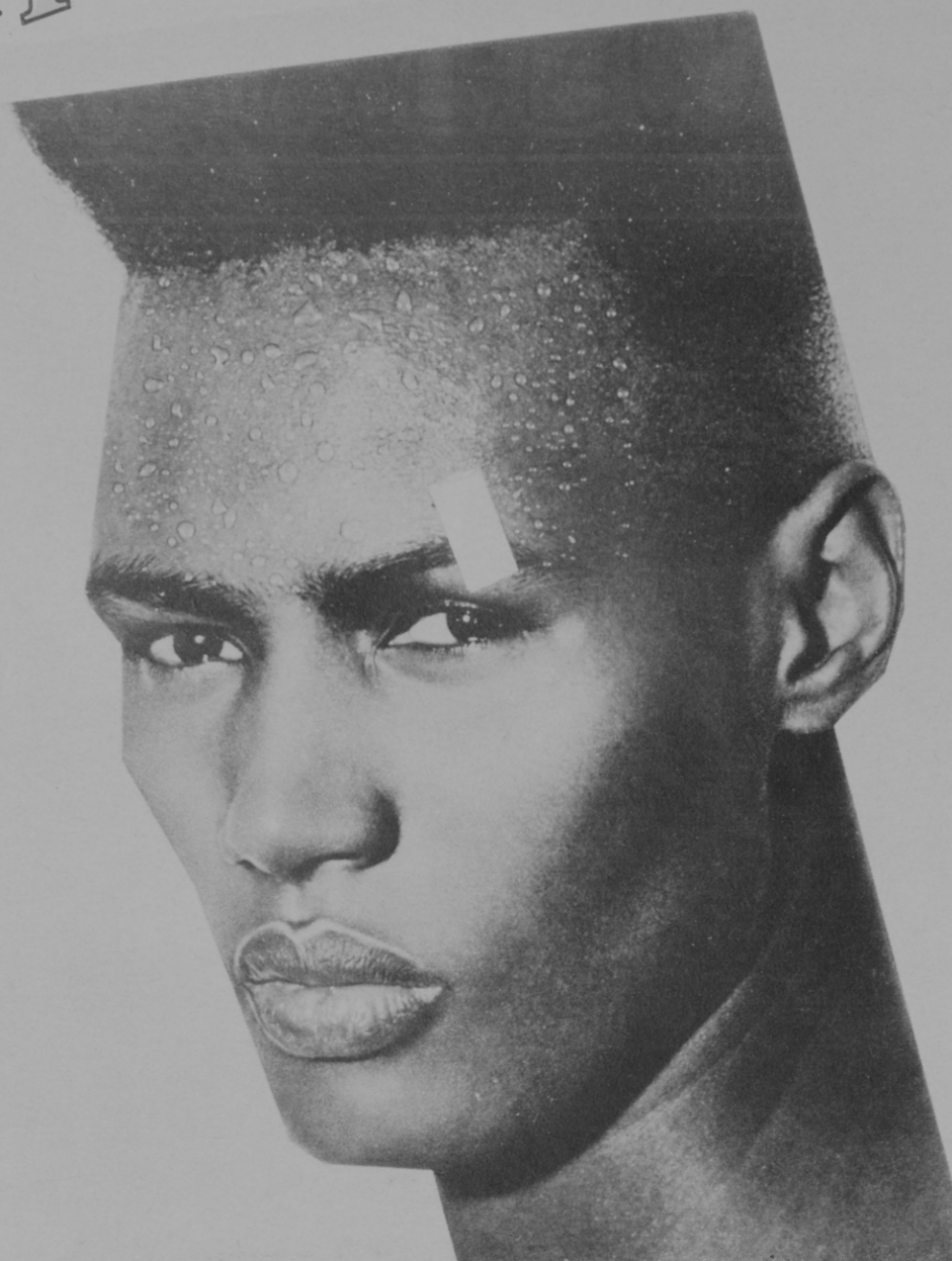


Just Pics



This new publicity pic for GRACE JONES says it all ...

JAM SPLIT

The JAM are no more, after nearly six years, six albums and umpteen fine singles. In a statement to fans, PAUL WELLER said:

"I feel we have achieved all we can together as a group. I mean this both musically and commercially. I'd hate us to end up old and embarrassing like so many other groups do. What we (and you) have built up has meant something, for me it stands for honesty, passion and energy and youth."

The band will play a farewell tour late this month and early next month, finishing with two dates at London's Wembley Arena. No future plans have been announced, but Weller is keen to front a larger group, possibly including strings and girl backup singers.

I was hoping we'd make real progress
But it seems we have lost the power
Any tiny step of advancement
Is like a raindrop falling into the ocean
We're running on the spot ...

Early JAM pic (L-R) BRUCE FOXTON, PAUL WELLER, RICK BUCKLER.

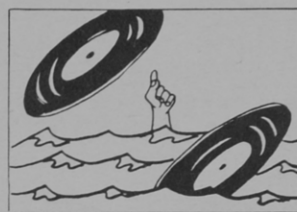


MILLTOWN STOWAWAYS release their EP 'Hired Togs' in December. They are left to right, Ben Staples (drums), Mark Dansey (bass), Syd Pasley (guitar), Fiona Anderson (vocals), Kelly Roger (sax), Grant Hughson (trumpet).

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Man Overboard



The column opening this issue is devoted to yet another consuming interest of mine, New Zealand and Australian music. Australia is enjoying a boomlet of global interest, from Rick Springfield to the Birthday Party, so it's not exactly suffering from inattention, and although there are some great recent Australian records, I'll deal with them later on. I'm starting with New Zealand, as neglected an English-language music scene as exists, but one whose diversity, exuberance, and volume of good music rivals any locality's.

Don't treat this as any kind of definitive guide to modern NZ music. Even in the U.S. there are enthusiasts like Ron Kane (without whose educative aid, along with the equally indispensable help of Rip It Up editor Murray Cammick, I couldn't have made it even this far) whose knowledge of NZ minutiae dwarfs mine. But I have been interested in New Zealand rock after acquiring (thanks to local historian Roy Colbert) a rather amazing selection of '60s records by artists like Ray Columbus & the Invaders, the La De Dads (both of whom have available reissue packages), Larry's Rebels, the Underdogs, the Pleazers, the Avengers and the Fourmyula (whose Chris Parry later went on to produce the Jam's early records and mastermind the Cure, who now seem to be a primary influence on the modern bands).

More recently it was Split Enz and their spinoffs the Swingers (whose mind-boggling 'Counting The Beat' is now a U.S. single) who rekindled my interest. But there's a lot more that hasn't escaped the country's borders until recently, when importers like Jem and Important started bringing in some current releases.

A good way to start acquainting yourself with NZ music today is with an anthology—the 'Hits & Myths' series, for instance, of which the second volume, *More Hits & Myths*, recently appeared. Besides odd Swingers and Split Enz tracks, you get 14 more songs, 10 of considerable interest—from the cavernous modern UK-style sounds of Danse Macabre and Penknife Glides to the sardonic XTC-ish rock of Blam Blam Blam's near-classic 'There Is

No Depression In New Zealand" to the chirpy pop of the Crocodiles (who have two interesting albums, one out in England). There's a haunting track by Graeme Gash, and best of all there's the Screaming Meemees' irresistible 'Till I Die,' which I wrote about in my June column.

You'll probably also enjoy Goat's Milk Soap, a sampler of spottier overall quality but featuring the Meemees, Swingers and Danse Macabre again (different tracks), plus the amusing 'Trendy Lefties' by the Mockers (good group), a fine Jam-like rocker by the New Entrants, and the best cut I've heard by the highly-touted, soul-oriented (and now, I think, defunct) New-matics.

So far my favorite NZ group is the Screaming Meemees, an opinion formed earlier from a four-song EP and confirmed by their recent album, *If This Is Paradise I'll Take The Bag*, which is actually rougher-sounding than their earlier material but spotlights slabs of guitars that almost reach early-Who excitement levels at times. The first side is as raw and stirring as anyone could ask.

Other good records: The Penknife Glides *Sound of Drums* EP features a title track that's the equal of most Echo & the Bunnymen records. Danse Macabre's *Between The Lines* EP also echoes the Bunnymen, with 'Torch' and 'Conditioner' the sterling stand-outs. The Clean have a very raw single called 'Platypus' with a guitar break that crosses the Velvet Underground (apparently a big modern-day NZ influence, along with Television) with the 'Anyway Anyhow Anywhere' Who. A later 12-inch EP, *Boodle Boodle*, has a topnotch three-song side full of sprawling electric guitar riffs and interesting acoustic flavorings. (A more recent EP didn't impress me as much, and I think the Clean too are now defunct.)

Blam Blam Blam's self-titled mini-LP has the afore-praised 'Depression' and another exceptional track, 'Got To Be Guilty.' 'Walls Of Art' by the Knobz has a great chorus; and a double-album sampler with a side for each of four groups shows the *Sneaky Feelings* and *Chills* edging the interestingly named *Stones* and *Verlaines* (!) on a generally crude but promising set.

Some NZ artists could stand to be a bit less slavish in their emulation of British trends (Cure, Echo, etc.), but their innate melodicism and raw-edged guitar tendencies are to be greatly prized. I'm sure there are more great records to come. Meanwhile, if you care to open NZ lines of communication, the highly informative magazine *Rip It Up* is located at PO Box 5689, Auckland 1, New Zealand.

by Ken Barnes

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The best from MOTOWN

18 GREAT SOUL TRACKS

Temptations 'JUST MY IMAGINATION' & 'MY GIRL', Smokey Robinson & Miracles 'TEARS OF A CLOWN', Mary Wells 'MY GUY', Jimmy Ruffin 'WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKEN HEARTED', Diana Ross & the Supremes 'LOVE CHILD', Jermaine Jackson 'LET'S GET SERIOUS', Diana Ross 'UPSIDE DOWN', Marvin Gaye 'HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE' ... AND 9 MORE.



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