

Tired of reading boring articles by arrogant, opinionated journalists? Sick of the same old interview questions? Offended at the way uppity interviewers talk to yer faves? This page is for you.

We bundled up a bunch of questions RIU readers wanted to ask Split Enz's Tim Finn and sent them over to Sydney, where the Enz are putting the finishing touches to their new album. Although exhausted from recording, Tim answered the questions while the tape ran. Below are his words — well, all but a few of the more poetic ones. (Send us a plain brown envelope and we'll send you the good bits.)*

How is the new Split Enz album going? Does it have a name yet?

It's going well, we're about 10 days off finishing it. It'll probably be about five of my songs, five of Neil's. It doesn't have a name yet. Neil's written the best songs he's ever written for it. He'll shine on it, I think.

When can we expect to see Split Enz in New Zealand again?

We'll be over for Christmas. I think we're doing a tour starting New Year's Eve at Mt Smart in Auckland and going through the country. It's the first summer tour we've done for a long time so that'll be nice. We'll be able to get suntans!

If *Escapade* happens to break big overseas would you consider leaving the Enz to pursue a solo career?

No. I don't expect it to break big overseas but if it did there's no way I'm going to become the Rod Stewart of the 80s or anything.

Do the lyrics on *Escapade* have anything to do with your personal life?

Of course. All the lyrics I've ever written — pretty well all anyway — have something to do with my personal life. The only difference on *Escapade* is that I wrote more from a male/female point of view than I've ever done before. On *Time and Tide* I used a lot darker imagery, more obscure if you like, to talk about things that were very personal but very deep. *Escapade* is a lighter album, but it does deal with emotions that are genuine. It's, if you like, a more soulful album, it's unashamedly romantic and positive. That's the best thing about it, for me. It's a very positive album.

Is there any possibility of a record of Enz members' solo recordings?

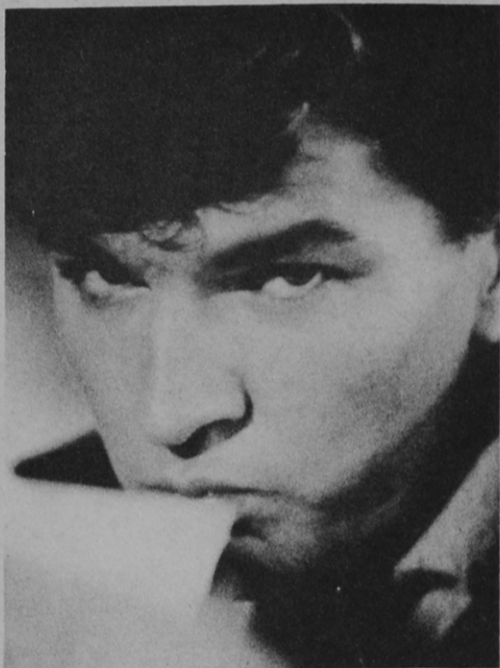
Well, there hasn't been a great deal of solo recording done yet. Mine's the only album, Noel's done a single, Neil, Nigel and Eddie have done some recording, but nothing they've released. I suppose it is a possibility but it's certainly not an important consideration for us at the moment. The main thing is to get this new Split Enz album out and get back on the road and start feeling like a band again. We've been off the road for too long.

What was the best thing about making *Escapade*?

The chance to do something on my own after being part of a band for so long. It was a thrill, I was intoxicated by it for a while but that's worn off a bit now. There's a strong possibility I'll do another one some time. It's not really a confining thing with Split Enz but I really did feel the need to do something on my own. *Escapade* is only one side of me, too. If I did

TIM FINN

ANSWERS READERS QUESTIONS



* This is a joke

another album in a year's time it might be totally different.

Do you like to have anything like video games in the studio to help you relax?

There's always a few machines around. I'm not really a fanatic on them but Nigel and Noel are. They sit down and conquer them, work and work until they get their names on the top score list. I like pool and billiards — it's almost like a catalyst to relaxation. Physical activities — a bit of exercise or a swim.

Do you prefer touring or recording?

When you're doing one you can't imagine doing the other — they're poles apart. I think, ultimately, recording. It's much more satisfying, there's more permanence to it. There's lots of fun on tour — you can get amazing peaks, highs and lows.

About how many concerts have you done over the years?

That's a very difficult question. It would take a long time to compile the answer but, obviously, it would be literally thousands.

What music and bands do you like? What are your current favourite songs?

I really like Style Council, Culture Club. I don't like Bowie anymore — I used to but I don't like his new album. 'Sierra Leone' by Coconut Rough. I used to like the Blams, I like Paul Scott who used to be in Pop Mechanix, he's a great songwriter. Michael Jackson's exceptionally groovy. I really like the David Sylvian song 'Forbidden Colours' from the Bowie movie. I was really into *Avalon* last year too — I've

always got time for Roxy Music. I think Bryan Ferry gets better as he gets older, which is great to see. As one gets older one likes to see role models developing. James Brown is the tops, I'm getting back into Van Morrison too. The best of the Police stuff — but I still find I only like three or four songs from each of their records.

Is there any chance of 'For You' being re-released to satisfy the many who are trying to complete collections of Enz 45s? With a Vertigo pressing now unlikely, perhaps one on the Enz label?

That's probably a good idea. That was our first single, of course. The A-side was 'For You' and the B-side was a song called 'Split Ends'. We could do that if the demand was there. I suppose it must be quite hard to get hold of. It would probably depend on whether we would be interested enough to do it and, right at the moment, I don't know whether we would be.

How much do you think Enz Records will be able to help New Zealand artists?

Hopefully, a reasonable amount. There's only so much we can do — we're not in the country very much. But we do have people who have their ears to the ground. Hopefully when we tour in the New Year we'll be able to make our first signing. You can lead by example, which I think we've done for many years now, but it's right to do something practical.

Are you interested in Maori songs and culture?

Very much. First all all, I was brought up with many Maori friends and living in Te Awamutu you couldn't help but be aware of Maori people singing and various aspects of their culture. And they've got so much soul. I hate to keep mentioning it, but look at Coconut Rough — it's about time the Maoris and the pakehas got together. The Maoris can give the pakeha boys a bit of soul. There's nothing worse than a band that's too white. That's not a racist comment, it's just an acknowledgement that Maoris are perhaps a little closer to their souls than we are. Closer to their culture for a start, because white New Zealanders don't really have a culture of their own, only an imported one.

When did you decide to call yourself Tim rather than Brian?

When we came to Australia in 1975 we all went to our middle names. Tim Finn sounds better than Brian Finn, it's easier to remember. I couldn't imagine calling myself Brian now.

When you went to school was it boarding school and, if so, did you enjoy it?

It's all in the song 'Haul Away'. I did go to boarding school, Sacred Heart College in Wellington and I enjoyed bits of it, hated others. I made some great friends there. I like having obvious targets for youthful frustration, like the Brothers. We used to play amazing pranks and tricks — delicious fun. There's nothing better than not being able to laugh and feeling the laughter building within you until it comes out and you don't care about being punished.

What date is your birthday?

That's in 'Haul Away' too. "I was born in Te Awamutu, 25th of June 1952 ...". Which makes me a Cancer with Aries rising for anyone who's interested.

What do you and other band members do in your spare time?

I like reading, I like swimming, working out trying to keep fit. I like conversation, going to see films. I like my old MkII Zephyr, I do some

work on that sometimes.

Are there any magazines you read regularly? I've stopped reading most music magazines but I always read *Rip It Up*. I'm not a great magazine reader though.

What's your favourite takeaway?

Al and Pete's hamburgers, without a doubt. Or even better than that, the old hamburgers you used to get at the Pie Cart, back in the old days. I'm very nostalgic about takeaways because I reckon nothing beats the burgers of the late 60s and early 70s. Everything about them was perfect — heaps of salad, the buns just lightly toasted, lots of butter, the meat, the sauces ... they still make the best milkshakes in New Zealand too.

Living in Australia, what do you miss most about New Zealand?

The physical splendour and beauty and glory of the place. You develop an almost organic attachment to that sort of thing. Now we no longer live there, when we come back we tend to look at it through very tender, romantic eyes. I do, anyway. As I get older, I just want to explore New Zealand more.

If girls wanted to join Split Enz, would they be able to?

Of course. It's been an all-male band for too long. I would love a girl to be in the band. It wouldn't matter what she played so long as she did it well.

Do you find you have to watch your weight on tour?

Not particularly. I find on tour you tend to eat less, because there's a lot of adrenalin attached to each day and adrenalin always tends to quell the appetite.

Would you like to get involved in films?

Yes, definitely. I'm trying to write a script at the moment with John Clarke (aka Fred Dagg), who's a very clever man. But that's probably going to be a year or so off. I'm not that interested in acting, although people keep telling me I should give it a go. It depends on the script and that sort of thing. I'm not really interested in the glamorous actor sort of thing. If I was offered a meaty sort of role, a supporting one, but still with a bit of grit, I might well be interested. It's a matter of time again. There's still so much I want to do in music, not only with the band, but just generally. But mainly I'd like to write a script, do a musical.

Does the 'Fraction Too Much Friction' video mean the bodgie renaissance has begun?

I've pondered this question, I'm rather fond of it. I wouldn't have thought bodgie though, no. I wish I could say yes, because I adore bodgies. Once, when I was six, a nun asked me what I wanted to be and I said "a bodgie." I suppose that's what I've become to a certain extent, with my MkII Zephyr, my success vaguely outside society ... What is an 80s bodgie? I don't know. If you are one, please write to *Rip It Up* and outline your cultural and social guidelines for membership, because I'd like to join.

Thanks for questions from: Helen McEvedy, Christchurch; Carolyn Mark, Fielding; Tina, Greymouth; Kaylene Heaney; M.J. Page, Wellington; Brent C, Auckland; B. Rapson, Christchurch; Linda Musson, Christchurch; Steve Spencer, Napier and Grant "Bodgie" McIntosh, Papakura.

Pete Shelley

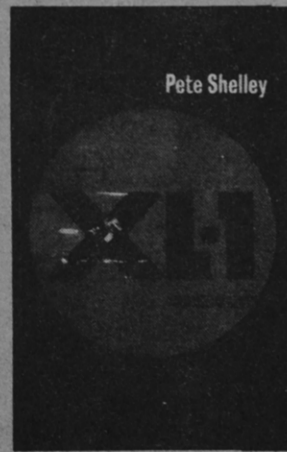
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