



Matthew Bannister Martin Durrant John Kelcher David Pine

'SNEAKIES' FROM PAGE 16

David Pine songs? Bannister: "He had more, and he was much more prominent in the band. Dave stopped writing songs for a while and I started and became more confident, and so on the new record I've got a bigger percentage. I was prepared to let David go ahead and do *Send You*, as I was scared as hell in the studio."

Compulsory Education

Bannister's 'Husband House' really ushered in a second phase for the band. A good song (a great song live) that required more than the custom-made guitar treatment, it hovered between success and failure on record. Its importance lay in the fact that it was emotionally and instrumentally subtle and ambitious — qualities that are hard for novices to convey in the studio. And the singing?

"I'm still developing as a singer," defends Matthew. "All I can do is my best. I've only paid attention to my singing in the last couple of years."

Pine: "I still like that recording a lot. Even counting the new album, it's still my favourite."

From there it's a short

step to 'Better than Before,' folk-with-a-mission, another Bannister song that should've stolen airplay. Yet it was John Kelcher's slow-burning 'Here's to the Other Six' that stole the EP.

"I didn't get what I was after," confides Kelcher. "The piano and the sax were added at the last minute."

Bannister: "But that's been the only track we've recorded where we've been completely relaxed. We sat there mixing it in Mike Pearce's Strawberry Fields Studio in Dunedin and took as long as we wanted, and so we just got it right."

And right means near perfect; Durrant's piano and percussion are intuitively flawless and Mark Allan's sax sounds like the song's next of kin. No higher praise.

And so to *Sentimental Education*, the end result of the lessons of the last three years. The band's growing confidence in the studio can be heard through the widespread inclusion of backing harmonies on the album. Don McGlashan's percussion on David Pine's 'Now,' the piano and horn arrangement on Bannister's 'A Letter to You' and the cello additives on his 'Backroom,' the piano and vibes on Martin Durrant's

'Coming True,' and the organ on John Kelcher's 'Walk to the Square.' And as 'Husband House' proved, Matthew Bannister is discovering the knack of grafting understated guitar lines onto main ideas as in 'I'm Not Gonna Let Her Bring Me Down' and 'Broken Man.'

In other words ability is catching up with ambition. "What we do now is take production ideas we like and scale them down to our resources and have them work," says Bannister. "Just little things like percussion that you can do yourself and actually find that they work. We do the best we can within the limits of time and money."

Pine: "And if you had to choose between the two it's better for the songwriting to drag the playing along."

Dave Pine's point is reinforced by the fact that on *Sentimental Education* two previously released songs have been renovated. 'Backroom,' from the Dunedin EP, glistens this time, and 'Amnesia,' their first single, has a clearer sense of purpose.

"'Backroom' was inherently a good song but we just couldn't do it, but we caught up with it," explains Durrant.

Bannister: "That was my

first vocal, and it shows. It's embarrassing. I did one take and I thought 'Am I finished now?' And Doug [Hood] said I could do it again."

Pine: "On the new 'Amnesia' we're pleased with the vocal and guitar arrangement. On the original single it's pathetic, it makes me cringe."

Durrant: "On 'Amnesia' we stumbled upon a noise that was ahead of its time, then. We pre-dated the Jesus and Mary Chain."

Mind you, so did Phil Spector.

Like 'Strangers Again' on *Send You*, Martin Durrant's 'Coming True' is a sleeper, a song that makes its point politely and with class.

"It comes from Philly soul," says Durrant, "it's way beyond me, but after years of listening to this music which I love, the song just came through somehow."

Sneakin' Suspicions

"You slice your bit out of someone else's pie. You don't know what you're gonna do with it, but it doesn't mean you're gonna be less than them" — Dave Pine.

"Without records from America there's no such thing as New Zealand pop music, it would sound like brass bands" — Martin Durrant.

Sneaky Feelings are doing their best to carve out their own particular, peculiar niche in international rock and roll. It sounds all too familiar, but unlike all recent local contenders, Sneaky Feelings' shambling old world fussiness and almost obsessive sincerity to progress and succeed give them more than a head start.

Durrant: "To quote Tom Waits, we're new, improved and old-fashioned."

Far from perfect, but improving.

George Kay

45s' FROM PAGE 12 perb. "Think positive"? After this, no problem.

Knightshade Out for the Count (Reaction 12")

The thing I like about NZ HM is they write songs with structures, melodies, hooks and beat, with no bullshit. 'Out for the Count' is the poppier end of HM along the lines of Starship, with strong vocals and chorus backing (good on all four songs) plus a fanfare ending. 'Free Love' is a speedy headbanger, with very solid drumming and showpiece instrumental passage. 'Heart of Stone' is slower and chunkier, but the guitars remain full on with plenty of weird sounds towards the end (hold it, the cat's tearing the wallpaper), while the laboured 'Blood and Money' — with contributions from R Reagan — gets a bit anthemic. Gael Ludlow, squeaky clean host of *Our World*, sings backing vocals.

Satellite Spies Living in a Minefield (Reaction 7")

The oldest truism in music is "you gotta have the songs." Once again the Spies have been impressively produced by Glyn Tucker Jnr, and all the classy playing is present, but 'Living in a Minefield' lacks any real hooks to be memorable. The 'Boogie Nights' rhythm guitar is distracting, but more beat is needed for it to be a nightclubber. B-side 'Should the Truth Escape You' is a better song, and immediately the influence for Mark Lovey's weary voice becomes apparent — Richard Butler of the Psychedelic Furs. While the verses are promisingly haunting, the mood is lost by the chorus, with restructuring, this song had possibilities.

Obscure Desire (Pagan 12")

And then the hairdressers made music... 'Obscure Desire,' after a promising delicate opening, slips into a seductive cruise with crooning from Gizelle Trezevant, who can also handle more demanding vocal flights of fancy. Superb club production by Liam Henshall, tasteful ringing synths by Andrew Waldegrave and bass by Pat Roxburgh. For tempting strangers across a crowded room, or pillow music along the lines of the erotic Serge Gainsborough classic. Very classy, but four versions of the same song is pushing a good thing too far. The extended mix certainly is (maybe it should be at 45rpm; Pagan labels never say), though I like the cello on the Harlequin mix. Excellent BVs and piano

by Grant Mitchell. 'Bullet' is a collection of very catchy riffs, programs and samples built on a video-game bassline; 'I Wonder' has ethereal vocals and personality — this could be a good radio song, but it gets into that pseudo-erotic bullshit; '4A' is more of the same, with actual French lyrics. Overall a very impressive one-off, with a stylish *Vogue* '65 cover by Alistair Kay.

Private Practice (Ode 12")

'Rock this Town' is honest, solid rock from this power trio of old hands led by John Rees. Plenty of guitar solos and not too much bombast. 'Positive Thinking' takes a bizarre shift to alluring reggae, with a lovely soft falsetto melody. A hidden gem with woodwind by drummer Peter Shannon. More guitar solos. 'Satisfaction' is straight and hard, a sense of wit, camp, looseness or improvisation is needed to get away with this on record, but I'm sure it goes down well in certain pubs. Rocks out with a long guitar solo. 'Cadillac' is fast and faceless rock with more guitar solos.

Jenny Morris You're Gonna Get Hurt (WEA 7")

Jenny Morris has an instantly appealing voice, and this song, produced and written by INXS' Andrew Farriss, shows why Australian rock makes good, if unadventurous, pop. Great rhythm guitar, especially in the middle eight, and catchy sax and BVs from the INXS boys. Dancing summer FM rock. 'Cool' is co-written by Morris, a sleek cocktail number reminiscent of the classic 'Fever' she used to cover with QED. The natural use of piano and flute is refreshing, but the horns let it down. Jenny Morris is gifted enough to take on many styles; let's hope she keeps choosing material which is demanding for both her talent and audience.

Skindivers She Comes Down Here (EMI 12")

At the more macho end of mainstream rock are the Skindivers; in another age they'd be glitter rockers. 'She Comes Down Here' has a slick guitar wash, a full sound and well enunciated vocals by Alan Badger, but not much to sing about. The simplicity of the bassline lets it down. 'Hole in the Boat' has more bounce, it's a stomper with singalong chorus, obligatory guitar solo, plus Badger's too-much-late-nights voice. Two songs, 12 inches, \$6.99.

Chris Bourke



Congratulations to ARDIJAH the winners of the inaugural Rheineck Rock Award.

In announcing ARDIJAH as winners of the inaugural Rheineck Rock Award, Rheineck also wishes to congratulate all other entrants

in this highly successful promotion of New Zealand rock. As winners ARDIJAH will receive

\$30,000 towards the cost of recording an album, for release under the guidance of the Award's Advisory Board.

Rheineck also wishes to thank the Advisory Panel — Karyn Hay, Doug Hood and Colin Hogg. They performed a tremendous role in judging the entries, and are continuing their contribution by now assisting with the production and release of ARDIJAH's new album.

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