

Tony Goth, Norm Dillinger, the Henchmen.



## HENCHMEN WE'VE COME TO PLAY

Popular music has developed certain traditions, certain faiths which are kept through the years by successive groups of youths. England's long-running Northern Soul scene is one example. And there have always been fervent cores of mods and rockabillies whose ranks periodically swell and then wane.

And then there's the Detroit Legacy. If you didn't know Detroit was the city that in the late 60s gave us, among others, the MC5 and the quite incomparable Stooges. This legacy is unconcerned with sartorial style — it concentrates on the raw rock 'n' roll that those bands played. There's been a traceable line of groups keeping the faith — more obvious examples have been Australia's Radio Birdman and the Saints.

While Radio Birdman dedicated records to the Stooges, Auckland's Henchmen dedicated their last single, 'Do the Maelstrom' to Radio Birdman.

"We empathise with them, with all the shit they went through," explains singer Tony Goth.

Goth and his fellow core member, guitarist Norm Dillinger, have been through their share of ups and downs too.

The group began life as the Dum Dum Boys, playing a few Ramones and Stooges' covers as well as originals. After co-opting in a few other musicians they played in the 1980 Battle of the Bands at the Windsor Castle. They were voted the worst band to appear and told never to come back by the judges.

"But it was the judges who didn't like us," smiles Goth. "We got quite a reaction from some of the crowd."

Since then there has been a succession of drummers and bass players playing with the pair. They often seemed to leave at vital moments and Dillinger had to play bass on the Dum Dum Boys' album *Let There Be Noise*. So why don't the musicians stay?

"Usually they can't handle the total commitment," says Goth. "I think it's just the New Zealand thing. Two years is about as long as a band lasts."

"I don't like Split Enz but I admire the way they've stayed together and done what they wanted. They're the only band in this country that has," adds Dillinger.

That first album was quite a remarkable effort. Manager Robyn Vamp and Goth and Dillinger had to sell virtually all their household effects — fridge, vacuum cleaner, etc — to pay for it. It has sold about 800 copies through mail order, shops and even street selling. After two years they have just got another fridge but they're still living without many home comforts.

The name change to the Henchmen was made last year with the

release of a cover of Iggy's 'I Got A Right'. Since then there's been 'Maelstrom' and now a new album, *We've Come to Play*, recorded this time at Progressive.

"We wanted a very raw, live sound, which is why we went to Progressive," Goth explains. "At Harlequin they like to clean up anything that sounds the least bit raw and we wanted something that sounded live. And also it's too expensive."

Like all their records, this one will be paid for and distributed by the band. They also book all their own gigs, often in hired halls.

"That way we get 100 per cent," Goth explains. "We don't believe in some clown getting 15 per cent for doing nothing."

They now have record outlets around this country and in Australia and are looking at distribution in America and Europe.

For all that the Henchmen are unable to get weekend spots at most established venues and haven't been able to talk *Radio With Pictures* into doing a video.

"They've been putting us off for the last two years," says Norm. "The usual excuse is that they're not filming any New Zealand bands at the time."

Although they draw a viable crowd whenever they do play, the Henchmen don't plan to keep on knocking their heads against the wall in this country. Goth, Dillinger and Vamp (they've just lost another drummer and bass player) will be heading for Australia next year. They've applied for an Arts Council grant and would like to do some more recording before they leave. But why the brick-wall attitudes that have made the decision to shift necessary?

"Because we don't compromise," Goth says firmly. "We're not willing to sell out to any musical trend."

And so they remain steadfastly determined to plough their own furrow which is now influenced, they say, by the Doors and Pink Fairies too. In their talk they're dismissive of other kinds of music but maybe that's part of the package. Their self-belief is exceptional.

As Goth puts it: "This band is a lifetime thing."

Russell Brown

## Letters

Post to 'RIU' Letters, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1.



Andrew Fagan in full flight, Mainstreet.

### Genius in Furs?

Having conversed at length with the "man in the pink fur suit" I feel suitably well informed to speak in his defence. Since the inception of his career Mr Fagan's philosophical approach to his profession has been "self effacement/ to make a fool of oneself." This approach is derived from his disrespect for both the press and public alike.

In his own words: "The majority of gig-goers are spiritless sheep, fuelled by the Friday night fuck ... I give them something to abuse ... they love to abuse."

In the context of this philosophy those who bite at Mr Fagan's frolics are the biggest suckers of all, Russell Brown included, for to state in a derogatory manner that "Fagan makes a fool of himself toying with images" is to merely state the obvious! Bravo to you Mr Fagan! I trust that you will always remain one step ahead of the multitude!

Davilion the Morocaf

Sweetwaters Dry

This year's Sweetwaters is going

to be a big fuckup. Apart from the increase in ticket cost (does this defy the price freeze?) the idea of a no booze festival is going to practically ruin a three day field of entertainment. People will just not go. Previous years have seen as much booze as you could imagine without much trouble apart from the exaggeration of the media. Who makes the excess profits they intend to sell at inflated prices at the festival? It's just a big con. You don't bring your beer in, you buy our beer, we make lots of money.

Annual Sweetwaters Goer

There was a lot of disgusting behaviour at last year's festival but it was more due to boneheaded male sexual inadequacy than to alcohol. Putting the only permitted drinking area out of sight of the main stage encourages these people.

RB

### Radio Radio

Today I think I found heaven in the lounge sipping gin and orange, listening to Naked Spots Dance and watching *Sesame St* with the sound off.

Tonight I think I found hell! 12M and no Barry Jenkin. What's going on? Someone better do something about this!

Jaz the Cat Parnell

### Another Angry Fan

While reading the seemingly good article entitled *Dance Exponents — Airway Spies to Railway Pies*, I was disappointed to read the paragraph that mentioned giving their songs to Auckland Walk that are "dirgey and have no melody."

How tacky can you get? That's a really low thing to say, even if it was just a joke. Poor Auckland Walk. They slave and slog away to win the B.O.T.Bs and then someone comes up and slaps them in the face. It is obvious that Dance Exponents are suffering from water on the brain which no doubt developed after their ill-fated swim across the Tasman.

Bop-a-la-la New Plymouth

What I want to know is why we get so many letters from New Plymouth?

RB

### So What?

I'm in New Plymouth. Love. P-tah McFartfart New Plymouth See?

### Coca Coola

Chris Sheehan, what gives you the right to run down Roca Coca in the Dance Exponents interview in the last issue of *RIU*? Fuck, you've only been in the band a few weeks. You've had it handed to you on a plate. Sure, Roca Coca aren't the best band in the land but they're trying hard and in my opinion comments like yours aren't helping them one bit.

An Angry Cocas Fan Christchurch

### A Letter About the Real World for A Change

I totally reject the Animals Protection Amendment Bill. It will do nothing to alleviate the suffering of laboratory animals and will simply reinforce the status quo. I demand that the Government produces more legislation that will both control the animals' suffering and reduce the number of animals used.

Janine Townshend Christchurch

### Hit the Bleach

I'm afraid my heart no longer springs to my throat at the mention of Jordan Luck. I can still get orgasmic pleasure from old photos and his oh-so-sexy voice on 'Victoria' but his new surfer haircut chills me to the bone.

(Frustrated) Fanny

Don't tell me, you're from New Plymouth too, right?

RB

### Those Awards

Marginal Era's 'This Heaven' was not only one of the best singles this year but it also had an amazingly good video to accompany it. What recognition did it get? Shit all! Makes 'Sierra Leone' look like the Narcs' abortion at Devonport.

Another single/video combination that went unnoticed was Unrestful Movements' 'Anti Trend'. The NZ Music Back-awards seemed to be chosen more for commercial success than anything else. MOST of the best NZ music lives underground.

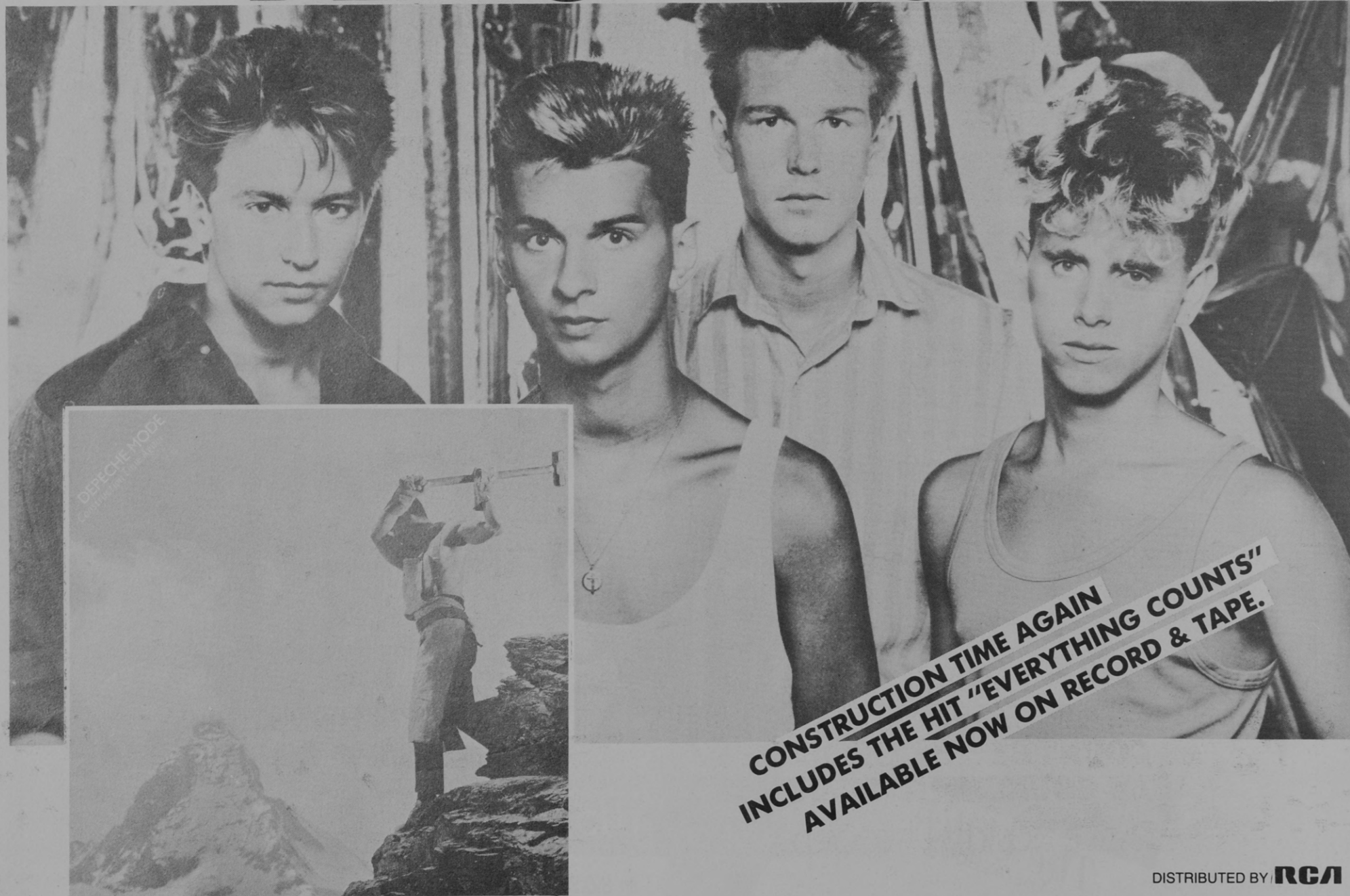
Eggcrate Brothers Murrays Bay

### A Compliment

I think the Car Crash Set really have a great little song with 'Those Days'. It's pleasant, to the point and doesn't get up my left nostril like 'Imagination' does.

Car Crash Victim Hamilton

# DEPECHE MODE



CONSTRUCTION TIME AGAIN  
INCLUDES THE HIT "EVERYTHING COUNTS"  
AVAILABLE NOW ON RECORD & TAPE.

DISTRIBUTED BY RCA