

RIDING FOR RECOGNITION

BIKE



FOUR STOREYS UP FROM QUEEN STREET, IN AN OFFICE ADJACENT TO THE FLYING NUN BOARDROOM — WHERE ANDREW BROUGH IS SEATED, ROLLING A CIGARETTE — A SCRAWLED FAX PINNED TO THE WALL READS; 'PHEW! THIS BIKE SINGLE MOVES LIKE A MOTHERFUCKER! I CAN SEE NOW WHY HE SACKED STRAITJACKET FITS!'

Brough, the leader of Auckland trio Bike, parted ways with Straitjacket Fits at the tail end of 1991. At that point, armed with an American major label deal, the Straitjackets were widely heralded as the biggest international hope for antipodean pop music. As events transpired, the Fits said goodbye at New Zealand's inaugural Big Day Out in 1994. By then, Bike was the only band on Brough's mind.

Three years on, Bike's second single 'Circus Kids' is turning ears, and their debut album, Take In The Sun, has just hits the record stores. Ensnared at the Nun offices in promo mode, Brough is reluctant to dwell on the past, but agrees to a few queries as to his state of mind when he left the Fits.

"It was at a time when I started to see I had the ability to write music, and that I could write good songs. I didn't feel that I was

contributing enough to the music, and felt that if I was true to myself I had to go out and do it on my own, and not be under the coat-tails of another songwriter who was essentially the leader of the band. It was important for me to prove to myself that I could do it on my own, which is what the last few years have been about.

"There was no doubt that Straitjackets were on a good wicket, and by leaving there was a certain amount of feeling of missing the boat. That said, at that particular time, being a big pop star wasn't the important thing to me. Initially we thought, 'we're going to be pop stars', but when it started to happen I wasn't overly impressed by it. The bullshit that goes along with being in a big pop band is just that, bullshit."

Did your experiences with the band leave you resentful or bitter?

"No, I'm not bitter about it. I was left with certain cynicisms about the record industry; essentially music is a product, and I think musicians are exploited so record companies can make dollars selling units. You have to realise that if you want to pursue music, that's part of the deal, if you want to reject the industry, don't moan when you're not achieving. It sometimes seems hypocritical for me now, because I despise the industry within which I'm working, but I'm still striving to achieve in it. You do make compromises, and you do play the game, because in the end it's all about selling records, getting the music out there and across to as many people as possible."

What lessons did you learn from being in the Straitjackets?

"The main thing I learnt from Straitjacket Fits was democracy in bands doesn't work.

One thing I have undertaken with Bike is, I want control over the creative aspects of the music so that I'm totally happy. I don't want to be seen as a musical dictator that can't hold a band together. I realise that the band is an important part of getting the music across, but my preference is that the responsibility of the creative force of the music is all mine."

How does working with Flying Nun now, differ from the Fits days?

"It's fair to say that Flying Nun is a different company now. I see Flying Nun at the moment as in a transitional phase between the old school bands, and them looking at heading into the 21st century and surviving. For Bike, it's good timing because the company's not swamped with a whole lot of brilliant bands as they were in the 80s. We're in a fortunate position that they're prepared to spend money and time on Bike."

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