



There's a line Peter Jefferies sings with the words "understated but overheard" in it. For the past decade the music of this Dunedin-based musician has been both under-rated and under-heard.

Jefferies first emerged during the early 80s in post-punk band Nocturnal Projections, followed by the vastly innovative and uncompromising This Kind of Punishment. Both bands also featured his brother Graeme, subsequently in the Cake Kitchen who are currently London based.

Since then Peter Jefferies has been in the dynamic, scorchingly beautiful rock band Plagal Grind (now defunct) and engaged in equally challenging duo recordings (most notably with Robbie Muir and Shayne Carter) and a solo venture.

Regardless of who it's been recorded with, his music has remained undeniably unique, passionate and original. In a music scene of everybody playing everybody else's songs, his remain fiercely untainted by trends.

"In broad terms it's alternative music, there's no effort made to make it commercially acceptable. I try to vary it, to alter styles," is Jefferies' own view of his output. "I try to think about the people who have heard everything else — there's not many of them — and think what could I possibly do to make them interested in another record I'm on." Contrasting sounds and approaches to the music is his principle aim.

Those that are interested get a massive kick from his music. Those that don't find it dark and (yawn) "depressing". To me, Jefferies is a calm and settled person, yet lyrically and musically he seems troubled and in continual emotional turmoil.

"I think I'm somebody that goes from ecstatic to completely miserable — I'm not in the grey area very often. When I'm feeling great I don't need to write songs. So they tend to happen when I'm at the point when I'm a bit more desperate or down or something," Jefferies explains. "They come to me when I need some sort of reassurance."

After a Plagal Grind gig about three years ago, I talked to Jefferies about Syd Barrett and drunkenly asked if he would ever do a solo album as well. "I already have" was the reply.

Jefferies had just finished recording his debut solo album *The Last Great Challenge In A Dull World*. Quite simply it is a brilliant album that fully exposes his diverse musical ability.

It's an album that sweeps broadly, from restrained piano pieces and strange tape experiments to frenzied, howling guitar and drum epics. One that Jefferies is still fairly happy with.

"It's one of the records that I'm pleased with all of the songs. I'm incredibly pleased with the musicians that helped play on it and worked on it with me (including members of the 3Ds and the Dead C). I can't bring myself to criticise it." Hear it and you'll realise why.

Originally an Xpressway cassette, American label Ajax released *Last Great Challenge In A Dull World* on vinyl and CD. This resulted in it entering the top 20 of the US independent chart earlier this year.

While the album features other musicians, playing live is just Jefferies alone with his stark, emotive voice and either electric piano or guitar. He

considers performing solo to give more freedom than bands and likes avoiding the pressure of headlining. Solo, the songs are "sketches" of the recorded versions and occasionally a song written on guitar is played on piano and vice versa. A risky move but one that can also add another dimension to a song.

A solo tour of America is likely to occur next year.

His collaborations with Robbie Muir (ex the Rip, Plagal Grind) and Shayne Carter have resulted in four mesmerising singles. With Muir there has been the 'Catapult' single and the recently released 'Swerve', both on seven inch. The latter in a most excellent blue and gold Otago colours gatefold sleeve.

With Carter there has been the landmark 'Randolph's Going Home' single recorded in 1985. The just-out 'Knocked Out or Thereabouts' will catch you hook, line and sinker as well.

Both of the singles with Muir have been acoustic-based and recorded in fits and starts over about a year, while those with Carter have been brashly slapped down in a day and are more abrasive sounding.

"'Knocked Out' is us being 19 year old punks, it's a rough, rowdy bit of fun," says Jefferies, "but 'Randolph' is lifting a weight that's almost too heavy for anyone to bear."

Jefferies intuitively their different approaches to songs.

"Robbie's quite a quiet sort of guy, perhaps a little more introspective, whereas Shayne is kind of rowdier and more of an extrovert and I mean that in the best possible way."

'Knocked Out' is a Flying Nun release; "Flying Nun have been forgiven," Jefferies admits, alluding to the multitude of qualms he had about how they dealt with This Kind of Punishment.

He came close to ditching music between then and the advent of Xpressway.

"That's as close as I came, that was about as low as I could go. My self-esteem was really flattened, it looked really bleak," is how Jefferies recalls those difficult days.

"Everything improved so fast" upon joining Xpressway according to Jefferies — his creativity started flowing again.

"I can't praise Bruce (Russell, Xway boss) enough. He's done so much for people around here."

That's one bouquet, now for a brickbat: "The biggest problem is that we've been fed this line that if you want your music to be internationally accepted you have to go along to a big flash studio and spend thousands of dollars making it sound like it's produced in America or England. But more and more the feedback Xpressway is getting from overseas is that Dunedin especially is seen as almost another planet, in a world of its own. They don't really want to hear music that sounds like re-runs of what was happening in their country two or three years ago."

Having been involved in numerous live performances and several recordings, one wonders what Peter Jefferies finds most pleasing about what he does.

"The act of creating it. The moment where it's gone from being something of an idea into a reality. That's my favourite bit."

GRANT MCDUGALL

BRED TO BE WILD



Sorry boy fans of the Pixies' Kim Deal. I only got to speak to her twin sister Kelly, one fifth of Kim's other super-group, the Breeders (along with ex-Throwing Muse Tanya Donelly and Josephine Wiggs of Perfect Disaster).

Over the line from Dayton, Ohio, Kelly comes across as an enthusiastic beneficiary of sibling solidarity. Being a Breeder has rescued her from a life of computer programming and thrust her into the international spotlight.

Well, not quite. A recent *USA Today* report on the female rock explosion omitted to mention the Breeders. So much for copping publicity from the Pixies connection. Not that Kelly wants to be associated with the girl-rock thing she characterises as "turn the gui-

tar up really loud, put some distortion on it and scream 'fuck me fuck me fuck me'. All these girl bands, a lot of what they're proving to me is that girls can play bad rock just as good as boys."

The Breeders, on the other hand, ("and I know this sounds lofty") just want to make sure the songs are good. Kim and Josephine are obsessed with the rhythm section. Kelly reports that bass player Josephine's idea of a good time is to lie on a couch, headphones on, listening to drum tracks. Record-

ing, she and Kim spend "hours" on how the drums are gonna sound, followed by the bass, with just a little bit of attention left over for guitars and vocals. Not that this is evident on the Breeders' new EP *Safari* which features Kim's laconic voice and attractively simple but noisy guitar on four Kim originals and one Who cover 'So Sad About Us'.

The Breeders would like to go places, like Australia, soon, but Kelly is completely broke. But cheerful. She just loves being in a band with her twin sister and she doesn't mind in the least that, out from under Black Francis' thumb, it's Kim who calls the shots.

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

PRIVATE IMPORTS OF SHOES ARE NOT CHEAP

"Many New Zealanders have been unpleasantly surprised at the amount of duty they have had to pay on footwear posted to them from overseas" John Housenloge, Manager, Border Operations, New Zealand Customs, said today.

He was commenting on the recent wave of publicity about people who have ordered shoes by mail from advertisements in magazines. When the shoes arrive, the person who orders them finds that the advertised price does not include duty and goods and Services Tax.

"A pair of shoes which cost NZ\$100 to order from overseas will attract combined customs duty and GST of \$63.15 on arrival in New Zealand" he said. "This figure recognises the reduction in duty, from 55 to 45% which took effect on 1 July." Many articles of clothing are also subject to high duty rates.

"Any person considering ordering shoes, or any other goods for themselves directly from overseas has to expect to pay any applicable duty and GST when the goods arrive" said Mr Housenloge. "Intending importers should phone their local Customs office to check how much that might cost before placing the order".

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