



Dave Dobbyn

an album, we can license it."

A new chapter in the life of Flying Nun will begin in February 1996, when the label open an office "somewhere on the east coast of America".

A TWIST IN THE TRAIL

The final, Dave Dobbyn chapter in John Dix's book *Stranded In Paradise* closes with the line: "...his plan for the 90s is to tackle the greater international market."

Keen to head down that road, Dobbyn was thwarted by those whom he needed most. In 1993, when he released his second solo album, *Lament For The Numb*, his label, Warner Music Australia, chose not to market or promote the album. Not unexpectedly, it was a commercial failure on both sides of the Tasman. By his own admission, disillusioned and lacking in confidence, Dobbyn returned to live in New Zealand later that year.

Sony Music New Zealand sensed an opportunity, signed Dobbyn to a five album deal, and in December 1994 his hat trick of solo records was completed with the release of *Twist*. The album was a massive critical and commercial success in New Zealand, and is the record both Sony and Dobbyn believe will finally see him break internationally. Their prime target is the United Kingdom. Although Crowded House had their first chart hit in America with 'Don't Dream It's Over', the majority of their success in recent years has been in England, and Sony are keen to bring Dobbyn to the attention of this market.

Paul Ellis and Michael Glading of Sony New Zealand, sent *Twist* to the UK division, and both met with label representatives individually on business excursions to London. They secured a commitment from Sony label Columbia, and *Twist* was released in the UK on July 1. Dobbyn flew there a fortnight later, and performed four showcase gigs — two at the Borderline in London, and two at the Olympia. Favourable press followed in high profile magazines such as *Mojo* and *Q*, and, like the Mutton Birds, Dobbyn was added to the playlist at Greater London Radio. Similarly, he also scored a coup being invited to support Sheryl Crow at London's Hammersmith Odeon, a gig that placed him in front of a crowd of over 4,000.

Without Dobbyn touring in the UK, Ellis says it's an uphill battle to maintain momentum for *Twist*, and therefore sell a lot of albums, but he insists the label are in it for the long term.

"Sales are okay... but Dave can't retire yet!

At the moment I believe *Twist*, in the UK, will be one of those records industry people will love, but it won't be until Dave's next record that we'll get some significant commercial success. He's a brand new artist, so it could take up to six months to get any major recognition for *Twist* at all. Plus we really need to get Dave back in there to do gigs, to really get it pumping."

Following the British shows, Dobbyn made a brief visit to America, playing two further showcase gigs in New York and Seattle. *Twist* went on sale in the USA on September 4, and Sony are currently working to secure Dobbyn as support act on a USA tour by a major act, to build a profile for the album.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

Of all the tales of big OEs, the one about the Nixons perhaps holds the most fairytale-like qualities.

Midway through 1994, Ashli Lewis, managing director of fledgling San Francisco label Incandescent, made a brief visit to New Zealand on a working holiday. During her stay she met with several local independent record companies, and returned home with a stash of recent New Zealand releases. Out of the pile, the one that got the most repeated plays was the Nixons' debut album, *Eye TV*, released on Auckland label Pagan earlier in the year.

Lewis: "I just never took their CD off my turntable. It never burned out on me, and I continue to listen to it now."

Initially Lewis' plan was to act as a liaison between the Nixons and a major US label, and hopefully help secure the trio a licensing deal within North America.

"I got the record listened to by the major labels, but there's just a huge buffer here, in terms of them being willing to work with bands outside of the United States. Although I did have three labels who really quite liked it, the A&R people, who are always so afraid for their jobs, won't take any risks. To them, having to work with a group that far away, they considered it a big risk."

Eventually Lewis decided to license *Eye TV* from Pagan herself. She chalked up release number 002 on Incandescent, when the album went on sale in the USA market on September 18.

The Nixons were forced to change their name to Eye TV for the Stateside release, due to a Texas band having the same moniker, so the USA version of the album features new artwork, and has been repackaged with two songs from

the band's *Special Downtime* EP added. Distribution is being handled through various regional companies nationwide.

"With an indie release like this, a lot of what may happen depends on how good the record actually is. You do everything a proper record company should — you send it out to college radio and press, then you follow up, and hopefully you can do some touring. But any expectations that this release would end up on MTV would be bullshit. That's not realistic for an indie. But one thing indies do that can be good for a band is get you the attention of a major label. It could very well happen that I put this out as a small indie release, and then somebody gets interested for the next time around. That's where the majority of majors get their bands, they pilfer off the indies."

The Nixons begin a seven week tour of North America in San Jose on October 19. The first three weeks will be spent in California, Oregon and Washington State, before they cross country, playing college towns throughout the Midwest and North East, eventually winding up in San Francisco on December 9.

Lewis reiterates that she isn't promising the Nixons anything, but in closing makes a statement important to all the New Zealand acts striving for success in America.

"You can't underestimate the buzz here in the United States. Buzz will get you everywhere."

JOHN RUSSELL



Nixons

Paul Kelly Deeper Water

The new
Paul Kelly album
featuring the single
'Give In To My Love'
in-stores Oct. 9

white



FESTIVAL