



When Flight 77 first emerged in August 1978, they created a rather large impression. At that time, most of their peers were inexperienced, stripped-to-the-basics punk bands. Flight 77 were nothing like that. They had the best equipment, a surreal light show, and original material that featured masses of swirling keyboards and thumping bass.

The comparisons came thick and fast. Ultravox, Bowie and the one that has haunted them ever since, Mi-Sex. Warwick Keay, bassist and founder member comments, "On the surface, we may have appeared to resemble Mi-Sex. At one stage, Jeff (the band's vocalist) and I were playing in a band doing the same pubs and playing the same cover versions as Father Time. They became Mi-Sex, and we became Flight 77. The problem was that, because of their experience, they came into the limelight much faster."

The problem escalated as Mi-Sex became more successful. Although they have changed their name to Flight X7, adding three new members, and a totally new repertoire, that label has stuck.

Guitarist Paul Jamieson, who joined in August last year says, "Initially, I felt flattered to be in a band compared with Mi-Sex, but then it became a pain in the arse. People like Colin Hogg just won't let go. But then, he compares every New Zealand band to Mi-Sex, even the Newz. I don't think we are anything like Mi-Sex, they are just Ultravox clones. Our influences are far more diverse."

#### Waiting For An Album

The need to shake off these obvious comparisons has brought some prolific song writing. In the past, it was Jeff Clarkson who wrote the songs, but things are beginning to change.

"When I joined about a year ago," says keyboard-player Mark Stanton (no relation, honest) "it was mainly Jeff, and sometimes Warwick who did the writing, but now everyone is contributing."

Warwick feels there is more cohesion in the band than at any time in the past.

"Although one of us may have the initial idea for a song, as soon as that idea comes up in practice, it becomes the band's song."

Flight X7 believe that they are continually developing, and this is the primary reason for

their delay in recording. Warwick says, "A few months ago, we were bending over backwards to do an album, but Polygram said, 'No. You're not ready.' At the time, we thought that was crap, but in retrospect, we think they were right. Why make a mediocre album now, when,

if we wait, we can make a really good one? We like to think the album will have something to say, rather than just be a collection of songs."

#### Trans-Tasman

Recently, word has had it that X7 may leave for Australia. Although migration has been seriously considered, the band are determined not to go there and end up on the bones of their arses.

"We were offered a promotional tour," says Warwick, "but, as with the album, the time wasn't right. Our first single has just been released there, but we have no high-quality video to back it up."

Manager Mike Corless quickly clarifies the situation. "A few days ago, the boys did an interview with Donny Sutherland, who hosts the Australian music show *Sounds Unlimited*. In a few weeks, the second single, "Don't Come Too Close" will be released there. We have an excellent video clip for that, and it will be screened on *Sounds Unlimited* and perhaps

*Countdown*. After that, the time may be right, but it is pointless going there to lose money when we can be making it here."

#### Departures

The next few months will be a testing time for Flight X7. At hand is a full-scale New Zealand tour under the title, *Don't Get Too Close*. Don't be surprised if the band sounds different. Warwick considers the tour a good chance to test the new songs. Paul elaborates, "We have been playing our songs so long that people come along and mouth the words. Although that is not necessarily a bad thing, we are still itching to give them something new."

Where the *I Lose Control* tour was very much a hard-hitting rock show, *Don't Get Too Close* gigs will be more on a theme. With everyone writing, the variation in style has increased immensely. We will still be playing Jeff's pop songs, but there will also be more sombre Magazine-sounding material."

Mark Phillips

**ON TOUR**  
**Sept 12-13** Windsor Park Mairangi Bay.  
**Sun. Sept 14** Henry VIII, Whangarei.  
**Tues. Sept 23** Tainui, Whakatane  
**Wed. Sept 24** The Trees, Tokoroa  
**Sept 25-26** Hillcrest, Hamilton  
**Sun. Sept 28** Rotorua Concert  
**October 2-4** Station Hotel & Kicks.

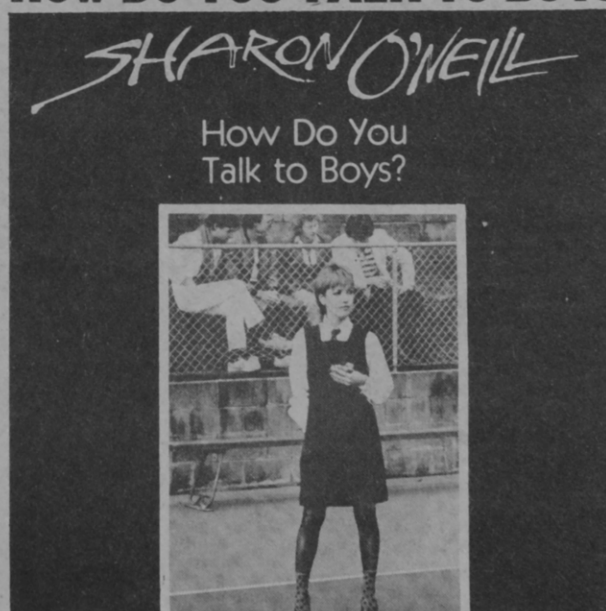
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**"No Music On My Radio"**

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