

► together, but to their credit, the Hoi Polloi approach is straight-up, no preaching, no anti-abortion songs dressed up as heavy-metal.

JENNY: "A song has never saved anyone and what we say is not going to save anyone, but hopefully our songs might generate questions in people's minds about issues. We just want to be provokers rather than providing the answer. No matter what people's beliefs are — from Madonna to Peter Gabriel — it's important to speak the language of your generation. If you're trying to say something you don't wrap it up in something completely irrelevant to the people you want to speak to, but you have to be real. As people that have the faith we have we're not about to go out and say 'we've got it together and all you guys are shits and you need Jesus'."

Hoi Polloi have definitely got it together career-wise. Jozsef says they were prepared to get themselves heavily in debt in order

to realise their aims. Spending six months a year in America will mean installing their young families in Nashville while the band gets out and meets n' greets. Singles sales in America stem from radio play, not video so the band will be working those reps. What will the great American public be hearing?

JENNY: "Our music ranges from passionate, hard driving rock to really mellow emotional phases. When I say mellow we aim for a lot of contrast in the song and in the set as well. It can go from really driving, dynamic stuff to really sparse and atmospheric. We set out to take people on a journey musically, create aural landscapes so people can enter into the song and maybe close their eyes and picture things because I use a lot of imagery and picture-orientated words in my songs."

There's no doubt that Hoi Polloi's chances of commercial mainstream success are subtly enhanced by the

photogenic presence of Jenny Gullen. The world's first Christian rock pin-up? How does she reconcile the raunchier aspects of live performance with her spiritual beliefs?

JENNY: "I think some women have unfortunately cheapened themselves on stage by being deliberately sensual when they don't need to be to communicate their songs, to get audiences into it and just perform with energy and passion. For some women it comes across very naturally as just the way they are. Others really manipulate what they do for marketing reasons and for me I think I'm willing to trailblaze the way for women to say yes, I am a sexual being, but I'm not here to turn you on, I'm here to say this is great music, I hope you enjoy my songs."

Hoi Polloi can see that this is their big chance and they're prepared to work their butts off, as Jozsef puts it. They consider themselves extremely

lucky, but they point out they also did the groundwork, getting into debt in order to send tapes overseas, hounding people, making sure their band got seen, refusing to wait on New Zealand label interest."

So they'll miss the greener grass of home, but admit it's exciting to tackle a new culture. Basing themselves in Nashville means they'll have access to some of the best studios, session players and engineers in the business while enjoying a smog-free environment. And if things get really lean, Jenny (who has a few awards for the genre under her belt) can always go country.

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singles

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS

The Life Of Riley (Virgin) CD Single

The English seem very enamoured by this guitar pop stuff. There's lots of folks like this guy doing this whimsical jangly impassioned sensitive stuff. Unfortunately I'm not English and this bores the butt off of me. Constructive criticism? Ummm, nice rocket ships on the cover and you Limeys have got some great rap bands.

MADNESS

It Must Be Love (Virgin) CD Single

One of the tamer, but thus more marketable offerings from a forthcoming Greatest Hits effort. For those of you who haven't heard these guys, they're a collision between the Beatles and ska. For those of you who have heard them, there's three bonus tracks on this single.

PIXIES

Alec Eiffel (Liberation) CD Single

If Madness are the ska Beatles, then the Pixies are the alternative Beatles. They use lots of melodies, jangly guitars that get real noisy in places and plenty of harmonies. This doesn't veer too far from their usual sound so it'll please the fans and you also get a couple of killer live tracks thrown in for good measure.

SOUL II SOUL

Joy (Ten) CD Single

Soul II Soul have actually made a few changes here. They've ditched that 90-whatever BPM groove they seemed to have the patent on and made a great soul record. Nice vocals, a big lush sound and a Brand New Heavies remix make this a goodie.

LEVELLERS

One Way (Liberation) CD Single

Sort of Billy Bragg with a better idea of what a beat is. It'll probably be big with socially concerned NME readers, but it strikes me as being a bit limp.

KILLJOYS

Spin (M.X.L.) CD Single

The Killjoys have a Vibraphone and sound like the Byrds with a female singer when they get rocking, while Paul Kelly just sounds a bit serious and upset with everything. Why our Tasman neighbours love this stuff will remain one of the world's great mysteries.

LEADLEG

Salt (B.T.T.) 12" Single

A while back Y.F.C. were doing some interesting things here, and now the core of that band are Leadleg and are doing interesting things in

Australia. Bleak but hypnotic, they seem to draw on the darker side of C & W as well as technology like samplers, and fuse it all with great results. Robbie Rakeite isn't going to twitch around to this, but that's probably why I like it so much. Hunt it down, it's worth the effort.

DEBORAH CONWAY

Release Me (Mushroom) CD Single

Intelligent, sensitive singer songwriter stuff that I'm far too immature to understand. Some cool hooks here though.

INSPIRAL CARPETS

Dragging Me Down (Liberation) CD Single

Sixties-style keyboards, dreamy vocals, harmonies everywhere, trippy lyrics, a white boy dance feel? It's the return of Manchester. These guys do try to rock a bit and use some tricky sounds, but that still doesn't excuse the haircuts.

ROLLINS BAND

Low Self Opinion (Imago) 12" Only

This is more like it, ole Hank hasn't got any mellower, but he has got a band who are the musical equivalent of one of Kurasawa's Samurai films: Hard, clean and remorseless. They are going to shake your head round no matter what, so just sit back and enjoy it, you're in good hands.

DANNI M.

Baby Love (Mushroom) CD Single

Not the completely crap Diana Ross cover I had hoped for, but actually young Miss Minogue getting funky and modern on us with a house sort of thing produced by Steve 'Silk' Hurley. Oh well, any starlet who wears her underwear on the outside and ends her name with 'ii' is fine by me.

LL COOL J

Strictly Business (M.C.A.) CD Single

Maybe not LL at his best, featuring as this does a swingbeat feel and someone singing a chorus, but still okay. LL is still sounding tough and Marley Marl does the production honours with his usual skill.

XTC

The Disappointed (Virgin) CD Single

These guys were once New Wave gods, they did quirky pop that was at times quite cool. A sort of new wave Beatles really, to continue what seems to be this month's analogy. Anyway, one of them went bald and formed Shriekback and the others now sound like a new wave Dave Clark 5.

THE CELIBATE RIFLES

Grooving In The Land Of Love (Festival) CD Single

No, that's it, I've had enough. Any more jangly guitars and I'll firebomb Apple Records. No wonder they invented rap.
KIRK GEE



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