

It's all pretty weird, really.  
Sitting in a tent backstage at Sweetwaters, squinting through the darkness at the Psychedelic Furs (someone's trying to get the lights on). People running round, people stumbling round, people angry because they can't get interviews.  
Barely have singer Richard Butler and brother, bass player Tim, sat down, than a thoroughly drunk daily newspaper reporter grabs Tim by the shoulders and shouts "Did you hear the cricket result?" Butler mumbles something in the negative. "We BEAT THE POMS!" the reporter cheers, forgetting that Butler is a pom. And on the main stage, the Meemees thud away...  
Up close, both Butlers look surprisingly young and shy. I brace myself for the corrupt, blustering voice on the records, but when Richard speaks it is in a relatively pure tenor, with a London accent. Little brother's voice is deeper and seems to indicate a more arrogant turn of mind. They both begin very politely, shake hands weakly.

*When you began the Furs did you ever envisage finding yourself sitting in a farm on the other side of the world?*  
"No," says Richard. "It was just through boredom and frustration that we were formed. We really didn't think we'd be remotely successful."  
*When did you first think you might be on to something?*  
"When CBS decided to sign us!"  
*How do you feel about playing this kind of thing? It's not the sort of gig you usually play.*  
"It's good, it's new to us. We've only done one outdoor performance before, during the daytime, which was even weirder. We're more of a night band..."  
*Would it be true to say your latest album succeeded on a wider commercial base than the previous ones?*  
"Well, we're getting bigger in America, but I think it's more the touring we've been doing than the album."  
*Is it important to you to succeed out of Britain?*  
"We're really pleased it's happening in America, 'cause we don't give a shit about England anymore. It's pretty fucked up



Richard Butler, backstage at Sweetwaters.

## FURS THINGS FIRST

as far as music's concerned."  
*Want to name names?*  
"The whole music scene's fucked," says Tim, taking over the conversation from big brother for the first time. "One minute you walk around in Fairisle jumpers and then..."  
*Why has that happened?*  
"I don't know," says Richard, coming in again. "I think it's boredom. I think people in England are really getting bored with the whole music scene, so it takes a new haircut to get 'em interested again."  
*Why have the Furs survived then?*  
"Because we've never been a trend band."  
*And what sort of people buy Psychedelic Furs' albums?*  
"People who think about things for themselves, hopefully. I think it goes right across the board. The audience we get tends to be young kids, but we also get a lot of older people."  
*More people have bought 'Forever Now' than either of the other two. Is it your best album?*  
"I think it's the best album, yeah," he says.  
"But they're all totally different in sound, so each one is a good album in its own ways," says Tim.  
*Hay you had the success you deserve?*  
"It doesn't concern me," Richard says. "I don't think about it. We didn't start out to be successful or commercial or make

a lot of money out of it. I never stop to think 'Why aren't we making more money?'. I'm just happy making the money I am and enjoying what I'm doing. That's my idea of success."  
*OK, to put it another way, the exposure you've deserved?*  
"Yeah. If we wanted to be more commercial, we'd have been more commercial."  
*So what are the aims, if not commercial success?*  
"Just to try and carry on making music. Try and open people's heads up a bit, make them think. That's why I like using slightly oblique lyrics, because it gives the listener a chance to work in other words and meanings himself."  
*You've been accused of stealing your writing style from 'Highway 61'-period Dylan right from the start. How do you react to that?*  
"It's just a way of writing. If you write obliquely, comparisons with Dylan are easy, it could even well be said there was some Beatles there. But yeah, Dylan is an influence definitely, but I didn't ape him, I didn't sit down and say 'Yeah, I've gotta write like Bob Dylan'. It's just the way I write, it just comes out like that."  
*How do you think the Furs will be remembered in ten years time?*  
After a pause, Tim leaps in: "As being leaders in a sound which people are now starting to copy, being different, not buckling down to the pressure of what's popular."  
*How have you coped with playing the older, denser songs with the smaller band?*  
"We've rearranged a lot of them, to bring in cello and synthesiser," Richard says.  
*Has that changed the feel of the songs?*  
"Yeah. It's getting slightly orchestral these days. I mean, it's getting more orchestral."  
*In what direction are you moving musically?*  
"I don't know, it's impossible to tell. We're going to be using more instruments than ever, probably. It'd be nice to get together a real big, big band."  
*It has been said that the best way to appreciate the Furs is not to take them too seriously. True?*  
"Ummm (laughs) ... I really don't know .. yes, I think they should be. Depends on what you want to get out of them."  
*But there's obviously some tongue-in-cheek there?*  
"Oh yeah, there's quite a bit of tongue-in-cheek in everything."  
*What was the reason for your drummer, Vince Ely, leaving?*  
"He wanted to do some production work. We'd heard the Birthday Party were splitting up and I thought Phil Calvert was a pretty good drummer so I asked him to join."  
*What about your own production? Who will be doing that next album?*  
"We might be doing it ourselves. I think we've picked up enough of how to use the studio to get round it ourselves. We're hoping to get Bob Claremont in as engineer."  
*Done any recording lately?*  
"Just demos."  
*How's the band's confidence at the moment?*  
"We've always been confident, because we believe in what we're doing and we know what we're doing's good."  
*How good?*  
"Oh, we're great, we're the best."  
"How good a writer are you?"  
Russell Brown

## In Christchurch?...

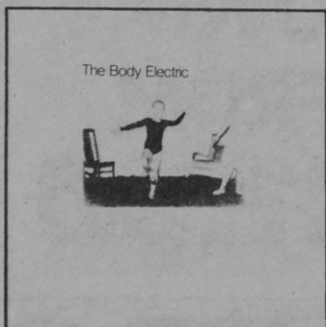
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## SUMMER TOUR 1983

### FEBRUARY

Mon 21 Feb	DB Rutherford, Nelson
Wed, Thurs 23-24	Capt. Cook, Dunedin
Fri 25 Feb	Otago University
Sat 26 Feb	Waikiwi Tavern, Invercargill
Mon 28 Feb	Terminus Hotel, Timaru

### MARCH

Tues, Wed 1,2	Star & Garter, Christchurch
Wed 2 March	Lunchtime Concert, Lincoln College
Thurs 3 March	Canterbury University
Fri, Sat 4,5 March	Post Office Hotel, Motueka
Sun 6 March	Outdoor Concert, Nelson Domain
Mon 7 March	Massey University, Palmerston North
Tues 8 March	Onekawa Hotel, Napier
Wed 9 March	New Wairoa Hotel, Wairoa
Thurs 10 March	Albion Club Hotel, Gisborne
Fri 11 March	Waikato University
Sat 12 March	Auckland University
Wed 16	Greerton Tauranga
Thurs 17	Junction Hotel, Thames
Fri 18, Sat 19	A Certain Bar, Auck.

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