

DAVID PARKER

After several years as frontman / songwriter for Rhythm Cage, David Parker emerged in a different phase as "The Parker Project", hitting No.1 on the charts with 'Tears On My Pillow' and now his album *Release* he's now just David Parker.

Parker prefers not to speak of going "solo" as his post-Rhythm Cage work has involved as much teamwork as when he was in the band. 'Tears' was a collaboration with the Rhythm & Business team, George Hubbard, Daniel Barnes and Jon Cooper and on *Release* he shares writing credits others.

Were you collaborating in Rhythm Cage?

"Yeah, in arrangements. When you've got a band you've got lots of dreams and aspirations and ambitions and if things don't go the way you want things self-destruct. After that experience I've lost a bit of motivation to be in a band. It had gone as far as it could and had become an unpleasant experience. It wasn't fun anymore."

Parker has written 'Child In You' and 'Save Me' with J.D. (Moahunters) and 'Second Nature' and 'Up' with young keyboards player Karl Benton. Other guests include Stuart Pearce on keyboards and guitarists Mark Bell and Joel Haines.

"There were so many musicians involved. I want to continue collaborating but based more around my own writing and playing."

David Parker's first two singles after Rhythm Cage were with the Pagan label but he has since moved to the new label Edge, owned by Tim Foreman of Airforce Studios and Gilbert Egdell (ex Sony). The album was recorded and mixed over three weeks at Airforce Studios.

Did you foresee leaving Pagan?

"I discussed that with Trevor and he said that he couldn't really afford to record an album with me, so he's been really good and supportive about it. It's the sort of music that you need a

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certain budget to do. You basically had to finance your own recording with Trevor and I couldn't see myself being able to do that."

Once again Parker is now working with a band live, the core of which is guitarist Lance Sua, Ben Gilgen on keyboards, bassist Max Stowers and drummer Richie Campbell.

Your favourite vocal performance on the record?

"I like 'The Telephone's Ringing' and 'Tears On My Pillow'. It was the original 'Tears' vocal, even though we've remixed the stuff underneath, it had a magic about it. It was me stretching into unknown territory. When I first did the warm up run-through Jon Cooper came up and said this is gonna sound fantastic and it was that kind of excitement in the studio."

Have you focused more on singing since then?

"Yes, I have. I've thought a lot more about singing and about how people sing and what makes someone a good singer which is definitely not just how technically good they are. I did take a singing lesson or two but it's not something I've stuck with. I've tried to learn how to sing so I don't damage my voice. I want to have it in 30, 40 years time but it's not important to me that I sing technically brilliantly."

Are there singers you now appreciate more?

"I like Frank, I've always been a big admirer of Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Tracy Chapman, a lot of women singers."

Are you influenced by other NZ singers or writers?

"Perhaps more so now, more the attitude than actually being influenced by them stylistically. Like the Mutton Birds and Greg Johnson — the attitude that you can make good music without big budgets, believe in yourself, develop your own style."



Are any particular tracks influenced by the South Pacific sound, Herbs etc?

"Not a conscious influence. There's obvious examples like the reggae tracks, 'In Summer I Fall', 'Tears On My Pillow'. It's not a conscious thing."

Do you see the Kiwi soul/funk as multi-cultural?

"Yeah, definitely. You listen to Radio Aotearoa and you'll hear a lot of old 70s and 60s black soul stuff and that's a big Polynesian influence, black music from overseas, especially American music. Then there's Bob Marley, a big influence, but we've got our European influences as well."

"I think that what we've tried to do without trying to sound pretentious, is try to be a bit of a melting pot. I suppose there is a conscious effort to reflect something cultural in our record but it's not like I'm trying to make some huge statement."

MURRAY CAMMICK



It's Saturday afternoon. Tex Perkins is yet again at the Metropolis studio in Melbourne, working. On something completely different, he says.

"I'll promote it in a couple of months. I'm actually singing, not much hollering or groaning or anything."

With that as an introduction, we talked about that voice in other recent endeavours. From the Beasts of Bourbon and the Butcher Shop to an HIV project for the Australian penal system to the Cruel Sea. Especially the Cruel Sea, due here on December 8th with the Bad Seeds.

I've wondered about that voice, whether Tex worked on it or if, as it sounds, it's the product of a hard life?

"No, it's a voice I found I can do a few things with."

It's not only physically dark, it tells dark tales.

"Well, yeah. Even when I write love songs I have to put a crack in there. Nothing's perfect. I think it's a lie to create a really rosy picture. Nothing is one way."

Like 'Cry For Me' from *This Is Not The Way Home*. That's a mean bastard tale of love gone sour.

"Well, it's a feminine version of a song I wrote called 'Hard For You'. 'Hard For You' is absolute blind revenge — hatred. 'Cry For Me' is the feelings one goes through when somebody hurts them. You want them to feel the pain you are. Everyone's felt that

at some stage."

With the Cruel Sea, the songs are put in a light setting.

"That's the band. The type of guys they are. The type of guy I am. That's what makes it an interesting combination."

It's been said they were a Shadows cover band.

"Essentially they were, not exclusively though. Just classic, instrumental guitar music."

Does that mean you dress up?

"No, no, no. It's a very un-image conscious band. It's almost daggy."

So what's your history together?

"I've been with the band since late '89. They were together a year or so before. I knew a fella who did their sound and I would go along and do lights. I really liked the band, love that instrumental stuff. Eventually they said to me would you like to get up and do a song? I was reluctant, I thought the concept of an instrumental band would be ruined by a singer. But I yielded and ruined everything."

There's still four instrumentals on the album.

"Sure! They haven't let go of that part of the band."

One of the instrumentals I liked was 'Fangin' Hoons'. What's 'Fangin'?

"Fangin means going fast. Fangin Hoons is a term for yobos drivin' fast in the hot cars. Flannelette shirts, beer cans on

the floor, elbows out the window, 100 miles an hour..."

Hmmm... instrumentals. Quite a contrast from the bleak outlook of the Beasts of Bourbon and the Butcher Shop. Is it schizophrenic?

"Being in so many bands? You take a look at your record collection. You have the capacity to be interested in more than one kind of music. I found out that I had the capacity to deliver different types of music. I didn't shut myself in, I like to do my job well. Singing for a rock band, the job is to be forceful and intense."

Then it's not a reflection of the hard life on the road?

"It can be horrible sometimes. I've got the scars. It's part of the job. Being in a band. Everyone goes through that shit."

Now I hear you were involved in some video stuff?

"Beginning of this year. An educational video, dramatised situation, about AIDS in jail. I played a jailed rapist who contracts AIDS from someone he raped. It's purely for the penal system. We did it at Long Bay [jail] in Sydney. There's some actors in it from this soap opera *E Street*, Angry Anderson and me. The rest of the cast were actual prisoners. It's very information loaded about cleaning fits and condoms and stuff."

So do Aussie jails let inmates have bleach and condoms?

"No. That's the whole hypocrisy. It's a strange situation. The system can't admit that there is drugs and sodomy. It's very hard to come to terms with, to admit what goes on in jail, but they have to."

What's next for you and Cruel Sea?

"We're recording another album in a couple of months at Metropolis."

With Tony Cohen?

"Yeah, I think so. At the moment he's pissed off with the knobs and the mics aren't working. So maybe he'll spit the dummy."

Anything you'd like to say to New Zealand?

"See you soon. I've got no message. No philosophy to help them out. They're on their own."

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