



Plenty of tours this month. Da Brudders, the **Ramones** will play three gigs (under the banner 'No Spit Please We're Americans') — July 21 Logan Campbell Centre, July 22 Wellington Show Buildings and July 24 Christchurch Town Hall.

Stars of "Stand Up and Spit", the **Members**, play Christchurch Town Hall August 20, Wellington Show Buildings August 21, and Auckland Town Hall August 20. RTC Records are releasing a four track EP to coincide with the tour. Side One is "Flying Again" at 45 rpm. Side Two plays at 33 rpm and features "Disco Oui Oui", "Rat Up A Drain Pipe" and "Love In a Lift" (a soul version).

The *Get A Dose of the Cure* tour is even more extensive. Dates are Mainstreet Auckland July 29 & 30, Hamilton Founders Theatre July 31, Palmerston North Opera House August 2, Wellington Town Hall August 3, Christchurch Theatre Royal August 5 and Dunedin Regent August 6.

Star of stage, TV screen and vinyl, **Jon English** is touring with his band Baxter Funt. The July tour begins July 12 Whangarei, 13 Hamilton, 14 Logan Campbell Centre Auckland, 16 Rotorua, 17 Tauranga, 18 Gisborne, 19 Napier, 21 New Plymouth, 22 Palmerston North, 24 Wellington Town Hall, 25 Nelson, 26 Greymouth, 28 Christchurch Town Hall, 29 Timaru, 30 Dunedin and July 31 Invercargill.

**Toy Love** return home again in August to promote their debut album. Tentative dates are August 5 Windsor Castle, 7-9 Gluepot, 8 & 9 Mainstreet, 11 Napier, 12 Te Mata, 13 Palmerston North, 14-16 Billy The Club Wellington, 18 Nelson, 19 & 20 Gladstone, 21-23 Captain Cook Dunedin, 24 Dunedin Dance, 27-30 Hillsborough Christchurch. September dates for Toy Love are 3 & 4 New Plymouth, 5 & 6 Framptons, 9 & 10 Windsor Castle and 11 & 13, Esplanade and Mainstreet.



Eric Goulden is 26 years old. He comes from Sussex. He likes a drink, he loves rock 'n roll, and he loves his mum. Just an ordinary little geezer, really. An accent you could cut with a knife, totally without pretension, and still wondering what the hell he's doing halfway across the world, getting covered with beer and gob.

"I got a tax bill from Her Majesty not long ago," he recalls. "It was addressed to 'Mr W. Eric.' I said 'Who's he?' and tore it up."

That sums the lad up rather neatly. Wreckless Eric is very much his own man, but the image cast of him by the media and his own record company is that of an apprentice lunatic, staggering from one pissup to the next, making a nuisance of himself and casting dirty leers at all female flesh. Rock's Albert Steptoe.

The reality is somewhat different. Eric is, in fact, a very shy chap who could no more do the Big Star trip than walk naked down Queen St. Trouble is, few people believe that.

"We had a party last night and I spent most of the time talking to my band because they were the only people I knew. I have to have a few drinks before I can actually start talking to anybody else."

"I'm thinkin' 'Gawd, I wonder if I can go and talk to anybody,' and all these people around me are thinkin' 'I can't go and talk to him, he won't want to talk to me.' People keep thinkin' me and the band are big stars and we won't want to talk, but that's just crap."

"It's a very funny thing, y'know. Kim Fowley came to see us in our dressing room in LA last week, and everyone's saying 'Come up and meet Eric', and he's sayin' 'No, he won't want to talk to me.' And I'm sayin' 'the same thing!'"

"I met Elton John. He's been a fan for some time. I got pushed into the room so I almost fall over him. I said, 'He's not going to want to meet an idiot like me', and they said 'He won't come and introduce himself to you. He's shy.'"

The tousled head shakes in disbelief.

#### Mirror Fantasies

Eric started out much the same way as any other boy seduced by music. He used to stand

in front of the mirror, miming to records, using his sister's classical guitar. He was about eight years old at the time, and listening to standard fare, the Beatles and later the Stones and the Who.

"Everyone about my age, if they really own up to it, wanted to be the fifth Beatle. I came from a musical family, my grandfather was a tenor sax player in a dance band and my grandmother was a piano teacher. She didn't want me to be anywhere near music on account of my grandfather getting into all kinds of wine, women and song, which all seemed to come about, in her mind, from him playin' in a dance band. It probably did. Most of the things that have come about for me have come from playin' in a dance band."

"I was 14 when I bought my first guitar, I used to play my sister's. Then I bought a guitar with real metal strings. The big occasion was when I got my first electric guitar, and I was carryin' it home in a case, and this Irish navvy called out 'Hey, play some Bill Haley.'"

And people said 'Oh, you're not gonna f\*\*kin' play that, you'll never learn to play that,' and I thought 'Yeah, you're just jealous.'"

Like all good boys, he went to art school, where he did enough work to get a degree, though his heart wasn't really in it.

"I mean, there's not much you can do when you leave school but get a job, and I didn't want to end up like all the others, workin' in the town hall."

#### If It Ain't Stiff...

At art school, most of Eric's contemporaries were more into music than discussing sculpture, and there was always one band or another going. He started writing songs, and then went shopping for a recording deal. Plenty turned him down until he walked one day, about four years ago, into the newly-fledged Stiff Records.

"I just went stridin' in and said 'Hello, I'm one of these c\*\*ts that brings tapes around to record companies. There's me address, there's me phone number,' and walked out."

Stiff decided to take the risk, and Eric suddenly found himself on the famous *Bunch Of Stiffs* tour, playing alongside the likes of Elvis Costello, Ian Dury and Nick Lowe, who produced some of his early recordings.

The "Wreckless" tag came partly from the record company, which wanted an image to sell, and partly for his reputation for getting mad and smashing things up. Telephones were a prime victim, when he was trying to phone his mum and they wouldn't work.

"I'm channeling my anger a lot more than I used to. I used to smash entire rooms up. But it got to be a bit of a joke, and it started to get stupid, so I stopped doing it. Now I channel it more into the writing, into the performing, into keeping the band together."

#### New Image

The other unfortunate part of his image was that of the drunken buffoon, which he got landed with and is now doing his best to shed.

"When I was at art school I think everyone was permanently pissed most of the time. I like an occasional drink, and I had quite a few drinks last night because we had a party. But I can still remember going to bed and I didn't wake up with my boots on."

"At first they promoted me as a lunatic because they didn't quite understand me. Like I said before, I'm quite shy. I could talk to you all day and you'd still be none the wiser."

"It was easy to call me a drunk because I got drunk a few times, and I smashed things up. But I'm too old to do that now."

Eric expresses horror at the PM's condemnation of rock music as non-cultural and therefore taxable.

"When I heard about that, I thought this must be some kind of police state. That guy knows f\*\*kin' nothin' about culture. I'm really glad to come here and try and f\*\*k up that kind of a bloke."

#### At Mainstreet

On stage, Eric still plays the fool to some extent. It's a delight to see him trying to do Rod Stewart tricks with the mike stand and dropping it. In front of a very skilful, experienced band, he looks like somebody's younger brother who's just jumped on stage for the hell of it. But there's no doubting who's in control.

He seems to have picked up a great deal from Nick Lowe and Dave Edmunds. Many of his songs, especially "Hit And Miss Judy" and "Take The Cash", have a very strong Rockpile flavour. He delivers with tons of panache, and on the venomous "Broken Doll", he's quite spellbinding, spitting the bitter words out with burning conviction. The band tears Mainstreet apart on "It'll Soon Be The Weekend", and the show is over all too soon. He could have done a little more, but what he did was delightful.

Eric Goulden may still be trying to come to terms with success, but Wreckless Eric knows just how good he is. Bet his mum's proud.

Duncan Campbell

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