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Neighbours



Trudi, Neighbours

The seven-piece champions of Stax soul, R&B and Caribbean clout, the Neighbours, have just completed a week at the Cook, Dunedin.

It's their Thursday night stint and after a sizzling first bracket, Rick Bryant, sax, vocals and legend, Trudi Green, vocals and Sam Ford, guitar, talk about being the Neighbours.

Their first single, 'Love Is Never Cruel' is out and it's great. Isn't it?

Trudi: It's good as a first single. We were aiming at a very big sound and that's why we went to Stebbing Recording Studio.

Rick: Since it was our first one it was bound to be experimental and I think it's a little bit soft but we're happy with the sales.

Why has the band opted for soul and R&B over the more fashionable bigger income earning ears of rock 'n' roll?

Trudi: We love it. The kids might not relate to it here but I was brought up in England where from the age of 13 on R&B was the only thing that we really went out and danced to. Even now record wise I'll play Otis Redding ten times more than any

album I've just bought.

Rick: We play it partly because we love it and partly because we hope against hope that it's the coming fashion. I've been in R&B bands for fifteen years now and there's always the people who like it and they make up for the discouragement of the mass not liking it.

Trudi: In our original repertoire there are things from the ska and Latin fields that allow us to get away with the R&B stuff. When I first saw Rick in Rough Justice I loved him when I heard the first chorus of 'In The Midnight Hour' and the whole place moved onto the dance floor.

Rick: Yeah, it's the best dance music and we grew up with it.

So the Neighbours' approach is a direct contrast to most of the very superficial, highly-groomed Auckland set. Agree?

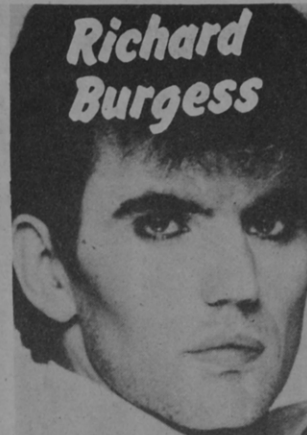
Rick: Yeah we're pretty strong in the South Island and in the lower half of the North but we haven't cracked Auckland yet. We've got a rapport with the Auckland musicians that are pretty fashionable but we haven't cracked a rapport with their main following.

What of the inevitable first album?

Sam: The record company wants us to do an album this year but whether it's after the second or third single is yet to be decided.

Rick: We really wanna push the album. We're impatient but they seem to be patient. Realistically it should be out by Christmas this year.

George Kay



If you bought the Spandau Ballet or Visage albums, then you may be familiar with the name Richard James Burgess. Burgess is from Christchurch. A New Zealander living in London, working as a musician and producer.

Back in the early seventies, Burgess was drumming in Quincy Conserve. In early 1972, he received a scholarship to the Berkley Music Academy in Boston.

In the mid-seventies, he moved to England and formed a band called Accord. From these beginnings came Landscape. Their early material was electronic, with its roots in jazz. More recently, they produced the successful LP *From The Tea-rooms Of Mars*, which spawned two British Top 30 singles, 'Einstein A Go Go' and 'Norman Bates'.

Landscape, however, is only one side of Burgess' multi-faceted life. He's best known for producing dressers extraordinaire, Spandau Ballet.

"I basically got involved in the Blitz because of my friendship with Rusty Egan. He and Steve Strange ran the club. When that scene first came along, we could identify with it, because it moved

close to what Landscape were doing. At that time, it was hard to find enough music to play at the Blitz. It created a challenge to make new music."

So where do Spandau fit in? "In the early days they were young soul boys into American funk. They felt frustrated at having to submerge themselves in a foreign culture, plus the fact that lyrically, a lot of American dance music is very hard for English kids to relate to. With the Blitz, it was a case of fusing the two cultures, making dance music that was white and British, rather than trying to be black."

"Spandau are moving. I think if we did what we wanted, every new record would have a different sound. The only problem is, you leave yourselves wide open to be capitalised on. It's happened to a certain extent with both Spandau and Landscape. You might make a record, then six months later someone else will release something with all its salient features. With Haircut 100, I'm sure 'Favourite Shirts' came out of 'Chant No. 1'."

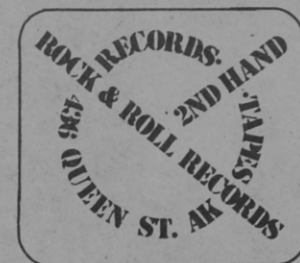
The second Spandau Ballet album is due out soon. It was finished last September, but was totally remixed for a boxed set of four 12 inch 45s for those who want longer dance versions.

Though taught basic production skills, Burgess' modern technique has developed through his own persistence.

"People talk about being natural in the studio, which is pretty silly. It's a totally artificial environment, you aren't there to create a live sound. Recording in the studio sense is an art-form, and you're trying to create something new, not reproduce something that's already been."

Would you like to work here with some local bands?

"Yes, but time would be a problem. I also don't like the idea of working with a band whose material I'm not familiar with." Mark Phillips

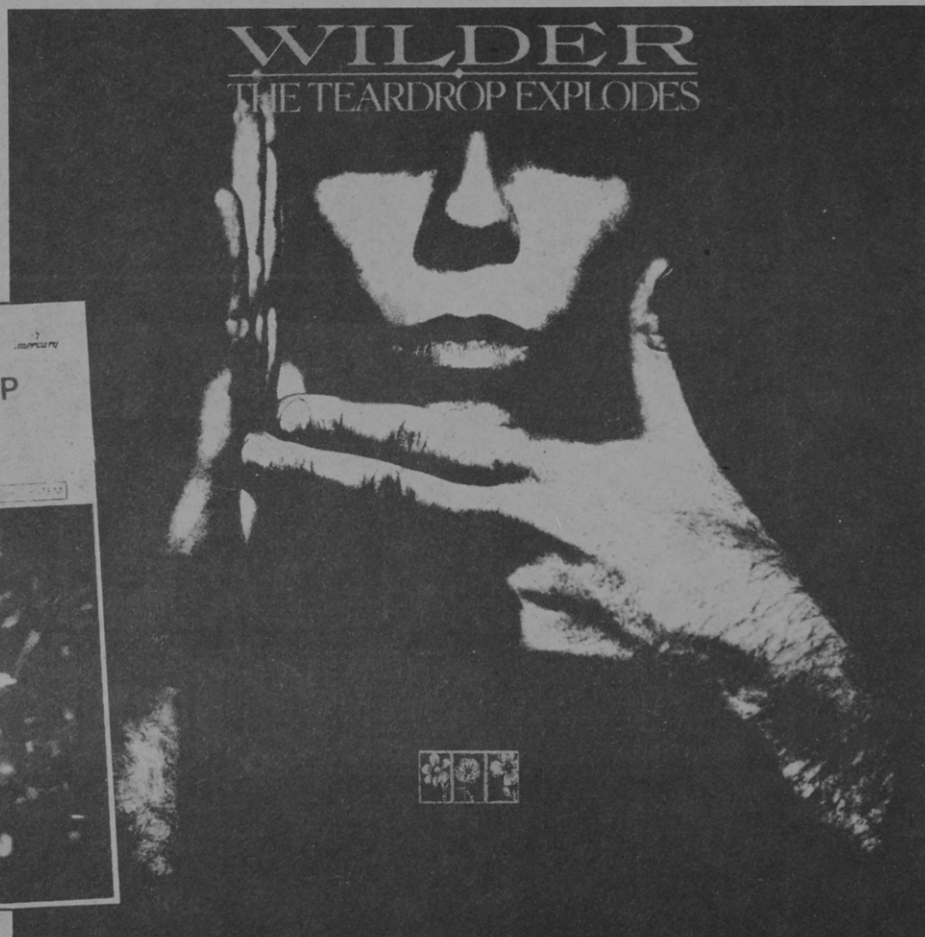
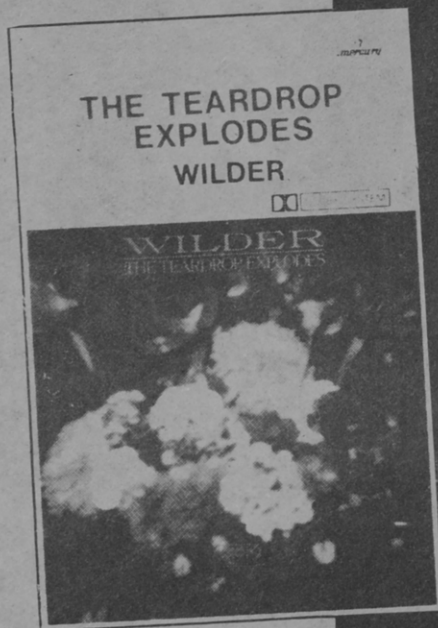


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