



MEMBERS

Having spent recent months wowing the fans in this part of the world, the Members are now back home, catching up on what they've missed. Much happened on the British scene during 1979, much of which they spent out of the country, and as a recent *NME* pointed out, their name isn't calculated to send out shivers of enthusiasm.

"Yeah, well I don't care," Jean-Marie Carroll told Neil Spencer. "I believe in the group, and I hope the new album surprises 'em (the UK masses). It's a great deal better than the first."

"I know it's going to be difficult," said Nicky Tesco. "A lot has happened while we've been off the scene, and we'll have to prove ourselves all over again. It will make us work harder at the gigs, we're back in the clubs this tour. I'm really looking forward to it."

BENEFIT

A look at the homecoming gig sheet certainly shows a paucity of big-name venues, but then as they showed us here, the Members play best when they can get close to their audience. Among the shows is a benefit for Strangler Hugh Cornwell, currently doing porridge for a dope possession bust.

The Members waxed enthusiastic to Spencer over their experiences down under,

especially here.

"It was just like being back home, apart from the great food," said Tesco. "Even though they'd never been visited by any punk-style bands before us they were all into it, pogoing and gobbing. They even had skinheads, proper ones down to the football badges in the lapels. It was bizarre."

True to form, the *NME* could not resist getting a little dig in, referring to Godzone as "the southern hemisphere's answer to Surrey" (a rather boring English province). However, they did quote a fragment from *Rip It Up*, showing that Antipodean culture is making some impact Back Home.

If Britain rejects the Members as being out of touch it'll be to the country's loss. Anyway, they know the welcome mat is always out here.

1980 — THE CHOICE IS YOURS

The strength of the concerts which *Rip It Up* readers voted best of 1979, coupled with the overall excellence of the Members' debut platter, *At The Chelsea Nightclub* makes the follow-up, *1980 — The Choice Is Yours* an important release.

This album should be approached with a fully open mind. Don't go expecting another "Solitary Confinement" or "Sound Of The Suburbs". Anyway, the Members have already written at least three youth anthems, and most are lucky to manage one.

1980 may not quite live up to such a grandiose title, it makes a very creditable effort.

SKA SOUND

Where reggae formed an integral part of the Members' early sound, their ethnic ingredient has been updated to keep abreast of current

trends. Three of the tracks use ska, which the Members have as much right to use as anyone else, since West Indian rhythms played a large part in their formative listening.

It opens with "Ayatollah Harmony", a ska instrumental with a Middle East touch, a little similar to Madness's "Night Boat To Cairo". It's a scene setter, like "Electricity" in *Chelsea Nightclub*.

"Goodbye To The Job", "Physical Love" and "Romance" deal with familiar subjects in tried and true fashion, hating the boss, kidding yourself it's love and not lust, and trying to pull a bird when you're so full you don't know what you're doing. "Romance" has the most impact, with its tongue-in-cheek lyrics and Tesco taking the piss out of himself as much as anyone else, trying to spin a line.

"Brian Was" treats the workaday world in much the same way as The Jam's "Smithers Jones", as a very ordinary bloke sells his soul to the company, comes around to reality one day and steps out a window. But at least Brian has the guts to be his own victim instead of somebody else's.

UP IN THE AIR

"Flying Again" reflects the amount of time the Members have spent on the road in the past year. Musically it's as close to "Sound Of The Suburbs" as they get on the album, and will probably be the first track the fans pick up on. It's archetypal Members.

"Normal People" opens Side Two, saying nothing new about the face-in-the-crowd syndrome. Your reference point is Paul Weller's "In The Crowd", which says it all far better.

Larry Wallis's "Police Car" gets the treatment next, and the Members realise the song's

potential far better than its writer ever did. Tesco fills it with venom and menace and it benefits for its change of pace.

"Clean Men" explains the album's title over a rock solid ska beat and some nice dub effects. Never trust a man in a neat suit, especially when he wants your vote:

*Custom built by specialists,
New faces, the same old lies.*

"Muzak Machine" is sure to please the crowds, full of pace and swagger, and featuring top-line guitar from Nigel Bennett.

MAGNUM OPUS

The killer, though, is "Gang War", which could stand out as the best song the Members have ever written. Musically, it's admirable for its restraint, lavished with Joe Jackson's piano and Albie Donnelly's sax (see The Rats' "Joey's On The Street Again"). It's the Members' magnum opus, a solemn picture of the sickening violence all too prevalent in Britain these days, and closer to home than a lot of people would like to think:

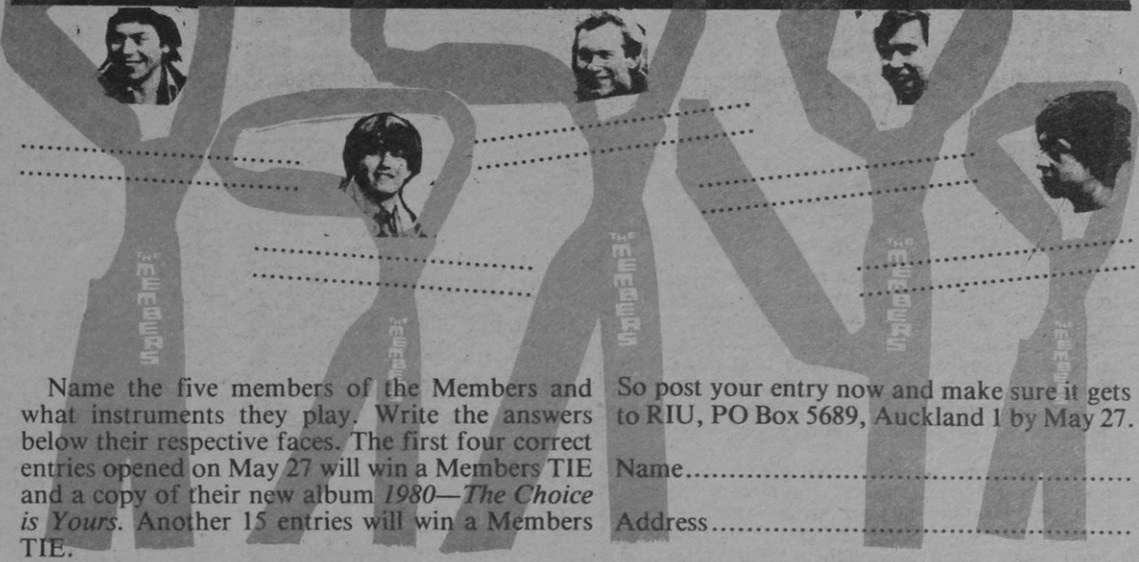
*There's been a stabbing tonight at the local
hop,
Some kid off his head, blown his top.
The ambulance driver has seen it all before,
It's gang war.*

The teenage naivety of *Chelsea Nightclub* has been replaced by a broader, less personal and more mature outlook. The production could have been better, with Tesco's voice being buried too often, but *1980* represents a genuine effort to look ahead. Its quality varies, but it's an honest, often perceptive work.

The Members have grown up. They're learning, and let's hope we are too.

Duncan Campbell

WIN MEMBERS' ALBUMS & TIES



Name the five members of the Members and what instruments they play. Write the answers below their respective faces. The first four correct entries opened on May 27 will win a Members TIE and a copy of their new album *1980—The Choice is Yours*. Another 15 entries will win a Members TIE.

So post your entry now and make sure it gets to RIU, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1 by May 27.

Name.....

Address.....

MAGAZINE



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