



Narcs: L-R, Andy Dickson (vocals, guitar), Tony Waine (bass) and Steve Clarkson (drums).

NARCS we know

The Narcs have been around for about two years, becoming nationally known on the D.D. Smash *Cool Bananas* tour. Supporting Smash enabled the band to play at venues and in places they'd never been before.



How did it go?

"D.D. Smash consistently tried to put their best across, and we did too. One nighters for six weeks may not be a lot by international standards but for New Zealand it was probably one of the most extensive tours ever done. It was very hard physically, but it really disciplined the band's attitude," says drummer Steve Clarkson.

After the tour the Narcs played five gigs, then took a short break in Australia. They didn't actually play, choosing instead to see a variety of Oz acts. Agents 'over there' are aware of the Narcs, and feedback has been healthy.

With a south-Sydney-sider on guitar, one who grew up with the Angels and Chisel, the band can't help but reflect that Australian edge and showmanship.

A lot of the hard, fast tunes in the Narcs repertoire were written when former drummer Bob Ogilvie was with the band, and aimed directly at making people dance. Since Steve joined the band last year, material has become

more diverse. Writing songs is tough.

"To have a song you've got to be confident enough with the riff or chord you're using to put some lyrics over the top — and you've got to have lyrics in mind," Andy explains.

Have the Narcs got something to say?

"Just everyday things," Andy continues. "We're not into politics yet. Life's not that much of a hassle that we'd want to be so blatant about it. We like things that interest us."

"I think we've learnt to keep things simple, and although my guitar style is very Australian, it's never reached the stage of total, fast heavy metal licks. I've started to learn more, I learnt from Dave Dobbyn on the tour, from the simplicity of their songs, and the feel."

Recording a single is very close. But they'll think very carefully about what they record before taking the plunge. They've learnt from their last EP, and have resisted pressure so far to get something down. When they do they want it to be a hit, and are convinced there is just no point unless airplay is assured.

On the Narcs' future, manager Peter comments: "We're not worried. We're going to be around somewhere in two years. We're all good friends."

Andy has the final say: "The longer you stay together the better you'll be. A lot of bands appear out of the blue and disappear back into it. I'm all for staying together as long as we can, your development takes its own course then. I remember when Cold Chisel had been around for four years and were still playing Led Zeppelin covers. It was five or six years before they gained recognition. AnnLouise Martin

Dance Exponents: Top, Jordan. L-R, Brian, Martin, Michael, Dave.



dance exponents

It used to be a favourite scenario with B-grade American movies in the fifties, the sort that are too bad to show on television. Big league impresario stops off in small town, the local band are in the school hall, a puff on the cigar and he's going to make stars of you, boys. Thirty years later not even the corniest story would take on a direction like that — unless you're a Christchurch band called Dance Exponents.

Christchurch may not exactly be Hicksville USA and Mike Chunn may be short on Colonel Tom Parker manner, but on a recent trip south he came across Dance Exponents, then a band of less than six months standing, and now they're the second signing to NZ Mushroom. Second on board behind big leaguers D.D. Smash. The average Dance Exponents age is nineteen. Dizzy stuff for a band whose origins lie in small town New Zealand ... Nelson, Timaru, Oamaru and Geraldine.

There is a more exotic side to the band, however. Vocalist Jordan Luck was born in Canada and drummer Michael Harallambi's parents were Albanian. The other three Exponents are David Gent (bass), Brian Jones (guitar) and Martin Morris who has recently replaced original guitarist Steve Cowan. Morris is the only band member with any sort of pedigree, coming from Sheer Fanatics and the short lived Dick Driver Dance Band.

Dance Exponents, what's in a name?

"At one stage, the music papers were calling every band an exponent of something," says Jordan, "pop or funk or whatever. We decided on Dance Exponents because now dance is wide enough to take in everything from pogos to polkas and also because the audience are the real dance exponents and we're a fun band, a dancing band."

Luck is also the principal song writer. The usual story about the band is that he can sit down and write ten or fifteen songs without a break. He's not so sure but writing does come easily to him, and he is responsible for the bulk of a repertoire of fifty originals. He professes no knowledge of theory and can scarcely play

guitar. His songs are written around patterns and left to the band to interpret.

Harallambi describes them as "soppy love songs" and Luck eventually agrees, reluctantly; although he does claim that underneath things are not quite as straightforward as they might appear. Beyond that, there is no particular message. The band's preoccupation is with the feet. 'Poland' is about as heavy as they get but even then nuclear holocaust comes almost incidentally at the end of *Coronation Street*, almost another episode.

That rags to riches story isn't quite complete however. An upcoming nationwide tour with the album promoting *Screaming Mee-mees* and a new manager, none other than Andrew Snoid ex Pop Mechanics and Swingers vocalist, finishes that tale.

Influences are harder to track down. New albums by older new wavers XTC and the Stranglers get the thumbs up but mainly it's the inspiration of everything that's happening in New Zealand music at the moment.

And Mushroom Records? The contract was too long and too boring to read but they trust Mike Chunn. It runs five years and calls for an album and two or three singles a year.

Dance Exponents are definitely enjoying life. Their first single is due on July 12, they're now professionals having left behind jobs like hay making and dart sharpening, they're homeless having forsaken flats for motels and the houses of friends but they enjoy touring, and if the van could be better and Jordan could save some of his money from their fining system, well it doesn't really matter, they're in it for the fun. Michael Higgins

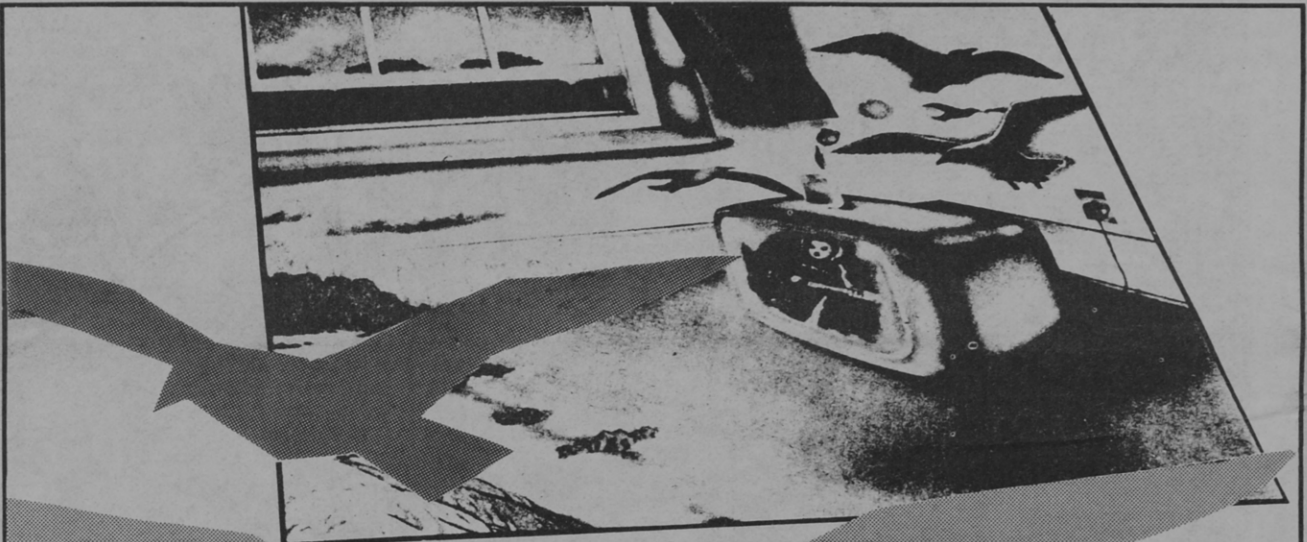


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A SENSE OF ADVENTURE IN AN AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

GANG OF FOUR

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SONGS OF THE FREE