

commit to an international release, the band would have other options.

Salty was released in New Zealand and Australia by EMI-owned label Virgin, in April 1994. Five months later, Robert Brookes, the head of the A&R (artist and repertoire) division of EMI Canada, visited New Zealand to attend a label conference, saw the Mutton Birds live, and returned home to convince his superiors to release the album. After a year of negotiations, *Salty* was delivered to the Canadian market on September 20, 1995.

"Getting a release overseas is largely about gaining a champion in a record company organisation. If you have no champion you've got more of an uphill battle. In Canada we have four or five champions."

EMI Canada's deal with the band gives the label the option to release another album, and with current sales in the region in excess of 12,000 copies, that looks likely.

In early August the Mutton Birds arrived in London, after touring throughout Canada, while negotiations to release the album in the UK and Europe were continuing. The band set about building a profile through live gigs and media coverage, and played several festivals including *Glastonbury* and *T in the Park* in Glasgow. They picked up airplay on Greater London Radio, and performed live-to-air on Radio One. But their biggest break by far came when an MTV Europe programmer attended

one of the first London gigs.

"They were then selected for MTV's *Most Wanted*, which is their highest rating show. The band goes on and performs several tracks live to 48 million people in Europe. That kick started a lot of things in terms of public response, that otherwise would have been quite difficult to achieve."

On September 5, Virgin Records released the album *Nature* (selected tracks from *Mutton Birds* and *Salty*) simultaneously in the UK and 16 major territories throughout Europe. At present the Mutton Birds are winding their way through Europe accompanied by Keighley, who is also negotiating a North American release for the band in March 1996.

FREQUENT FLYING MILES

Flying Nun is the only local independent label to have every one of their artists released overseas. All bands or solo performers (except Baiter Space) are signed to the label for the world, meaning, they can't independently seek distribution with an overseas label. The way Flying Nun gets the sound out there is through licensing releases to other independents, or by exporting product.

In 1994, Flying Nun was presented with a Tradenz Award, after they exported (in the 92-93 financial year) \$1,000,000 worth of product from their Auckland base, to outlets in the UK,



Chris Knox

US and Europe. At that stage, all Nun releases were being manufactured in Australia and shipped to those territories. When Flying Nun opened an office in London in August 1993, and began manufacturing there, exporting to the UK and Europe ceased, but

continued to the USA, as distributors there were importing a large amount of back catalogue, as well as new releases — both of which were in stock in New Zealand. In May this year, the exporting wing of the label was shifted to London, as the bulk of the Nun catalogue is manufactured in the UK. Now, all Flying Nun product released in the UK and Europe goes through local distributors, while in the USA, Nun releases are either exported from London, or licensed from Flying Nun New Zealand.

A licensing arrangement involves an American label paying Flying Nun a fee that allows them to manufacture and release a particular album in that territory. Lesley Paris, Flying Nun New Zealand's manager, says that ultimately, a licensing deal is what Nun looks for with every artist.

"It works a lot better to have records licensed rather than exporting them, because

you have people there in the States focussing on the release and working it really well. We strive to license things because, while we don't have any office in America, we need people there to make the most of selling stuff to give us that presence."

The biggest success for Flying Nun in 1995 has been licensing the Chris Knox album, *Songs Of You & Me*, to USA label Caroline Records. Caroline made a concerted effort to get widespread college radio airplay for Knox, and in June he reached Number 1 on the CMJ American college radio charts.

Paris: "Chris is totally happy with how they're doing, and they've been really effective in what they've done for him."

Knox also signed a music publishing deal with USA company Warner-Chappell, which meant heavy marketing support for *Songs Of*



David Kilgour

You & Me when it was released in the States in May, and could possibly see his songs chosen by more mainstream artists for cover versions. Knox returns to tour America this month, for the third time this year.

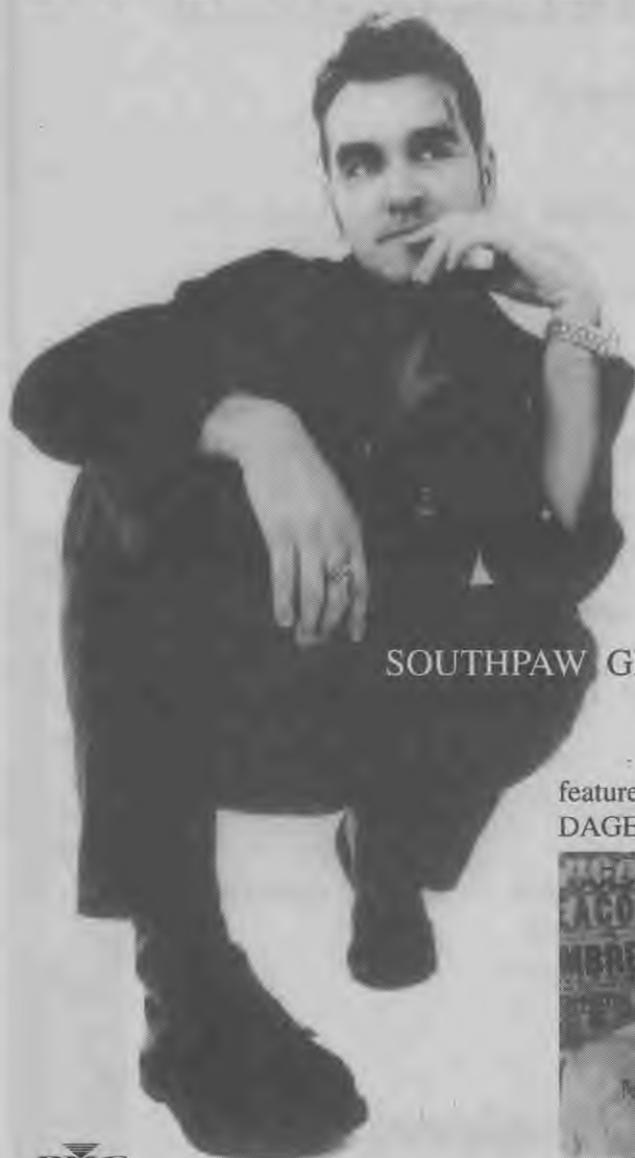
In other major licensing deals signed this year, the Rick Rubin owned label American Recordings is to release David Kilgour's second album *Sugar Mouth*, with tracks from his debut solo release *Here Come The Cars*, plus new material, added. American have also requested that Kilgour tour the United States in early 1996. Paul McKessar of Flying Nun New Zealand, arranged the deal with American.

"There's a hard core of people at that label who are genuine fans of his music, and it makes it more encouraging when you figure there's not just the one guy out there, championing the artist's cause against indifference."



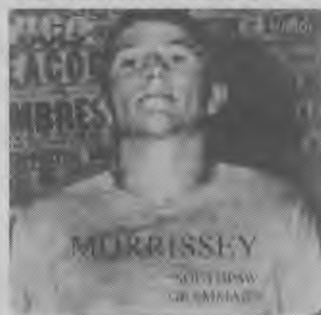
The Mutton Birds

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