

Rock musicians keep unusual hours. Or so editor, Alastair Dougal, and cub reporter, John Malloy, were to find when they tracked Dave McArtney and Graham Brazier (of Hello Sailor) down to their hideout — a disused fallout shelter in Newton. There, amid the vicious noise of the relentless Sunday traffic, they taped the interview that was to appear below.

But it was not to be. Our heroes de-

## THE SIX MILLION D

By John Malloy

For them what don't know, Hello Sailor are a rock band. In fact, they're a rock 'n' roll band in the classic mould: a two guitar, bass and drums line-up, fronted by singer/saxophonist Graham Brazier. Auckland based, they've been playing round the country for about two years, in which time their music has changed, as has their personnel.

Their guitarists, Harry Lyon and Dave McArtney, play complementary parts with an ease that comes from long hours of playing together, while the rhythm section of Lyle Kinney on bass and Ricky Ball on drums provide that essential solid foundation. The music is an eclectic collection of songs with such diverse influences as reggae, latin music and British rock; while their original material is so much a part of their act that their audience take it for granted. Their single, "Gutter Black" backed with "Latin Lover", has been getting a lot of airplay lately, and they have a soon-to-be-released album in the can for Key records. And, right now they're hot.

*Can you first tell me about the beginnings of the band?*

**DM** Well, for a start, Graham and I were living in a house in Ponsonby with a whole lot of people, playing acoustic music just for our own enjoyment, and we had the odd gig together; writing all our own songs. I'd known Harry years ago — we played in a band together once — and he appeared back on the scene, playing in a band called Beam. He used to come along, and gradually we got a lot of gear together and started playing. So, we just decided to form a band. There was just the three of us for a start. We started off playing our own music really, and we searched around for a few suitable cover versions — but not with the idea of working. We just wanted to play, at first. Then we decided to take it seriously and we got the band together and rehearsed for a couple of months, and it just took off. We played at Napier, came back, and played a gig at Dunlop's Gym. That's in Grey Lynn — a really old colonial place with a boxing ring.

*What were you doing for jobs at that time?*

**DM** Well, up till then I'd been a gardener. Harry had been a professional musician for about a year. Graham was a gardener, dustman, and a few other things. See, Beam sort of broke up, and I joined them but we didn't play anywhere. It broke up after a week, and then we got Graham in, and then the rhythm section left. We just rehearsed with two guitars and a bass, Harry and I swapping round on bass, and then we got a drummer (which was Graham Turner). Then Beam's bass player joined us for a couple of months. Then, we got another guy filling in for a couple of weeks (Bob Taylor — he plays with Larry Morris now), and then we got Andy McDonald out of Streettalk. He stayed for about six months, and then we got our present bass player.

*How do you find working around New Zealand without a manager?*

**DM** No trouble. Probably the reason we've gone so long without a manager is that some of the guys in the band — Harry, and recently, Rick — have had a lot of experience in things like that, so they can handle that side well. Because you need to be quite firm in what sort of money you want, y'know? In New Zealand there's lots of different sorts of promoters. There's honest ones, and friendly ones, and there's ones that won't pay you, and there's

ones that'll pay you in advance. You really need experienced people. And also you need someone to represent you. You can't really represent yourself. You can't go along and say, "They're a really good band, really shit hot, you wanna hire us!" But we seem to have survived all right without one. We'd like one now. There's lots of things to handle now. There's lots of dealing with record company people, and things like that.

*At the moment you are doing a lot of fairly solid rock material. Does this reflect the needs of your audiences?*

**DM** Yeah it does. You gotta project energy. You can't project it in a pub playing more introverted material, which is what we started off doing. On the album we've got coming out there are a few numbers like that. We've got quite a mixture. Not all of it is danceable material though.

*When did you start making the album?*

**Graham Brazier** About two months ago. We spent a week in there and a week out, depending on how the studio was booked. If it was free we'd be in there from eight thirty till five.

*That's a long time to spend in the studio.*

**GB** Specially when you gotta go and play that night.

*Did you have much trouble getting the sound the way you wanted it?*

**DM** I don't think it ever sounds how you want it. There's always something wrong with it.

*What's the point of releasing an album in New Zealand?*

**GB** Hope like shit it goes to Australia. That's the only point. If it doesn't you're gonna see it in a junk shop in two weeks time.

**DM** If you're a band writing your own material, it's good to get an album out. It's good to do. The single is more promotional. The album is sort of the art form of rock 'n' roll — getting a good forty minutes of music.

*Would you like to go to Australia?*

**DM** Yeah. We'd like to go to Australia, but under the right conditions — guaranteed work. We'd like to have at least two albums behind us before we go, really, and a good single so that you can go there and get pushed. If you just go there like Dragon, you have to start from the bottom again, and it takes three years. But we don't wanna go before we're ready.



Dave McArtney and Graham Brazier

