

RICHARD STRANGE



JOHN FOXX

INDIE FILE

INDIE LABELS MARKETING BY RTC



King of the Indies, the label which started it all, back in 1971, with Mike Oldfield's perennial *Tubular Bells*. Virgin gave other, bigger labels a lesson in marketing, and now stands firmly alongside them. Boss Richard Branson, never one to rest on his laurels, has branched the Virgin name into wide-ranging fields, from shops to studios to venues to books and back again.

John Foxx was one of the original guiding lights in Ultravox, a band roundly scorned in their early days, being strong on synthesizers when three-chord thrashers were in vogue. Foxx left after three albums to try it on his own. His influence on latter-day synth bands is obvious, and Foxx is now following his own dreams, with one LP, *Metamatic*, and another, *The Garden*, due in September. John also wants to sign new bands to his own Metalbeat label, distributed by Virgin.

Human League split in half towards the end of last year, Ian Marsh and Martyn Ware forming the British Electric Foundation, while Phil Oakley and Adrian Wright kept the home fires burning. The new League is more dance-orientated, having picked up a

coupla dancin' girls named Joanne and Susanne in a Sheffield disco. The new-look League already has a hit with 'Sound Of The Crowd', the follow-up, 'Love Action', is making waves, and the new LP, *Boys And Girls*, is on its way.

After quitting Human League, Martyn Ware and Ian Marsh formed British Electric Foundation, a production company to act as a cornerstone for various activities. BEF released a cassette of synthesised music called *Music For Stowaways*. At the same time, a project called *Heaven 17* was being formulated.

With vocalist Glenn Gregory, they cut their first single, the now-famous 'We Don't Need This) Fascist Groove Thang'. Since then, Ware and Marsh have been hard at work on *Heaven 17's* first album, *Penthouse and Pavement*, due out soon on Virgin. The 'Pavement' side is dance-orientated material, while the 'Penthouse' side is mind and body music. The BEF is also working on a project called *Music Of Quality and Distinction*, an LP of cover versions of sixties and seventies' classics, with BEF backing guest appearances by the original artists.

Richard Strange was known as 'Kid' in a previous incarnation, leading a bizarre little band known as the Doctors of Madness; highly influential in the pre-punk days. After their demise, he withdrew for a

while, re-emerging late last year with new material, playing solo gigs in Europe and America. In December 1980, he opened Cabaret Futura in Soho, a highly successful mixed media club which still thrives, although Strange himself no longer appears there.

His first studio album in three years is entitled *The Phenomenal Rise of Richard Strange*, based on a narrative song cycle which he describes as "a political fantasy."

Scotland's Simple Minds have recently signed with Virgin after quitting Arista. They've been recording at Rockfield studios in Wales, under the guidance of Steve Hillage, who also produced their debut Virgin single, 'The American'. They're keen to follow up on the success of their first single 'I Travel', which was a disco hit in the US, and the highly-acclaimed *Empires And Dance*. But first, they must seek a replacement for drummer Brian McGee, who's just quit because he's had enough of touring.



HUMAN LEAGUE

Virgin recently signed a deal with the emergent Glasgow label Cuba Libre, featuring two very exciting bands — the Shakin' Pyramids and the Cuban Heels. The Pyramids are an acoustic rockabilly trio,

who frequently busk in market-places, outside shops, in tube stations, anywhere there's an audience. The Cuban Heels have a reputation around Glasgow as a very hot live act, but had trouble attracting

attention further south. This led drummer Ali MacKenzie to form Cuba Libre. The Heels already have two singles, 'Walk On Water' and 'Sweet Charity', and are currently preparing their debut LP.

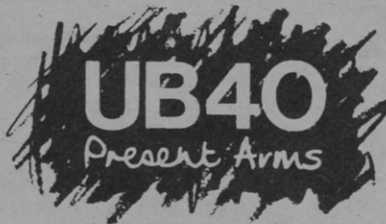
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