



Brent Eccles Greg Clarke Geoff Chunn Mike Chunn

## GOOD MORNING CITIZENS

After a year or so of torpor, Auckland is starting to fill up again with working bands who are a little more than that label often implies. Hello Sailor probably started it, but now there are enough bands around offering enough extra to ensure that a night out at a rock and roll pub or club is something more than a chance to show off your new jeans and halter top.

Although the Sailors have already broken free of the pub circuit, and seem able to exist solely on concert work of one kind or another, there are quite a few others who are hovering on the brink of bigger things. Because of their pedigree, if nothing else, Citizen Band must be prime contenders in the cross-over stakes.

Although you can see the shudders when they hear it, the band boasts two members with the ever more common Split Enz connections, a Space Waltzer or two, and even a member who can trace his pedigree back to the near-legendary Moses. Besides these rather esoteric backgrounds, drummer Brent Eccles and guitarist Greg Clark have spent years playing in club and pub acts — of which Vox Pop is only the most recent.

Undoubtedly, the band is chiefly the product of the combination of the Chunn brothers. Geoffrey is the principal songwriter, and Michael, after five years or so playing bass with Split Enz, gives them a depth of experience a little out of reach of the rest of their league. Considering the kinds of projects the two of them have been involved with before, the style of Citizen Band's music comes as something of a surprise.

While Geoffrey Chunn also began with Split Enz (as a drummer), in the last two or three years he has become noticeable more for solo work (backed by strays from Waves, amongst others) and a short-lived band called After Hours. Both of these lineups played a curious kind of melodic — and usually drummerless — material with definite blues and bossa nova tinges.

Michael was a major contributor to the gothic rhythm section of Split Enz during a period when they could never have been accused of being simplistic. It is still some-

thing of a shock to walk into a pub where Citizen Band are playing and hear a genuine beat group.

Like most bands at their stage of development, Citizen Band cannot produce a complete three hour working night of original material, but their choice of songs to cover is a clear indication of how they are trying to shape their own songs. No ten-minute covers of "Cocaine", no Chuck Berry, but a careful selection from the goldmine of 1960's pop music. There can't be another band in the country covering Larry's Rebels.

At times, Citizen Band come closer than anyone else to capturing the spirit of witty, song-centred rock and roll which got swamped by the march of the axe heroes. A song like their next single, "Out in the World," with no real echoes of antiquity, recognises the value of a simple approach in a way that almost parallels some of the more recent foreign phenomena. They retain the recognisable New Zealand sound and themes of some of Split Enz' better days, but still demonstrate a preference for pop like that shown by Elvis Costello or Tom Petty. They might not like what those two play, but they probably like what they listen to.

Still, it's not as simple as that. Obviously, from their first record, and their problems in putting together an album which really suits their tastes, they haven't yet found an easy way to put across that feeling while recording. "In a Lifetime", quite a little gem in its own way, is no frontal assault on the pop sensibilities of New Zealand, and they admit to dissatisfaction with a portion of the recording they have completed for their already overdue debut album. In an effort to counter a tendency to over-embellish and fill up all sixteen tracks, they have

turned to playing 'live' in the studio, and cutting out over-dubbing. Already, the products of the new approach, which will probably appear on a maxi-single with "Out in the World" seem much more immediate, and suit their intentions better.

This is also reflected in their decision to cut back to a classic two-guitar line-up and do without the keyboard contribution originally intended. Warren Sly, who co-wrote a number of the repertoire with Geoffrey Chunn will feature on those but from here on it will all be streamlined.

As well as their problems in the studio, they obviously also find it difficult to translate a successful small scale act into something which sounds good and holds the attention of a large audience, especially an outdoor one. They have been regulars at this summer's spate of one day festivals, and also appeared at Nambassa. Most of the time they suffered from major sound

balance problems and the casual pace of an act born in the Island of Real Cafe began to look leaden in front of an audience five hundred times as large.

The fact that they refuse to be rushed or to drop parts of their act which could be called idiosyncratic, is probably a reflection of the experiences of Michael Chunn with Split Enz. He has said that he felt that that band got somewhat out of control of those who should have been in charge. Citizen Band, with no manager, no immediate plans for emigration, beyond "playing in Takapuna", and a satisfaction with recording in Auckland at the moment, do not seem likely to head out for huge debts and stresses on the international market.

There is no telling how long they will keep that attitude of course. If they do manage to stay happy domiciled in Auckland they will be pretty well unique. I can't think of any other band of their originality or potential which has stayed home and stayed together. It may well be that there will be a day when, to survive, Citizen Band have to move. If they do, you can safely count them among the statistics — the big ones that got away.

Francis Stark

band's brief but sensational US tour and as they were due to fly out to Rio de Janeiro to perform at a concert at which Great train robber, Ronald Biggs, was to give a poetry reading. It seems Johnny Rotten felt that this smacked too much of a publicity stunt and decided to quit.

Alternative versions of the final split up have manager Malcolm McLaren, firing Johnny Rotten for "driving us mad with his ego".

At one point Rotten said: "I didn't leave the band. The band left me. No comment on the reason why. This is not the death of punk rock, it's the demise of one band of many. It stopped the rise of the Rolling Stones of the 80's ever happening."

At another point Rotten stated: "I was bored chronic singing the same set that we'd played for 2 years. I won't work with any of them again and that's no great pity. Steve can go off and be Peter Frampton, Sid can go off and kill himself and nobody will care and Paul can go back to being an electrician."

In fact Sid Vicious, bass player for the Pistols, collapsed on a plane flight from San Francisco to New York and was rushed to hospital with a suspected overdose. Vicious was apparently advised by a doctor that if he didn't slow down on his use of alcohol and drugs, he'd be dead in 6 months.

As for the future — Johnny Rotten has said he intends to form another band possibly with more of a reggae flavour. He said: "I'm looking for a new band, but I don't want to do no Johnny Rotten show again. I hated that in the Sex Pistols."

We'll keep you posted.

The Sex Pistols no longer exist.

But the circumstances behind the break up of the band are clouded in a haze of conflicting rumours, statements and stories. Their record company, Virgin, issued a bulletin that is the clearest statement of the position: "It's now quite definite that the Pistols are going their separate ways for the moment. But don't exclude the possibility of any permutations of the line-up in the future, though certainly they have no intention of working for the time being". But all four members of the group remain contracted to Virgin as individuals.

The break up occurred at the end of the

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