

a line of merchandising or want to create a hair product in their name, why shouldn't the manager share in the spoils of those commercial things. It's like a team effort. Anything you help generate income wise, a manager should be entitled to take a commission on it."

When you talk about '20% of' are you talking about 'of net profit' or 'of gross income'?

"In most instances you're talking about gross, but this is where it is so difficult. I think it was Madonna who had a deal whereby her manager's income was capped at a million dollars annually. There are other instances where the artists pay all the management expenses and the manager takes a wage similar to the wages the band members are getting. There are a lot of different formulas. You can't say 'this is the exact way it should be done'."

"If an artist thinks they can run their career without paying a management commission, they should do it. That's like negotiating a record contract without a lawyer. If you don't want to pay a lawyer to tidy up the fine print on your record contract, then don't, you'll probably find you don't have a very good contract. There are people out there who don't believe they should pay agents 10% to book their gigs. The bottom line on it is, I think agents belong in the business and should be paid, because if the manager is really focussing on what he should be doing, helping the band, driving the record company and strategising into the future, he hasn't got time to sit on the phone all day worrying about whether you work the hotel at the north end of town or the south end of town. Pay somebody else 10% and get on with exploring wider fields of opportunity for your artist."

If you compare Crowded House with Split Enz, with Crowded House was there a greater maturity of understanding of the business side of the music business? Were Split Enz green all the way?

"Without making them sound like boofheads I think that if you spoke to Neil, Eddie Rayner or Tim, they would clearly say that was the case. That's not my opinion, I've gathered that from them. They were not savvy to the way the business worked at all. In fact I was just talking to Eddie Rayner about this, this morning, the one guy who always had a feel or an eye on the business end of their career was Neil Finn. It is interesting that he has had the most successful career post-Split Enz. There are a lot of artists who abdicate from responsibility and think they can hand the whole thing to a manager, and they don't have to worry about life."

"There are days I tell Neil Finn what to do, there are days he tells me what to do. It's a relationship. We bounce ideas off each other. Sometimes I try and coerce him into doing things he doesn't want to do and sometimes he forces me to do things that I am not that comfortable doing, but that is what a business relationship is about. You use the best of both brains."

Hasn't it got to a point where every musician or songwriter has to be an amateur music business specialist?

"I don't think they have to be a specialist, but if they don't want to get ripped off, they have to have a loose understanding of how the business works. They have to have a bit of a view of the way life works, but I don't think they need to be able to do it all themselves."

"The entertainment business in general attracts a lot of the wrong sorts of people. They look at entertainers, think they make a shit load of money and think, 'wow, wouldn't it be great to get a slice of this.' Their motivation is not the people they represent or the music but more the fact that they can get in there and rip and take part of the money."

The sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll perception?

"It still exists to a degree. If anyone wants to look at how corrupt and immoral the business is there's a great book *Mansion On A Hill*. It talks about Bob Dylan and his manager, Springsteen and his manager, and David Geffen and all the ills and dishonesty that goes on behind the scenes."

My perception is a lot of the great talents I've met inherently don't have a clue as to what's going on... when they start off?

"I would say that's right, when they start off. But the ones that have ended up having careers 10 or 15 years down the road, they all definitely have a clue as to what is going on."

Even though Split Enz were green and they made big mistakes, you can see big mistakes in the Crowded House story, too.

"Oh, Yeah. You've only got to read the book Chris Bourke wrote *Something So Strong*. I think Neil's on record as saying 'we made a shit load of mistakes.' We got

a lot of things wrong, but we worked really hard and got a lot of things right as well. The other difference is, Split Enz, it was 10 years earlier. From the start of Split Enz to the demise of Crowded House you're talking about 20 years, and things have really changed dramatically in 20 years."

Do you see making mistakes as just part of achieving success?

"There is the perception in life that if someone is successful that every thing they do they get 100 percent right. That's just not true. What it is about is the people that are successful are the people who get more things right than they get wrong."

Were you surprised by Neil's decision to disband Crowded House?

"Not really. He'd been in a band for 20 years of his life. I was surprised he didn't use the line that Lady Diana used, that there were 'three in her marriage.' There were six or seven in his family life by the time he had other band members, managers, crew and he has a wife and children. It's a bloody lot of people to have dependent, or not so much dependent as interconnected with, on a day to day basis. He is on record as saying that band had gone as far as it could creatively. They were at risk of repeating themselves. I think it was a brave move but I don't think it was a stupid move. You've got to be prepared to keep reinventing yourself. Crowded House in the initial stages fired in America and in

latter stages fired in the UK, but clearly the band was not finding the global mass acceptance that I think the band was deserving of. When you look at the four albums that Crowded House made and you look at the commercial success of them around the planet you could suggest that we missed by quite..."

You are talking about substantial millions of albums sold. Surely you can't achieve higher than that?

"I don't want to appear ungracious or greedy [phone goes]... if you sold a couple of million records, that's great and it's better than selling 20,000 records, but if what you've got is really good, why can't you sell 20 million records?"

But you don't want to be like Bruce Springsteen and sell 20 million and then nobody wants to hear from you anymore... you don't want that?

"Absolutely. Crowded House's career was fine but we lost a lot of ground in America and you can clearly point your finger, not at the band or the calls the management were making, but the record company [Capitol] was a revolving door, it was not in good shape."

Was it a foregone conclusion that Crowded House would do the big final show in Sydney?

"Neil hung me out to dry for about five months on that. I was working surreptitiously behind his back on trying to pull all the bits together. Neil wasn't convinced it was the

right thing to do. He finally confirmed it was the right thing to do five weeks before we did it. I'd been working on the planning for five months, so I could pull it together quite quickly."

Will you ever make New Zealand your home again?

"I'm a New Zealander. I don't have an Australian passport, I have a New Zealand passport. I get to come home between six and 20 times a year, but I think that Sydney will always be where I reside. I think it's a really beautiful city and it just happens to work for me on a business level. In the future, if I'm going to do the best thing for the people I represent, rather than coming back to Auckland I'm likely to move to London, New York or Los Angeles. I need to be where I can get the best results for the people I represent. I don't think being in Auckland and having coffee on a day by day basis with the people I represent (while I'd love to be able to do that), would be doing the best job I could for their careers. I can do the best job for their careers by not being here, by being somewhere else."

Do you work in a more positive psychological environment in Sydney? Is New Zealand's 'tall poppy syndrome' a reality or a myth?

"No, it's a reality, but it's a myth that it only exists in Auckland. It's human nature and it happens all over the world. The only reason

why you don't see it so much in England is because they have a class system which automatically means that if you're in that upper class, you're in the system you can't be chopped down. And in America they don't have a class system, so they invented their own, a star system. But in New Zealand and Australia, human nature dictates that anybody that gets off their arse and makes something of their lives, everyone else sits there and says, 'Why wasn't that me.'

"A lot of acts don't work as hard as they should at their careers, they've got really good golf handicaps, they are really good surfers, they know a lot about television but I don't think they work as hard as they should."

In all realism, 90 percent of people who choose to make music won't succeed?

"Yeah, I was a musician myself and at 18 years of age I was smart enough to realise I was never going to make it. I was this goofy guy with a pair of glasses who was not going to belong on the stage. I don't have a voice like Neil Finn. I can't write songs like Elvis Costello, or play guitar like Eric Clapton."

"I decided to switch horses. I still wanted to be in the music business but I realised I had a passion for the other side of the business and I directed my energies there. My life has been really fulfilled by doing what I did, and I have been well compensated for the energy I put into it."

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