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**10am to 4.30pm**

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day trippers ferry leaves princes wharf 7.00am

Car Crash Set (L-R): Trevor Reekie, David Bulog, Nigel Russell, Pat Roxborough and Simon Mark-Brown.



## No Accident

John Fryer's a quiet man not accustomed to talking with journalists on the other side of the world. He expresses himself through his work as a producer/engineer with groups such as Depeche Mode, the Cocteau Twins, the Mortal Coil... and Auckland's Car Crash Set. He remixed and produced their recent EP *Another Day*.

How did he come to be working with our masters of industrial funk? "It was quite strange," he says. "David [Bulog] just rang me up from New Zealand. He'd heard some of the stuff I'd done and asked me if I wanted to work on their music. I hadn't heard the group. He sent me over a tape and then came over himself."

Bulog, one of the Car Crash Set's keyboardists, spent a week with Fryer at London's Blackwing Studios remixing their songs and overdubbing new material. "John takes a track and adds new things to it," says Bulog. "He chops a song up and reconstructs it, creating new things from the stuff that's already there. He uses delay lines which give a different rhythmic emphasis. There's a nice ambient sound over the whole record."

"It's an audiophile's delight," says vocalist Nigel Russell. "Very clear and well spaced. All the tunes are the same, but he rearranged the parts, so they were quite different

to the way we saw it. The first thing we got back was 'East and West,' which we recorded in Auckland at Echo Park in 1984, with overdubs at Mandrill. We were totally amazed. It took a bit of getting used to, we didn't know what to expect."

"The guitars on 'East and West' are like nothing else, with a very, very distorted sound that here you'd shy away from, people want a more clearer sound. He's got a real sense of daring."

Fryer says he approached the Car Crash Set project the way he approaches everything. "They asked for a 12-inch mix, so I directed it the way I do 12-inches. I think I've developed my own style. I'm always influenced by whoever I'm working with, but there's always a lot of me in whatever I do."

He describes his special skill as "creating a nice noise." Unusually for a producer, Fryer didn't have a musical background except for "helping some friends in a band"

before getting the job at Blackwing. "I haven't got much musical talent, I'm not musical. Basically it's all down to imagination. With imagination you can do anything you want to with sounds."

"Quite a lot of groups have limited musical ability. They don't have to be technically brilliant at what they're doing. It doesn't make my job any more difficult because I can't play anything anyway. So whoever can play an instrument, can play it better than me."

As with anything creative, knowing what to leave out can be just as important as what you put in. "Quite a few people say that when I do remixes, I lose the song in there," says Fryer. "But then the song would have been there in original mix. If they've done a seven-inch, and they want a 12-inch, the song's already on the seven-inch and there's no reason to keep it particularly as a song."

"I use a lot of gimmicks in what I do. Sometimes when you're remixing a song it won't take any gimmicks so you have to keep it quite straight. If you take the Car Crash Set remixes, some of them are full of gimmicks. They can be called gimmicks or they can be called music. Just because you hit a piece of metal doesn't mean it's a gimmick — it makes a noise and it could be music."

*Another Day* was digitally mastered and pressed in Sydney using the latest laser technology. "Mastering is crucial," says Russell. "You could lose everything on the record cut, though it may have sounded great in the studio."

Car Crash Set plan to release another 12" single in May, wanting to "close the 18-month gap" that occurred between *No Accident* and *Another Day*. "We work at our own pace," says Bulog. "We don't feel obliged to produce hits or go on the road. Our new stuff is more uptempo, shying away from guitars and getting back to keyboards."

Once again, John Fryer will produce. "Our material will be better recorded this time," says Russell. "We've learned a lot. His work on *Another Day* has affected the way we listen to things."

Chris Bourke

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