

STONE FREE

"We're serious about not being serious. That's the quote," he leans closer to the tape recorder. "WERE SERIOUS ABOUT NOT BEING SERIOUS."

That's Jeff Stone, of the STONES. The DUNEDIN Stones, dig, not the ROLLING STONES. "That's GREAT, it's got a ring to it. Let's call our next EP that!" says Wayne Stone. But WHAT DOES IT MEAN? To Jeff Stone it means: "I'm like right against people analysing

Stones in Concert (L-R) Wayne, Jeff, Graeme.



PHOTO BY CAROL TIPPET

music. People tend to take it far too seriously."

To Wayne Stone it means: "It's like anything, you can get far too obsessed with it. I mean, when it totally takes over your life that's when it gets DANGEROUS."

To Graeme Stone it means:

Jeff Stone says, "I don't look at it as ART, like some people seem to. I'm not saying they're BAD but you know what I mean. But then again I don't like the other side - doing it just to make MONEY."

"It's just something that comes off the top of your head. Trying to do what comes NATURALLY." The STONES, dig, are from Dunedin. So it's irritation time when they get fitted into that neat little category?

"Yeah, it's a bit annoying. Everyone describes us as being SIXTIES, VELVET UNDERGROUND - I don't think we really sound much like that. We've never really tried to be a sixties band I don't think," Wayne Stone says.

Note YEAH, not YEEEAHHH. No sneer here, dig?

So it's a pretty POSITIVE FORCE (idiom, dig) being there, out of the way of the BUSINESS?

"Not really," says W. Stone. "It's just where we happen to live. If we

were up here (AUCKLAND) it would be a lot easier to GET THINGS DONE; we could play more."

You'd like to play more? "SOMETIMES I wouldn't mind playing more, but I couldn't handle playing too often."

So why stay in the cold, cold SOUTH?

Jeff back: "It's WHERE WE LIVE. Why should we want to move?"

So - WHAT'S IT LIKE? "It's almost like it's just all us lot PLAYING TO EACH OTHER, all the different bands. People can say that's EGOCENTRIC or whatever ... that's a word someone said the other day. But I mean, we're HAPPY, WHATEVER. No one's particularly planning anything. "We DRIFT along," Wayne Stone muses.

"We've been drifting this far," comes the rejoinder. ABOUT THE WEATHER: "It's too cold in Dunedin."

ABOUT THE WHETHER: "We might be doing some more recording up here (AK). I'm not sure. After that we'll go back to Dunedin and see how we FEEL."

Is there a MOTIVATION problem in Dunedin? (Psychobabble, OK?)

"Oh yeah, definitely," Wayne Stone. "There's lots of people with IDEAS, but there's nothing happening."

So Stones have been motivation short?

"MOTIVATION TO DO WHAT, THOUGH?" Jeff always gets whole sentences. "We're just playing for our own enjoyment. If OTHERS can enjoy it ... When we come up to Auckland probably a lot of people come and see us for DIFFERENT REASONS. I don't know why ..."

So how's it feel, coming "up" here to the heart of the BUSINESS?

Stone, W: "It's quite good that things are motivated up here, even when the motivation's money."

PUBLIC SERVICE: New STONES RECORD: *Another Disc, Another Dollar* (Irony, dig. Ask a poet.) Out soon (HA!) on Flying Nun. FIVE tracks, one for each finger.

So WHAT'S NEW from burgeoning Celtic city of Myth?

W: "There's lots of people who've got LOTS OF IDEAS, but Dunedin suffers from people who are too strong about their ideas and NO ONE is very willing to work with ANYONE ELSE."

Steff Jone: "It's turned a wee bit sour in some ways. IT'S NOT SUCH A GREAT BIG CHUMMY SCENE ANY MORE."

ENOUGH. The last word goes to Graeme Stone.

He says:

Russell Brown

Stephen (left) and Neil.



Just Desserts Blancmange

"A lot of people take this business far too seriously. You're only on this planet once; you've got to enjoy it and see it for what it is worth, which is basically a big joke."

The sense of life as a cosmic comedy infuses the music and lyrics of Blancmange, a likeable English duo who recently made the English charts with the manic synth-oriented pop of songs like 'Feel Me' and 'Living on the Ceiling' and their *Happy Families* album, recently released in New Zealand. You could see this band as a bastard son of a weird mating of the B52s and Orchestral Manoeuvres, but keyboardist Stephen Luscombe, on the phone from New York, wouldn't define its sound to save his life.

"I hope we're more diverse than people give us credit for. We want to create as many moods and atmospheres as we possibly can. On this new single we're working on, 'Blind Vision', we use a kind of Gamelan sound combined with a Philadelphia horn sound. There are so many different musics you can refer to. Notice I use 'refer to' rather than 'steal'."

Prior to joining forces with vocalist/lyricist Neil Arthur four years ago, Luscombe was active in the experimental/improvisational music scene in London, working

with people like Brian Eno, drummer John Stevens, and those bizarre mock-classical musicians, the Portsmouth Sinfonia.

"After I met Neil, I more or less continued on the same path of doing what I felt like. It is only really in the last eighteen months that we started doing songs. These are based on the disciplines we'd learnt from doing more exotic musics. The songs just happened naturally; we never sat down and said we wanted to be pop stars."

With a background like this, you might expect Stephen Luscombe to be a serious musical conceptualist. You'd be wrong.

"I'm not concerned with coming across like Martin Fry or Green (Scritti Politti). I think that's so unnecessary. You get on with music and do it, you don't just sit and eulogise about it until nobody can understand what you're saying."

To be honest, I'm not really concerned with how people see us. We enjoy winding people up. Sometimes we'll sit with a journalist who is not quite in key with what we're doing and we'll just send him up. Then you'll read the article and we'll come across as a real pair of thickos."

Blancmange's extravagant sense of humour is apparent on their recent videos. The Middle Eastern feeling to 'Living on the Ceiling' prompted the duo to head for the pyramids and camels of Egypt.

"It was actually cheaper to shoot the video there than in England, as the Egyptian Government gave us a lot of help with money and resources. They saw it as a promo for their Tourist Board."

The fact that most of the Blancmange entourage came down with tropical bugs was perhaps not the publicity the government wanted. For the current single, 'Waves', the duo stayed closer to home, Penzance on the Cornish coast.

"Neil went out on a boat, I went up a lighthouse and we had some peculiar looking mermaids splashing about on the rocks. It turned out to be quite funny, while the song is quite serious. The sea was very rough, so the whole crew got sick and I nearly fell off the lighthouse. Apart from that, we came home unscathed!"

Kerry Doole

Keyboards/Synthesist

Professional musician with own equipment wanted to join 3 piece line-up headed by Shona Laing.

- Studio Experience desirable
- Based in Wellington, the band will be touring.

For further details phone 843-716, Wgtn.

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