (L-R): Wayne Bell (drums), Clive Sheridan (guitar, keyboards), Peter Harrison (keyboards), David Manning (bass), Bruce Sheridan (guitar), Dianne Swann (vocals).



Everything That Flies The Flight of the Swann

Letters

Post to 'RIU' Letters,
PO Box 5689, Auckland 1.

Radio Talkback

After reading the article in your last issue, I am moved to put one radio programmer's point of view, and a few home truths which radio critics seem to overlook or be unaware of.

Radio stations need a large audience to get money to play records. To get a large audience, you need to ask the people you want to attract, what they like, and then play it.

The simple fact is that the majority of people in any given age bracket don't like music that is very far left or right from what is termed mass appeal. We in radio are consistently bombarded with Kiwi product that smacks of self-indulgence, and this burning desire to be different. Well play it to yourself in your garage because no successful radio station will be interested.

The bands that target their material and style at the majority,

The release midway through last year of an arresting little song called 'Bleeding Hearts' marked the debut of Auckland band Everything That Flies. In the words of vocalist Dianne Swann the song enjoyed an "almost cultish" popularity; it got attention for its 60s-style glitz video and completely sold out its pressing, despite failing to chart. Respectable indeed for an independently-produced first effort.

for example, Split Enz, DD Smash etc, receive airplay on most stations without question, quota or anything else.

The answer is really quite simple... listen to a successful music station (usually measured in terms of percentage share), gauge the bounds of their format, and then record a quality product that will fit. If you then don't get airplay, try a quota system. You can be certain that quota or no quota, radio stations will only play Kiwi music that fits their format, and garage garbage will stay where it belongs.

My advice to any fledgling Kiwi artist or band is, compare your efforts with what is coming into New Zealand from the world. If it's as good or better you can face radio with confidence; if it isn't keep trying and trying and trying. Nothing endures like quality.

Bruce Bowen Programme Director, 898FM, Hamilton

Remarkably well-known for what amounts to one song and little else, ETF's low profile is deliberate. The softly-spoken Swann says the band dislikes the hype and are well aware of the traps it can lead to. "Too many bands burst onto the scene and can't follow through past their first success."

The Kiwi music scene being what it is, four of ETF's five members hold down regular jobs, Swann included, which naturally means a major reduction in the amount of live work the band is prepared to undertake.

However, ready for release is a brand new single, 'As the Sun Goes Down', recorded at Auckland's Mandrill studios, the first product of the band's current involvement with Reaction records. "A listen to the finished mix reveals a much more commercial gloss to the new material — no doubt Glyn Tucker

Jr's influence having more than a little bearing on its mainstream sound.

However, Swann denies it is a "radio shot". But surely airplay is what every under-exposed band with commercial ambitions yearns for? "We didn't sit down and consciously write a single for the radio. We had the song already, and the way it's turned out is because of the bigger studio and the people involved. 'Bleeding Hearts' was all done ourselves, production-wise, and we were pleased with it. The new record is poppier, but I still like it."

Feeling comfortable in live situations is a department that Swann says Everything That Flies must develop. "We're inexperienced, but I don't think we're bad. I really like being a front-person, but I find it hard to just get up there and perform."

Apparently it's not made any easier by the sexist attitudes of some male gig-goers who have difficulty grasping the fact that Swann is there to sing. "I look upon it as a challenge. Some men are sceptical about seeing a woman on stage, but that's their problem. Playing live is my favourite and I've really enjoyed all the playing that we've done."

A three-week national tour is planned to coincide with the release of 'As the Sun Goes Down' (the 12" version will feature a re-release of 'Bleeding Hearts' on the flip) and Dianne Swann seems excited at the prospect, despite bemoaning some previous low turn-outs. Everything That Flies' first gig was at last year's Rock On New Zealand live TV broadcast, since then, response to their live show has been encouraging. "We've been really lucky, had good reactions... but, uhhh... the doortakes could have been better!"

Talk of albums, band commitment and loyalty, wanting to act in movies and shifting to Australia give the impression of a young woman who's looking a long way ahead, who knows what she wants and what she'd like to be doing — and it ain't computer operating. It's just that low profile that's a bit of a worry.

Brendon Fitzgerald

Safari So Good...



Peter Solomon, Rapture.



Chrome Safari's Simon Alexander.

PHOTO BY ADRIENNE MARTYN

PHOTO BY RAEWYN WATSON

Simon Alexander and Peter Solomon were once in the Grammar Boys. Now, they've both released EPs — Solomon under the name of the Rapture, Alexander with his new group Chrome Safari — which includes Solomon.

Alexander wrote 'Fight' a year ago with a heavy Australian group in mind. Since then, he says his writing style has changed. "The song is like a snapshot from that time," he says. "Now my writing is more like Peter's — that's why we're combining." Also in Chrome Safari and on the Fight EP are Shanley Morris and Bill Hill; Kim Willoughby, Lyn Buchanan, Greg Clark and Paul Naim assist Alexander on the instrumental 'Bop to the Drummer', commissioned for jazzercise.

Solomon's 12" single 'Cry for You Only', which like Alexander he engineered and produced himself, has a funky club sound. "I felt like experimenting with engineering and production," he says, "and at the time I was hearing a lot of English and American club music, so

I wrote it within that frame."

Although it's a solo record, Solomon used the name the Rapture, "because I'm not keen on my own name," he says. "Simon and I were going to call Chrome Safari the Rapture. I think it suits the song — I like the link between the music and the name. If you've got a song, it doesn't matter what name it comes out under, as long as it comes out."

Alexander agrees. "It would have been nice to have done the Fight EP as a band, it just happened to end up as a solo project. I don't intend to be a solo artist, but when you want a record out, it's not important. Doing it yourself seems to be a tradition of the New Zealand musical culture." Alexander and Solomon financed the records themselves; they are being released through Pagan.

Now, Chrome Safari intend working live, but the pair emphasise their main interest is in recording — and releasing — their songs. "We'll incorporate it with working live," says Solomon, "but we want to put out more records, and quickly. I don't want to wait another 12 months. We can do our music as Chrome Safari, or one-off solo things — there are lots of options."

"We're basically songwriters," says Alexander, "so our natural medium is a record. That's the way we communicate. We'll play live, and maybe tour — but we did plenty of that in the Grammar Boys." CB

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