

Mondo Rock's Ross Wilson cheerfully carries the burden of his past. Although not the band's main songwriter, to many Ross Wilson is Mondo Rock, due to his previous incarnation as frontman for that classic Australian band, Daddy Cool. Mondo's performance of 'Eagle Rock' was a showstopping surprise at this year's Sweetwaters. Did the other band members resent playing that song?

"It was their idea," says Wilson. "I was the one who was showing reluctance because I didn't like the idea of living on past glory, and I was trying to get new ideas across."

"But Mondo Rock had had a

couple of minor hits before this current lineup was put together, so I was feeling less reluctant about playing 'Eagle Rock', and it became apparent that people really wanted to hear it. And the other guys in the band wanted to play it, too."

One of the advantages of having a 'name' musician in the band is the cross-section of age groups you get in your audience.

"Daddy Cool has just experienced an incredible resurgence of popularity in Australia. I'm 35, so there are guys who have known me since then who are Mondo Rock fans. We've just done a series of concerts in theatres in Australia with no

licensing age restrictions and there was an amazing variety of people. Lots of young kids down the front, plus plenty of people my age and they all had a good time."

Wilson was not happy with Mondo's spot at Sweetwaters, mainly because of the time limit placed on their set.

"Even though we had only 45 minutes, I thought we acquitted ourselves quite well and I was more than happy with the response we got. But it was a bit of an anticlimax to travel a long way and hang around for a long time and only get to play 45 minutes. I felt there was a bit too much of a rigid approach to the

## Mondo Talk-o

organisation. We could have had an encore, and I think if a group works hard, and the people want more, you should give them that extra number. That's just good manners. It cost us a lot of money to come across and do Sweetwaters and we felt slighted



Ross Wilson, Mondo Rock.

that we didn't get the chance to do one more number and really bring it home to the crowd."

How important is the live performance?

"It's very important to me. I'd like to make more records and perform less, but I definitely need to be a live performer and quite often the character of the songs we do will evolve more on stage than they would if we just sat around in the studio."

Mondo Rock are now making money in Australia, but what of the prospects further afield?

"Well, we're having our records released all over the place. Nothing's happened yet, but we're going to continue doing the best we can and something is bound to stick."

"I don't know where our market is outside of Australia. At home, everything's fine, hit record after hit record. I wouldn't care if we had hit records in Tibet, that would be fine with me. But I'd like to have them somewhere else."

The economics of touring is

raised. Wilson says while the live scene in Oz has vastly improved from the old days, it's certainly more complex and much more expensive.

"We're making enough so we can take a two-month break and still get paid while we're off the road writing and rehearsing. But it does get stretched a bit thin; sometimes you feel you're in the business of subsidising truck companies (laughter). Mondo Rock is like a little industry in itself and this one band must be supporting about 30 people."

Wilson isn't particularly interested in musical trends, preferring to follow his own instincts as to what people like.

"I reckon rock and roll everywhere is going through a 'Jeez, what's happening?' kind of a period. It's almost like there's too much music around. Everybody's capable of making music now, with all these cheap synthesisers and drum machines. All you need is an idea and it's easy to put into practice with home studios and things like that."

At Mainstreet Wilson takes his frontman role to heart, setting out to convert the ragged Auckland audience, so different from the typical Aussie reaction of rage-before-they're-on-the-stage.

Standout tunes are 'Queen In Me', 'Chemistry', 'Mondo-Sex-O' and 'State of Heart'.

For Wilson, there is life after Mondo. He'll be taking a break from the band soon to do some solo work and cut a single for his wife Pat. He's also enthused with his recent production of up-and-coming band the Dynamic Hepnotics, whom he'll be working with again.

"That band's really got good lately. They never had management, they were just this little R&B band who carried their gear in, set up a little PA and so on. But they're getting a bit more ambitious now."

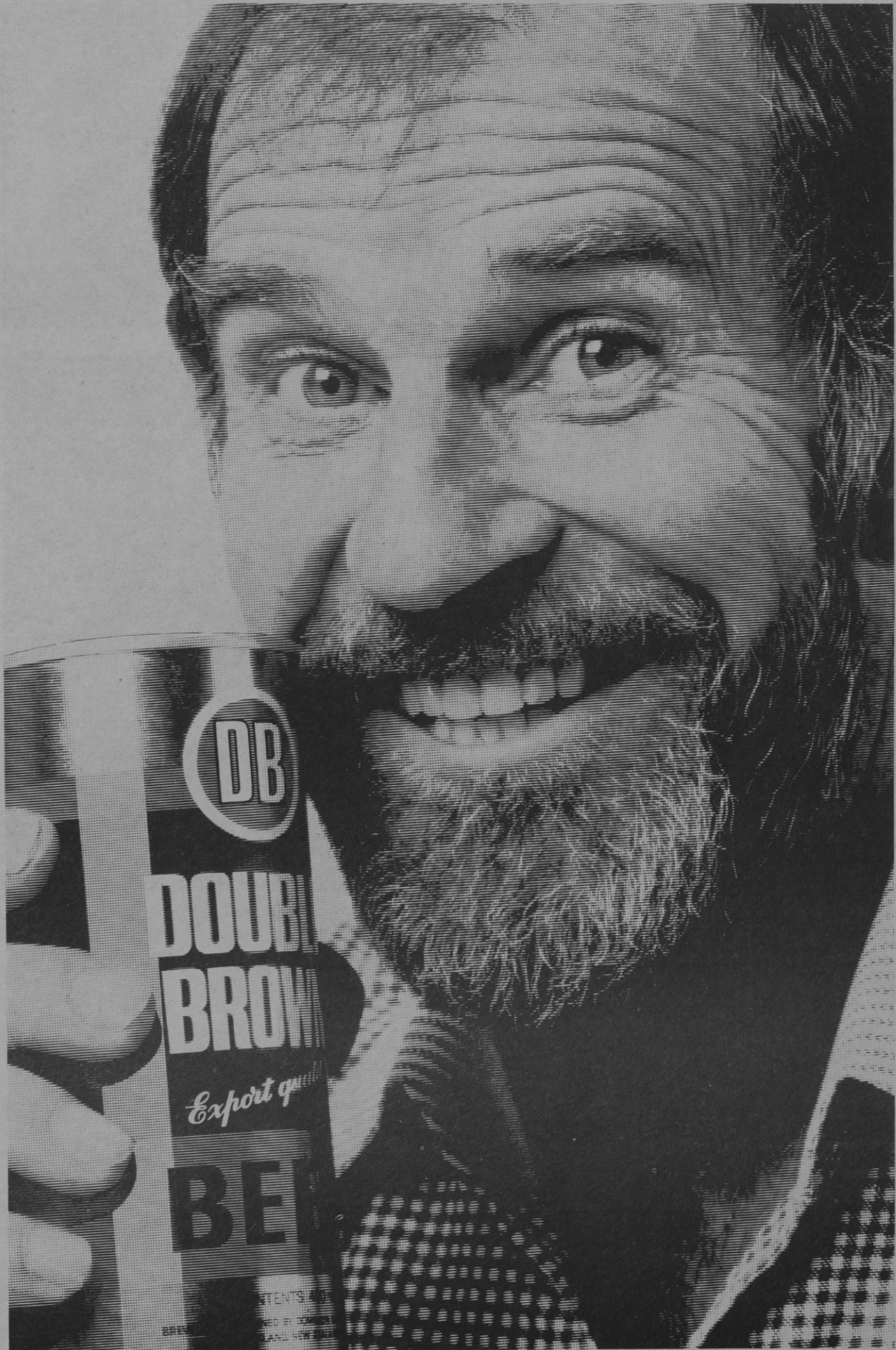
They must have taken lessons from Ross Wilson.

Murray Cammick

DOUBLE BROWN BECAUSE...

# "It's good, real good"

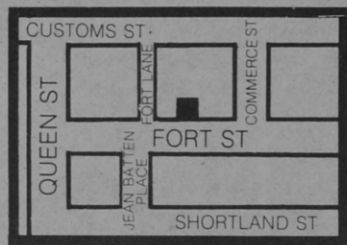
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