

Things are getting serious for Blond Comedy, and they know it. Up until recently the band has had a low-key approach, playing a lot of support gigs, aiming not to lose money. But now, with the second single of their Mushroom Records contract due out soon, the band is gearing up for bigger things.

"We're consciously working on actual songwriting skills," says bassist Dave. "The actual structuring of songs. If you're not born brilliant it takes years to learn."

Criteria for songs have been tightened and if everyone in the band is not happy with a song it will be changed or thrown out.

"We've written heaps of songs in the last few months that have never made an audience's ears," explains guitarist Damian.

"And it might reach an audience once and the next time be totally different," Dave adds.

Blond Comedy: rear, Tony, Damian, Gregg. Front, Dave, Hugh.



Lyrics are also scrutinised carefully and the whole band is involved in putting them together so there can be no complaints.

The band recently had its first taste of songwriting in a new environment, the recording studio. The result of sessions at Azimuth Studios is to be their new single. At the time of writing it is unfinished and untitled, but the

band is enthusiastic about it.

"It sounds like it's going to be the best thing we've done so far," says soundman Gregg.

The band's contract, the standard Mushroom document, provides for two singles and an album a year. They hope the new record will be out more quickly than their first for the label, 'Rebecca', which took eight

months to be released.

But there's also the live aspect. "We're just starting to get back into live gigs," Dave explains. They've been trying to avoid getting "worn out" like some local bands he says.

"Guys get put out there on the road to earn money for someone else," comments Gregg. "New Zealand bands are worth more than that."

They recognise the need to tour, but they'll be doing it carefully. No rushing all over the country to unprofitable gigs.

"We'd rather concentrate on the music than how much in debt we are," Dave explains.

They believe Gregg's services will be invaluable here, because he has been with the core of members through several bands and understands the music. His ties with the band are unusually close for a soundman. He is a royalty-earning member and appears in band photographs.

Blond Comedy have their sights set firmly on the international market. Unlike stablemates Dance Exponents, they want to head for the USA, rather than Australia, when they're ready.

"From what I can see, in the next three or four years, New Zealand band are going to be able to break straight into Europe," Gregg says.

"But we don't want to go there half-cocked," he says. "We want to go out and make money and be value for money."

Russell Brown

## 'BURNING AMBITIONS'

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UK Subs (who I wouldn't have on any compilation of mine) and Flares and Slippers' by Cockney Rejects.

Although not strictly part of the punk phenomenon, the Saints and the Heartbreakers have been included as a mark of respect. The 101ers are here too, but strictly in lieu of the Clash.

The last part of the record is mainly new punk and the feel is definitely different. The music is deliberately ugly and all about disillusionment with the world. That doesn't excuse the cliché-ridden uniformity of a lot of it. There seem to be too many rules about what "real punks" should wear and what "real punk" should sound like. The Exploited are far nastier than the Pistols ever were but they and their fans are also boring and predictable. Still, some of what's here more than compares with the rest of the record, like 'Last Rockers' by Vice Squad. 'Complete Disorder' by Disorder sounds like the Pistols on acid and breaks a few rules. The record closes nicely with the Angelic Upstarts' football-chorus 'Lust for Glory'.

This record isn't definitive, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Jam, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Stiff Little Fingers either couldn't (because of existing contracts) or wouldn't contribute. And the arguments about who should and shouldn't have been on and which songs should have been chosen to

represent various bands could go on forever.

For me, this is the music that got me interested in music and it still sounds great. As for it being dead, no, I don't think so.

Russell Brown



## Penknife Glides

Live Drums (Ima Hitt C60)

Recorded in March '82, this is a tasty, well put together set that shows the Glides had more than dress sense.

Taking the Weight Off' and 'Pleasure Through Tears' come through the usual live recording problems to sound better than the studio versions, but 'Sound of Drums' and 'Fewer Than You' aren't improved on.

Towards the end of their career the Glides were moving in the right direction. This is exemplified on 'Speak Action', which is bloody great and 'Silhouettes'. So if you loved or merely liked Penknife Glides, send your \$7.50 to Ima Hitt, PO Box 407 New Plymouth, you won't be disappointed. If this sort of thing catches on perhaps more live tapes of late, lamented NZ bands will see the light of day. Anyone out there sitting on any live Swingers tapes? Alistair Cain

## 'THE WHO' FROM PAGE 2

figured it out for himself and taken a stance that he doesn't want that to happen to him.

"I'd found the Jam a very hard band to feel warm towards before, but when I saw them live I was really knocked out by the amount of warmth I felt. I do think they're motivated in the right way and are making the right decision, I really do. They are stopping while they're ahead, I think Paul Weller is playing

his cards right.

"But I'll tell you this, he's made hundreds of thousands of young Jam fans desperately unhappy and that is something we've put off for years and years, breaking that link that exists between you and the fans. You live off them, for Christ's sakes. You end up feeling you owe them something."

Kerry Doole

## TALK TALK

Talk Talk. Mark Hollis at right.



A London four piece formed around singer-songwriter Mark Hollis (younger brother of producer Ed - check out those Eddie and the Hot Rods records), Talk Talk

have, it seems, emerged clutching the coat-tails of the Duran Duran-Human League synth dance movement. Their breaks, as Hollis explains from London, have come easy:

"I've never been in any bands before. I went into Island Music, who's our publishing company, with the sole purpose of recording a few songs and during that week I assembled a band to play the songs. I concluded a publishing deal and we used that money to subsidise us for the six months during which we arranged the songs before we went out and played. We were very methodical and luckily for us after three gigs we did a Radio One session and because of that two gigs later we signed our record deal."

Easy, no truckin' no dues paying, but what's this about the band having no guitarist?

"The idea of that was to enable us to work along the same lines as a small jazz unit so that the rhy-

thm section could be rhythmic and melodic and the keyboards would backdrop the sound and the vocal could, to some extent, assume the same role as saxophone could in terms of Coltrane. So the lyrics would have to be phonetically important as well as lyrical."

Ambitious stuff for a band who have been compared to no lesser mortals than Duran Duran. Are those comparisons fair?

"There is a tendency to categorise everything. I can't see the comparisons as we're very different lyrically and in mood. The only similarities are that we're both contemporary English bands and a reasonable amount of material evolves around dance music rhythms."

Does he like Duran Duran?

"Yeah, I think they're a really good band in terms of what they do."

Talk Talk have also been accused of being soporific and superficial in their approach. Response?

"I just think that's totally absurd. The amount of care and time I put into writing lyrics and the amount of involvement I put into the band you've no idea. I've no opinion about that whatsoever except that they're wrong."

The Party's Over is no great shakes but it does have its moments of melodic appeal, the title track and 'Hate' in particular. Hollis is happy with the album:

"It showed us at that stage. Musically I admire people like Bowie because of his progression

and change and so in terms of our second album which we're in the midst of recording now, I feel we're achieving that. Half of our new material is geared from a piano basis and then we add synths and other things. I certainly don't want to make a carbon copy of the first album and that's why we have Rhett Davies producing and also because I've admired his work with Roxy Music, B52s and Dire Straits."

Any immediately available new material?

"We have a new single, 'My Foolish Friend', produced by Rhett Davies which is in the charts at 58 this week. It's on the way up hopefully."

George Kay

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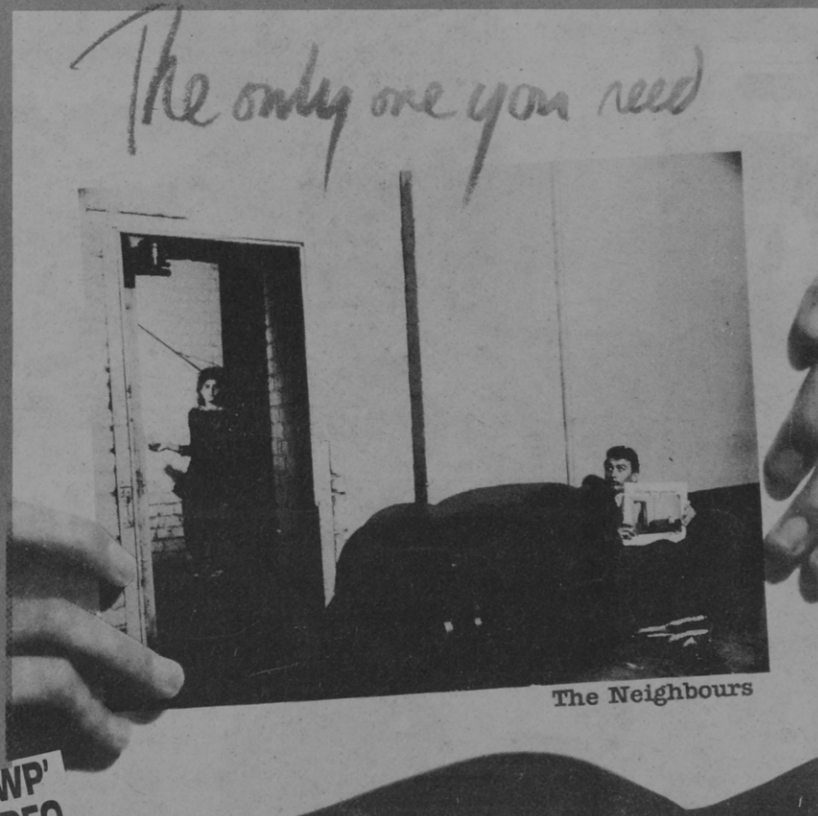
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