



Pink Flamingos ...

The band has moved fast. After only a few months of existence, they've an album due for release this month, and a single already out on the streets. It is indicative of their talent, a corresponding abundance of material, and the Flamingo approach to business.

Dave McCartney (ex Hello Sailor) plays guitar and sings, Paul Hewson (ex-Dragon) provides keyboards and vocals, Paul Woolright (ex Ticket, and a long line of club bands) is on bass and vocals, and the drummer is Jim Lawrie (ex Street Talk).

Hello Sailor, and Dragon were splitting up at about the same time across the Tasman, when Paul Hewson and Dave decided to return to New Zealand and form a band, which they did, eventually, at Jilly's nightclub.

Earlier this year, Dave was busy recording with Harry Lyon, Ricky Ball, and Lisle Kinney, and had started work on a solo album, which developed into a team effort once the Flamingos got together. The result is *New Order*, produced by Bruce Lynch and recorded at Mandrill studios, on the Polygram label. The songs are Dave's, due to the fact it was conceived as a solo project. They're all potentially commercial, and good for dancing — the kind of songs you'll hear in a few years, and think nostalgically of the summer of 1981.

Paul's keyboards pour through the tracks, weaving with Dave's guitar, while Walter Bianco's saxophone passes over some delightful phrases in 'Lonesome Old Star', and 'I'm Outside'. It all rests on the infallible rhythm section. The vocals on 'The Beat Goes On', are somehow reminiscent of vintage John Cale, but the total is a consistent, if restrained package.

A song called 'Assholes of the World' was deleted from the album, according to the boys, because the record company disapproved. "Something to do with the lyrics, and using the words 'the world'," Paul Hewson says.

Dave adds, "They think it's derogatory to

record company executives, but it's not like that at all."

This Time

The band is currently intent on cultivating an Australian audience. There'll be a tour of North Island centres to coincide with the album release, followed by a three-week sojourn in Australia, then it'll be back to New Zealand to promote the album some more, with a South Island visit at some stage. Finally, the band will go back to Australia, where they have full support from Polygram, and head for the States.

Paul is confident about the band's future.

"The idea is to set up a base in the South Pacific, get some money behind us, and make a really world-class album, one that'll make people sit up. Obviously, we should be improving, so the next album should be better than this one. That way we could become successful within a year or two in America, rather than five years."

"Success for us means just being able to work," says Dave.

"Just being able to work, have a Rolls Royce, and a swimming pool for each leg," Paul interrupts.

Dave muses, "And then other problems present themselves: how to plan ahead, how to keep together. All this so-called success is just airplay, and exposure. You've got to live by the law of the jungle."

Locally, the band will keep to the pub/club circuit, although they may try different venues later on.

"The only disadvantage with playing the pubs is that you can't get to the kids, so we've been thinking of trying some high school gigs, or even beach resorts, because the teenagers are usually more enthusiastic about music than anybody," Paul says.

But the Flamingos aren't consciously aiming for the underage crowd. As Dave says it's

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necessary to aim for a wide audience to sell records, and it's the strength of the songs rather than any form of theatrics they're relying on for communication purposes. It works, judging by the full houses they manage to attract around Auckland.

No Image

Visually, the band is low-key. The business is playing. To quote Paul, "What you see is what you get". It's the musicianship which counts in the end, and with the Flamingos, they're too honest to dress up the essential in a fashionable facade, or put it down to a confidence that comes with age and experience.

However, Dave is ready to admit "image" does have a place, but is sceptical of how it fits into the New Zealand scene.

"I've never been one for images. You evolve a style as the band goes on, confidence and charisma grow with it. You can't manufacture it, certainly Kiwi bands can't. New Zealanders aren't like that, we're not "front" enough. The show biz aspect is important, but I think you have to be brought up in that sort of environment, with that kind of personality expression. It can be learnt, but this band isn't like that, and I don't think it ever will be."

Too Many Songwriters

Playing at Jilly's forced the band to rehearse a lot, and generate enough original material to cover the whole night, so they've a store of songs to fall back on, and consequently they

can afford to play a range of songs at each venue, without too much repetition.

Dave and Paul have publishing deals, and Dave feels it is the avenue their careers may take.

"Playing live is good, but you lose a lot of vitality, it's hard to maintain, and it's often why bands break up, — a vicious circle. You have to work hard to meet overheads, you can't afford to take weeks off, so you virtually kill yourself, physically, and creatively."

"I would have liked Hello Sailor to have lasted for years, because you build a rapport with the other guys, and it's good for the audience, but it became too chaotic."

"We had three songwriters instead of two. Two guys can monopolise the song writing, but you can't have too many personalities coming through, because it splits the band's direction."

Paul agrees, "Two songwriters is perfect. We had too many in Dragon, and it contributed to the breakup."

The Flamingos seem to have struck a balanced combination.

Dave draws a comparison, "It's not like painting where you just do it once, and it's done. Playing a song, you've got to do that painting every night."

"It's good working with guys who've all been in other bands recently. You can put your experiences to a new test, everything's fresh, and you want it. You want to succeed."

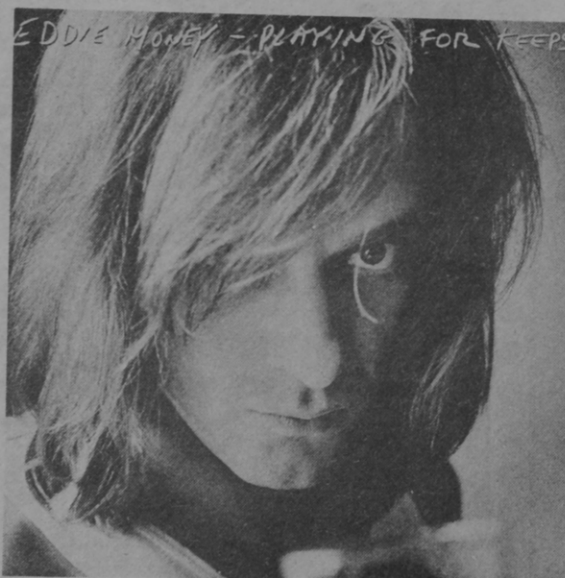
Ann Louise Martin

Rock on with...

Eddie Money 'PLAYING FOR KEEPS'

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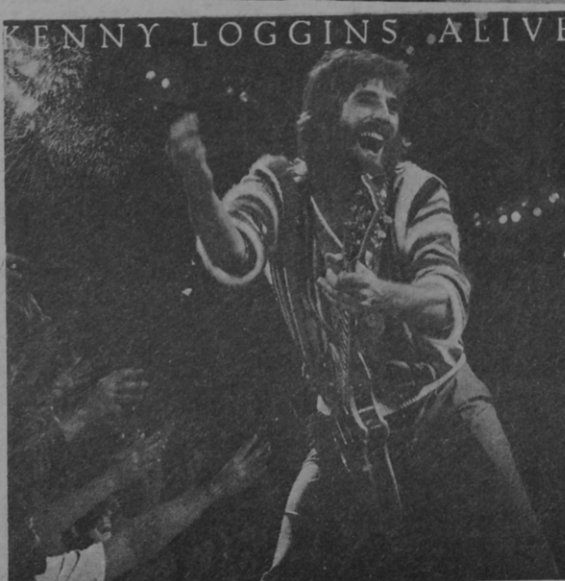
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