

Models in Motion

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know what I'm wearing. What I go for, lookwise, is to look as nineteenth century as possible without wearing nineteenth century clothes, you know what I mean? I think the biggest influence on the way I look is that picture of Arthur Rimbaud that Picasso drew, the one in the oval. Biggest influences on image, we'll say, Arthur Rimbaud and Jean Shrimpton.

"I think looks kind of evolve. I sussed out my image pretty early in life though. I'm quite conservative, really. I always wear the same kind of clothes. I don't possess any casual clothes."

He turned his head away from me and his voice faded for a time. When he turned back, I could hear him again.

"I'm working on a screenplay at the moment, I'd like to get a commercial director interested in it. It's based round a little-known DC Comics character called Dead Man. He just looks like an ordinary citizen, quite good looking. He used to be a trapeze artist and he's a restless spirit who can't completely die until he catches the engineer of his demise, a character called the Hook."

"All DC characters have identity crises, at least three in each issue - walking through the city streets wondering why they're doing all this, dressing up this way. But this particular character has more identity crises than anyone. Practically one every page."

I hoped this talk of death wasn't any kind of macabre humorous preamble to the real thing. Anyway, the crowds were making me nervous. I left the shop and struck a nonchalant pose outside the door. Eventually this John Cooper Clarke, the poet, walked out into the bustling street.

With speed born of desperation, I was on him in a flash and had

his frail frame pinned against the shop window. I demanded to know who he was and what he did.

"I'm John Cooper Clarke," he said nervously. "I'm a poet."

What sort of poet?

"I do gigs and things, y'know ..."

Gigs? Gigs! GIGS!

My mind lit up like a Guy Fawkes sky, bright strands of memory shooting through it like rockets, crossing and interlinking. My story had been thus, I realised:

I had squeezed into a hotel with hundreds of others to hear this man's words. There had been bustle, noise, laughter ... and booze, lots of booze ...

I remembered a vague disappointment at the similarity of the previous night's show to a similar one I had witnessed fully 11 months earlier. (Just how devastatingly had this amnesia slashed at my memory?) Others had felt the same sensation ... I told him these things.

"I don't agree that people get disappointed about that. I think where most of those 60s groups went to pieces was this onus on them to progress. I can only think of three groups from the 60s who didn't completely blow their credibility in the 70s. The Velvets, the Hollies and the Searchers are the only groups that kept the magic that got them there in the first place. The rest of them progressed up their own arseholes and fuckin' disappeared."

"Yeah, sure I'm writing new stuff but I couldn't remember what I'd done last time - it was a lot of gigs ago. I didn't think I'd done 'Ten Years in an Open Necked Shirt' last time. I didn't do 'Death Takes a Holiday'. But for the rest of it I figured I'd be pretty safe if I did the favourites. I mean, you can't go wrong, really. I wouldn't



Models: Sean Kelly, Barton Price, James Freud, Andrew Duffield.

Australia's Models haven't exactly had a high profile in this country. They've never played live here and probably the most significant fact about the band to locals is that Buster Stiggs used to drum for them.

That will all change later this month when the Models play support on David Bowie's two NZ dates - to upwards of 100,000 music fans.

They will be bringing with them a new single 'I Hear Motion' followed by the recently completed album *The Pleasure of Your Company*. The album was made with the well-known producer Nick Launay.

Main Model Sean Kelly is on the line from Perth, where the band is playing. First question: Why was this latest album recorded in Sydney and not in Britain as the last one *Local And/Or General* was?

"Well, firstly because we had a great studio to record in. And when we recorded our last album in Britain it was mainly because there was no studio time available here. At that time, two years ago,

you had all these horrible groups hogging the studios."

The fact that the Models could wave Launay's name around undoubtedly made it easier for them to get into a good studio. What was Launay like to work with?

"He's an amazing engineer. He's a very meticulous producer but he engineers himself and takes a lot of care putting the sounds down."

They're pleased with the final product, Kelly says. I've only heard the single, which definitely leans towards the dancefloor. Does that reflect the rest of the album?

"In relation to 'dancefloor' it does a bit, but the actual style of music on the album is very varied, I think. It's a very straightforward style but it's got lots of other influences, like jazz ... it's quite a unique fusion."

How many of the songs were written in the studio?

"We wrote about a quarter of the stuff in the studio and the rest is stuff we've been playing live over the past two years."

Two years - that is a long time between albums.

"Yeah. We had a lot of trouble recording the last album. We were under pressure at the time. And it's

have been disappointed if I'd been in the audience. I would have got all the numbers that I came to hear.

"This constant desire for new stuff ... I mean, obviously, I'm writing all the time. Some of it makes it in books, some of it's good on TV, some of it's good for magazines. But only certain poems make it live. You've got to remember that an audience is on their feet and their attention span is really very limited. You've got to do the stuff with the punchlines."

I loosened my grip on him. The

things he said sounded logical. Suddenly feeling foolish, I let go of him altogether and mumbled an apology. Said I'd had a rather confusing day.

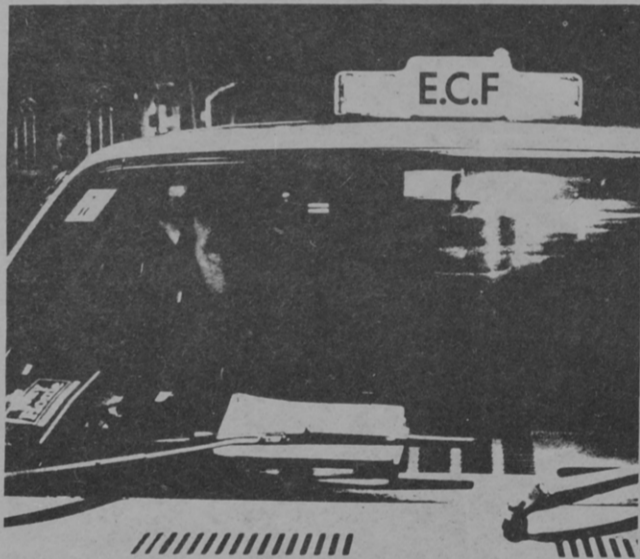
"Yeah, right Jack," he murmured and took off into the setting sun as fast as his spindly legs would take him.

I stood and watched, wondering what the sun was doing setting already, but then it had been that kind of day.

Yes, John Cooper Clarke the poet had been right. It wasn't the speling of well-known "numbers" that had left me a little downcast.

I too wanted to hear my favourites. What had made me sad was the sensation that here was a talented artist taking his audience for granted. Trotting pretty listlessly through a set he had done a hundred times or more, taking the money and running. But I could feel a little of this basically good man's dilemma. You can't be stunning every time but you've still got to pay the rent. And everything else. It's a fact of life.

And the facts ain't always pretty.
Russell Brown



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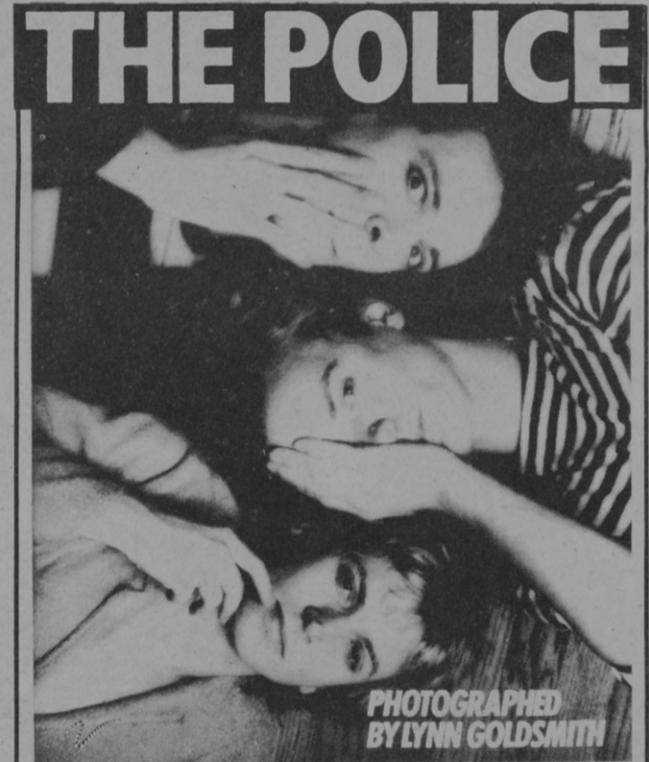
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