



Headless Chickens are (L-R) Michael Lawry, Grant Fell, Chris Matthews, Rupert E. Taylor, Anthony Nevison and Bevan Sweeney.

response to my question about Dunedin bands versus the Headless Chickens, "I think the main thing is the fact that electronic equipment is quite a big part of our music. That's actually very normal around the rest of the world but here we get people who just don't like us and can't accept that we use that sort of equipment. They see it as an easy way out of making music."

"I go and see so many guitar bands now and I know what they're doing is really easy. So many bands that get a long way aren't particularly talented. It's just so easy to sit down with a guitar and muck around with different guitar lines, it's an easy way of writing songs."

But the really dramatic, swirling chunks of your songs are on a floppy disc and you guys just add the rhythm and guitar icing. It can't be so satisfying to play.

Grant: "I find it a lot more satisfying. As a band we're much more into continually finding new ground and the way to do that, aside from writing really good pop songs like the Chills, is to go into technology. It's really hard for a lot of people to appreciate that rehashing something or picking up someone else's samples and then re-working them is a worthwhile thing. But Michael will find old records, really weird things like Steve Allen's 1974 Commonwealth Games record and sample something out of that. To me it's far more interesting to look for those little things and try to do something with creative technology."

So the Headless Chickens are heeding the siren call of England and America. But long term removal could be tricky because these Chickens travel in a pack.

"We've basically got eight people, with Justin our lighting guy and Rex, who's also in NRA" explains Chris Matthews, who has just breezed in from Grey Lynn. And of course Bevin also drums for NRA and Anthony, the Chickens keyboardist, does their sound.

Grant adds that there are other considerations. "Anthony and Angus (who's our monitor person so he's sort of like the ninth member) have just set

up a 16 track studio in Symonds Street called Incubator. That's one of the reasons we haven't played much — we've been working on that for three months."

They've also been working on the soundtrack for a short film called *Postscript* by Peter Tait, the actor who plays the unhappy gas cranker in the 'Gaskrankenstation' video (and by the way, that was Bevin up there on the stills).

Chris: "We want to do more soundtrack work. It's a neat thing to do, I reckon. It's interesting how hard it is trying to write a piece of music that will fit what's going on the screen."

"We're all been busy thinking about the band even though we haven't been playing live. We're always writing, it's a constant thing," adds Grant.
DONNA YUZWALK

UPCOMING RELEASES

Iggy Pop *Brick By Brick*. Co-writers include GNR's Slash & Duff, Don Was produced, B52's Kate Pierson duets. Maxi Priest *Bona Fide*. Producers include Soul II Soul. The Time *Pandemonium*. Reunion album — Jam & Lewis, Morris Day, Jesse Johnson etc record as Time again. Winger *In the Heart of the Young*. Romanian Angel Appeal to help homeless children. Various Artists contribute new or rare studio or live performances. Paul Simon and

George Harrison duet on 'Homeward Bound' and Mike & the Mechanics do 'Ain't That Peculiar', both from TV appearances. Other artists include Guns N'Roses, Billy Idol, Van Morrison, Dave Stewart and Elton John. Dusty Springfield *Reputation*. Wendy & Lisa *Eroica*. ELO *Afterglow* boxed set. Prince *Crafttiti Bridge*. Includes tracks by Tevin Campbell and Mavis Staples. Jane Wiedlin *Tangled*.

WHAT A GAS

Headless Chickens Update

"As a band we've never really operated above fifty percent of our talent. The amount of talent in this band is quite outstanding but it hasn't really surfaced yet."

So says Grant Fell, Headless Chickens bassist and video maker. We're sitting at a table in his K'Road warehouse flat wondering where the Headless Chickens fit into the scheme of things in a world which sees the Chills starring in LA and the Straitjacket Fits touring New York and the Verlaines going down a storm in Chicago. Why have the Headless Chickens — longtime lynchpins of the Auckland alternative scene with a quality debut album under their belt and now a hit single

('Gaskrankenstation') in the alternative and commercial charts — failed to make at least a dent overseas?

"Because we haven't had any records released over there," replies Grant, talking about oversights in the band's overseas distribution with an air of resignation. Seems there was a hitch in the form of someone in London who was prone to tossing Headless Chickens samples in the bin, rather than passing them on to the relevant people, because they

conflicted with his notion of the New Zealand sound. Which, as we all know, is the Dunedin sound.

That's all in the past now. Headless Chickens have been working on songs for a new album and a more switched-on overseas distribution deal. And evidently somebody out there managed to get hold of some of their vinyl. Recently New York's *Village Voice* phoned RIU asking for photographs, while American *Rolling Stone* included the Headless Chickens in their list of "hot" New Zealand bands ("spunky combos with steely guitars, warped pop charms and exotic monikers").

But the Headless Chickens do want to go overseas and make some money and find some fame. They've sort of got nothing more to play here (they don't want to die of overexposure). And as makers of dark, electronically induced dance music, they have less than zero in common with the mass of local jangly guitar bands.

"There's always been a competitive thing," says Grant, in

Playlist



ROLAND RORSCHACH

Lead howler with the Hallelujah Picassos and the man in skulls and boot buckles at DKD cafe, reveals a few personal signposts for Playlist. The Hallelujah Picassos debut tape *Taxi Driver* is all but sold out, but they're recording a mini-album in September.

GOD: "Oh yeah, she's a nice guy, shame about the attitude."

DRINK: "Listerine Mint." FAVE HANGOUT: "Other people's pants."

FAVE CITIES: "The Hague and Auckland."

FAVE ARTIST: "Clay S. Wilson (the checkered Red Demon)."

TOP 10 RECORDS:

1. Big Youth, *Dreadlocks Dead*.
2. All Schoolly D albums.
3. General Tree, *Ghostrider*.
4. Demented Are Go, *Perewig in the Park*
5. Soupdragons, *Can't Take No More '12*.
6. Little John Boom Bastic.
7. Shippy Peggy, 'Natty Bobby' 12".
8. Joyce Sims, 'Lifetime Love / All n' All' (remix).
9. Volnitza.
10. S.P.U.D. *Sour*

FAVE TV SITCOM: None. Don't watch it

FAVE SICK JOKE: "What is unborn and goes up and down on a string? An Embryo yo."

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Concrete Blonde bloodletting

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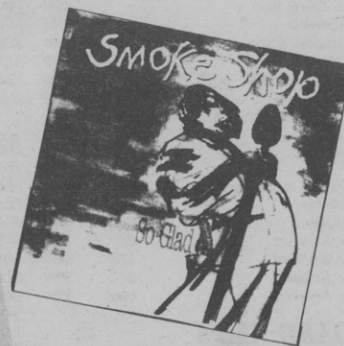
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