



Rich Girl

Max Sharam strolls into the foyer of the Regent Hotel, and she looks a million bucks. Immaculate in a black pinstriped suit and crisp white shirt, she's clutching a dirty navy sock, full of 20 rusty 50 cent coins, that appear as though they've been at the bottom of the sea for a hundred years.

"This is all my New Zealand money!," she exclaims.

According to the press in her native Australia, this is not untypical behaviour. Music papers nationwide have labelled Sharam a fruitcake, and she appears willing to exploit it. In Auckland to promote her debut album, *A Million Year Girl*, she attempts to explain what makes her tick.

"Most of where I come from is based on how you feel, your soul, your love connection, as opposed to mental, logical reasoning. I think what happens in my case is that my music is removed from my sense of

logic. It's like making love, you let go with everything and you have no boundaries, there's no limitations to what you can say or do when you're impassioned or completely in love with something. When you're in your head, which I am quite a bit, that's when you're analytical. But most of my time is in that musical space, which is totally boundary-less."

Sharam, who provoked a record company bidding war after she appeared on the conservative Aussie TV show *New Faces* in a gold lamé suit with a shaved head, says her aim with *A Million Year Girl* was to make a record that the ladies would enjoy.

"Women get off on different things in music than men. The music that men have been making for so long has usually been directed at wooing women in the real schmaltzy, Barry Manilow manner, or else a complete assault of the senses, which is loud and aggressive, like cock rock. But there's this other side — if women were making music for women, what would women want to listen to?"

JOHN RUSSELL



Hunters: Living in a Powerstation

Hot on the heels of their live double album, *Living in Large Rooms and Lounges*, Hunters & Collectors play Auckland's Powerstation Feb 23 and 24. With Barry Palmer's spin-off project Deadstar ("a little three-piece band" says guitarist Jeremy Smith), and a Mark Seymour solo album in production, Smith is quick to deny that all of Hunters are doing the solo thing. "We're not like Kiss with every member of the band doing a solo album." The first live disc in the set is the semi-acoustic *Live at the Continental Cafe*, a hip Melbourne eatery with tables for a few and standing room for many. "It sounds like a cabaret but it's really good playing in an intimate venue. It's really popular for all sorts of music from thrash to jazz. I don't think they serve dinner with thrash." This format has grown out of a couple of Hunters doing one or two songs as promotional appearances on TV or radio shows. "It feels real fresh doing it." The band are currently on a summer tour after six months off. "It happens every year," says Jeremy, "We tour January and we miss every Big Day Out." Why no 'Talking to a Stranger'? "The line-up of the band is different," says Jeremy, "It's just history."

MURRAY CAMMICK



Mentals: Not Crazy After All These Years

"We never broke up," says Mental As Anything drummer David Twohill. A "hiatus" is how he describes the Mentals' absence from the recording world. The rockers with art school / *Mambo* credentials galore, have jumped headlong into the interactive era with the interactive CD *Liar Liar Pants on Fire*. David jokes that, "We were made an offer we couldn't understand so we went with it." In fact the Mentals don't run their company in a loose fashion, they own their own recordings, they pay themselves wages, and they don't leave home for more than two weeks. "You don't want to tell your wife you're going away for three months. What was that Neil Finn song — 'Darling Be Home Soon'?" When faced with record company indifference the Mentals recorded the *Bicycle* EP and "gave it away to the first 300 people at selected gigs. Triple J played something that couldn't be purchased in a shop. By the time we got back from tour, record companies were phoning us." The CD-Rom interactive component on any CD copy of *Liar Liar* is two video clips, and tram painting footage. The Mentals are into this CD-Rom thing, so expect *The Mental As Anything Art Gallery* sometime, and a New Zealand tour in the near future.

MURRAY CAMMICK

Hey, Little Iva

Shocking news in pop music circles can come in many forms — Robbie leaving Take That, Louise waving goodbye to Eternal, and the continued lack of solo material from Andrew Ridgeley.

The revelation this month is that Iva Davies and Icehouse are alive and kicking, and still in show business. Their new album *The Berlin Tapes* is a 13-song collection of covers. The original artists include Bowie, Sinatra, PIL, and Lou Reed. During the making of the record, Davies suggested to long time friend and Sydney Dance Company choreographer Graeme Murphy that a ballet could be constructed around the songs. The resulting production, *Berlin*, was toured successfully in Australia, and was recently staged at the Aotea Centre. For Davies, the creation of the ballet also meant he could intentionally get a bit vague about describing the album.

"One reason I wanted to attach this album to a dance work was so could describe it as an adjunct to a stage work. I prefer not to refer to it as a covers album, because I've always had incredible problems with covers albums — generally, I hate them. But obviously, in its form here, it looks exactly like a covers album — in fact, it is."

Davies has no plans to record any original Icehouse compositions until 1997, but the man who penned a string of hits in the early 80s, including 'Hey, Little Girl', 'No Promises' and 'Crazy', keeps a keen eye on the pop music landscape of today.

"I tend to have an overall view that music is a cyclic thing, and also I guess my view of music is constrained by having a certain

knowledge of the history of music going back hundreds of years. I don't think anything's changed much — there are periods when music is more disposable, and there are periods where it is more intense. For example, dance music these days is practically in the same category as disco was regarded when it was happening. That is, it is music generated entirely for the purpose of dance — which is totally valid — but perhaps it doesn't hold up to any scrutiny beyond that. But then we're likely to go through some incredibly intense period of art making. But none of this is new, nothing's really changed, nothing is original."

JOHN RUSSELL



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