

this century. But, at the same time, now we are very modern and very high tech' and quite rich country. [London] is a cosmopolitan city, one of the four or five biggest cities in the world or something. In Reykjavik there lives 100,000 people. In a way, it couldn't be more opposite.

"Even though I had been here a lot before I moved, and I knew London quite well, it was still a shock because, just leaving all your friends behind and... this country is so reserved, and I'm very used to over emotional communication, where people just let it all out, all day long. But I learned to appreciate it, and I take it for what it is. A year later or so, or especially now, two years later, I'm very happy here."

I figured she must have her own postage stamp in Iceland, where one magazine named her Woman of the Year for her international achievements. But, despite the obvious differences in the two countries' sizes and cultures, Björk hasn't found her move has made a difference to her celebrity status.

the vocals on a beach in the Bahamas, and one of the tracks ('Cover Me') was originally recorded in a cave, amidst a bunch of bats. Collaborators include Nellee Hooper, Graham Massey of 808 State, Scottish DJ/producer Howie B and Tricky. Hooper (who produced *Debut*) initially refused Björk's request for him to rejoin her as producer, saying she was capable of doing it on her own.

"I think he was more saying that as an advice, and he was being a friend," says Björk. "But I don't think I was completely ready. I was very close to it, and the six songs on the album I did with him, I did mostly on my own, with sort of comments from him. It was very good to have him there, like a safety net, but I think the next album I will be braver."

The variety of collaborators on *Post* results in an understandably wide variety of styles: from techno to big band, and Latin to ambient, there are few stones left unturned.

"One of my favourite things is collaboration and working with all sort of different people. I

listening to the irritating noises of dinosaurs and people, dabbling outside...' — Björk.

"Oh, I love modern things," Björk gushes. "I mean, telephones, synthesisers, Walkman, helicopters, I think are excellent, submarines. I love all these things."

A modern myth and a modern fable are also included on the album. The former is the upcoming single 'Isobel', for which a video has just been completed. When Björk tells me the story of this song, it's easy to imagine what it must be like to be her nine year old son Sindri, when it becomes time for a bedtime story.

"Isobel' is a story where I decided to make a story of a myth. In the same way as Atlas is like the strong guy in Greek mythology, and Neptune is like the god of the

lover, because it's very precious to them and they don't know if they are ever gonna fall in love again. After three years or so, they realise they have kind of like collected a lot of angry things, so they have to go somewhere and get rid of them to be able to come back home and continue to be all sweet and nice."

'We live on a mountain, right at the top...



"[England] is so reserved, and I'm very used to over emotional communication, where people just let it all out, all day long."

"I think, because Iceland is such a small town, people don't get over the top about people that are famous. I mean, being a star in Iceland doesn't really work [laughs], because you're gonna see them every day, walking down the main street, kind of like fall on their bottom, you know, or in the shop, or in the bus.

"In Iceland I get stopped several times a day to chat with people. Everybody behaves to me like they know me, like I'm their best friend, and I look at them and I've never met them before. That's something I've lived with in Iceland since I was 11. Most people mean very well, and you just learn to deal with it. When I moved over to England it was the same thing. So it wasn't a big shock or anything, the big success with [*Debut*]. It wasn't like I got identity problem or anything, because it was just a continuity for me. It sounds very big headed, but it just seems to be the same sort of proportion in Iceland that it is now in England.

"If I want to be left alone, that's very easy. I mean, I go to the local corner shop, and because I'm there every day, it's like stupid. The people there wouldn't just ask me for an autograph every day. I just get normal treatment from most people."

The recent release of Björk's new album *Post* and single 'Army of Me' has propelled her even further into the spotlight. She recorded

get a lot of kick out of that. No two collaborations are the same. I've been a singer, I've been a songwriter, I've been a producer, I've done films, I've done jazz music, punk music, you name it really. Probably my biggest fault, and also my biggest quality at the same time, is that I really get very easily bored, so I have to keep changing. So it suits me really well to work with a lot of different people.

"So, for example, when I work with Nellee Hooper, I'm missing a songwriter. When I work with Graham Massey, we are kinda more equal. I think when you get a good relationship with a person, it's not just me and Tricky, maybe, doing a song together. It's like a third thing is supposed to come in as well, and that's the best bit. So it's not just me plus Tricky is like one plus one is two. It's more like one plus one is three."

Post's subject matter ranges from flat-out fun to soul-stripped honesty, painting a satisfyingly complex portrait of its creator. The most obvious joke is 'Modern Things', a response to people always whining about how things were so much better in the 'good old days'. Björk disagrees, hence the album contains an ode penned in support of modern things.

'All the modern things, like cars and such, have always existed / They've just been waiting, in a mountain, for the right moment / And

ocean, I wanted to write a story about the goddess of intuition. Basically, she's born in a forest from a spark. As she grows up, she realises the pebbles on the forest floor are actually baby skyscrapers. So, when she grows up, these skyscrapers grow up as well, and when she's fully grown woman, she finds herself in the middle of a city full of grown up clever people. She's just kind of pure instinct and impulse, intuition. That sort of crashes with all the clever people around her. So, she decides to isolate herself, and that's why I call her *Isobel*, because it's isolated."

'My name Isobel, married to myself / My love Isobel, living by herself...' — Björk.

"Still thinking she's right, she decides to train a lot of moths. She sends them outside of her window to the whole world, and they fly outside the window of people who are too clever, and they confuse them by saying: 'Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah.' And people go: 'Oops, oh, oh I'm so sorry,' and they click back into their intuition."

The fable, 'Hyperballad', is less fanciful, having sprung from Björk's observations of other people's relationships.

"I've noticed that most of my friends, after three years of relationship with a person, they realise that because they are in love, they only show what they think is their best side to their

Every morning, I walk towards the edge, and throw little things off / Like car parts, bottles and cutlery, or whatever I find lying around / It's become a habit, a way to start the day...' — Björk.

"I don't look at it as insincere, or bad, or evil or anything. I just think it's very human."

Björk once said she has been striving towards creating the perfect song since she was about 11, and she expects it will turn up when she's an old granny. Does that attitude put a lot of pressure on the journey to that song?

"No, it's just a question to have target in your life, and trying to learn as much as you can to prepare yourself for that moment, so when that moment arrives you are capable. I look at it like my duty, because you are born in this world and you get a lot of presents along the way. Most of them are probably experiences that you get offered to take a part in. I really like that. Moving over to England, and meeting so many people I can work with, is really a privilege for me. I'm just trying to learn as much as I can before that moment pops up, so I'll be as ready as possible."

And how does Björk think she'll know when she has found that elusive song?

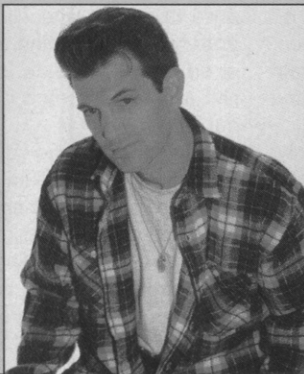
"I dunno," she says. "I'll probably just explode and die or something."

BROWNWYN TRUDGEON



Chris Isaak Forever Blue

California's favourite balladeer and the man who brought us the haunting "Wicked Game" returns with a compelling collection of new songs. And what's more for the first time Chris Isaak will be delivering them personally to New Zealand ears and hearts with two sure-to-be sellout shows in July. The first single "Somebody's Crying" is already a favourite at radio - check out the accompanying video which reflects Chris Isaak's love of surfing.



Buy "Forever Blue" from the music retailers listed below and go into the draw to win 1 of 25 tickets to either show:

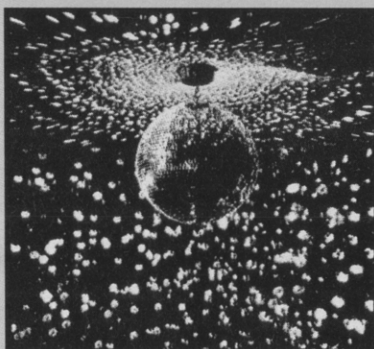
Auckland July 20th – Logan Campbell Centre

Wellington July 21st – Town Hall.

Available at: Truetone, Sounds, Marbecks, Real Groovy, Compact Disc Shop, Music Plus, Tower & Tandys.

Batman Forever Movie Soundtrack

The opening weekend for the Batman Forever movie set an all-time box office record of US \$52.7 million eclipsing the record set by "Jurassic Park" and the album is set to do similar business for the music industry fuelled by the sensational new single from U2 "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me". This unique soundtrack contains new music from the cream of today's recording artists: PJ Harvey, Brandy, Seal, Massive Attack, Eddi Reader, Mazzy Star, The Offspring, Nick Cave, Method Man, Michael Hutchence, The Delvins, Sunny Day Real Estate and the Flaming Lips.



Neil Young Mirror Ball

Coming in July a devastating new album from Neil Young and "You Know Who"... and yes... it really rocks! It's called Mirror Ball but it ain't no disco! Guess the backing band – win a pie!



Hootie & The Blowfish Cracked Rear View

Who are Hootie & The Blowfish? The quiet achievers of the music business crept up to #1 on the US charts recently and stayed there for an astonishing 4 weeks. The singles "Hold My Hand" and "Let Her Cry" are now amongst the most played at radio in America and New Zealand. If you like music packed with great hooks and melodies ask your music retailer for a listen.

