

'CHURCH' FROM PAGE 14

every man for himself." He doesn't seem to relate much to the glorious uncertainty of performing live, the "danger" that John Cale speaks of. Maybe that's the problem.

Tony could have been purpose-built as a roadie. When the band plays, concentration and dedication are etched on his face as he tunes guitars, changes strings with a torch clenched between his teeth. Occasionally he lets loose a smile, as if to encourage the band.

"When I first started to work for this band I heard they were real pricks to work with, but they're fine. I heard the lead singer was the worst, but he says bugger-all," he says. "Of course, about once every six weeks I have to give them a talking to and remind them what's what."

Kilbey's lyric writing is perhaps the most common target for critics of the Church. He's conscious of it.

"I can't understand why people have such high expectations of us that they don't have of other

bands. I mean there's people like those idiots in Australia writing lyrics like 'get down on your knees woman and suck me till you're blue' and that's fine and yet some people go through my lyrics with a fine-toothed comb trying to find an absurdity or somewhere the rhyming scheme doesn't work properly. I don't know why that is."

Do you think your lyric writing is improving?

"It's getting hard to push the lyrics any further. I'm sometimes a bit disappointed with them. I'm just too impatient to really work on them and get the best out of them. I put something down and think: 'I'll come back to that later' and I never do and it ends up on the album."

Do you think people can identify with your lyrics?

"What do you mean by identify?"

Alright then, understand them ...

"I don't know if it's all that important that they understand it. I don't understand it myself. I think a lot about lyrics and with a lot of songs you look at the lyrics and they're just meaningless. My lyrics are there as ... an abstract pointer to what the music is, I don't know. Some of them are quite easy and understandable and some I write because, quite frankly, they rhyme. Doesn't everyone do that? That's why songs aren't really a good vehicle if you've got a thought to express to the general public. You've got all these restrictions of rhyme and metre and there are certain words you're not allowed to use in rock 'n' roll ..."

It's good to see that Kilbey doesn't put a great deal of stock in his lyrics, they're written quickly and quite a few are pretty silly. But amidst the most barnstorming pseudery he can come up with gems like: "I turn to leave, as if in a cameo," from 'Electric Lash'. His strength isn't in his words but it

isn't all in his music.

The Church among themselves are far from as morose as you might expect from their records. They all crack jokes. Kilbey cracks the most but nearly all his humour is barbed. Ploog and Wilson-Piper seem the most outgoing - they sat around on their hotel beds talking to various locals before and after the Auckland concert.

They'd have reason to be despondent. A heady rush of success degenerated into an international trek, playing nearly every night and not seeming to make much progress. They're now in debt and can't afford to leave Australia again for Europe this month as they'd planned. Is Kilbey disillusioned after this year's events?

"More disillusioned, yeah."

Did you expect to do better?

"Well, I didn't expect to do the same thing over and over again."

Is there any way out of the grind?

"If I knew that I wouldn't be sitting here in Auckland now. I'd be back in England. It's just getting the money to finance things."

So the Church will go into the studio to record an album early next year. On this album Kilbey wants everyone in the band to do some writing. In the meantime they'll be playing things low-key.

But how about long-term goals? Would you like to develop your songwriting or don't you see it as a craft in that way?

"No, no, I don't think of it like that. That phrase freaks me out actually - 'Would you like to develop your songwriting?' It's just a continuing process, not something you necessarily get better at. In fact, history shows that most great songwriters have stagnated after a point."

You've got a book of poetry coming out soon. Can you see yourself as an author in the future?

"I don't see myself as anything

the 'ARRY AWARDS

With the record companies giving out awards to various twits like Patsy Riggir and Dave Dobbyn it's time for 'ARRY to do 'is again. I'm still nursing the bruises from last year's and this year there's bound to be more coming but 'ere goes:

- The You Know It's All for the Bugs Bunny Gold-Plated Moneybox: Gary Rodent.
- The Record Profits for Lion Breweries Silver Tankard: The Tryhards.
- The Record Profits for Dunbars Whisky Trophy: Doug Hood and Ian Dalziel.
- The Annual 'Nice Poster, Shame About the Concert' Award: The Dead Kennedys.
- Prize for the Best Advertising Jingle for a Japanese Car: Coconut Rough.
- Captain Crabbe's Award: Jordan Luck.
- The Ceremonial Silver 'Er,

- Only Four Cans, Officer' Keyring: Simon Elton.
- The 'Use the Gents and Not the Fence' Platinum-Plated Miniature Urinal: Mike Corless.
- The 'You Can't Fly the Coop When You Owe That Much Loot' Silver Handcuffs: Simon Grigg.
- The 'Praise the Jacksons and Pass the Boot Polish' Special Award: Murray Cammick.
- The 'My Head is No Bigger Than My Body, But Then That's 400 Pounds' Statuette: Roger King.
- The 'Flogging A Decomposing Horse' Trophy: The Screaming Meemees.
- The 'But There's More Money in Encyclopaedias Than Records' Book Prize: Paul Rose.
- The 'Tattooed Arm With A Can of DB Out the Window of a Holden V8' Statuette: Tomorrow's Parties.

- The 'Fucking Fish is Fucking Old, the Fucking Chips are Fucking Cold' Plate: Mainstreet.
 - The 'Evidently Chickentown' Award: Palmerston North.
 - The 'Let's Go Funky Now, Everybody's Funky Now, Come and Fuck it Up With Me' Trophy: DD Smash.
 - The 'I've Got My Fingers in So Many Pies That I'll Soon Have to Wipe Them Off My Face' Cup: Ralph E. Boy.
 - The 'So Who's A Hippo?' Memorial Medallion: Ian Kingsford.
 - The Special 'I Brought Foot and Mouth from Timaru to Auckland' Shield: Russell Brown.
 - The 'Would You Buy A Used Car From This Man?' Award: Roger Shepherd.
 - The 'But Peter Doesn't Sound French' Rosebowl: Peter Ulrich.
 - The 'But Nor Does Mark and I'm a Pom' Award: Mark Phillips.
 - The 'This is & That was' Award: Andrew Boak.
- So there it is, and it's Turangi here I come. 'ARRY

except someone who's struggling really hard to make a bit of money. I don't have any illusions, I really don't."

Like his countryman Nick Cave, Steve Kilbey is fond of taking pleasure from his pain. They're happily unhappy, the pair. It's a good way to create -

so long as you keep a shrewd eye on yourself. But unlike Cave, Kilbey doesn't have a towering, blasphemous onstage persona. He's ill at ease before a crowd. He doesn't have Cave's brutal lyrical conciseness either. But he does have a real gift for melody that can express things he can't get out otherwise. He's a romantic, in a

different way. Nick Cave sluices down whisky, Steve Kilbey smokes marijuana.

The Church are a young band. They can still get excited in a quite charming way. But it must be hard to get things done when your greatest strength lies in your naivety. Russell Brown

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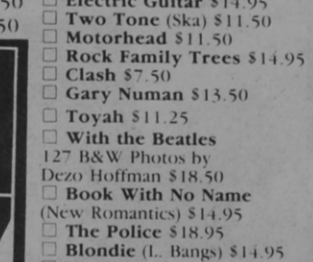
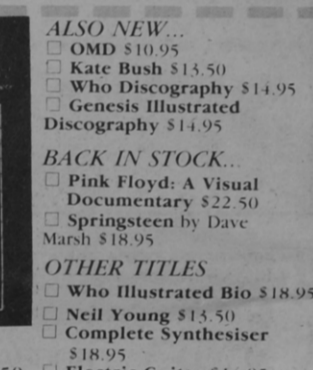
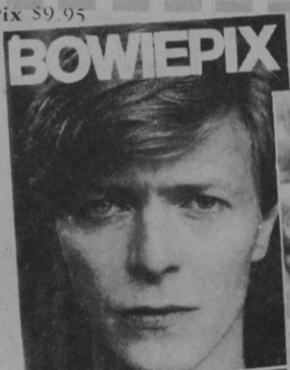
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