

It seems as American women get more and more attention through 'bitch core' (L7, Babes, Hole etc), their Australian counterparts are gearing up to follow suit.



CLOUD 10

Well, no I'm lying, in fact they're not at all. The big wave emanating out of Australia at the moment is indie pop. A scene led by bands like the Clouds, whose succulent guitar pop and gorgeous harmonies rush like amphetamine through your veins. Australia can't take all the credit for this particular ensemble though. Trisha Young, one of the Clouds' frontwomen, is an Aucklander.

"I used to be in a band that played with the Able Tasmanians sometimes, we weren't well known AT ALL. We were a three piece all-women band called the Alfalfa Louts."

And ironically it's the Able Tasmanians who support the Clouds when they play the Powerstation on October 30. But the burning question on my mind was 'why Australia?'

"I decided on a whim one day, like hopped on a plane in less than a week after I'd decided. That was about four or five years ago now."

The band's New Zealand connections don't end there it seems. There's a mention of the 'ex-pat' high priest, Neil Finn, on their new mini-album's 'thanks' list.

"Yeah, we borrowed one of his guitar amps on the new record, and the studio that we recorded at is owned by Tim Finn. It's this amazing old Vox that's this really weird triangular shape, like it's narrower at the bottom than it is at the top, and it's a beautiful old thing — and it's got a really warm, close sound."

Their debut album, *Penny Century*, gained them critical acclaim in New Zealand last year. Their latest offering, *Octopus* (which has a picture of a magnetic field on the cover if you are curious), should finally see them breaking some commercial success as well. The eight track mini-album sees The Clouds coming to grips with

"I WOULDN'T SAY WE WERE EVER 'NICE'. PEOPLE ONLY THINK THAT BECAUSE OF THE GIRLY SINGING..."

their sound and diving into 'deeper' waters. Some would claim it's a move away from 'niceness'.

"I wouldn't say we were ever 'nice'. People only think that because of the girly singing, and because we've got really soft voices, and because we don't sound like Kim Gordon or Polly Harvey. On *Penny Century* we didn't get the guitars as big sounding as we would have liked them as well — because we didn't really know how to do it. But on the new record we've come closer to what we want. Live we're even gutsier sounding than we are on record, I suppose just coz you tend to go for it when you're live, just put your head down and play.

Around this time last year the Clouds went through their first line up change, replacing a guitarist. Now their old drummer has left to play for Died Pretty — and Andrew Burns has pulled up a drum stool.

It almost seems as if the guys in the band are temporary appendages — this is the second one you've gone through isn't it?

"Well it's not supposed to be

like that. We don't want it to be like that. We hope that the line up is stabilised now and we're very much a four piece unit, it's not just me and Jody and a backing band. It just happens that we write the songs. Well we write the melody and the lyrics, but the whole band puts together the finished product — everyone has a very big part in how the overall thing sounds."

Is it hard getting people to

take an Australian 'indie' band seriously with the country's cock rock history?

"Well I think a few years ago, people thought that music coming out of Australia would be like Midnight Oil, and the Divinals. But these days, especially in Europe, people have heard of the Go Betweens, the

Triffids, and not just cock rock coming out of Australia. And people are becoming more receptive, yeah.

"Women are strongly involved in the alternative music scene here. There's the Falling Joys obviously, there's a band called the Hummingbirds with two women, the Underground Lovers have a female guitarist, vocalist, and keyboard player, and they're all doing well."

Of course the Clouds aren't doing all that badly either. *Penny Century* is about to be released in the UK — where they will probably have to put up with descriptions like 'Lush without the blurring atmosphere or 'the Sundays with a bit of guts' ("We've even been compared to Bananarama! Basically anything female — from people with no imagination.")

In the meantime they're hoping to conquer New Zealand, and smash a few pre-conceptions.

"Come along to the gigs and see if you still think we're 'nice'."

JOHN TAITE

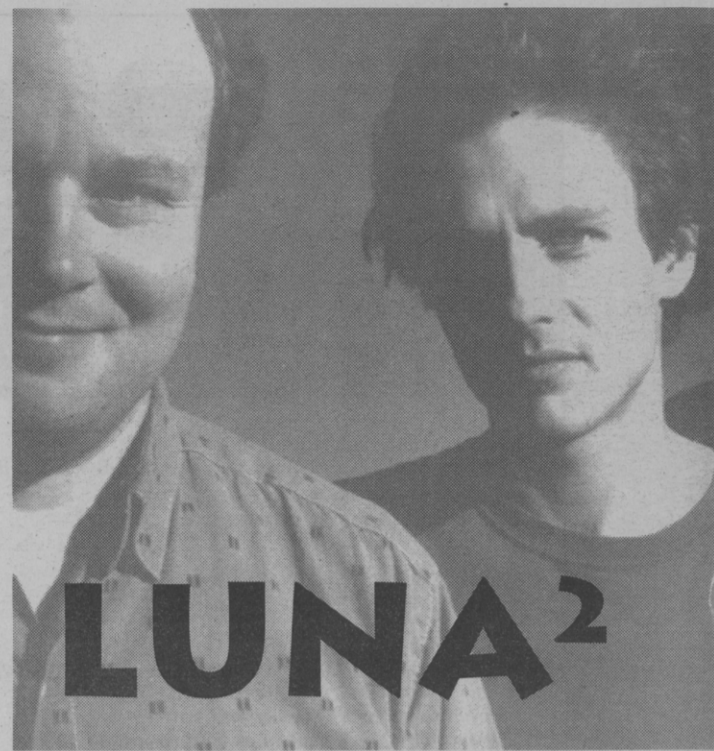
Ever wondered what happens to an ex-Chill? If you're Justin Harwood, bass player, you get telephoned by ex-Galaxie 500 mainman Dean Wareham and asked to join his new band Luna² in New York.

A year later Luna² have released a first album, *Lunapark* and Justin is about to get his work permit renewed, courtesy Elektra. Justin likes the Big Apple. It's more anti-social than New Zealand and it's minus a cohesive scene but there are lotsa gigs every weekend, all different kinds of music, and Sonic Youth play every three months.

Justin met Dean in London when Galaxy 500 borrowed some of the Chills equipment. The two kept in touch and when Dean fell out with the rest of the Galaxie, he decided to find people he really liked working with for his next project.

"We both wanted to write simple pop songs in the vein of Television and the Velvet," explains Justin, "Dean's greatest influence is American guitar bands and I'm a fan of those as well."

The resulting record is dreamy, slightly sad, spacey guitar pop with echoes of new contenders like Mercury Rev



Stanley Demeski, Dean Wareham and Justin Harwood

a place for me in. When I joined the Chills we treated it like a band. Even if publicly it was Martin, internally we'd all make decisions together. When people leave he builds another block up in front of everybody,

personal crusade and after a while it wears you down and you realise you're not getting back what you put in. And instead of Marty giving you more slack he pulls it in. You end up saying, well, I'm sleeping on

Bass player Justin Harwood talks about how his new band came about, and how he came to leave his previous band...

(whose guitarist Grasshopper guests on some of the tracks) and should-have-beens like Opal. Shimmy Disc head Kramer lent his hand to a Hammond. Justin describes Kramer as: "a funny guy, incredibly talented and really great at being weird."

Speaking of weird, why did Justin suddenly up and leave the Chills just when they had a heavenly pop hit?

"The same reasons why everyone else left," replies Justin, "but mainly because Marty was starting to make decisions and head in a direction I didn't see

he builds a bigger wall and I just felt I was gonna end up just being the bass player in the Chills and not having so much say. He signed a management contract without consulting me and that was like a last straw. We still speak to each other and we're still friends as much as we can be."

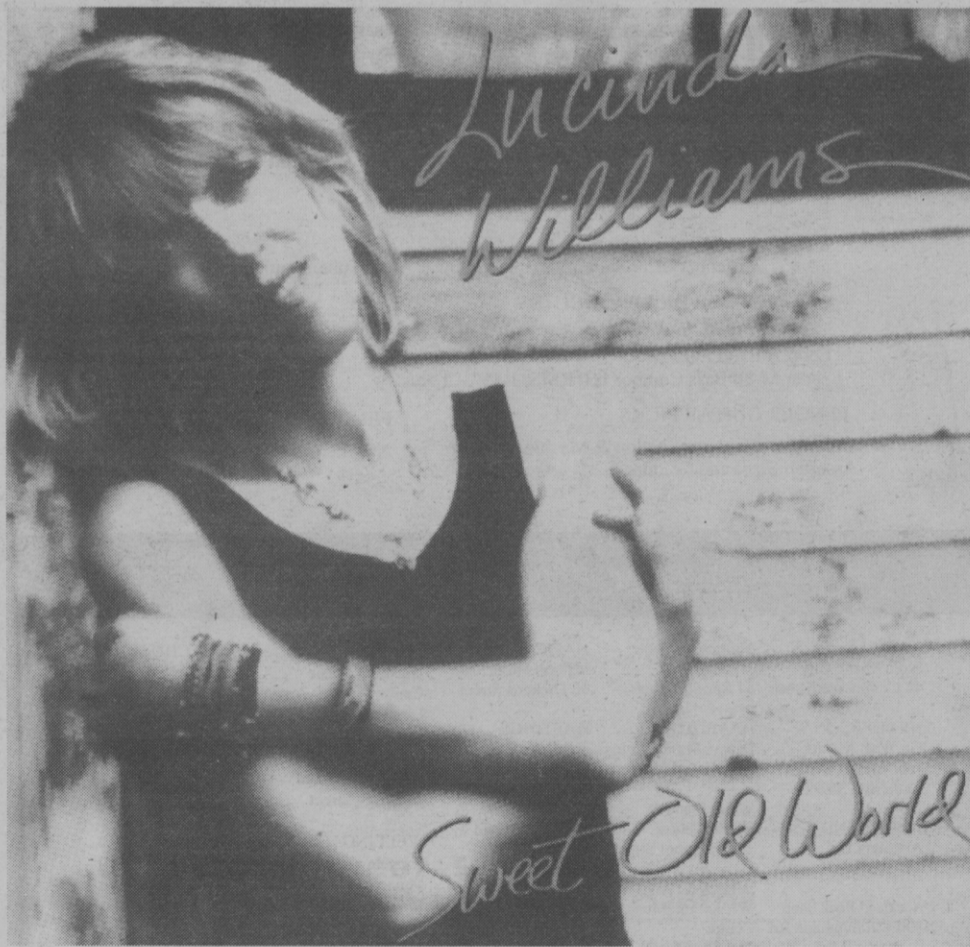
Do ex-Chills feel they weren't allowed to make a full contribution?

"I think so. You give everything to the Chills because the music's so good and you dedicate your life to it but it's really a question of Marty. He's on a

floors, I'm living on fifteen pounds a week, I haven't had any money from this band for four years and I still don't feel like I get any credit. He won't let you buy a piece of the Chills."

What is his crusade?

"He wants to write eternally great pop songs and he's constantly trying to improve on that. Obviously having to consider band members can hinder that process. I think it's good that he's constantly trying to prove himself and improve the songs he's writing but unfortunately it doesn't leave any room for the people around him. I



Lucinda Williams

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ATTENTION MEMBERS

Shortly, all APRA members will be sent voting forms for the election of a New Zealand writer to the board of APRA. This election is of particular importance as this is the first time that voting has been possible by post. It is in the interest of each and every member to ensure that they take part in the election process.

The Board of Directors of APRA comprises of six writers and six publishers. While there are no publisher directors from New Zealand, there is one NZ writer that sits on the board. This position comes up for re-election every three years and that time is nigh.

This year there are two nominations. They are:

Arthur Baysting
Ray Columbus

As the writer/director position is essentially the voice of New Zealand members at Board level, it is imperative that all members actively vote on this position. For more information, please contact Mike Chunn, General Manager, APRA New Zealand, (09) 379 0638 or PO Box 6315, Auckland.