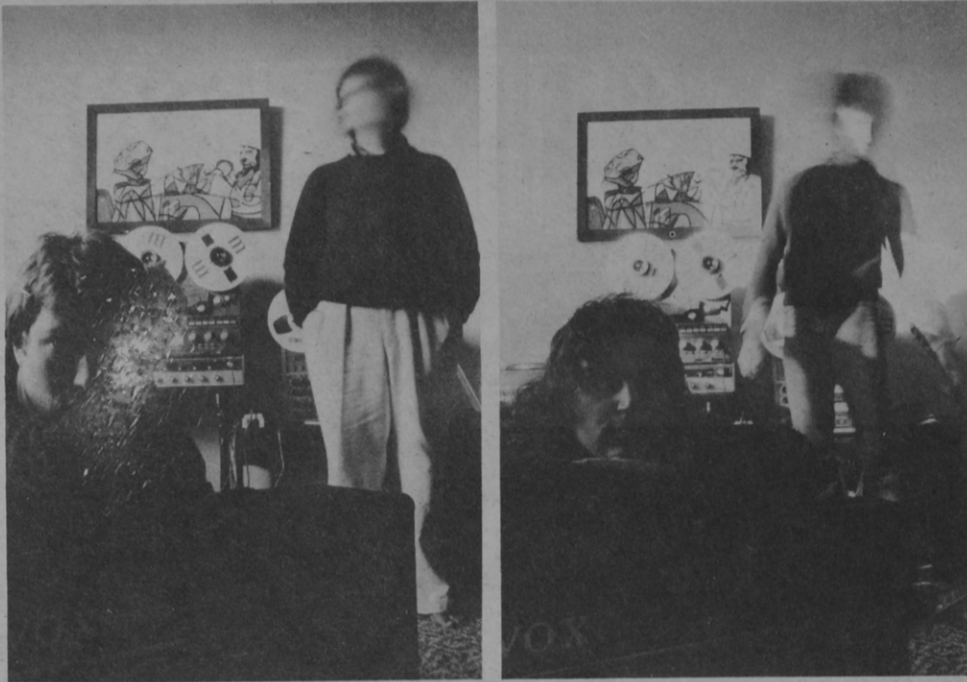


Tall Dwarfs take turns experimenting with a new percussive technique to be heard on their next record. Sustained violent jerking of the head causes the brain to bounce around the cranial cavity with a rhythmic squelching noise. Bet From Scratch'll be doing it next ...

GROWING UP TALL



PHOTOS BY ALECBATHGATE

The guy just wouldn't stop. He just kept on about the Enemy and Toy Love, in the middle of a packed pub.

"There's not as much feeling in what you're doing now. You would have hated what you're doing now when you were in the Enemy," he told Chris Knox.

People told him to go away, but he wouldn't. He just kept telling Chris Knox about the Enemy and Toy Love. Telling Chris Knox about the Enemy and Toy Love.

When emotions are being attacked they defend themselves. Eventually Knox tried to hit him. He didn't really succeed, but that didn't matter. It was sad it had to come to that.

Chris Knox has become public property. No other performer is expected to be accountable for his emotions in such a way. People seem to think he is directly responsible to them.

Toy Love has become a myth. The Enemy, because fewer people ever saw them, have become a bigger myth. They shouldn't be forgotten, but they deserve a sense of perspective.

Fuck, remember Toy Love? Remember that night we drank a bottle of whisky between us? No, no, it was two bottles ...

Tall Dwarfs, Chris Knox and Alec Bathgate, have been making a record. They've been doing it in Chris lounge. The place has a real sense of atmosphere cluttered with the dark paraphernalia of recording — two tape recorders (a four-track and a two-track), an organ,

guitars, amps, speakers ...

Bathgate came up from Christchurch with only one song pre-written. Knox had nothing. But things have been going well, they have half a dozen songs in various stages of completion. The music is different again from that on the first EP and *Louie Likes His Daily Dip*, but it's still identifiably Tall Dwarfs.

Interview time. Knox is trying to be honest rather than witty. Bathgate tries, but he's made to play music, not talk about it.

Maybe you've heard it before, Chris Knox has this thing about white people trying to sound black.

"It's people trying to play music they have no feel for that I object to," he says over the kitchen table. He really means it.

It's eerie (read foolish if you wish), but it was while I was

listening to Knox's *Guppies* solo album that I had the same thoughts myself. I scrawled it all down, white man's destiny and all that.

To oversimplify, there's been a kind of lineage that includes the Velvet Underground, John Cale, the Saints, Wire, the Stooges, the Birthday Party and authors like William Burroughs (forgive the obviousness of it all) who have tried to describe the White Man's Condition. It is soul music in the sense of the white man's soul.

All this doesn't necessarily have much to do with skin colour, it's not a racial thing. White men like Captain Beefheart have even used black motifs to examine their souls. And white men like Van Morrison can have soul in the sense of the black man. Even white men like Bowie can be briefly engaging when they assume "soul".

But I don't see the firm line of demarcation that Knox does. Maybe he's whiter than me. His favourite black artist is Stevie Wonder.

Back to a crowded pub. The Stones are playing.

"This is plugged straight into the white man's heartbeat," Knox enthuses. He's right — this isn't affectation.

But chase any destiny you want, that's what I say.

A large part of this recording-releasing business is education, he says. Encouraging others to do the same. You don't need a big studio.

"I'm interested in creating something full, with atmosphere, from comparative sparseness," he says. "Artists I admire, Young Marble Giants and Wire for example, have done that."

Maybe Alec sums it up:

"To me, we're doing the same sort of thing the Velvet Underground were doing, just playing our own music. I mean, I'm not saying we're anything as great as the Velvet Underground, but it's the same sort of thing."

Back to a crowded pub. Chris Knox is at once the most and least self-conscious "frontman" I have ever seen. He's acutely, desperately aware of the audience, he sings to them, but sings to himself. To say he doesn't feel what he's doing is very, very cruel.

Toy Love was a "band", a very structured thing. You have to do things in a certain fashion in a band. But people like bands, within subjective limits, you can say whether a band is "good" or "bad".

Tall Dwarfs is simply the most direct way these two musicians can work. Bathgate's linearity straightens out the two little circles that the solo Knox tends to run around in. It's really a very humble thing. It's curious that something so unexceptional as simple expression can be so very exceptional. Maybe it's sad.

Back to a crowded pub. A multitude of expectations, but many of them seem to understand. Fuck, of course it's entertaining.

But in a sense I'd hate to be Chris Knox. What has he gotten himself into? Russell Brown

LATE NEWS

Breakin' up: Irish popsters the Undertones are to split next month after a final gig at the Dublin Festival. Unclear what members' next moves will be but singer Feargal Sharkey is expected to emerge either as a solo artist or with a new band ... and the Birthday Party have made their split official, citing reasons like the need for "new challenges to sustain our creative vitality". They will be going into individual projects ... guitarist Keith Levene has announced his departure from Public Image Ltd. Recording of the new PIL album continues in New York.

Former Mockers' drummer Brendan Fitzgerald has become the Hip Singles' third drummer this year after the departure of Dave Robinson. The Hip Singles will have a short rest to write new songs ... Wellington's 1st XV have dropped guitarist Blaze and reformed as Freedom for Sheep with new member Mark Crawford.

Killing Joke have been working on a new album for two months and have single 'Let's All Go (To the Fire Dance)' out soon ... following Yazoo split, Vince Clark is busy collecting acts for his new record label.

Kiss guitarist Ace Frehley recently charged with drunken and reckless driving after a 90mph chase from the scene of an accident ... Bob Geldof and Paula Yates' new daughter will bear the name of Fifi Trixie-Belle Geldof. Much more sensible is Natalie, the name Chrissie Hynde and Ray Davies have decided on for their bairn.

New Daggy and the Dickheads' single is 'ATV/Wine and Roses'. It was recorded at Harlequin studios and produced by Billy Kristian ... Wellington's Unrestful Movements starting work on a video for their 'Anti Trend' song soon.

Dave McCartney has new single 'Incredible Mountain', taken from the soundtrack of the film *The Main Divide*. It's self-produced.

JO JO ZEP

cha

the new album ...
it's different ...
it's simply his best.

includes hit single
'Walk on By'

on album & tape

FLYING NUN

is sick to death of listing the same old bunch of records so... if you need to know about the previous pressings, read last month's ad. There are however two - 2 - NEW ONES!! (new!)

BE MY FRIEND/AMNESIA
- 7" 45 by SNEAKY FEELINGS -

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN
- 7" 45 by THE VERLAINES - BOTH \$2.99

— BOX 3000 - CHRISTCHURCH —

Dunedin's

NETHERWORLD DANCING TOYS

E.P. OUT NOW