

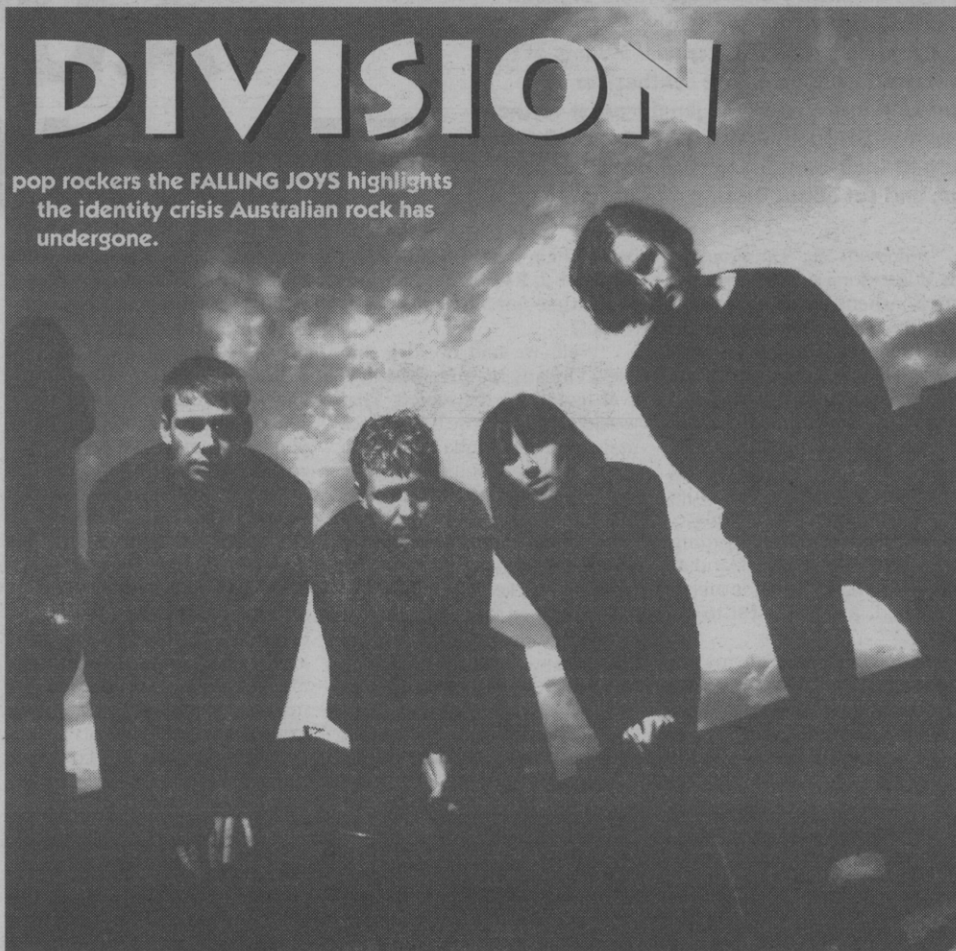
# JOY DIVISION

The success of Australian pop rockers the FALLING JOYS highlights the identity crisis Australian rock has undergone.

The central core of Aussie rock is out of vogue. It's just not cool to be a bloke anymore. The hard man of the 80s has been replaced by the "in touch" man of the 90s who dismisses his predecessor as a sexist patriarch. And of course the death of the bloke heralded the demise of the gas crankin', mike rupturing bloke's bands — the Cold Chisels, Hunters and Collectors and Spy vs Spys of the past. Even Jimmy Barnes hung up his tattered denims, slicked back his hair and tried to convince us he had soul.

The point is driven home by the massive upswell in popularity for bands like Ratcat, the Clouds, the Hummingbirds and the Falling Joys. The Joys number one mainstream hit 'Lock It' last year, a delicately insecure, deliriously melodic slice of guitar pop, was the antithesis of the XXXX brandishing, stick beating anthems Australia had previously been known for. 'Working class man' was overrun by hordes of middle class kids desperately trying to escape the pretensions of the bourgeoisie. The sound of Australia became poppier, though more lyrically pensive and understanding.

The Falling Joys bear out that image perfectly on stage. Lead singer/guitarist Suzie Higgle bounces around, smiling like a street urchin that's just found a dollar, defying every pose you expect a guitarist to strike. Walls of frenetically blurred rock chords are created and collapsed on



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all sides and she's just acting so... cute. Pete, the drummer, smiles so broadly I begin to wonder about the contours of his stool. They're so happily unpretentious it's almost annoying.

It gets worse when I meet them. Somehow, you expect a band in their position to be at least a little arrogant, if only in that it takes a lot of self-confidence to get where they are. But the Falling Joys are anti-heroes with their feet seemingly nailed to the ground.

"We're incredibly sorry," says Stuart Robertson (guitars)

explaining the successive airplane breakdowns and flight delays that stopped them from getting here last year. "One of the plane's engines blew up and we were stuck in LA for 20 hours. It wasn't that we didn't like you, really. We were going to come straight here and play which would of meant that we wouldn't have slept for three days but we couldn't even do that. The irony is that they sent our instruments here in time, so hopefully they played a good gig without us."

The band doesn't seem to have much luck with modern

technology. Two separate recording studios burst into flame as they tried to record their second album *Psychohum*. "We burnt down the biggest, most expensive studio in Sydney," says Pat, the bassist, "We only had one day's recording in there and just as we were tuning up the amps started to blow up one by one. Just as we noticed a funny smell all the wiring in the wall cavities burst into flames. So we went to another studio the next day and for some reason that caught on fire as well."

Understandably feeling

somewhat jinxed, the Joys headed to Greenhouse Studios in London to be produced by Jessica Corcoran (Neds Atomic Dustbin). Perhaps as some sort of subconscious exorcism ritual they recorded a fire extinguisher on the album, mixing it in so as to be indistinguishable from their heavier guitar blasts. Unfortunately while easily mastering how to turn it on, turning it off proved somewhat more difficult.

"We just banged it on when we wanted to start recording but couldn't find a way to stop it so the whole place got covered in foam. Kind of a mess." Stuart admits.

Somewhat aptly, the band has moved away from technology on *Psychohum*. "Wishlist, the first album, had thousands of overdubs which ended up evening everything out too much," says Pat, "kind of like we left the songs somewhere in a computer. For *Psychohum* we wanted more extremes of loud and soft songs. We recorded entire songs rather than just short takes of lines on verses."

I suggest that the stripped back to basics approach is a trend at the moment.

"Oh sure," Suzie cuts in, "but it applies to everything. That's why so many cottage industries are being set up. Technology hasn't improved the quality of life, it's just made it faster. But we're not technophobes — another reason we cut things back was just because the heavier stuff is fun to play."

So are Falling Joys the new sound of Australia?

"No, I don't think so," says Stuart, "Sure, the real hard Aussie rock stereotypes have gone, but our type of sound has got more international recognition. The new sound coming through is more acoustic, almost NZ influenced, but with really dry Aussie lyrics. Bands like Peg and Crowe.

Never heard of them.

"You will."

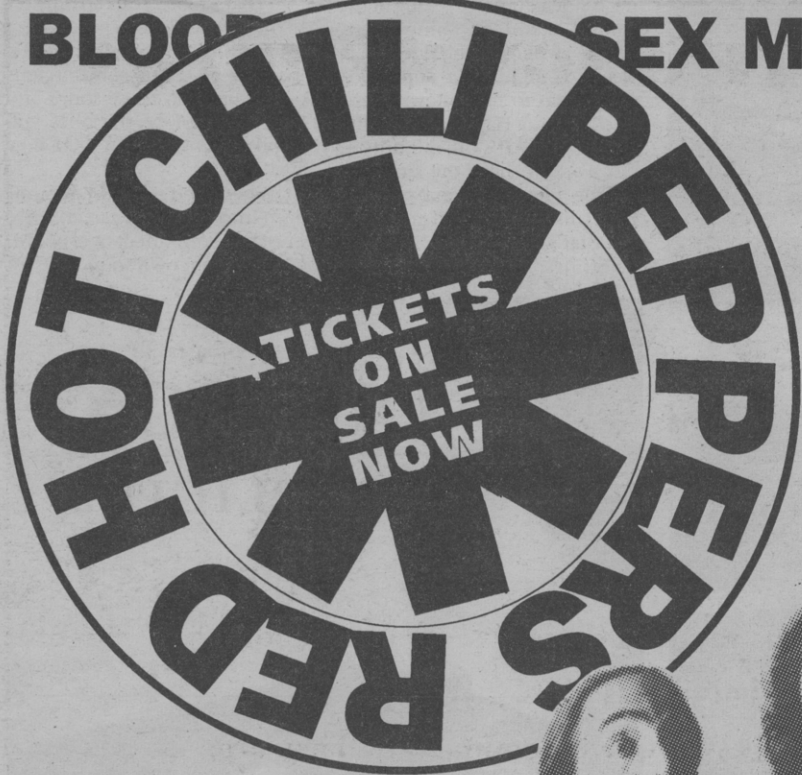
TONY MILLER

actually think the people around him have a great influence on how the songs turn out in the end. I don't know if he agrees with me or not. I think Terry Moore and Martin Bull during 'Pink Frost' and the early days had a huge effect on the way the songs sounded and Marty may be a little bit blinkered in his credit for that. But to carry on for twelve years, to go through so many line-up changes, to battle on believing that you have to do it — if he handed out a piece of the Chills to everyone who's been in the band he'd have nothing left to carry on with."

Luna<sup>2</sup> are having to fight not to hand out a piece of themselves. A New York chanteuse called Luna is threatening legal action against the band for using a name she says she found first. Consequently all the band's posters and records have to be appendaged with that to-the-power-of-two digit. Only in New York.

DONNA YUZWALK

## BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK



WARNER MUSIC  
NEW ZEALAND



**BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK**  
17 TRACK ALBUM, features the smash 'UNDER THE BRIDGE'

### THE bFM TATTOO FOR CHILI PEPPERS COMPETITION

Design a "bFM" tattoo, and the best one wins a ticket to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Mt Smart Oct 29. Offer your body to be tattooed and the selected tattooee wins a ticket.

Enter at Truetone Records Remuera Rd, Tattoo Art, 8 Durham Lane, or bFM, Ak Uni, Princess St. Competition closes Oct 26.

Winner announced 9.15 am, Oct 27 on bFM's Breakfast Show with Marcus Lush.

Example tattoo supplied by Graham of Tattoo Art, 8 Durham Lane. Note the "b" above the "f" above the "m".



**OCT 27 WELLINGTON**  
SHOW BUILDINGS

**OCT 29 AUCKLAND**  
MT SMART SUPERTOP