

BAMBOO SHOOTS UP

Teina Benioni

Things started to get funky in Auckland this summer when a couple of thumping debut singles were released by two bands described last month as coming from the Ardijah school of funk.

"Who said we're from the School of Ardijah? Do you know who did it? I'd like to have a few words with that guy. Ha!"

That hearty laugh is a big part of Bamboo guitarist Teina Benioni's dialogue.

Together with his sister-in-law Norma Benioni on vocals and Peter Hoera on bass, Teina's got good reason to be happy. As Bamboo, their first record 'Do What I Did' has hit the Top 20. Things are looking up for the South Auckland trio. Teina told us about the hard slog and how he got funk under his fingernails.

"The School of Ardijah? I spoke to Ryan Monga (of Ardijah) about it too, because I had dinner over there the other night. He goes "Aw, doubt it!" We just learnt heaps off each other, it was a two-way thing."

How did your association with Ardijah come about?
"I played on 'Give Me Your Number' and that was it. They asked me to fill-in 'cause their guitarist took off to Norfolk Island. He never came back from a gig at the Gluepot. So I learned the repertoire in one day and one night, between 5 in the afternoon and 4 in the morning. The next night we played at the Gluepot and only twenty people turned up. Ha ha! So that was a wasted time. But we all learnt off each other."

How did mixing rock and funk

styles come about?

"I was kind of bombarded by all the music my friends like. I'd do a rock song and they'd go 'Argh, that sucks man. Do some funk.' I'd do some funk and they'd go 'Know any Doobie Brothers?'. I've just got all this stuff that I like."

Which musicians have influenced your playing style the most?

"Now it's Larry Carlton. In the past it was Jimi Hendrix, Doobie Brothers and Steely Dan."

So it's more on the rocky side of things.

"Yeah, it's not really in the funk direction. I used to listen to funk but not in a way that was going to help my guitar playing. I love the beat and everything about it though. I've been trying to look for my own style, writing my own stuff."

How hard did you have to hustle to get the attention of the record companies?

"It was really hard, the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life. A friend of mine, Tim Mahon, took a demo tape to Polygram and spoke to them. He played a big part and so did the Otara Music Arts Centre."

Is there a story behind 'Do What I Did'?

"There was a true story behind it



Bamboo (L-R): Teina Benioni, Norma Benioni and Peter Hoera

but the moral behind the single is different to what really happened. On the single it's referring to a fight but in actual life it was just a harsh argument between a man and his wife."

Why did you choose 'Ten Guitars' as the flip side?

"I wanted it as the A-side. We ran out of songs at a gig and we couldn't get anyone on the floor so we just stopped playing. Then this old lady walks up and says 'Can you play 'Ten Guitars'? I said 'Yeah, let's do it reggae-style and see what happens.' And it just took off."

Has audience response changed since the single has been out?

"No, but I walked through the school today, Papatoetoe High. A couple of the kids were going 'Hey, Bamboo! And there's me eating a pie going uh-oh."

How did you score the U2 support slot?

"The New Zealand promoters spotted us on Saturday Night Live and rang the studio while we were on telly. I learnt quite a bit about stage presentation from watching B.B. King at that gig."

Will you be expanding the line-up?

"Definitely. I've been looking for a keyboard player for three years. They're just not there. I want

someone who can play string parts and chords simultaneously, but with different rhythms."

What have got lined up

"We're doing our next single, 'Time'. We'll start recording that in April. We've been really busy working for a month now, gigging every day. We're going on a tour soon: Wellington, Palmerston North, Wanganui and New Plymouth."

How does Bamboo work as a unit?

"I do all the songwriting, arranging and laying down on tape. Norma's a fantastic lyricist and Peter's got an unreal groove. Peter's bass is the funk of the group."

"We formed a group called Turn Palace, did a gig, played for five

minutes and the management kicked us off stage for playing funk. They wanted a band that could play anything. We could, but they didn't give us a chance. Our manager was taken to court and I went with her. The judge said to the club's manager 'What do you think funk is?' The guy said 'It's stuff that black people play.' Then the judge turned to me and said 'And what do you think funk is Mr Benioni?' I said it's when the bass player starts slapping and plucking his strings and the judge went 'Alright!' and I won the case for our manager. And that's a true story. Guilty of funkiness, yeah? Yeah!

TROY SHANKS

CD's

Polygram have released the **Jam LP All Mod Cons** on mid-price CD.

Virgin Records have released a series of Vanguard blues and folk recordings (CD only) such as **Doc Watson Old Timey Concert** (22 tracks 72min), **Jimmy Rushing Essential** (14 songs 72min), **Skip James Devil Got My Woman** (12 tracks 50min), **Joan Baez Joan** (44min) and **5six** (40min), **Blues Live at Newport** (various artists 72min) and **Stand Back! Here Comes Charley Musselwhite's South Side Band**.

More blues and soul CDs from the Fantasy/Stax catalogues (via Festival) are **Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee & Peppermint Harris Going Down Slow**, **Stax Blues Brothers** (various artists) and **Dorothy Moore Winner**.

Recent mid-price CD releases from WEA include **Blues Brothers Made in America**, **B.B. King & Bobby Bland Together for the First Time**, **Dudley Moore Trio Live**, **Tim Buckley Greetings from L.A.**, **Everything But the Girl EBTG** and **Yellowjackets Yellowjackets**.

Eight **Smiths** three track CD singles have been released on Rough Trade via Festival (RRP \$9.99).

From the Grateful Dead label via Festival comes four CD and vinyl releases — **Grateful Dead From the Mars Hotel** and **Blues for Allah**, **Jerry Garcia Garcia**, **Bob Weir Ace**.

Two Virgin CD-only releases are **Ronald Shannon Jackson Taboo** produced by **Bill Laswell** and featuring **Vernon Reid** of **Living Colour** on guitar plus the music from the film **A Zed & Two Naughts** by **Michael Nyman**.

Music Videos

Smoke On The Water — **Rock Aid Armenia** is a new heavy metal collection released by Virgin featuring 15 classic videos by top acts, **Bon Jovi**, **Led Zeppelin** ('Dazed 'N' Confused'), **Emerson Lake & Palmer**, **Black Sabbath**, **Asia**, **Firm**, **Deep Purple**, **Rush**, **Pink Floyd** ('One Slip'), **Yes**, **Iron Maiden**, **Gary Moore**, **Foreigner**, **Mike and Mechanics** plus an all-star jam on 'Smoke on the Water'.

The **Who Live** video derived from their recent USA tour is a 135 minute epic featuring the televised performance of the rock opera **Tommy** with guests **Phil Collins**, **Billy Idol**, **Elton John**,

Patti Labelle and **Stevie Winwood**. Additional Who performances include 'Substitute', 'I Can See For Miles', 'Boris the Spider', 'Won't Get Fooled Again' and 'Join Together'.

UB40 are filmed in Italy, France, Ireland and their hometown Birmingham on their **Labour of Love II** video, interpreting 14 of their favourite reggae oldies.

Recent USA music video releases are **Neil Young Freedom** (2 videos, 7 live tracks), **R.E.M. Pop Screen** (9 videos), **Lou Reed New York Album** (14 songs) and **B-52's 1979-1989** (8 videos).



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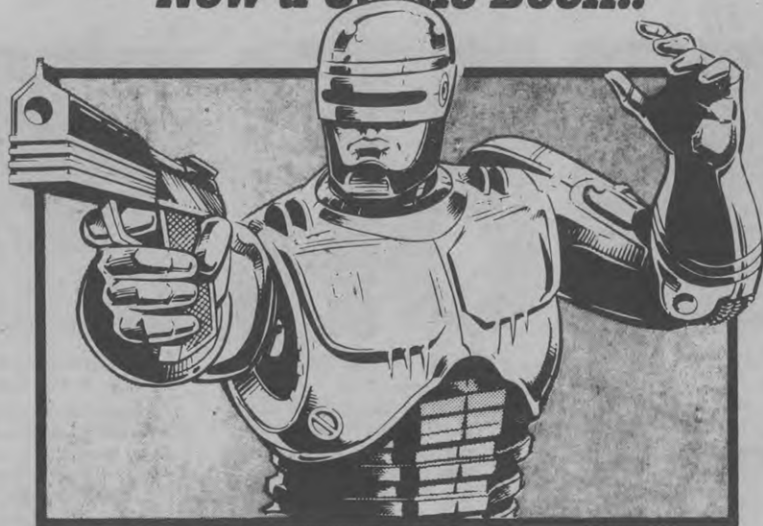
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