



DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX'S

From an instrumental only band, playing at parties and low key pub gigs, the Cruel Sea, with the addition of legendary frontman Tex Perkins, have developed over three albums and through extensive touring into one of Australia's biggest bands. 1993's *The Honeymoon Is Over* album scooped the pool at the 1994 ARIA awards. But with the success came problems: the ARIA night ended with Tex bottling a man fighting with his girlfriend, there were stories of drug problems,

and guitarist James Cruikshank had a head-on collision with a truck, which put him out of action for some months (there was a stand-in guitarist with the band when they played the first *Big Day Out* here last year).

Late last year, the band entered the studio with no songs prepared (and not knowing where any were going to come from) and, luckily for them and us, emerged with their fine new album, *Three Legged Dog*.

Over the phone from Sydney, Tex Perkins sounds like a man who has been working very

"The worst year of our life's been going on for a couple of years."

hard for some months promoting a new album. This year, the band has already been to Europe, the US, and just completed a seven-week tour of Australia. When I talked to Tex, he had just a couple of shows to go before two shows in New Zealand at the end of July.

"That's it for touring for a little while — have a bit of a rest."

So, *Three Legged Dog* came together in the studio?

"When we first were in the studio together, we didn't really intend to be making a record. We were just going to work up songs, but do it in a studio. If we didn't come up with anything, there was no actual pressure. We weren't actually supposed to be making a record at that stage. We were just... getting together in a studio, but a lot of the record was created from those initial sessions."

Did approaching it that way make for a different sounding album?

"Yeah. The other records, a lot of it was written before we got in the studio, by writers in the band. This record was much more of a band writing together in the studio."

Longtime Cruel Sea producer Tony Cohen said in *Rolling Stone* that *The Honeymoon Is Over* "was done for a reason and it worked, it got them on the radio".

"Yeah, well that's the way he sees it, I guess. It's true that we were making a pop record with an attitude of clarity and economy with song structure... but that's just because we wanted to do that, and we hadn't done that before as a... concept. Now that we have done that, it's not necessary to do that again. Without being 'concept' albums, we do have concepts when go to make a record. We try to have a consistent attitude throughout — even if that attitude is complete chaos, or lack of care."

Does the success of bands like the Cruel Sea, coupled with people like Barnsey going bankrupt, signal a change in Australian music, the end of Oz Rock?

"Oh, certainly. More a case of things like You Am I and Silverchair, more becoming controlled by the kids again. Whether that's a good thing or a bad thing is up to the individual. It's about time major popular music was-

n't made by someone in their late 30s or early 40s. I think it's pretty cool that it's being made by teenagers again." Then he adds, laughing: "Of course, I'm not talking about myself."

But your music is an example of a band just doing their own thing well and the public finding it.

"We're not representative of any sort of cultural movement or anything like, say, Silverchair. I don't particularly understand our success. We never have been at a point where we've been fashionable. We've only become fashionable unto ourselves, really. You can do anything, so long as it's good... or good enough."

The band had an unpleasant experience doing some soundtrack material for Aussie cop show *Blue Heelers*.

"Personally, I had nothing to do with that. I saw that to be a complete fuckhole thing to do right from the very start, and I completely washed my hands from the very start. It was also a really fucked thing our fuckin' publisher did. He gave the music of *Honeymoon Is Over*, without the vocals, to them without our consent, which is a fuckin' outrageous thing. It got to air... and I tore somebody's head off, and it was off after a few episodes."

The band have described the time leading up to *Three Legged Dog* as 'the worst year of our lives'.

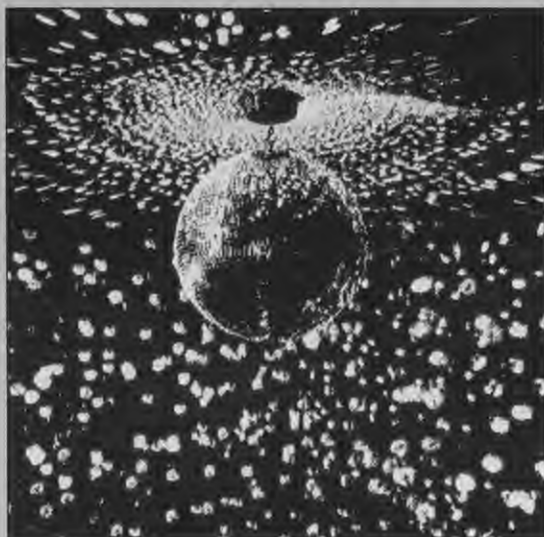
"We have lots of worst years of our lives," he laughs. "The worst year of our life's been going on for a couple of years."

Is this one going alright?

"Yeah... no... this year's been hard work, really. Lots of touring, lots of travelling overseas... actually, that was last year as well. The bad year was when James had his accident, lots of illness in the band — on many levels. When all our superficial newspaper success was going on, we were all personally fucked up, in all sorts of ways..." He trails off. "Oh... that'll do."

I guess it will. Despite whatever went into the making of it, *Three Legged Dog* shows a band still at their best. It's an advance and a consolidation of what they do. Guitarist Dan Rumour calls it "a distillation". Whatever, it'll do.

JONATHAN KING



Neil Young Mirror Ball

Mirror Ball is the monster new album from Neil Young. Recorded in Seattle, *Mirror Ball* is a devastating guitar album that displays Young in all his ragged sonic glory.

"By the end of *Mirror Ball* you feel privileged Young deigned to release these Seattle sessions at all.

Truly he stands alone."

(9) *New Musical Express* June 24 1995

Herbs French Letter

In response to the French Government's decision to resume nuclear testing in the Pacific, Herbs have recorded and released a new version of their classic single 'French Letter'. A large number of people donated their time to produce the single and its accompanying video, and all buyers of the sweet sounding reggae track will receive a free postcard addressed to President Jacques Chirac, to record a personal protest in opposition to the resumption of testing at Mururoa Atoll.



ALANIS MORISSETTE JAGGED LITTLE PILL

From Madonna's Maverick label comes 20 year old Alanis Morissette,

a soulful sounding Canadian, now resident in LA. Her debut album, *Jagged Little Pill*, showcases a mature and powerful soul voice that belies her age, and features an excellent range of lusty ballads and jazzy pop tracks. Must hears include 'Wake Up', 'Hand In My Pocket', and the wicked first single 'You Oughta Know'.



TIGERLILY NATALIE MERCHANT TIGERLILY

With her debut solo album *Tigerlily*, former 10,000 Maniacs singer-songwriter, Natalie Merchant has delivered a stun-

ningly beautiful collection of folk-flavoured pop songs. Expanding on her lengthy career with the Maniacs, Merchant assumed full control for the recording and sound of *Tigerlily*, ensuring a masterful selection of exquisite ballads and dreamy melodic pop. Check out 'I May Know The World', 'Wonder', and the awesome first single 'Carnival'.



THE TRIP 5

NZ's premier alternative compilation is back! Check out this line-up... Green Day, Bush, R.E.M., Collective Soul, Stillskin, Letters To Cleo, Juliana Hatfield, The Cult, Faith No More,

Grant Lee Buffalo, Jan Hellriegel, Filter, Royal Trux, You Am I and more! Instores August 12. Buy the album and go in the draw to win 1 of 2 'Town & Country' snowboards, value \$1,500 or 1 of 3 'Town & Country' clothing packages worth \$600. Details from your music store.