



Robert Smith, Simon Gallup and Lol Tolhurst.

To talk to the Cure, I put myself at the mercy of British Rail. About 20 minutes by train, through the wilds of deepest Battersea, brings you to a picturesque little village called Barnes, home of Olympic Studios. The Cure are due there to record a track for *Top of the Pops*.

A *TOTP* appearance is almost compulsory for bands who want to make it, but considering the hassles, it's little wonder that some refuse. No miming to the original track allowed. The Musicians' Union decrees that a new version must be recorded especially for the programme. With studio time costing an average of 55 quid an hour, and a track taking at least three hours to lay down, it's a costly exercise, with no guarantee of recouping it in sales.

With all this, compounded by the band's late arrival for the session, it was getting late by the time I managed to draw bass player Simon Gallup and drummer Laurence Tolhurst aside for a quick chat. For lack of anywhere quieter, we talked in manager Chris Parry's car.

The Cure are now back to a three-man lineup, with the loss of keyboards player Matthieu Hartley. Their new album, *Faith*, basically continues where *17 Seconds* left off. It's a dark, broody, rather unnerving work, but not without some attack, especially on 'Primary' (the single) and 'Doubt'.

"We had about 13 tracks when we started originally," says Gallup, "but we finally cut that back to eight, because the others didn't particularly tie in. Robert plays a lot of keyboards this time, instead of guitar."

"The new material is a bit more expansive, if you like," adds Tolhurst, "*17 Seconds* was more, sort of, misty and set-back, whereas this is more up front, and there's a lot more variation with instruments."

"It's more immediate in some respects, but it's still got a theme that's running from *17 Seconds*, there's still that same kind of feeling. It's a lot more positive though, more specific."

"I think it's a natural conclusion to *17 Seconds*, really," says Gallup. "We had no real idea what the sound was going to be like when we started these sessions. It's as much as a surprise to us as to anybody else, really."

"We never contrive a certain type of sound," Tolhurst explains. "We work with a basic backbone, and everything else we do is like a discovery. We very rarely go in with a set idea. It just develops as we go along."

Hartley left at the end of the Australasian tour, necessitating some smart rearranging of material.

"When we came back, we had about eight days off before playing some British dates," says Gallup. "So we had a couple of rehearsals, and the parts that the keyboards were really essential on, Robert and I took our share of that. We tried just to put the essential parts in, but a lot of it wasn't needed. It certainly sounded a bit rougher, and meant we had to work harder on stage to get a tighter sound. But there were only about three songs where we really needed keyboards, so Robert and I took our share of that."

The Cure intend remaining a three-piece from now on. "At the moment, to fill out the sound on two of the new songs, I'm playing bass pedals as well as bass," Gallup says. "If we think about it, we can actually make a very full sound, we don't have to have an extra instrument."

"It's also good because we like to keep songs down to a bare minimum, to give the melody more chance. The melody is very important to us."

The new stage act features all of the new album, about three-quarters of *17 Seconds*, and two or three oldies. Gallup says the new sound is very solid, especially on tracks like 'Primary', where two basses are used, playing chords. The band is trying not only to use new instruments, but to use instruments in a new aspect.

The Cure are now touring Europe, after extensive shows in Britain and Ireland. Expect them back down this way in July or August. They also want to sandwich in another single somewhere along the line.

"It's been our pattern to do a single a year and an album a year, but now we feel that we want to do something a bit more immediate, and not spend a year in between," says Tolhurst. "I mean, a lot of that has been touring anyway, we've done a lot of travelling and we find it very hard to write as we're going."

Ideas do emerge, however, while on tour. 'Primary', for example, was conceived in Australia. But the band hopes the new structure of the live performance will give them a little more breathing space, and time to exchange ideas.

Part of the new stage show is a brief animated film called *Carnage Visors*. It has a vague theme of good and evil, being a series of images using wooden figures as characters. The film was devised by Gallup's brother, and the band wrote a mainly-instrumental soundtrack for it. It'll be shown as the first half of the concert, instead of having a support act.

"I'm not being derogatory to other bands, but sometimes you might get a support band that's singing 'Route 66' or something like that, and both bands don't complement each other. They'd be better off playing on their own," says

Gallup. "So to make it a whole package, we have the film, and then we come on immediately after."

The Cure are a long way from superstardom, even at home, but they're happy with their support. They put in the same amount of effort whether they're playing in London or Upper Hutt.

Says Tolhurst: "Quite a lot of people know about us know, but it's fairly even in every country. Our popularity at home is the same as in other places. It's not like the Jam, for instance, though they might dispute this. Their popularity in Europe, as a whole, is very, very low, while in England they're massive. But we've never had the attitude that people should bow down to us overseas just because

# faith

To win a copy of the Cure's new album *FAITH* and a poster just answer the following questions. The first 10 correct entries opened on May 30 win *FAITH*. Post your entry now to *Rip It Up*, PO Box 5689, Auckland.

1. Name the member of Cure not on the first album?

2. What is the first single off *FAITH*?

Name .....

Address .....

we're English. We set exactly the same standard everywhere, and maybe that accounts for people liking us in other countries."

Right now, the Cure are happy and confident in their work. They bear the slings and arrows philosophically, particularly the barbs thrown by the British media. But they were chuffed to hear that *RIU* readers voted their New Zealand performances the best of 1980. I wasn't personally bowled over, but await their next visit with interest. The title of the new album is an expression of self-confidence rather than devotion. The Cure have plenty of faith in themselves, and they may yet move a mountain or two.

Duncan Campbell

