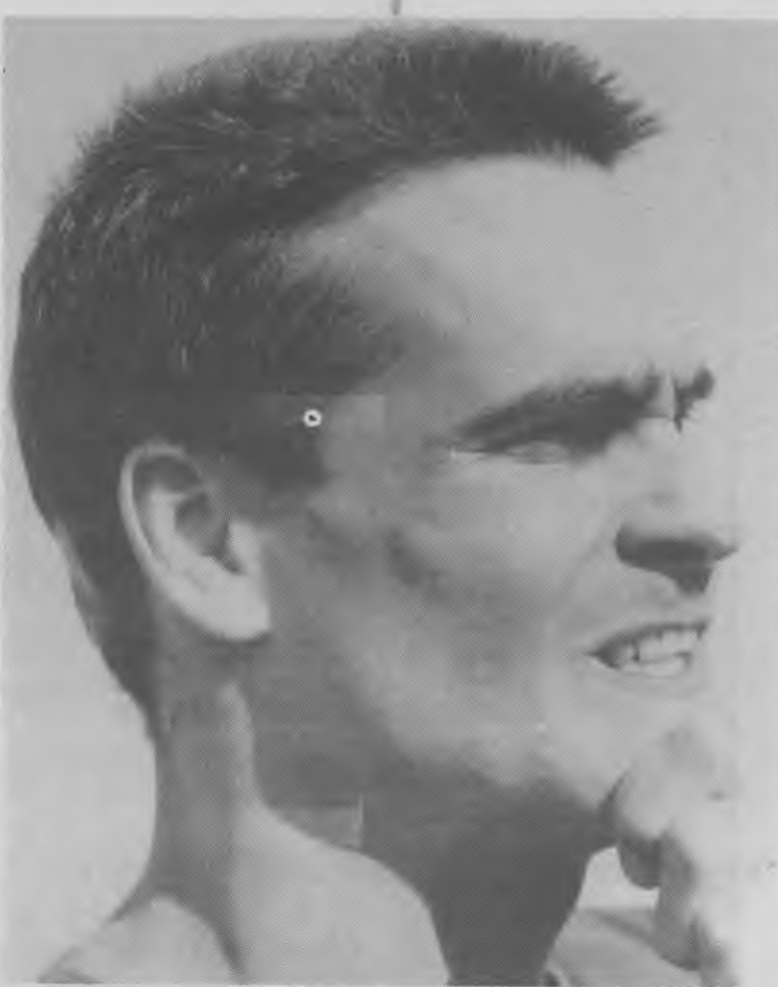


# ROLLINS



James Brown may have well been the hardest working man in show business for a long while, but nowadays that title most definitely needs to be passed on.

Great man though he is, the Godfather's work load comes nowhere near that of Henry Rollins who is involved in more schemes and combos than any five other musicians you care to name. First and foremost is his work with the Rollins Band, one of the hardest, tightest and most powerful bands working today. They have pretty much carved out their own genre in the last few years and now they have released *The End Of Silence*, their first album for a label not run out of someone's living room, and probably their finest work yet. Add to this Rollins' involvement in a number of other acts like the Hard-On's, his own publishing house and all manner of other projects like spoken word tours, solo recordings and video appearances, we're talking a real modern renaissance man here.

Despite all this, Henry Rollins still found time to talk to New Zealand. Well, sort of. The first attempt worked, but we never got around to doing any proper interview-type talking as Rollins was recovering from a European tour with the Chili Peppers. The second attempt was cut short as it was soundcheck time for a show with Ice T, but finally we were both in the right place at the right time and questions were asked, like 'How come you found your way onto a major?'

"Imago happened because a friend worked in A&R there and she really liked the band. She used to come see us a lot and she dragged

the President along one time and although he didn't really like us that much he listened to some demos and stuff and decided there was something there and it all just happened."

The album certainly has happened, the more I listen to it the more I think it's the band's best yet. The songs have all the power you'd expect from the Rollins Band and they've further explored the total intensity that can be achieved from slowing things down and fooling around with tempos, as on tracks like 'Blues Jam' which winds up sounding beyond heavy. A lot of credit can be given to the very clean production, courtesy of Andy Wallace, better known for his work with the likes of Slayer and White Zombie. A slightly surprising producer for an act like the Rollins Band.

"The thing with Andy happened because he was suggested by a friend, so we hooked up with him and he seemed like a really cool guy, he came to some practices and stuff and really liked us, and I bought some records he produced and liked the production no end, so we thought 'Yeah!'. I think what he's done suits us. It's a different sound, but it's still us."

Imago have proven to be an excellent choice as a label, they seem to understand the Rollins Band's approach and being a not too large label, they have the time to devote to the band. All the same, it seems strange that a major has picked up someone as notoriously

independent as the Rollins Band. How have things gone with Imago so far?

"It's not a problem at all, they're great. They do what they say they'll do, they don't lie, they get things done, they're basically nice people. There's a lot of work involved, doing promotion and interviews and stuff, but that's okay 'cause we actually achieve things."

Signing to a major label isn't such a bad move for a 'left field act' nowadays. After all, look what it did for Nirvana.

"Yeah, that's cool. I like Nirvana and I think it's a good thing. Although it's strange their album sold five million whereas the Jane's Addiction one only sold one million. I mean Nirvana are a good rock band, but I think Jane's Addiction have something really special happening. If they stayed together I think the next album would have been really big."

You've just been doing that Lollapalooza tour with Jane's Addiction, how did that go?

"It was really good, it was the biggest grossing tour in the US for 1991, bigger than Van Halen and everyone. It really set a precedent, like everyone had heard about it. Kids that weren't anywhere near it had heard about it, even you guys down there heard about it."

After all that, releasing an album and touring with the Chili's, it must be good to rest up a bit.

"I'm still really busy, doing a lot of stuff at the moment. Yesterday I had a meeting with Rick Rubin and it looks like we might be doing a small label together, so that's cool."

How was the show with Ice T?  
"It was real cool, we were

onstage and Duff from G n' R got up and he was kind of drunk and hanging off me trying to sing and stuff. It was pretty funny and Bodycount were really awesome. A good night."

2/13/61 is Rollins' publishing venture. He produces not only his own books, but works by Hugh Selby Jnr, Nick Cave, Don Baejema and others. It must be hell trying to fit all that work into a schedule.

"2/13 is really jamming at the moment. We're doing so much,

we've just done two of my books and soon there will be books by Bill Shields (great ex-Vietnam vet writer for you literary types), Don, Exene Cervenka and hopefully we'll be doing books by Alan Vega and Iggy Pop soon, so yeah, there's lots happening."

"With the book company I have people who help me, when I'm at home we have meetings and sort out what we need to do, then when I'm away on tour they have a lot of stuff to keep them busy. While I'm

away I do some writing and editing and stuff and when the band's not on the road I have the time to do the spoken word stuff. Basically I don't have time off, but that's okay, I like that."

A good thing really, because I can't see any other way for anyone to create on the level Rollins does. But hey, why believe me? Chase down those books and listen to *The End Of Silence*. These guys are definitely not fooling around.  
KIRK GEE



Music is most interesting when it's most bastardized and the current American industrial dance groove is definitely out there on the edge.

An amalgam of hip hop, metal, alternative, industrial and any other damn thing, the noise created by these people veers from captivating to unlistenable, but it is never boring.

Among the early practioners who have survived and mutated is M.C. 900 Ft Jesus, aka Mark Griffin. His name comes from tele- evangelist Oral Roberts, who claimed a 900-foot Jesus came to him in a vision. On his new album *Welcome To My Dream*, Griffin's music has gone from the early hip hop gone wrong to a new atmospheric blend, as heavy on the jazz style as it is on the hip hop beats. It certainly seems a strange musical vision for a white boy in Texas to follow, but as he explains it, all the elements are there.

"The music scene around here is like a combination of all the elements that are in our music, there's a big rap scene, there's a big jazz scene, especially around Dallas and I used some of those players on my record."

"What originally led me to this was I had been in bands all my life and I just wanted to be involved in something I could do on my own, and that's what made me buy a sampler. I could sit around the house and cook up a tune as opposed to being in a band and trying to write songs in a real collective way. I got tired of not being able to get anything done."

The jazz element is probably the biggest surprise in *Welcome To My*

*Dream*. Instead of the expected hard-core technology there's real instruments and a feel that makes you think of early jazz fusion, definitely not the usual approach for an artist most readily associated with the industrial music scene.

"I had lost a bit of my fascination with sitting at a sampler all day long. I was coming around to wanting to get away from that, so I started playing more and I used a lot of my friends on the record and it just took on a direction of its own. I wanted to incorporate some jazz elements, but I didn't want to dramatically change the sound. It just evolved into something different because of the players I was using."

The jazz feel creates a definite moodiness, lulling the listener rather than attacking. This is enhanced even further by Griffin's lyrics, which are more prose than poetry, a stream of somewhat perverted consciousness.

"I get kind of negative about the way I do lyrics. I don't think I do write pop lyrics, but musically my sensibilities are that way and the songs are put together that way. The sounds are maybe a bit more aggressive than a pop song, but that's just what the songs seem to need."

"It's just the way I see things, I think songs should tell a story from some perspective. I could sit and write about somebody, but to me it's a lot more interesting to put myself in somebody's shoes, especially if he's a

little fucked up anyway. To get inside their head and make it sound real, especially if they're off their rocker, is a challenge."

To this effect Griffin has even based his first single 'Killer Inside Me' around the Jim Thompson novel of the same name. Definitely not the sort of thing you do to win rock stardom.

"I've always been a huge Jim Thompson fan anyway, especially back when I wrote that song. I was trying to search out any of his books I could find, at that point I'd read about 14 of them, and I particularly wanted to catch their flavour and his sense of humour, especially in the character in 'Killer Inside Me' that has this really hidden and nasty hostile streak."

Maybe not the sort of thing most acts would do, but Mark Griffin is hardly approaching music from an ordinary perspective. He's a member of that select group of musicians who are taking a few chances with what they're doing, and damn the consequences. They see music as becoming a homogeneous mess and are willing to try and change that. Definitely an attitude we need.

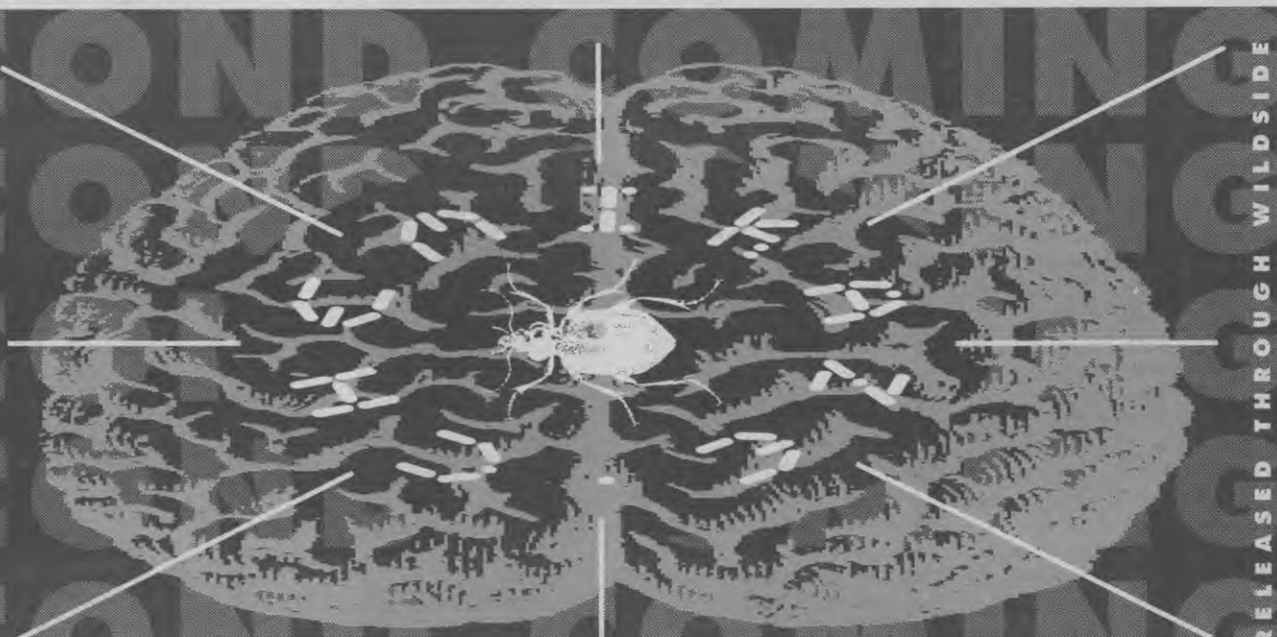
"I worked in a little indie record store for about eight years and I got to hear so many records that I was seeing all the cliches that people lapse into all the time. I got this really good motivation to stay away from other peoples' ideas, so I'm always looking for something new to do. I want to stay away from all the usual cliches."

KIRK GEE

CHEMIKAZE  
COMPACT DISC  
& CASSETTE

TRASCH

AVAILABLE MARCH 30  
INCLUDES THE SINGLE  
THE REASON RHYME



RELEASED THROUGH WILDSIDE