

Plans for '83 Enz' own label

Yes, that was Tim Finn you saw at the Windsor. He and brother Neil were in the country for their sister's wedding.

But they were also here to finalise another kind of wedding — or rather a renewing of vows. The band has just re-signed to Polygram Records after the initial three-year deal proved mutually beneficial. Tim is enthusiastic about the signing because it means the band's own record label, tentatively called Enz Records can be set up in this country.

The aim of the label will be to pick up and help out promising local bands and help them record to international standard, so the implications are obviously major. But more of that later.

Tim has been spending the time since the band last played here completing his solo album *Escapade*. The single from it 'Fraction Too Much Friction' has been released in Australia and the album should follow in about a month.

The other Enz members haven't been idle either. They have all been experimenting in the studio but only Noel Crombie's country single, a cover of 'My Voice Keeps Changin' On Me' has been released.

"Noel's single was serviced to country radio, he did some talk show-type things, he did some good promotion for it. It wasn't a hit but it was a chance for Noel to get out and about as Noel," Tim says.

And as for the work of the others:

"Good album tracks but no singles."

Eddie Rayner and Neil have also been getting involved in producing. Neil has done his first production job for Karen Ansell (formerly of the Reels) and Eddie has worked with Russell Morris and an as yet unknown called Paul Smythe.

Work should begin on the new Enz album in late June. Has much writing been done for the album?

"Neil's done more than I have, because I've had my solo album. Neil's got heaps of songs and I wouldn't be surprised if it was his year



for singles because I had a pretty good run last year. It's nice to have that opportunity to step back.

"We're going to try and go away and get a place in the country beforehand. It's worked for us before — just the five of us going away like a boy scout troop or something."

We probably won't see Split Enz again until October or November.

"We'll probably finish the album early September, tour here and Australia first and then see what happens in America. Go if it's happening, don't go if it's not. We'll definitely go to Canada — Europe if they want us."

Tim's solo album has already been picked up on for American distribution by A&M Records. The album features many respected session players (including, on one track "the fastest fiddler in the world") and he's pleased with the way it's come out.

"I thought it was going to be very drum machine orientated at first — just me in the studio with a drum machine and a couple of synths. But it couldn't have been more opposite to that if I'd tried. I very much depended on the musicians I worked with and it ended up having quite a soulful, sort of natural feel to it."

Were the songs on the album recent compositions or ones written over the years?

"Mostly recent, actually."

Any kind of theme running through it?

"I wouldn't say, at this stage. They're my personal songs, just things that have been going on for me in the last six months or so."

Back to Enz Records. What will the new label mean?

"It gives us the opportunity to be more or less

the A&R ourselves, be the ears, talent spotters.

"We've seen a lot of bands coming up — Pop Mechanix, Blam Blam Blam, Dance Exponents — that we've noticed emerging but haven't been able to help or do much except encourage them.

"So we'll be able to say to bands, here's a deal. We'll through our contacts perhaps be able to arrange producers to come over here or maybe produce it ourselves. It's a whole new thing to get into.

"It probably won't really get underway until next year. There's not much we can do this year, we're so busy.

"Production-wise it'll certainly be important to us. Eddie'll probably come over and produce things, perhaps Neil or me. Getting a good-sounding record isn't easy. It requires a lot of hard work. It's still a bit sort of 'whack it down and see how it sounds' over here I think.

"It's exciting. I've only been here just over a week but I've detected signs of things on the up and up. There's a lot of bands out there who are starting to take it a lot more seriously. I wouldn't be surprised if there's a new era on the horizon, I really wouldn't. It'd be nice to be part of that. We've always dreamed of that happening."

Have Kiwi acts in the past been giving up too soon?

"Yeah, it's a source of frustration to me to see it happen. You've got to stick at it and just keep going — unless there is something else you want to do. Obviously then, go off and do it.

"But if you're interested in being a band, the more years you stay together the better you'll get. It's just inevitable."

But so many NZ bands have set off for Australia with great expectations only to die there. Would you still recommend this country's bands to go across the Tasman?

"Well, I'd hesitate because it is ... well I don't hesitate, I think they should, but they should be prepared for a big shock — how competitive it is, how much more upmarket it is. Right from improving their gear to taking it more seriously

to better film clips, the whole thing is up several gears. If they're prepared for that, prepared to stick it out, it'll be alright. It's not a playground over there, it's serious stuff.

"To an extent I think New Zealand bands are ready because if you can survive here, get through the apathy and cynicism that still exists, you'll be well-prepared for Australia. That's what the case was with us. We fought through that attitude and refused to acknowledge it and therefore we had this ... burning confidence, if you like.

"We're a band that's taken the long way whenever we've done anything. There are bands that seem to expect it to happen quickly, I don't think it usually does."

So what lies ahead for the only Kiwi band to come out of Australia's cultural quicksand smelling remotely sweet? Will the Enz be cutting down on touring?

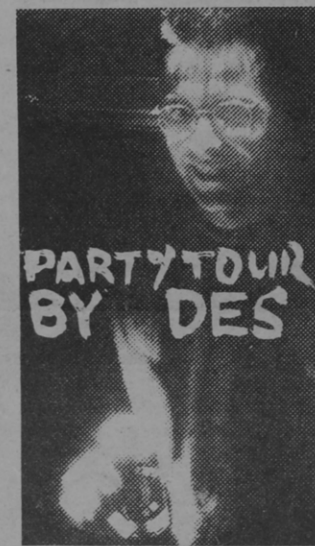
"We already have. I think we've knocked it down to the bare minimum, which last year was still six months. Limited touring but done with great style and impact is really the answer. None of us are interested in going to America and touring for six months just to break a record. We'd rather wait for that hit single. We like playing live still; we get a lot out of it but it just becomes numbing after a while if you do too much of it."

Does the thought of calling it a day and settling down every occur?

"Not really. I can see periods of it happening. In the future there might be a time when we'd take a year off or something. But there'd never ... I mean, once you've found something you can do you may as well keep doing it — it's hard enough to just find something you can do. We just want to get better and better at it really. I think Bryan Ferry is an example — as he gets older he gets better, I reckon. I think *Avalon* is a wonderful album.

"If you can do that, get better, keep refining what you do, well there's no end to it."

Russell Brown



Twenty-second April, the day loomed ahead. The day of Marching Girls' departure — a nerve-wracking experience in itself. We find Mr Hefner at home relaxing and making last-minute preparations for the trip. This would be the second visit home, a trip looked forward to by the whole band for some time now. A phone call, not unusual in this house, but a phone call from England — from old er, um friends, the Birthday Party, the now drummerless band requesting Hefner to fill the seat and play unfortunately their last dates in New Zealand and Australia before departing and going their separate ways.

After the call, I was terrified as I had one day to learn a set of Birthday Party songs and

then play a professional set in front of a huge audience. Some task, but nevertheless a good opportunity to experience first hand the power of this world-standard band.

I did it and pulled it off reasonably well and now, after four gigs in New Zealand, I am pretty well prepared for Australia (Perth, Sydney, Melbourne). I found the band very reasonable to work with and good fun to socialise with so after all the nerves it was well worth it. To me the Birthday Party are in their finest hour now. Having started just before I arrived with Marching Girls in Australia, they have undergone a natural drastic change and are now to me creating Birthday Party music at its best. *The Bad Seed* EP is one of the best records I've heard in years, so buy it and wake up to yourself. Buy Marching Girls too, another fine EP (a real collectors item in a few years).

Touring is, in my opinion, a real bore. No time for anything — sleep, eat, soundcheck, play, sleep etc. And this time round was worse than usual. Playing the first set with the Marching Girls, then half an hour later, a set with the Birthday Party. Not that hard, but it does take it out of you.

It was good seeing what was left of family, friends and any familiar buildings left standing. So overall, some fun was had.

I think both bands went well in New Zealand but it will be interesting to see the reaction to Birthday Party in their home country.

Most of the audiences have heard them and have their

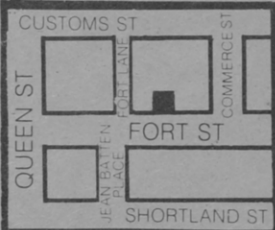
records. I'll be under a lot of scrutiny from fans, I will have to perform with every bit of energy available. It will be interesting to see, as I have never been to Perth, so I get to see a bit of Australia I would probably never see. So on this note I'll end. Thanks to everyone concerned with Marching Girls tour '83. See you when we see you. Hefner '83.

LATE NEWS

Dexys leader Kevin Rowland is to wed his violinist Helen O'Hara. The two met when Kevin asked her to join his band while they were waiting at a bus stop ... Billy Currie has severed connections with Visage ... LA mystery man the Residents are to make an unheard of European tour ... former Skid Richard Jobson has a new group called Jungle of Cities ... Cabaret Voltaire will record on Some Bizarre label ... Stray Cats have landed themselves a multi-million dollar lawsuit by adding the word 'fuck' numerous times to their version of Eddie Cochrane's 'Jeanie, Jeanie, Jeanie' ... Rip Rig and Panic plan to record their next album in a digital studio in Japan ... Bollock Brother Jock McDonald is to release an album containing new versions of all the songs on the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks* on Charly Records. It features synthesiser.

New albums: New Order *Power, Corruption and Lies*, Coati Mundi *The Former 12 Year Old Genius*, Motorhead *Another Perfect Day*, Iron Maiden *Piece of Mind*, Mike Oldfield *Cries*, Red Crayola *Black Snakes*, UB40 *Labour of Love* (covers of old ska and reggae tunes).

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