



You couldn't call the Ramones a bunch of lazy punks. Already this year, they have toured the US, Europe and Australia. After their New Zealand visit they returned to New York for two weeks before heading off for Europe again.

Johnny, the band's guitarist, explains. "We play as much as possible. It keeps us all in shape. We like to think of ourselves as trained athletes."

Going Soft?

The release of their first album in 1976 motivated a generation of juveniles all over the world to start Ramone-clone bands. Initial critical reaction was good, and the band seemed set to take the Seventies by storm. Instead, they have had to watch the British bands who came after them climb higher and higher into the American charts, while mass acceptance has so far eluded them.

Johnny feels that the Ramones have never deliberately aimed for commercial success. "People accuse us of making attempts at commercialism, but they really don't understand that we are just making Ramone music. We would never go soft for monetary gain. It disappoints me to see bands like the Clash going soft to try to make it."

End of the Century

It has been said that if the Ramones had never existed, there would never have been a band for Johnny to play in. He agrees, and adds, "The Ramones is right where I want to be. I wouldn't change it, no matter what."

The latest Ramones release is *End of the Century*. It further displays the maturity that has been evident in their song-writing since the departure of drummer/producer Tommy. He has been replaced behind the desk by legendary producer Phil Spector, who had been making vain attempts to work with the brudders since first seeing them in 1977, at LA's Roxy. Johnny comments, "All of a sudden it seemed like a good idea, after all, we had nothing to lose. The chance to use a real producer really started to excite us."

The end result was a wonderful synthesis of sixties and eighties pop, with the Wall of Sound giving depth Ramones songs have never known. Although the band were delighted with the result, Johnny insists that Spector won't be with them when work starts on the next album in October. "We try to make every album unique. It's a supreme challenge to keep giving the fans something new."

Despite Johnny's desire for freshness, *End of the Century* includes a song that dates back almost to the days of Ritchie Ramone (commemorated on the *Rocket to Russia* cover) who was fired for having "absolutely no musical talent". Titled "Chinese Rock", it was first recorded by ex-New York Doll, Johnny Thunders. Both parties claim credit for it.

Johnny Ramone explains the brudders' side of the story. "Thunders stole the song from us. He just changed a few lyrics, and then went around claiming he wrote it. We decided to include it on *End of the Century* because we do a better version."

Rock and Roll High School

The Ramones made their screen debut in a B-Grade comedy, *Rock and Roll High School*. It featured the band doing ten songs and small bit parts and was well-received in the States. The British music press were not so receptive. Johnny is quick to defend the film.

"English critics always try to dig too deep, trying to find hidden meanings that don't exist. We did the movie purely out of fun — it wasn't meant to be any kind of profound statement of youth."

"The kids in England don't take any notice of the music papers any more, they only read them to find out who's playing where."

Johnny's confident dismissal of the band's critics is more than justified by their live show. Joey, the prize geek, with his head dropped, body rigid, seems to be supported by nothing but the microphone stand, while his sweet soaked brudders, Dee Dee and Johnny, bounce across the stage like runaway pneumatic drills. Mix this with some powerhouse drumming by newest member, Marky and you have pure and simple Ramones music — timeless headbanging pop.

Just what the world needs to make it through to the end of the century.

Mark Phillips

Ramones, Hoovers

Christchurch Town Hall, July 24.

Expectations, naturally enough, play a large part in determining whether or not a rock'n'roll act is going to deliver the required kick. Some rise well above, some crash well below but the Ramones remained pretty close to expectations partly because of the quick-fire

homogeneity of their repertoire which leaves little margin for error, and the predictable gabba-gabba response of the crowd.

A Ramones concert must always be like this — jammed stage-wise close enough to be doused in Dee Dee's sweat, close enough to touch Johnny's gym shoes and wonder how Joey manages to keep his hair the exact same length.

So flag behind them they full-throated into "Blitzkrieg Bop", what else? And if you weren't pogoing in the squash you were dead. I moved discreetly out of the way and proceeded to watch them try to live up to their legend and for the most part succeed. Dee Dee's work-rate on bass never faltered, perpetual motion, Johnny ditto and he even managed to get a couple of kicks at a guy up front who was throwing his weight around. Joey stood permanently with one hand on the mike, legs apart and occasionally bellowed intros — and Marky played drums.

The emphasis, song-wise, fell on their first three classics as blocks of Ramones' chords blasted out with the ease of four years frenzy. Disappointments were there — imprecise hammerings of "Commando" and "Chinese Rocks" and they didn't do "You're Gonna Kill That Girl". But the high points were plenty with "Surfer Bird", echo vocals included, being perfect, and the first album bracket of "Let's Dance", "I Don't Wanna Walk Around With You" and "Today Your Love" registering a k.o. rock and roll and how.

They were on stage one hour ten but it felt like three hours ten. I still haven't figured if that's good or bad.

Hoovers are a new Christchurch trio and let it be said that they opened for the Ramones. Combining an incongruous choice of non-originals ("So Lonely", "Delilah" and "Back in the USSR") with their own hastily assembled unsympathetic material they failed to elicit anything other than indifference bordering on antagonism from their local crowd. So they weren't about to blow Dee Dee and co off the stage.

George Kay

By the time I'd found Magazine's rehearsal studios in the maze of Chelsea backstreets, I was a pack of nerves. Just how do you approach a band fronted by the man described by Virgin Records as "one of the more ... enigmatically fascinating figures of the new wave"?

I pushed open the studio door and muttered something about an interview. They reacted as if to a roll call, all squashing onto one couch along the studio wall. Howard Devoto was absent. "This is quite a scoop innit ... really?"

It was the first interview Robin Simon has given as the replacement for guitarist John McGeoch who has decided to pursue other projects, according to the press statement released that day. John's activities outside the band have included work with the Banshees after Siouxsie's original guitarist left her in the lurch last year.

The line-up I am facing now is Robin Simon, drummer John Doyle, keyboard player Dave Formula, and Barry Adamson, the bassist.

There is speculation that John McGeoch will join the Banshees. The possibility is not denied. DF That's up to them. I think they've got three people to decide between.

John left within months of Magazine's American and Australasian tours. Hadn't his decision come as a surprise?

DF It wasn't a day (he snaps his fingers), then (snap) another day. There wasn't really any horrorbleness — and I'm not being diplomatic.

Robin Simon played on Ultravox's *Systems of Romance* before going to the States where he married, and played with David Johansen (among others). He returned to England and joined Magazine in late June. How did he come to join the group?

JD Sneakily.

RS I knew Raf (Magazine's manager) from two years ago, but I hadn't met any of the others.

JD But now we're one big happy family.

DF We like what we heard on the Ultravox album, and we've also got various bootleg tapes of him that he doesn't know about.

Some time after *Secondhand Daylight* had been delivered, Magazine came out with a round of releases — three singles: "A Song From Under the Floorboards"/"Twenty Years Ago", Sly Stone's "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)"/"The Book" and "Sweetheart Contract"/"Feed The Enemy". They topped these with their most impressive album to date, *The Correct Use of Soap*.

BA There's something our manager said to us.

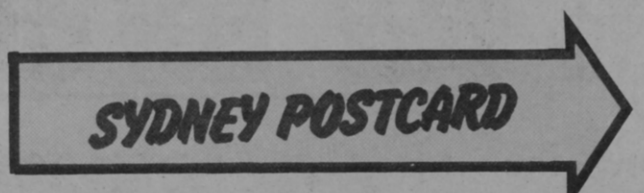
We rehearse, get a song together ...

DF Then our alter egos come down on a

YER SIDNEY FAN...



THE VIEW FROM ON-STAGE AT FRNCH'S



The following is a story written originally for the 'Rip It Up' May 'X-TRA' (a publication that never happened, but there's still time yet!) by Chris Knox, about Toy Love's first few months in the land of Oz.

Since the date of writing, the band has recorded their debut album at the EMI 301 Studio in Sydney, had good work in Sydney and Melbourne, and they are now back in NZ to see Mum and promote the album.



Dave Formula, Robin Simon and Barry Adamson, Magazine.

spacecraft and start working on what we've done.

BA "Are you sure that's what you want to play?" We were trying really hard with the third album to knock down those barriers.

They even went so far as to record in the rehearsal studio. "Twenty Years Ago" is perhaps the furthestest they've gone towards what Howard calls the "Five-Minute Snapshot". It has been described as funk, and I likened it to "Contort Yourself" by James White and the Blacks.

BA The contivance! Funk's a term that I totally disagree with that has been applied to a series of notes, a rhythmic style. "Twenty Years Ago" is just a basic groove — a Magazine dance number with free-form icing. It turned out to be an experiment in spontaneous playing. Just going for it.

DF It was destructured.

JD And the same goes for the lyrics. There was no premeditation.

I don't know the meaning of hegemony and who is Raskolnikov? Is Howard writing for some elite?

DF Oh no. You mean you've never heard words that you've not understood but you've thought, "Wow ... that's a good word. That sounds really good"? It's all music. Us talking is music — we're pitching and modulating. Using difficult words is like using an elaborate chord. Sometimes it works and someone who's just starting to play might think, "What's that? Perhaps I'll try to work it out."

Everyone knows "Saw my baby on the corner ... she really wiped me out."

Howard owns the saxophone that John McGeoch used to play. Now he's gone, Howard's been applying the spontaneity theory.



There's a lot of money being made over here — by PA hire firms, light hire firms, promoters, agents, accountants, poster printers, power companies, phone companies, landlords and other supposedly necessary people and corporations. These snivelling swine receive about \$900 per week from us. We make between \$600 and \$900 per week from an average of seven gigs.

But!

"Things will get better once you've got some product out." "Soon you'll have more money than you can handle." "Look what happened to Mi-Sex." "You're doing it the right way; starting at the bottom and working your arses off to get a good audience."

On The Other Hand

(From an article by Stuart Coupe in Sydney Shout — "What's Wrong With Sydney Rock") "Toy Love are energetic and tedious." This is the extent of our Australian media coverage.

So

We've all gritted our teeth, tightened our belts, set our sights, blown our noses, and looked Sydney square in its glossy, Americanised face, and said in strong, unfaltering voices, "Help ..."

The Good News

We've recorded an album.

We've got new songs.

We've had several good gigs (almost up to standard of the average Windsor-Last Resort-Gladstone-Cook night.)

Late night TV's great — dumb movies and 'personalities' getting pissed in the commercial breaks.

Beer's cheap.

There are at least two good bands in Sydney.

BA He says "OK — I'm a saxophone player". And it just happens.

I was struck by the bass line on "A Song From Under the Floorboards" when I first heard the song. On subsequent listenings I was convinced the song would be a hit — it wasn't. I wondered if Virgin had given them enough publicity.

BA No. A quarter-page advert in a music paper. You can just skip over them.

DF We got a full page in Motorbike Weekly but that didn't seem to help. Virgin were quite surprised that "Floorboards" got as much attention as it did. Probably if they'd cottoned on sooner, they may have put more into it. It's nothing personal. We're not considered an overtly commercial proposition.

Robin denies that they are anti-commercial.

RS It's selfish to say "We play music for ourselves."

BA Another thing is that we don't get enough airplay.

The rush of Magazine material is the result of their fruitful relationship with a producer who has been in the studio with Factory acts, Joy Division and A Certain Ratio, and many others (including John Cooper Clarke and Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark). Martin Hannett was also the whizz-kid producer of the Buzzcock's classic *Spiral Scratch* EP.

DF Martin was much more in tune with what we were doing than our other two producers.

What was working with him like?

DF He's got that spontaneity that we were sympathetic to.

BA When you get to the fifth night without sleep you start to wonder ...

JD A competition goes on. Who can stay up the longest?

All those sleepless nights seem to have got the better of John — he ducks out while the rest of us opt for a drink in the local.

Sitting around a table we divide a little. The other two talk to each other while I find out about Barry's musical tastes. He likes jazz — Coltrane, Davis and Parker. Do the others have any favourites?

DF Well, yeah ... the best one is listening to him, listening to jazz.

It's obvious I'm not going to get a straight answer to this one, but I try again.

DF I listen to Capital Radio. I don't buy albums, or very rarely. I have got a large jazz collection.

RS Have you really?

DF I whip one out every now and then ...

BA ... to lend to me. (Laughter all around).

DF Honest to God. Don't you know that's the