

'JAM' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

waste of time, but that's water under the bridge, and he's not particularly interested in confronting brick walls again.

"It's up to them to show some interest in us now. I mean, there are so many other places we haven't been to, and we prefer to concentrate on them."

Are the Jam too British for American tastes?

"That's what everyone says. I don't know if it's true or not, I don't personally think it is, actually. I tend to think our sound is more European, I don't think it's just British. I think it's just alien to what they've known before."

And yet the Beatles, a very British band, took America by storm.

"Yeah, but you've also got to remember that the Beatles were just entertainment. They weren't saying anything, as far as I could see. It was just show biz, and show biz will make it anywhere in the world, probably. We're offering something a little bit different."

The Jam are determined to avoid being tagged in any way. At the height of punk fashion, they looked more like mods, but when Modism had its brief revival about 18 months back, nobody included the Jam as part of that fad. Weller realises the pitfalls.

"Once you get pigeonholed as one type of band, you're finished. People think we sit on the fence and try to keep a hand in everything that's going. But it's not that, it's just that we don't want to get labelled, because once we do,

"The main thing is to make people think a bit more."

that's it. That's why we avoid anything that comes along, we just want to do what we wanna do."

You always seemed to be at odds with the punk attitudes.

"Well, a lot of that was contrived as well. That's the sort of time it was. But I still think it was the most exciting time of my life, actually. I think it was much healthier, much more exciting than it is today, not just for the Jam, but for music as a whole. Things were happening, they were moving, there was much more of a chance of changing things. There was a lot of good music, a lot of new bands, young bands, but I don't think there's the same sort of unity now, amongst the audiences, anyway."

"There have been so many new movements since then, Mods, Teds, Ska, things like that. It sort of smacks of desperation. People are looking for another movement to replace punk. It's all OK, it brings new music and new people into the scene, but it's still clutching at straws."

Is it necessary to base your life, your attitudes, the way you look, on a movement or musical style?

"Well, that's exactly what I've done anyway, with the Mod thing. Since 1975 I've based the way I look and the way I think and write on the Mod thing, so I can't really criticise that, because I've done exactly the same. I suppose it is important to some people to have a base to work on. It depends how you use it. But then you start getting into this tribalism thing, a lot of bands are trying to revive this showbiz-glamour image, which I think is f\*\*kin' boring."

"It's escapism, really. Whenever times get rough, people always try to cling onto old values. That applies to anything, including politics, like the Tories are doing now. I think escapism is the worst thing you can turn to."

You want to make people think?

"Yeah, music has gotta do that. Obviously, it's not its sole purpose, music is for dancing and enjoying as well. But it's got to be a mixture of everything."

Foxton: "I mean, we're not just entertainers, we can't just

go out and play our nice little pop tunes for an hour or so. That's the way they see it in the States. It's all right for a certain percentage, just to get off on the music, but we want to take it a step further. We hope they've had a good time, but we want them to get something more out of it. Obviously, they don't have to agree with what we're saying, but the main thing is to make people think a bit more, and be aware of something."

I remark to Foxton that the Jam seem to have written very few straightforward love songs, only a handful coming to mind at random.

"Yeah, that's about it," he agrees. "But even those are not as straightforward as 'the moon in June', even those have a bit more substance to them. Paul could answer that better, because I think love songs are a bit more personal."

"I can only write a love song if I really feel like it," says Weller. "But I hate the sort of songs that are over-sentimental, anyway. 'English Rose', probably on the surface quite romantic, has also got some funny lines in it."

"I am a romantic sort of person, but then I don't always draw from personal experiences. Sometimes I use a character or situation to put a point of view across, it won't necessarily come from my own involvement or experience. I use whatever I feel is necessary at the time."

"I think the point is that all my songs are drawn from my own way of thinking, regardless of what I use."

On the subject of inspiration, I ask about the source of 'Down In The Tube Station.' Not one of Weller's personal experiences, it turns out.

"It was brought on by paranoia, really. It uses a situation I dreamt up, but it's drawn from my own paranoia, probably from living in London, coming from a place like Woking, which is a real suburban, sleepy town, and living in London, thousands of people milling past you every day of the week, the claustrophobic feeling of it."

For the uninitiated (shame on you!), the song is about a weedy suburban type caught in the underground late at night by a bunch of thugs who proceed to kick the living daylight out of him. Having experienced the London tube system in the dead of night, I can understand the feeling. You're the loneliest person in the world, and the types you meet down there at that hour don't help.

"We won't end up millionaires, but then we've never really been bothered about that."

The Jam are always striving for higher standards, and are extremely self-critical. They still aren't happy with *Sound Affects*, even though they feel it's the best album they've done. The sound, they feel, is weak, which is why the songs are quite different live. *Setting Sons* was unsatisfying because it suddenly changed direction while it was being written. Weller originally had a concept of three friends who ended up fighting each other on opposite sides of a civil war, but that was later abandoned, and consequently the ideas don't flow as he would have liked them. He rates *All Mod Cons* above *Setting Sons*.

Not long after this interview, the Jam set off for a two-week Japanese tour, followed by dates in Canada, then a TV show and a gig in New York.

"There are a lot of people there (the US) who want to hear us," says Foxton. "When we first went over there, in '76-'77, it was just the thing you should do, like most bands, once you're successful in England, you shoot off to America, which we did. It was encouraging, the first time we went, then it steadily declined after that."

The band was then due to play a large Scandinavian tour, including several festivals. Europe, again is largely uncharted territory for the Jam. *Sound Affects* sold twice as much as *Setting Sons*, but then, that's not the criterion they use for where they'll play.

"We just want to play as many places as we can," says Foxton. "It's not a case of following the success of that record, we don't do that. We still want to play the places where we aren't selling, because the interest is still there, among the kids."

Adds Weller: "We can keep going, purely on a financial basis, on what we make in Britain. We won't end up millionaires, but then we've never really been bothered about that. But we can keep going, and that's what counts."

A hint, boys: You've currently got your first chart single and album in New Zealand. But don't let that put you off.

Duncan Campbell

RUMOURS

UK & USA

The *Selector*, hit by two defections recently, have now lost lead vocalist Pauline Black. The band are currently in USA and plan to continue without a replacement ... the *Cure*, who impressed here by their willingness to keep their volume below ear-splitting levels, are currently on the road in Britain — with Pink Floyd's PA ... also on the road, but probably using cardboard megaphones, are new *Joe Jackson* band, *Jumpin' Jive*. They will be playing exclusively 1940's swing music, with a large horn section.

Linda Ronstadt is also dabbling in the 40's, preparing for an album of Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald tunes — looks like she's not a punk any more ... her old mate *Elvis Costello* has been in her neck o' the woods recently, recording more tracks with country star George Jones ... da *Ramones* are also about to record — produced by 10cc's Graham Gouldman.

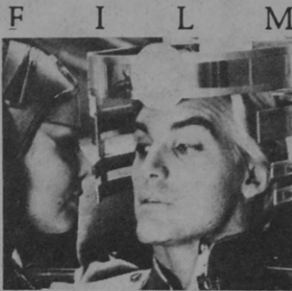
Ian Dury has split, apparently less than amicably, from Stiff Records, and is currently occupied recording the dreaded solo album ... ? & The

Mysterions are back together ... *Bow Wow Wow* are now signed to RCA and have a new single, 'Chihuahua' ready to roll.

Just to prove that New Zealand really is making it on the world recording scene, we have news that the new *Beat* album features a track called, 'A Dream Home In New Zealand' ... what's more, *Tangerine Dream* soundtrack for made-in-NZ horror flick, *Dead Kids* is completed.

Howard Devoto has left *Magazine*. He announced his decision, which effectively kills the band, on the eve of the release of their fourth album. He will not form another group, but no other plans have been announced ... the *Clash* have had to double the length of their sell-out concert season in New York after the Fire Dept halved the legal crowd capacity of their venue ... English 'March for Jobs' finished on May 30 with a massive London concert featuring *Pete Townshend*, *Aswad*, *Linton Kwesi Johnson*, *Jim Capaldi*, the *Members* and *Tom Robinson* ... recently unemployed, though not on the march, is *Stuart Adamson*, late of the *Skids*.

The Co-operation



Flash under pressure.

**Coalminer's Daughter**  
Director: Michael Apted

*Coalminer's Daughter* could be considered as a populist companion piece to Altman's *Nashville*. In this biopic of country queen Loretta Lynn, there is nothing, however, of the laconic observation of Robert Altman. However restrained Apted's direction may be, and however finely-observed Spacek's performance, there is still a good deal of that camp sensibility that is (unconsciously) such a part of the country-and-western music scene. Beverly D'Angelo's splendid performance as Patsy Cline is the highlight of the film. With a wardrobe ranging from gold lame and glitter to voluminous head bandages and panda-like black eyes, she shows the audience how flamboyance and emotion are not necessarily irreconcilable.

**Fritz the Cat**  
Director: Ralph Bakshi

Bakshi's ribald cartoon classic of the seventies has finally made it through the censor's office. As a whole, it is only marginally more successful than his later work which, alas, from *Wizards* through to *American Pop* has shown an alarming decline in inspiration. The mood of *Fritz* is resolutely post-Woodstock: the radical chic doctrine of Liberty, Equal-

ity and Fraternity with group sex in bathtubs and some rather laboured lampooning of the police. The actual characters of the film are taken from those classic porno comix by Robert Crumb, and one wishes that someone would have the courage to make a really gutsy film with content more in keeping with the Crumb originals.

**Flash Gordon**  
Director: Michael Hodges

And they still keep trying to revamp old kitsch ... *King Kong*, *Superman*, *The Jazz Singer* and now *Flash Gordon*! When will they learn, Virginia? Apart from a lavish spread of rather nudging kinkiness (my favourite was Brian Blessed's duel with Timothy Dalton) *Flash* is a rather flat affair. Special effects were nothing to write home about, Queen's music score was a source of constant aural agony and the pacing was tiresomely slow at times. Lester's *Superman II* is really much flashier.

**Breaker Morant**  
Director: Bruce Beresford

This craftsmanly film by Beresford is another feather in the cap of the burgeoning Australian film industry, particularly in view of its success in Britain and America (we won't ask why it got to Auckland eight months after its British premiere). And yet the whole affair falls too much into the genre of stiff-upper-lip and pawns-in-the-game-of-war for comfort. The scene of Edward Woodward and Bryan Brown walking hand-in-hand to their execution is moving, but whilst one is being moved one also feels a sense of being manipulated. What I would like to know is, are we ever going to see Beresford's previous film *The Getting of Wisdom*?

William Dart

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