

S i m p l e M i n d s

it's myself, or what I want to express.

"The character in the song could be 100 percent me or 10 percent. There's a couple of rough characters in this record, in songs like 'Criminal World' and 'This Time', unloving characters I don't think are me, but are maybe part of me. On 'Hypnotised' the bass drive was very hypnotic. It has a great sense of longing on it and something fatal — edgy."

Very New Gold Dream-ish?

"Yeah, very Roxy Music. It's funny, but we're in Paris just now and Bryan Ferry played last night. I didn't see him 'cause I was working, but a couple of people have said 'Hypnotised' is the perfect Roxy Music song they didn't write. It's due for a remix as a single and I think it's gonna be really big. The man that has to do it is Brian Eno or some of those guys that did *Avalon*."

The Virgin press people stressed there were to be no questions on Patsy Kensit, but to what extent does your personal life impact on your music?

"Was it Mick Jagger who said domesticity is the enemy of the artist? I could see how that could come to be the case. When you're 19 or 20, the band is the only thing in your life, so you put 100 percent concentration into it. Then, when the band becomes a business, that takes 15 percent of your time away. Then, if you've got a wife or family, that takes away another 15 percent. Take away 10, because you're a rich slob anyway, and you're down to 60 percent. The trick is to organise it. Charlie and me disappear to the studio Monday to Friday — it's a domestic set up there. It also happens that both my ex-wife and my current wife lead very busy lives of their own, in terms of their jobs."

"My life is very much on the run, and split and moving around. If my family is on a movie set, it could be anywhere, as they were in Australia last year and Canada at the moment. Last year was Patsy's busiest year. There are real challenges as these enforced separations can cause a lot of problems. We were laughing and talking about it with a couple last week and they said: 'Listen, we see each other every day, and we're continually fighting [laughs].'"

Back to the album, why didn't you release it for the Christmas rush?

"On the one hand, Christmas is great, in that it's the busiest time for the record industry. But there's also a lot of

competition, so why make it harder for ourselves? I think the record's good enough. It's not going to go mouldy in six months and we need the help to make it in places like America, where you're fighting for radio and in-store attention — it's a mad house. So I think, let it come, so we can shine like a diamond in the new year."

Whose idea was it for the delayed release — yours or management?

"I had the suitcase in the hallway waiting for the taxi, so at first I took it badly and I thought: 'Aw, fuck.' But then Charlie and I started writing songs for the new album, whenever that comes. So the decision's been made now, and the rest is up to how the experts want to put it across. But we'll be touring the record. It won't be extensive, as we want to get out of the album every three or four years rut, but we'll be coming down your way."

You've said that coming off a tour is like cold turkey.

"I think you're mad and moody for about six weeks, like some anorexic model. You find it hard to settle again. When you're touring, the oxygen is thin, and there's a whole camaraderie and bond, not only with the people on stage, but the people next to you. There's also something cold hearted about touring, because for a year you don't have a problem and, if you do, someone's gonna sort it out for you. You get back home and the washing machine door doesn't work, and it's like a fucking major trauma."

Then there's stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens...

"They say the whole thing went back to the early blues guys, to keep up with travelling and fight fatigue. Then, of course, it became de rigueur. I've noticed, when we're tour-

ing, there's two types of people. There's one type that's determined to get extremely fucked up and see you at the other side, and there's another lot that are walking around rattling with vitamins and going to gyms everywhere [laughs]."

The Proclaimers were like that. Their idea of a wild time was jogging around the hills of Dunedin.

"I know wee Stuart, their guitar player and band leader, and I've never seen anyone drink like this guy. He's working with the Proclaimers, so he's at a bit of a loose end."

"I like three nights of one and three nights of the other. If I have a really late night, by the fourth song the next night on stage, I'm really struggling. I'm the dying Scotsman. Yet Charlie Burchill's got the constitution of a pit bull. He doesn't even get a hangover and, if he does, he enjoys them."

Do you still get sick before you go onstage?

"I get nervous in a much more pleasant way. It used to cause me misery before, and the wee clubs were the worst. The big ones make it easier, as there's thousands, and half of them have decided they like you before you've even played a note. In the wee ones, you're going into foreign territory, with people seeing you for the first time, and you may be incidental, so you really had to prove it."

And you still don't believe in the razzamatazz that surrounds so many 'stars' in rock 'n' roll?

"That's right, we don't. Some of the Virgin people have just come off a year working with Janet Jackson and they haven't knocked her, but when I hear about these people... get a life."

It's showbiz Jim.

"It'll end in tears."

GEORGE KAY

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