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IN THE SERVICE

Since Lip Service appeared on the scene nearly three years ago, a lot of bands have come and gone. In 1979, armed with new bassist, Brian (O.D.) O'Donnell, they completed a very successful national tour, and followed this up with a debut album on CBS records.

Lip Service have recently returned from their second New Zealand tour, but this time around, things didn't run so smoothly. *Rip It Up* spoke to drummer Peter Warren, and guitarist Dave Marshall about their experiences.

"Well," says Dave, "the attitude of the people towards original music is getting better, but unfortunately, nobody seems to have any money anymore."

Peter considers that things are getting worse. "A year ago we did better, and we didn't have an album out. In Christchurch, where we did so well last time, we bombed out totally. It wasn't just us — all the bands are noticing it. Soon, with this twenty percent with holding tax, the whole scene will be reeling. Nobody will be able to afford to tour. We lost money on this tour, and it has made us very wary about doing another. The way things are, I can't see us ever touring New Zealand again."

"It is impossible to put on a show with good lighting and sound. Hirage of PA, lighting and soundmen has got to the stage where it's out of the bands' price range. What's worse, if you put an extra fifty cents on the door charge, the public considers it outrageous."

Cult

Although the band's music has continually changed, they don't see themselves as having

changed direction. Dave explains, "When we started, we were far more inaccessible. Over the years, we have slowed it down and simplified the songs. A few years ago, the punk bands thought they played really fast, but compared to us they were slow. People have said to us that we're too diverse, which is a fair criticism, but I think our direction is becoming more set."

Peter maintains that there is continuity. "The direction we have been following is Lip Service's. We have just played what we have written. It gets boring following musical trends. A lot of bands get slagged for following their own direction, then, all of a sudden, they make it big, and everyone tells them how great they are for doing their own thing!"

Public acceptance has been slow, but Dave feels, "that was to be expected." Peter thinks he knows why.

"New Zealand's a laid-back place, perfect for bands like Hello Sailor and Th' Dudes. We have always had only a cult following, but then we are really just a cult band. I don't think we will ever be big in New Zealand unless we go away and make it somewhere else; somewhere where there are enough people for the cult to be a large one."

Out Front

At one stage, Lip Service considered that Peter should be lead vocalist. "After all," says Dave, "he is an obvious front-person."

Numerous drummers were tried out, but none had the punch of Warren. "We decided that we should stay as a four-piece and all take turns at singing." Says Peter, "It adds variety for us, and for the audience."

The same democratic system is used with the songwriting, although Dave and Peter do most of the lyrics. "We like the words to say something," elaborates Dave, "the way that Talking Heads do. It takes time to develop that sort of competence, but at least we have passed that 'La, la, I love you' stage that most bands seem to get stuck in. The trick is to say something profound but still be fun. It's much easier to do on record than it is to do live."

Fast

When the band went into the studio earlier this year, they were fortunate to get the services of Graeme Myhre. Recently back from England, Myhre has done work with the likes of Bowie, Visconti, and Numan. Though he acted more as a producer/adviser than a conventional producer, he was still a very welcome presence in the studio. "We just told Graeme what we thought" claims Dave. "There was no real producer as such, we all just collaborated on everything."

Peter's opinion is that they tended to play everything too fast. "But we learned our lesson," he says, "next time round we'll get it right. At least it is the fastest album to have come out of this country."

In contrast with most local first albums, the

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Williams & Cooper Productions present:

MISSEX

THE 1981 TOUR

November

- 6 Dunedin Town Hall
- 7 Christchurch Town Hall
- 9 Wellington Town Hall
- 10 Wanganui Opera House
- 11 Palmerston North Opera House
- 12 Hastings Municipal Theatre
- 13 Gisborne YMCA Stadium
- 14 Tauranga QEII Stadium
- 15 Auckland Logan Campbell Centre