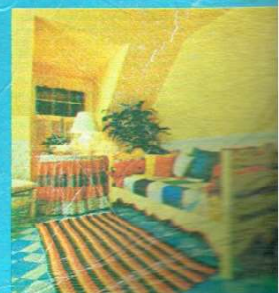
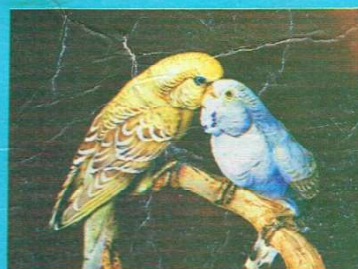
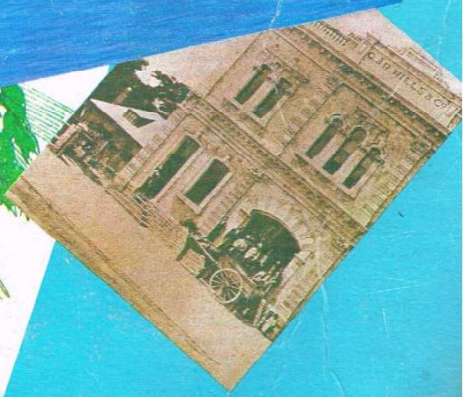




No. 929

\$1.85

NEWS SCRAPS and CUTTINGS



THE RESURRECTION SHUFFLE

The Church are the unsung heroes of paisley power. They stuck to their 12 string guitars whilst everyone around went synthpop. Mark Bradbridge decides their time has arrived at last.



If you'd thought The Church had split up sometime last year, you might be forgiven. Or perhaps not. Misconceptions, it seems, run rife.

"And I know the reason," says drummer Richard Ploog, "the media here is old, balding, sexist and overweight!"

"Not you, of course," Gae, thanks. I'd also heard you'd left the group, Richard.

"I heard that too. It was even in *RAM* and *On The Street*. There's never been any thought in my mind of leaving this group. I want to stick it out until the end."

"If people paid a little more attention, there wouldn't be these misconceptions," says Marty Willson-Piper, he of the jangly 12-string Rickenbacker guitar.

Granted, but it's been a quiet 18 months or so for Messrs Ploog, Willson-Piper, Kilbey and Koppras, whose last Australian recorded output (until now) had been the EP *'Persia'*, in mid-'84. Their last long-player was *'Spence'* in early '83. But the Church have in fact been quite busy.

Warner's Brothers America signed the group in '84, released a compilation album of the EPs *'Remote Luxury'* and *'Persia'*, while the group toured there in the last half of that year promoting it.

The album topped the US college charts, but while not exactly earning them a Rolls Royce splurge, did give them a nudge in the credibility stakes.

The group spent most of 1985 writing, rehearsing and recording the new LP *'Heyday'*, their most concise, confident and consistently interesting effort to date. Even Kilbey's trademark monotone has been overswept by the songs' sheer potency.

The album was produced by Peter Walsh, chosen for his work on Simple Minds' *'New Gold Dream'* and Scott Walker's much-ignored *'Climate For Reason'*.

"It's much more focussed," says Richard. "We've done our mysterious bit, and our laid-back bit. Now it's time for something more punchy, maybe more light-hearted, deep without a meaning."

"It's a first in that we all contributed to the music, while Steve did the lyrics. Because we decided to do it together, it's come out better than anything we've done in the past," says Marty. "Walsh brought out a lot in Steve. His voice really



breaks through."

The album was held back so it could be simultaneously released worldwide, to counter a previous confusion of various albums and EPs being released at different times in the US, Australia and Europe. The Church have now untangled themselves from their English label Carrere, who Marty says laid on to them for four years, "and did absolutely nothing". The relationship did at least give the group showings in the independent charts as the UK, then Europe, started championing the group's neo-psychedelia.

Warner's, it seems, see The Church as part of the much-hyped "new guitar movement", alongside the likes of REM, Lone Justice, Ram Parade etc.

"It's just another pipeanhole," says Richard. "We're not that 'new' for a start. We were doing this when it was very out of date and everyone

was into synthpop." Are you amused to see similarly-inspired music now coming into favour?

Marty: "Not really amused. More frustrated." Richard: "In a way frustrated, but if we get our due respect and success which I think we deserve worldwide, then OK. If not, it would be unjust."

It's likely The Church will be given "Paisley Pioneers" status, while the superlatives are directed at their US peers.

Richard: "But that's usually the case. If you look through rock history, that was the fate of the best groups. Hopefully we won't go down in history as that."

One factor which might impede The Church's progress (in this country anyway) is mainstream radio. Apart from, say, "Unregarded Moment" and "Almost With You", their singles have been met with

breath-taking indifference by AM programmers. At time of writing, the new *'Already Yesterday'* seemed destined for the same fate.

Marty: "If they don't know that our single is worth playing, then that's their bloody great loss. It's just ridiculous. I don't have any grudges, but if they don't want to play our records, I don't know what we can do about it. I just hope we can somehow fit into their silly system."

Richard: "There's been a lot of talk of 'Australian product first', but that's not the case. It's a superficial attitude and a lot of groups who aren't played here are raved about overseas — they're forced to go over there."

Like The Church?

Here is the

And it came to pass that the Church did make a new record. And they did call it *Heyday*, for it was good. And on the seventh day lead singer Steve Kilbey came to town, and he did converse from on high with Daphne Sider. Here beginneth the lesson:

When I started wearing a band called the Church. (No, I don't think I'm a trendsetter, but neither do they, as they're the first to admit.) For me, that's probably where the attraction started. . . . Then I listened to the music. . . . Then I met the man.

I didn't know what to expect before meeting Steve Kilbey, lead singer and bass guitarist for the Church. I was impressed by his super-cool, super-serious type of image. Like the awesome qualities of their music, I figured on Steve being quite larger than life.

We met at EMI's head office and I was at once relieved. He could have been the guy next door! But he wasn't speaking to me like the guy next door. Steve's image is that of an intelligent, artistic, self-assured individual. Maybe he is just that; I couldn't make up my mind.

"I'm not like some people, living in the suburbs and doing their mundane work thinking, 'Gee, I wonder what it's like to go to nightclubs or take drugs,' because I've done all that."

The Church's new album, *Heyday*, was released in January this year. It's not a record that will impress those who like to live and jump around their bedrooms thrashing on an invisible guitar. In typical Church style, *Heyday* is great for a relaxed afternoon's listening

pleasure. But don't get me wrong, it won't send you to sleep. "Already Yesterday" and "Tantalize" are the two superb singles taken from the album. It will surely make up for the lengthy interlude between releases: *Senance* was their last LP, out in 1983.

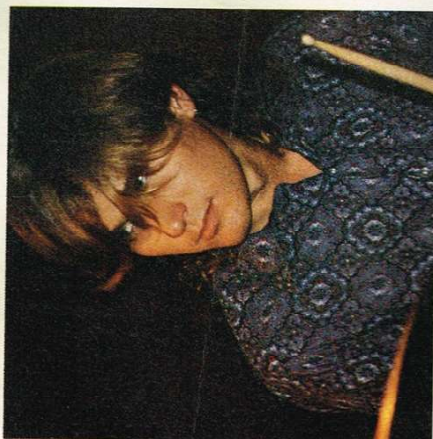
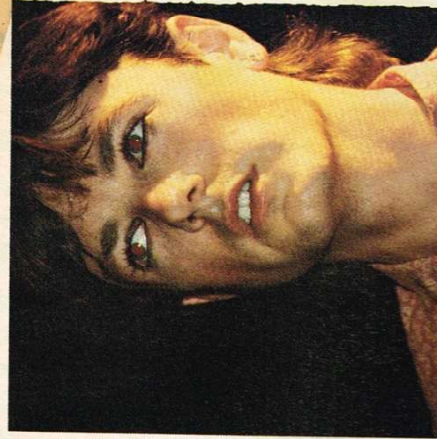
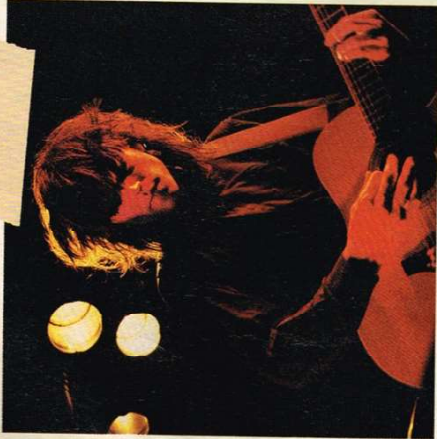
The Church was formed six years ago by Steve and guitarist Peter Kopprasch. They were old friends, having played together in garage bands. In Steve's four-track home studio they put down some great demos, which convinced them to form a band.

Marty Wilson-Piper, the other guitarist and backing vocalist, was a friend of a friend who happened to migrate from England just in time. The drummer, Richard Poog, was chosen through an ad in the paper.

Their debut single, "She Never Said", was released in November 1980, less than a year after the band's inception. It wasn't the most successful track ever put on vinyl but the one that followed shortly afterwards, "The Unguarded Moment", went on to become a national top ten hit in Australia.

Although that wasn't a guarantee for success, the impression I get from Steve is that no one's really worried. You don't have to be a winner all the time.

"You need success and failure to be a complete person and because we've experienced both, I think we've grown up a lot. In retrospect, it's good to fail and not have every utterance you make



PHOTOS BY CAMERARTERY

taken as gospel or not have a thousand people go crazy every time you walk into an auditorium. It does you a lot of good: It builds moral fibre," he says.

So when their contemporaries changed to a more modern approach to music, the Church stuck to their original ideals and played harder on their 12-string guitars. But they have survived, although you'd be right in assuming that for the last couple of years they haven't made much profit for their record company.

The opening lines of their latest single "Tantalize" tells the story: "God I've been asleep so long I've been away, but from software limbo the natives call today."

I'm sure the Church weren't hibernating, although Steve admits

they've had a very easy, privileged life. "Each day I feel guilty that I wasn't working. I knew it couldn't go on; I was just lying around in a hammock reading a book."

Musicians can sometimes afford to do this sort of thing. It's not so much a matter of living on what they've earned in the past but rather on what they expect to earn in the future. Steve feels the Church are in a very good position in that they're not big enough to have to cope with the constant demands of touring, yet they're certainly big enough to make a good living out of it.

So what sort of lives do they lead? All four are very health conscious: They are vegetarians and don't drink heavily. Steve is into yoga and meditation, swimming and surfing. Apart from the

band he leads a relaxed sort of life — going for drives, shopping and at night just going out for dinner or to a film. The only band he tends to see regularly is the Crystal Set, as his brother's in it.

But Steve is also kept busy doing band-related work. One thing he's very involved in is the Church's information bureau. (It's like a fan club.) He walks to the post office each day to collect fan letters, which he reads and tries to answer. He really gets a buzz out of that. So if you're interested in writing, you can send a stamped addressed envelope to PO Box 56, Rozelle 2039 NSW.

"Mary," says Steve, "spends a lot of time out of the country. He's English and feels more at home over there. He's also

187 CHURCH

got a Swedish girlfriend. (I have too, but she lives out here with me.) As an avid record collector, Marty's the type of person who will buy a record that he already has three copies of just because it has a different label or is a test pressing. He enjoys eating out and, like me, loves a night at home reading or writing songs.

"Peter is fairly subdued. Basically he'll just get up and eat a good breakfast, do a bit of shopping, sit in the sun and watch the day go by." (It seems like the only difference between Peter and my grandmother is that he has a porta-studio in his home.)

"Richard is the adventurer of the group. He spends a lot of time in places like Jamaica or Thailand, but never does the tourist trip. He gets out at the airport with a tent under his arm and hops onto a train to some remote province. He'll put up his tent in a field and just live on rice and learn to speak a bit of the native lingo."

I'm assured, however, that this type of existence doesn't go on all the time. When the band is on the road there's no lying around. A typical touring schedule involves travelling around a lot on buses, checking in at hotels, doing a soundcheck, coming back to the hotel for a shower and shave, finding a decent place for dinner, playing the gig, going

back to the hotel and collapsing. Next day you wake up early and start the whole thing over again.

At the time of this interview, that's exactly what the band was looking forward to. By this stage they're probably in the northern hemisphere somewhere, getting on each other's nerves and throwing things around.

The Church has enjoyed relative success in Europe and America which is probably where you'll find them now. But Steve recalls one major mishap: The ill-fated Duran Duran tour. They only played about five shows before they pulled out. Steve said the support slot was totally unsuitable. "Like trying to sell wet suits to Arabs." Their melodic guitar riffs with quiet, emotive lyrics were certainly far too remote for the excited Duran Duran fans.

There's no doubt the Church certainly has a distinct style of its own, but in my mind I hear and see traces of the '60s. "I think it's hard for a complete modern rock band not to have a taste of the '60s." He goes on to compare Pseudo Echo. "They are four young guys with long hair, some of whom play guitar. It's something that the Beatles made the definitive statement of what a pop group is." It that appears like a huge generalisation to you, you're not alone. Perhaps Pseudo Echo wasn't such a good example. But what about the

paisley?

"We were the first band I'd ever heard of to wear paisley. We were wearing it in 1980 when everyone else was a New Romantic. It's simply because we found lots of paisley shirts in opportunity shops at a time when there was no demand for them. I've got a wardrobe full of them and it's natural for me to just pull out a paisley shirt." Well, maybe that's what draws them all together: Wardrobes full of paisley shirts?

"Most '60s type bands are using that image as a slavish means of identity. We don't need that and haven't felt anything in common with that whole movement." Although Steve is quite adamant the Church has nothing in common with the '60s movement, you could easily get that impression. With page-boy haircuts, paisley garb and guitar riffs peculiar to that time I feel that sort of image is created. He does go on to say, however. "The Church is far more of a collective. We choose the best elements of all time and incorporate it into a complete sound." Yes, the sound is complete, and the Church have come a long way in their six year career. A long way, too, beyond their original hopes. As Steve says, "In the beginning I suppose our wildest dream was to one day make a single." Eight singles, three EPs and four albums later must speak for itself.

DOLLY APRIL 125

ONE of the best live performances I have seen this year was — not surprisingly — by The Church.

With a new single out, called *Already Now*, The Church are taking a break from work on a new album to do some live dates.

You can catch the band at The Club on Thursday, The Venue on Friday, the Village Green Hotel on Saturday, the Prospect Hill Hotel on Sunday, and the Central Club on Monday.

Supporting at all gigs will be Kam Sha — another band promoting a single. It is called *A Thousand Years*.





THE CHURCH: ALTARED STATES

Scott Howlett in Sydney thanks the Lord that STEVE KILBEY is in a good mood.

When Molly Meldrum took a fancy to the Church and *Countdown* played their hit single, "Unguarded Moment" for the third time in as many weeks, the writing was on the wall that they were commercially doomed.

When their third LP, *Seance*, was released, the critics sharpened their pens and the recording public looked at the Sydney-based band as "poor tortured Steve Kilbey and his poor tortured live band".

For the next two years, the Church proceeded, paying little heed to the criticism. Commercial success was past tense.

In October last year, the Church packed their collective road cases and journeyed to America where they were already a cult phenomenon and critically accepted. *Creem* magazine called them "one of the most important bands this year."

And so, the Church were given a new lease of life. The grimacing faces that were worn by the band members at any one of Sydney or Melbourne's beer barns were replaced with enthusiastic smiles.

No-one in America said they were sixties plagiarists; they took the band for their worth and as a result, the Church made an impression, albeit restricted to the people who already knew of the band before they arrived. They had been given a second chance.

Today, Steve Kilbey sits behind the ominous microphone and desk at an independent Sydney radio station. He knows where his audience lies. Kilbey admits the Church have thought about breaking up for the last three years. But with critical acceptance in America comes a renewed outlook. Peter Koppes, the Church's lead-guitarist, has even been known to smile lately.

The Church are not imitators. But they are innovators, Kilbey says.

"A lot of people don't understand this, but the Americans really dig our music and know what we are trying to do. People went crazy everywhere, hurling lots of superlatives around. We got two or three encores every night. Most of the venues were packed and sometimes, people couldn't get in."

"After all, we were one of the first bands to do this type of music. If not the first. We knew back (to Australia) and everyone is walking around in paisley shirts and all the bands are playing 12-string guitars and bands such as Lloyd Cole and REM are popular."

"We were around years before that stuff. When we went to America, people knew that and knew that we were the first in the 'neo-psychedelic' area. Then to come back here and just go back into that rut of playing to all... I've said this before and I'll reiterate. I'm not talking about the Sydney or Melbourne audiences, but I'm talking about everywhere else you've got to play. I love playing in Sydney and Melbourne but as soon as you step outside of those places... it's like going out with the most beautiful woman in the world and then having to go out with Phyllis Diller."

"In America the crowds were on our side even if the gig wasn't very good. Everyone says the Church are a rotten live band... but the (Australian) audiences are f...g rotten. When we do to America, the people say what a great live band we are. Give us a good audience and we'll be great."

"Four years ago when our first album came out, no one knew what to do with us. We were perceived as an old-fashioned band because at that time everyone was being amazed by

the Human League. Four years down the road, everyone's being amazed by guitars and paisley shirts so people are tending to rediscover us."

For the last two years there has been much discussion concerning the future of the band. This recent US tour has, however, redefined their outlook and put an end to the speculation concerning their break-up.

"Everyone's starting to make a bit more of a decent wage out of it now (prior to the US tour, everyone in the band, apart from Kilbey, was on the dole when they weren't on the road). We worked hard for no profit in the past. People are always sort of anxious to see us break-up and ask us whether we are or not. But at the moment we are probably as stable as we've ever been... as we were in our heyday, I guess."

The Church are about to enter the studio to record their fourth album. Since their *Sing Songs* EP, Church records have been produced in association with John Bee of EMI Records.

For this new vinyl venture they will team with English producer, Peter Walsh, who in the past has produced *New Gold Dream* by Simple Minds and an album by Scott Walker. Kilbey likes both. He says working with Walsh is something he has always wanted to do.

"Peter Walsh and the funds (for the hiring of Walsh) became available, so we jumped at the chance. I wouldn't be surprised if there is a change in style on this new album. We have about 20 new songs to pick from and we've written a few really good instrumentals which I haven't put melodies or lyrics to yet."

"But we're not really quite sure which way we are going to go, or what's going to happen. We never really are. We just go in and the thing becomes apparent as we go along rather than saying 'yeah, we're going to change direction this time'."

Although the new Church album is not expected to be released until late October, Kilbey has taken the opportunity over the last six months to record and release his first solo project — the single, "This Asphalt Eden" (EMI).

For every song on a Church album, I've probably got five or six songs that are sitting on a tape, on a shelf, at home, that won't probably ever be used. This single was just three of those songs.

"I always liked 'Asphalt Eden' for some reason, and had some kind of compulsion to do it and to want to see it on vinyl. The other two were other people's suggestions and I often listen to what other people say regarding what songs I should record. Sometimes I wish I didn't."

"I'm fairly happy with it, although I'm never really pleased with anything I do. I don't know why. After it's finished I always think whether I've done the right thing. I don't know what people are going to make of this new single. I don't know if people are interested in making anything out of it, apart from enjoying or hating the song."

Now that Kilbey has finally released a solo single, he is eager to do more and the Church's American record company has shown interest in releasing a Steve Kilbey solo album.

A recent tour of Queensland, Victoria and NSW has proven worthwhile for the band. The gigs were well attended and the crowds were receptive to songs on the band's commercially failed EPs *Persia* and *Remote Luxury*. The tour proved that the Church still has an audience in Australia.

But Kilbey says the possibilities for expansion have expired and, to all intents and purposes, Australia is a dead end for the Church.

"We've got to go where things are happening," he says.

INNOCENTS ABROAD

"Once" says Steve Kilbey as we climb up the stairs. "I'd done loads of acid and I came up here and opened my cupboard, and I thought to myself 'I must be the luckiest man in the world to have all these lovely shirts...'"

This is one of the rare things about this job — demand to be shown the contents of his/her wardrobe.

On the 11th of July, 1986, in Europe, The Church's *Heyday* had just been released to give style two (most of them which said they might not have liked the church before but had been changed by the release of the album).

The Church's first single had not seen that enthusiasm translated into record sales. They should have gone with "Golumbin" rather than "Heyday".

It's the first time the Church has cracked it for "The Church" through the rest of the world but it's brought them a lot of attention.

In the US, the band has been able to tour and read their hearts there with Echo & The Bunnymen, has opened them to new crowds. It is unfortunate that The Church's first LP, *Heyday*, was released in the US with the first of their albums, *Heyday*, in 1984.

In England, the LP and "fantasies" are getting action on the alternate scenes although the band were so knocked out with they still remember that gig. Sadly, Italy was another discovery. They are now supporting the band on some 300-seat stadiums and were resal-



Is there a shining aura about Steve Kilbey? Why did two of them walk out... and then come back? Will The Church crack the Swaziland Top 40? All this, and more in this report from London..

ing beauty turned loose into this warmly loving climate turned out to be not such a heyday after all.

Backstage at the Mean Fiddler Club in Harleside, Steven is being philosophical. "We're doing it," he says. "We want to lead a good life. We want to be happy. These days, we might as well make one monster hit single (not that we know how to) and nine pieces of rubbish. So, I think you are the days to go for the popular at some point."

On no I cry, instinctively. "Still, it's better than working in a bank," he says. "I don't mind that, but he was supposed to be philosophical."

"It all depends how envious you are. You can look at all the legends of people above you or you can look at the legends of people below you. It depends on whether you see music as a football ladder."

Like, if you see a handsome man with downy hair, you might think he's a footballer. As him, and then you see a real ugly bloke and you think, well, I'm glad I'm not that bad."

★ ★

We traveled even further back now, right back to the beginning. To 1969 when Steve Kilbey and Peter Koppen played their first gigs as the Church. They were called the Church and their first drummer Nick Ward.

What was happening then? "Everything had to be New Wave. It was all guys with short haircuts and skinny ties. Every-one was sort of like 'The Rolling Stones' but not the Rolling Stones. We were in the world. And I don't know why, but I'd never liked rock music to be wacky. I thought it had the potential to be more than that area of whatever."

I'd always been into that area of whatever. I'd always been into that area of whatever. I'd always been into that area of whatever.

you want to call it, automatic writing, or surrealist writing, or whatever. I don't know. I was playing guitar in a band that was doing a Raspberries type trip, kind of end of 1965 guitar stuff, and people told us we were psychedelic and we were into it. We were into it. We were into it.

"Our initial intention was to be psychedelic in the red sense of the word, so that when people saw us, some kind of mind altering process would be going on. It was so nice and the lyrics evoked certain images."

"Not like some revival band, you know, they wear little Roger McGilgan glasses and write songs about the torments of psychodelia, the Rickenbackers and the haircuts, but without ever seeing what made Strawberry Fields for example. It was so nice and the lyrics evoked certain images."

"But I think people have been making psychodelic music since the beginning of time. It's not like the torments of psychodelia, the Rickenbackers and the haircuts, but without ever seeing what made Strawberry Fields for example. It was so nice and the lyrics evoked certain images."

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you're just sitting there with your guitar and this flash comes and you suddenly write this song. It's just sitting there with your guitar and this flash comes and you suddenly write this song."

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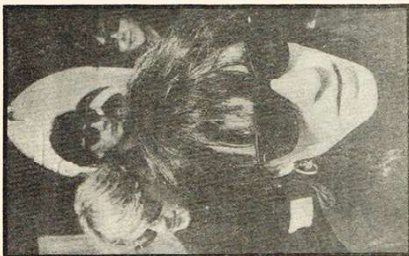
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It happened to us. We had the food that didn't tip, happened to us. We had the food that didn't tip, happened to us. We had the food that didn't tip, happened to us.

"The has broke down in the middle of Texas and it overtook. So we could drive a mile and we could drive another mile, and we could drive another mile, and we could drive another mile."

● **The Church's Marty Willson-Piper** agreed to do 92 satirical songs. You know "haya, this is Marty W.P.", from The Church and you're listening to station xxxx where the his rol...") his tongue. A few hours later, trying to pronounce such "Ameri-Lajolia" "Sanluisobispo" "Las Cruces" and "Mont. Peller" among others.

Another rumour — **THE CHURCH** are to split — let's hope not.

● Next Church video, for their "Tantaise" single is reported to cost about \$75,000.

● Next Church single will be "Columbus", the track that this paper tipped should have been the first single off the Heyday LP. The band will be filming a video during their current US tour supporting Echo & The Bunnymen.

Oh, remember in one of the first ever church interviews, Marty Willson-Piper, aroused the suspicions of stinkbombs and hostile letters when he said that his ambition (or one of them) was to play Madison Square Gardens in New York. It took them some time, but they finally played there in early April.

THE CHURCH

Feb
26 Lady Bay H Warrambrook
27 The Palace
28 Fernitree Gully
Mar
1 Central Club
2 TBA
4 Tivoli
5 St George Sailing Club
6 Sweethearts
7 Dee Why H
8 Blacktown RSL
9 Newcastle Workers
11-16 Old
19-20 Adelaide
21, 27 Perth (Check Local Guides)

● **THE CHURCH** and **THE SCREAMING TRIBESMEN** are gigging this week. **THE GRAINSTORE**, **THE VENUE** and **THE EXCELSIOR**.



Heyday, The Church (EMD)

Great Australian Record Number Four. It would be a misnomer to point out that over the years Steve Kilbey has written some of the silliest and most meaningless lyrics in the history of the recorded media. On the new Church album most of the songs are credited simply to "the Church", but they still don't make much sense. Otherwise, with Heyday, the paisley ones have made their best album for years. The playing sparkles, thanks largely I suspect to producer Peter Walsh (Simple Minds, etc), the melodies are great and hey, just really really like it. And let's face it, the last few Church albums were about as exciting as a postcard of Westminster Abbey. ★★

THE CHURCH Tantailized (Parlophone)

Speaking of po-faced guitar bands with religious overtones... There are many who hold that if Steve Kilbey didn't write such consistently good songs he would disappear up his own pulpit. These people are overlooking the rest of the band, the general musicianship, the sparkling guitars, the dead-accurate fuglike drumming. Though this is an attempt to whip off a frantic rocker, it's not as hysterical as it sounds, I'm tempted to think they've succeeded.

THE CHURCH

Tantailized (Parlophone)
The Church's the band's big comeback after a bit of a wander in no person's land. And life it does. Rocks your ass off if you give it half a chance. They've found the Force, and it's pumping in their veins again. A big record that redresses the balance between art and rock, rock, first, art, unshir-

BEST SONGWRITER

1. JIM MOGINIE
2. DAVE FAULKNER
3. STEVE KILBEY
4. GARRETT/HIRST
5. DAVE MCCOMB
6. NICK CAVE
7. PAUL KELLY
8. MARK CALLAGHAN
9. SEAN KELLY
10. A. FARRISS/HUTCHENCE

BEST GROUP (Aust/NZ)

1. MIDNIGHT OIL
2. HOODOO GURUS
3. DIVINYLS
4. THE CHURCH
5. INXS
6. MODELS
7. TRIFIDS
8. MENTAL AS ANYTHING
9. DO REMI
10. I'M TALKING

THE CHURCH

Already Yesterday (EMI)
I'm not sure what it all means, but who cares when it sounds so good? Just goes to show what the Church can do when they refuse to join the hired ears.

BEST DRUMMER

1. ROB HIRST
2. RICHARD PLOOG
3. BARTON PRICE

BEST BASS PLAYER

1. PETER GIFFORD
2. JAMES FREUD
3. STEVE KILBEY

BEST AUSTRALIAN SINGLE

BEST AUSTRALIAN REMI

1. Man Overboard — HOODOO GURUS
2. Like Now — HOODOO CHURCH
3. Bittersweet — DIVINYLS
4. Already And Pain — THE CHURCH
5. Pleasure And Pain — THE CHURCH

INTERVIEW OF THE YEAR

1. PETER GARRETT/Andrew McMillan (RAM)
2. JOHN LYDON/Molly Meldrum (Countdown)
3. STEVE KILBEY/Guy Allenby (RAM)

ALL-TIME FAVOURITE ALBUMS

1. Blurred Crusade — THE CHURCH

1. Stoneage Romances — HOODOO GURUS
2. East — COLD CHISEL
3. Loudon Calling — THE CLASH
4. Dark Side Of The Moon — PINK FLOYD

BEST MALE SINGER

1. PETER GARRETT
2. JIMMY BARNES
3. STEVE KILBEY

THE CHURCH

Live!

ON STAGE



Steve Kilbey (pic by Tony Mott)

Venue: Prospect Hill Hotel, Melbourne

Each time I see The Church, the more I'm convinced it's one of this country's finest bands. Now that's a pretty big statement and I'm not usually in the habit of making such, but how can this band miss?

I'm sure Steve Kilbey would appreciate the implications of such a view. He has a firm and confident belief in the band's abilities and aspirations, particularly with regard to success overseas. He also has an uncanny ability of making the band's live work look so damn easy. Yet these guys work hard.

Apart from minor sound problems early in the set and then again at the end, The Church deliver a relatively short, but energetic and precise show. Tonight the band is firing.

The last time I saw them in Melbourne there was a guest keyboards player in tow. Although the washes of keyboards added to the atmosphere of the music, they tended to suppress the energy level. There is nothing restrained about the band tonight.

Back to the sleek four piece as we know it, The Church is harder, faster and tighter than ever. In the live situation the guitar work of Marty Willson-Piper and Peter Koppes has taken on a diamond-hard quality previously only hinted at it seems.

This is clearly evident on newer material such as 'The View' and 'Tantalized', but even older songs like 'Shadow Cabinet' and 'Life Speeds Up' take on a new life. And when that new life takes hold and blossoms the result is both pleasing and strangely compelling. Yet underneath it all that beautiful, glittering nature remains.

For direct comparison you only have to look at the band's recorded work to realize that The Church on stage is an entirely different matter. The two are separate entities and should always be treated as such. Nevertheless the bonds that link the two are not severed and what we ultimately get is the subtlety of the studio bolstered in the live arena; the best of both worlds.

The new album, *Heyday* (already shaping up to be one of this year's best releases), inevitably forms the basis of tonight's set. From the lyrical strains of 'Already Yesterday' and 'Tristesse' through 'Disenchanted', 'Roman' and up to 'Tantalized', the balance between old and new is maintained.

Unfortunately sound complications mar the delivery of one of my favourite Church tunes, 'Constant In Opal' from the incomparable *Persia* mini album. The bottom end is lost in the mix somehow and the song becomes a formless mass, although Marty's 12-string guitar work shines through.

There is something else apparent in the band's presentation tonight. The Church is now playing to its audience, rather than at it and what's more Kilbey actually looks like he is enjoying himself for once. This may seem odd for he wouldn't be playing live if he didn't enjoy it, but it certainly livens things up.

And it's always such a joy to watch drummer Richard Ploog at work. As well as being precise and economical player, he drums with a passion and is rarely without a smile.

In a few weeks The Church again leaves these shores for America where the band's popularity is increasing daily. If the band's form on this current tour is any indication, the Yanks are in for a treat. Home grown audiences could do far worse than catch this unique band now.

— IAN MCFARLANE

the church

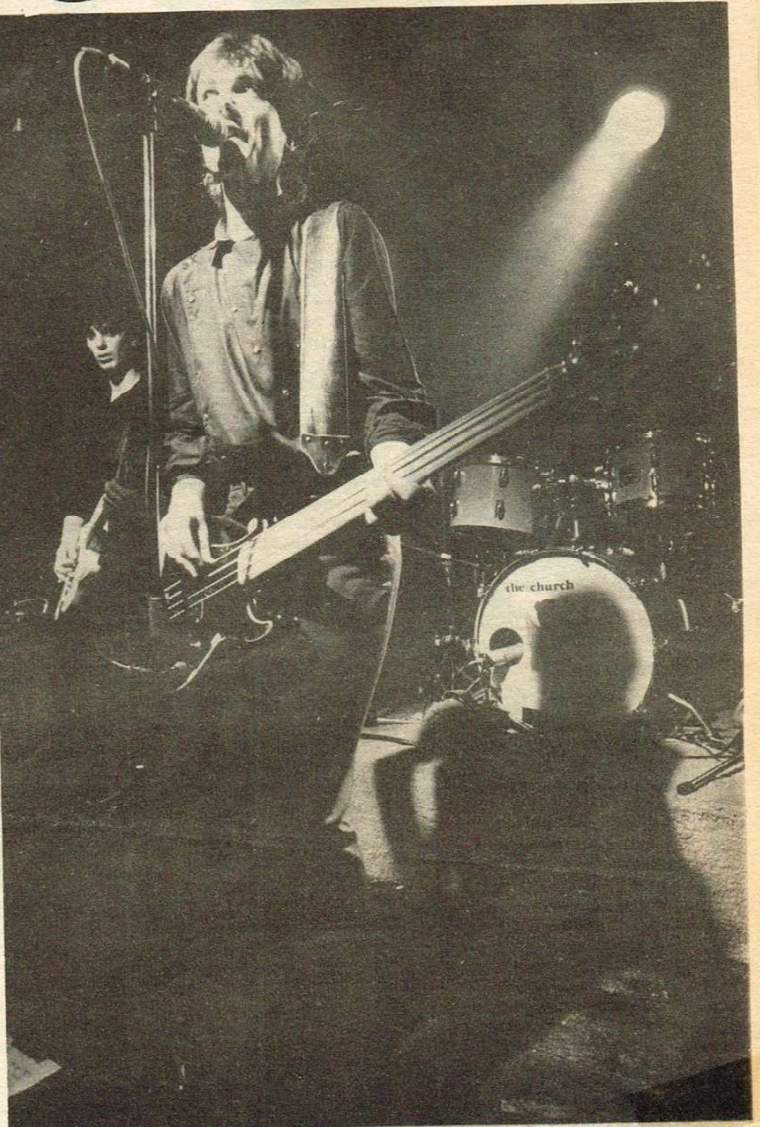
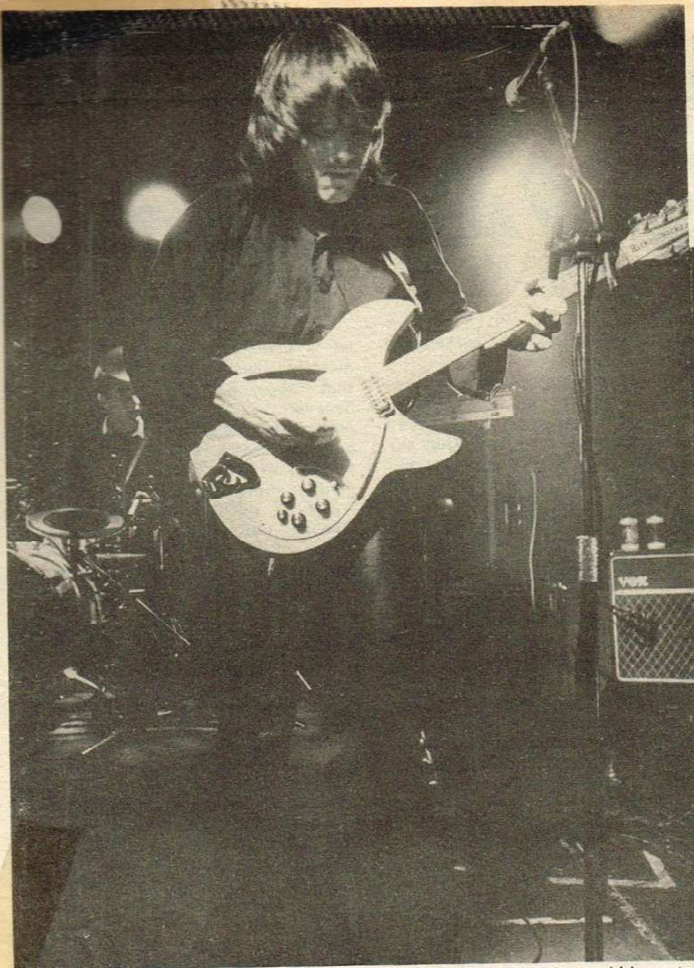
new single

already yesterday

out now

EMI

THE CHURCH



Sydney band The Church feel quite at home in Melbourne. Lead singer Steven Kilbey says he finds the audiences here more perceptive and sees the venues as a welcome retreat to many of the headbanging beer barns in Sydney.

With all in the band experienced in studio work, their debut album 'Of Skins and Heart' has the stamp of professionalism. Studio work, according to Steven, is where the band fires best.

"I want to make records that we can't play live, we're not trying to make records a representation of what we do live at all. I just want to keep making records and that's the only reason I'm in it".

Though the present line-up in the band has only been in existence for a short space of time, all in the band have had years of experience as musicians describing themselves as an old-fashioned pop band.

Lyrics aren't really meant to be deep and meaningful and as Steven goes on to explain:

"I'm one of those writers that just sit down and write the first thing that comes into my head. That's just always been my method, your subconscious always knows what it's trying to say but you may not realise it on the surface level. Often I will be standing on the stage singing a line and suddenly it will hit me what I was trying to say. Sometimes it's others that discover what you mean way before you do, but the lyrics don't mean anything specific".

Church sees themselves as a guitar band, and as such a reaction against the cold emotionless world of the synthesiser. Says Steven:

"I'm really fucking sick of all this sort of post modernism, futurism, the cold computerised future which I don't think will come. I don't think the world which the Gary Neumans and Mi Sex's sing about will happen. It's like looking at the fifties and the visions of the world they thought would come, but it didn't. I think that guitar is just a more soulful instrument. Computer music is like eating a Big Mac, it fills a gap in your stomach but you don't really get anything out of it. I suppose if I had to

name a favorite group it would have to be the Byrds, music is a spiritual experience and Numan tried to apply mathematics and logic — where everything happens in the right place and I just don't go in for that".

Playing late at the Jump Club, Church attracted a packed audience and introduced themselves as "just an honest hard-working pop band". And hard-working they certainly are. Though they see themselves as a studio band they displayed a long set of talent, power and professionalism. Working as a tight unit, drums, bass and guitar are tightly interlocked — pounding away producing songs of pure pop to sparse and intricate musical patterns. The Church are far more than a band with just potential.

Steve Camden

ALBUMS

THE CHURCH

Heyday
(EMI)

*How can you be so invisible
Give me the nerves to see
Privilege on privilege
An unwanted discovery*

All the brooding and dark-edged cynicism of the last few Church records have been virtually vacuum-cleaned away. Heyday sees a more positive Church, uplifted and strong, more eager to communicate, with some crisp intelligent

and "Youth Worshipper" are prime Grade A-1 pop; it's a more accessible Church without an iota of compromise in quality. The first thing you note about Heyday is that the songs have an equally disquieting effect; more so with increased listening.

*Hooves and horns and teeth and bones
Gonna stitch you up where you'd come
unseen*

*Youth worshipper, wrapped up in blue fur
and ermine*

Youth worshipper, got no pity for vermin

While "Disenchanted" and "Already

Yesterday" are no more than a redefinition

of the now-trademark space-folk guitar

music of the first few records, the strongest

and long lasting cuts are the ones where

muscles are flexed, the past come to terms,

and exotic cultures evokes.

Equating Church music with a sense of

spiritualism would be almost like drawing a

bad pun. True, the inspired guitarwork and

interplay with bass/drums provides a

Uplifting



and strong

production touches and subtle use of brass/strings to give the music even greater purpose and vision.

By this stage, you'd have worked out if you like The Church or not. Whether by design or not, they make records that the Great Unwashed Public generally isn't sure whether it could fall in love with or not. The language and imagery is unquietening; the international artifice and classic ritual leaves the listener feeling uneasy.

A quick whip-around in the Juke offices came up with the general opinion that Heyday is the sort of LP that could become cherished by people who haven't cared too much for The Church in the past. A couple of the tracks here like "Columbus" "Tantalised"

PREVIEW
exclusive

genuine excitement. But what draws the listener back time and time again is the yearning and vulnerable quality in the vocals, in such haunting tracks as "Myrrh" or "Tantalised". By definition, it's spiritual music in the very best sense: it doesn't always make sense except in the heart,

which won't ignore it. There might be a touch of confusion and venom in some of the lines, but it wit and charm strike beyond.

What Church do here, of course, is hardly unprecedented. But rather than follow on in the tradition of REM, Green On Red etc which they've always been attributed to, Heyday could easily slot alongside Dylan's soundtrack to Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid, Eric Clapton's 461 Ocean Boulevard or even Led Zeppelin's "Stairway To Heaven" where the lyrics indulge in the wisdom and mystery of some ancient spirit. From the opening cut, "Myrrh" the ethereal sense is complemented by full instrumental texture, with an instrumental two-part "Happy Hunting Grounds" that evokes the myths and dream-time of ancient tribes. The latter is a track

that attempts to convey a message and attitude without the need for words, but ultimately poses more questions than it answers.

For the first time in so many Church records, there is no distance, no attempt to recapture any past glories. Every single track here has something going for it; as John Prine once said of Jackson Browne, I don't know where they get their melodies, but I'd sure like to go there.

Heyday is the best album The Church could have come up with to launch themselves internationally with. And, verily verily it is written, when you die and go to heaven, you don't hear harps but Rickenbacker. And they'll probably be playing Church music.

— MICHAEL MORRIS



THE CHURCH

HEYDAY

NEW ALBUM OUT NOW



PCSO.430034



THE Church ... back with a breath of fresh air in the ranks.

The real thing

THE Church's stunning new video features real live head-hunters!

The song is called *Already Yesterday* and the clip shows scenes of a savage jungle tribe.

"It's the tribe who supposedly ate Rockefeller's son," frontman Steve Kilbey told **SCENE**.

"They're pretty primitive — they're still in the mud age because they don't have stones.

"When we were thinking about the film clip, lots of people were submitting ideas.

"We heard about this guy who had footage of this New Guinean tribe and we thought it would be a good idea to use it.

"The guy who filmed them reckons they are pretty fierce."

The Church is one band who haven't been as keen as other bands to explore the video area.

"I think it's fairly regrettable that music got caught up with video," Steve explained.

"A song can make important statements in an abstract way, but a video can take away other things a song could have said.

"I mean, *Already Yesterday* is now going to be tied to that head-hunter thing."

The Church were conspicuous by their absence in '85.

After several successful years both here and abroad, they seemed to vanish from the scene.

"We did nothing last year," Steve said.

"Everyone took very, very long holidays.

"Richard (Ploog, drums) spent five months living in a jungle in Thailand!

"It was nice to take time off to evaluate everything.

"When The Church started it was very exciting, but then we got disillusioned and a terrible cynicism crept in.

"But now we are back into it and it's like a breath of fresh air blowing through the ranks."

The Church plan to release a new album in February and will then look at touring plans.

"Lyrically the album is more involved and conceptually it's more innovative," Steve said.

"As for touring, we don't know if we'll do Australia or America.

"We're a very popular cult underground band in America and we've been going down well live.

"But basically we're just going to where most people want to see us."

During the band's break last year, Steve thought long and hard about The Church's lifespan.

"I thought to myself: What am I going to do when this is finished," he said.

"But we're back and enjoying it again, so I'll probably see you in 1995."

BUCKETFULL of BRAINS

ISSUE 15



INTERVIEW & FREE FLEXI-DISC INSIDE BY

THE CHURCH

with the previously unreleased

'Warm Spell'

PLUS

DREAM SYNDICATE, PLAYMATES,
SHOUTLESS, CHESTERFIELD KINGS
LYRES, ITALIAN PSYCH

PAUL ROLAND, SURFIN' LUNGS, ABSOLUTE GREY, NEWS, REVIEWS



The Church

[Cont from 15] managed to secure their first choice — Peter Walsh, the young English producer and engineer who had made Simple Minds' *New Gold Dream*.

Preceding the album's release, the single "Already Yesterday" came out in November; unsurprisingly, even though it possessed soul and savvy in abundance, it went nowhere. Radio still seems reluctant to give the Church a chance, a continuing situation which has been the bane of the band's existence: only the early single, "The Unguarded Moment," has enjoyed airwave exposure. To this listener, the Church's florid folk-rock is nothing if not extremely accessible and attractive. Kilbey has a few ideas on the subject.

"I think the fact that we're called the Church," he says, "and our albums were called something like *Science*, and the covers featured things like hooded women on the way to the grave — I think that put a lot of people off. Mystery and intrigue don't rate highly; people want something that's easy to understand, like songs about cars and girls. I think the gloom and doom put people off."

Yet while the Church may never have accrued a major audience in Australia, around the world they're a revered cult act. After testing the water — unsatisfyingly — in the U.K. and Europe early on, in 1984 the band turned its attention to America, where its records were selling well on import. And playing in America provided an uninspired band with just the tonic it needed.

"Once we hit America, we started to rediscover ourselves," Kilbey recalled. "The audiences just went crazy; it was wild. The ridiculous thing, we realized, was that once upon a time we were an exciting band, but then we went into that horrible gloom and doom period, playing all those slow songs. In America, we rediscovered the fact that we could be exciting."

But the band had to wait before it could go back into the studio again. Walsh wasn't available until July 1985 so they laid low, with members taking on different projects, like James Griffins' Subterraneans; Kilbey recorded a solo single, "This Asphalt Eden." "It wasn't very constructive, it certainly lowered our profile," he recalls, "but it was nice on a personal level, just to have the time off, to do nothing. Then this whole paisley underground thing exploded, and I guess we just felt fairly amused."

Of course, from the very first, the Church had been pegged as new psychedelia, though it's never been clear whether this had more to do with their shirts or with their sound.

By the time they were ready to record, the group members were

release of the new album goes a long way to explaining his positive mood. *Heyday's* release, after a number of unsuccessful international deals, is the first fruit of the band's contract with Warner Brothers in the U.S.A., and as such is cause for celebration. It was a vegetarian diner not far from EMI's Sydney head office, Kilbey seems at ease and eager to talk, almost as if to redress the balance. Of course, the

[Cont on 24]

15

unanimously of the opinion that they wanted to "record something more exciting than what they'd come up with over the previous couple of years. And indeed, taking a deliberate step back from the unfocused indulgence of its immediate predecessors, *Heyday* picks up again the clarity and drive of vintage Church. This band hasn't proffered a more coherent collection of songs since their second album, *The Blurred Crusade*.

Kilbey puts this down, in part, to the fact that rather than the songs being written by himself alone (which was always the practice in the past), they were written collectively by the band — comprising in addition to Kilbey, guitarists Peter Koppes and Marty Wilson-Piper and drummer Richard Ploog.

"I thought the album would get an injection of energy that way," Kilbey explains.

The band spent a month or so in the rehearsal room with Peter Walsh, getting material together. It was Walsh's work on Simple Minds' *New Gold Dream*, in particular, that prompted the Church to employ his services. "Peter got really involved, he sort of became a fifth member," Kilbey says. "He isn't a producer who gets the currently fashionable drum sound; I think we just wanted a big, warm, exciting sound that rather than impress people on the first listen was something they could live with for a while. We were also keeping an eye towards something that had a chance of getting played on the radio."

Certainly, the crisper, guitar-oriented sound of *Heyday* will translate more readily to the stage, but radio play remains a big stumbling block. Although the Church don't want to desert Australia and the loyal fans they do have here, they're more than prepared to leave for America, as their prospects there are still good.

At this stage, no one can accuse the Church either of throwing down the gauntlet, or of selling out. Kilbey's visions haven't changed, and nor have his shirts.

"That's my big dilemma," he says, "I can't seem to abandon it. I'm just very wary of making obvious statements. I guess it's there and I guess it always will be."

"Thinking about this band, my theory is that maybe there's not many people who like Church records, but the people who do, like them a lot. I don't think a lot of bands get a second chance — we're on about our tenth now. I just think no one has ever been able to make up their minds about us."

"I've always thought, even though you do accept rock music as the lowest common denominator, that it is possible to make some kind of statement with it. You can alter people's consciousness. Perhaps after all, reality is an illusion, and the illusion reality."

THE CHURCH

(Floyd's, Canberra)

The Church were always misunderstood. At the height of their local popularity they were one of the most clever and sincere bands around, and Steve Kilbey's lyrical nodding palm trees could only be matched by Julian Cope at his surreal best. They looked embarrassed when they appeared on *Countdown*, and stared sullenly from teenybopper magazines at a time when Steve Kilbey craved respect as a songwriter.

The Church were never destined for huge success at home, and having exhausted the limited Australian market looked elsewhere for appreciation. Now fresh from one of their overseas missions, they seem much more optimistic and self-assured. Kilbey still shouts/talks/whispers his lyrics, but generally the band is faster, louder and tighter.

Yet the Church thrive on tension and understatement, and at Floyd's they were more passionate than I've ever seen them. Their set was a selection of their 'greatest hits', although they did do a new song by Marty Willson-Piper — a typically plaintive ballad, albeit with a harder edge than is Martin's usual wont. Still, it bodes well for the next album, to be recorded in July.

High points of the set were the old favourites — although these, even performed with such gusto, are becoming as hackneyed as the new keyboardist's waistcoat; he, incidentally, also plays acoustic guitar on demand.

The keyboards were always intended to be subliminal, and as such, the keyboardist remains unobtrusive — exactly what's required. This was always a delicately balanced quarter, its distinctive sound hinged upon the twin guitar axis. Though they're playing with more aggression these days, that balance remains reassuringly undisturbed.

Understandably, the Church's attitude toward local audiences tends to be patronising. Having spent the last year striving to convert the uninitiated overseas (with encouraging success), it must be deflating to return home to the same fervent following — a following prepared to swallow the same old material without question.

New material is eagerly awaited. Perhaps a resurgence of local interest will follow in turn. This is one Australian band we can't afford to get complacent about, and new songs will obviate any such danger. Don't be afraid to spring 'em on us.

GUY ALLENBY



(Pic: Camerarterry)

THE CHURCH

(Tivoli, Sydney)

The Church sound awesome. Powered by the thunderous drums of Richard Ploog, who for some inexplicable reason rarely gets the recognition he deserves, they crash through any apathy in the mix'n'match Tivoli crowd. The last year of OS touring has obviously infused in them a self-confidence bordering on (justifiable) arrogance, allowing them the luxury of dispensing with keyboards and once again relying on the guitars of Peter Koppes and Marty Willson-Piper. What little was lost in texture was more than compensated for by the full force of a rhythm that started somewhere behind your chest and spread up and outwards, taking the head and heart with it.

So self-assured are the Church that they gleefully resurrect some older favourites — *Fraulein*, *Chrome Injury* and *Unguarded Moment* — proving once again that there will always be a corner of Steven Kilbey's heart dedicated to Glam. The harder sound they displayed on their last tour a few months ago has developed into the full-frontal assault that came disguised as tonight's gig. The myth that they are poor live performers should be well and truly exploded by their upcoming shows if tonight's any indication.

The new material follows on from this change in direction. *Never Come Back Again* is the closest the Church have come to the 60s punk sound with its raucous guitars and pounding beat, while Willson-Piper's *The View* has a tougher feel than any of his earlier work. Both of these seem destined to become crowd favourites and could even sell out in the great suburban wasteland. On the other hand, *Already Yesterday* (the new single) completely disarms with its beautiful melody and chiming guitars as Kilbey takes you to 10 Mile Beach and back.

Quite often a Church gig is akin to cutting yourself off from all outside influences, so that when they left the stage I was sure it had been a very short set — until a check of my watch revealed they had been on for over an hour. It's hard to reconcile the quality of this band with its relatively small following. If there is any justice, this tour and the new album (due in the new year) should establish the Church as a major force both here and overseas.

BERNARD ZUEL



(Pic: Camerarterry)

THE METAPHYSICS OF INNOCENCE

metaphysics — n. the branch of philosophy that investigates principles of reality transcending those of any particular science, traditionally including cosmology and ontology; all speculative philosophy.

THE CHURCH are poised to lodge in the minds and hearts of far more than their strangely limited local following with the release of their fourth full-length LP, *Heyday*, early in '86. (Their five-year output has also included three mini albums and a string of singles.) Here **STEVE KILBEY** reflects and refracts through a hall of mirrors that extends from his youthful days miming the Beatles in front of one. About to step through another with the rest of the Church as they take on America and Europe, Kilbey tells **GUY ALLENBY** he owes it all to purity, innocence, books, yoga and... spirulina.



(Pic: Ian Greene/Camerartery)

IT WAS the right place. You could tell by the garbage bin. Outside Steve Kilbey's house was a plastic one decorated with all manner of writings, drawings and scrawlings, and on the lid was a large paisley motif. Inside blared George Harrison.

Inside the house, that is.

"Apple juice?" Ta. Steve spoons a teaspoon of spirulina powder into his glass as small talk drifts from our common Canberra links towards the matter at hand — the new album, and the new Church.

The Church have always been the intessentially cosmic band. They run direct links with the 60s, but ngly guitars and vaguely surreal rics lead to inevitable comparisons ith the current American revival of oth the music and mores of that era. Still, the Church are different. Not ly have they blazed a trail garnering le but deserved credit, but their ecial blend of textured guitars, oning poet vocals and oblique lyrical ggestion portrays a beauty and idness only hinted at by other guely similar bands; and sadly lost, r the most part, on local audiences. mehow (thankfully), they've rived the rigours and knocks of an dustry that seeks its identity in onolithic pub-rock. They've trudged e world in search of more welcoming rrs; suffered management and ord company troubles, and asional lapses of musical direction; it they've built a solid, ever growing, yal following across the globe and eated a new album with which to tract new converts and confound the believers.

Heyday, to be released in January, arks a major turning point in the urch's career. With record company pport and an overseas groundswell appreciation, their confidence and plication have resulted in a record th all the emotion of previous work, it also a power and coherence that y at other times lacked.

"I think," says Kilbey, "we were selling ourselves short on the other albums. We were doing songs of mine I don't think we should have been doing — we were rushing things. And then with this album, for the first time in ages, we said, 'Let's really try our hardest.' This time we've spent a lot of time making qualitative decisions, thinking about every note that's laid down and thinking about the songs and going over and over them to improve them. I spent a lot of time on the lyrics and a lot of time singing them, and I think it shows — shows that we really tried hard."

For the first time, they've worked as a team — with Peter Walsh as coach. Producer Walsh (Simple Minds' *New Gold Dream*, Heaven 17) followed the whole project through — from rehearsals and pre-production — where previously Bob Clearmountain (*The Blurred Crusade*, *Of Skins And Heart*) and Nick Launay (*Seance*) only really mixed the albums. And this time, instead of Kilbey writing nearly all of the material, *Heyday* has been a far more collaborative effort.

"The whole band wrote the music and I wrote the lyrics afterwards, so we just took the best ones. Peter Walsh made the final decision from rehearsals as to which songs we were going to record. Walsh twiddled the knobs. Obviously we were making suggestions — I was making suggestions about how we wanted things to be. It was a group effort, I suppose. He wasn't an absolute tyrant, but he had his hands on the controls — not us.

"*Heyday* took two months to make — about a month of pre-production — which was really just jamming at White Room (rehearsal studio) in Surry Hills, and then about a month in the studio after that. It was expensive."

And is Steve confident that the investment will pay out?

"No, I'm not confident. It was the best thing we could do at the time, and we did it... and I'm really hoping people will like it and I hope it sells and enables us to do another one etcetera etcetera."

EMI have already picked up their option on another album, if the Church want to do it, but to my ears this is the one that will break it for them — radio willing. Undoubtedly their disappointing sales have had more to do with lack of airplay than an absence of pop sensibility.

"You've got three or four people who don't like the Church at the major stations — not don't like us, but don't consider our sort of music 'suitable' for their radio station. But you've got Triple Jay, George Wayne and people like that who counter the scales by playing us a lot, doing interviews, giving us a plug..."

"I made a lot of mistakes — business mistakes — being nasty to people. If I meet

a boorish person doing something they shouldn't be doing in any situation, rightly or wrongly, I've always been rude to them or ignored them — I make sarcastic remarks and things like that... When I first got into the band I started doing it naturally, trusting my luck, thinking I won't need these people — thinking I was on this trajectory (he points up), and it got to the stage where everything I did was misconstrued.

"We're all supposed to feel like we're part of this one big Australian Music Industry. You hear things like 'I hate all the bands and I hate all the promoters, but I love this industry' — as if it's this thing which has taken on a life of its own. Anyway, they cut me down to size and they did a good job."

Regardless of the pitfalls and setbacks, somehow they've kept going, riding through the bad luck. The Church are nothing if not determined — dogged, even.

"We've had strokes of good luck, too. We just keep seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and keep on following it. There have been times when people have felt like giving in, but I think it's the same with anything you do — good times or bad times, you have to follow it through to its logical conclusion. I don't think I've felt it's time to give up on the band, I don't think the other guys have either... We've always felt like, 'Let's try something different, let's keep going'."

"I have this feeling that we're going to be a little more successful than we are now — I think things are going to get better for us."

As songwriter, Steve has enjoyed the royalties trickling in where at times the rest of the band have not been quite so well off. Now with a collaborative effort, it seems that the whole band can look forward to making a living — where at their lowest ebbs in the past, the dole was a frequent means of recourse.

"Actually I've just signed a publishing deal which will keep me comfortable for a couple of years. We're all now in the position of not having to worry too much about money — we're relatively secure. I know you're supposed to starve for your art, but when you've got people depending on you..."

"We've got a new manager and a new publishing company, and we're fairly independent of having to think about making mega-hit records. Thinking about making hit records leads to inferior product, as witnessed by a few bands in Australia this year. They turn their back on their previous body of work — not naming anyone, but saying, 'Let's put on leather jackets.' And that's cool, there's nothing wrong with that either, but with me, writing the kind of music I like writing makes me happy where having lots of money wouldn't."

Does mega-stardom appeal in any form?

"It'd be nice."

Why?

"Just to see what it's like. But to be realistic, I don't think it's going to happen — so it's not something I spend a lot of time craving. It'd be nice to fly, it'd be nice to breathe underwater, but those things aren't likely to happen and there's just as much likelihood I'll fly as be a mega-successful rock star."

But wouldn't success on the level, say, of R.E.M. be feasible?

"Well, yeah, I'd like to do that. That's more feasible, they're not what we'd really call 'stars'. I think we're as good as they area. I think there's a possibility we could do something like that."

UNFORTUNATELY, or perhaps luckily, the Church haven't been lumped into the category that encompasses R.E.M., the Long Ryders, Rain Parade, the Replacements or any of their lesser-known American contemporaries. Besides, the Church are Australian, not American, yet their music has a polish and obvious commercial edge which makes their being overlooked on other levels all the more baffling.

"Why have we been overlooked by the public of the world? I don't know — when we've played there (America), it isn't like we were being overlooked because we were getting fairly good attendances. In England, in London, we could probably pull a pretty decent crowd and our records are doing moderately well. I don't know what it is, really. But if you play in New York to 2,000 people who go absolutely bananas and give you three encores, how do we let people in Australia know that's happening? Do people in Australia care that that's happening? Because on that level we've sort of already arrived — we are a revered band in America that sells moderately well."

A criticism that is often levelled at the band, and often cited as the reason for their lack of consolidation, is the perceived gap — between recorded and live work. And some would say Steve Kilbey simply can't sing...

"Sure, there are certain songs we can't play live. I'm in the unfortunate position of not knowing what we're like live. Some nights I think we transcend live what we've ever done on record. Other nights the records are better. We've never tried to recreate the records live."

And singing?

"I'd actually go as far as to say I probably can't sing. But in the studio I can. You listen to the record — I did 99 percent of the vocals on that record. The real trouble is I need to sing very quietly to properly sing, and to play live you can't do that. You have to sort of bellow your words."

"I had to force myself to sit down with cassettes and listen to them over and over again until something started happening . . . I was reading a few interesting books at the time which did give me a little help."

"I think there's a lot more going on in the world than meets the eye. Not that the Church has any answers at all. The Church is merely one of a million doors in this world, and the Church is only a very small clumsy door, but I hope people open it up and think about it and think about a few metaphysical questions."

Kilbey communicates with a refreshing honesty and sincerity — with a *spoken* sense of both, unfortunately cheapened by the written word and born not out of naivete but experience. His world is one of questioning. But what has that got to do with rock'n'roll?

"I refuse to be told by critics or anyone involved with music that it can't deal with cosmic things, that you can't try for something really good, that you have to write to the accepted ideal of pop music — about boy meets girl. I don't see why rock music can't explore all kinds of situations and conjure up all kinds of emotions, and I see myself as . . . You know, if it were a hundred years ago I'd be trying to write poetry, to explore these things."

"I'm not trying to say I *know* anything, I'm just saying I think that what a poet or an artist or a musician does can be significant . . . even a rock musician, when rock music is the lowest common denominator of all art forms. Rock music is the easiest anyone can get involved in. Anyone can buy a portastudio and drum machine and make pop music. There's no mystery, there's nothing clever about it. But even within this very basic framework, I don't see why one should be forced and limited by contemporaries or critics to write about boy-meets-girl or dancing on Saturday night at the disco. I don't see why it has to be about that . . .

"The 1980s is a very money-oriented era, where everything is very matter-of-fact. You see it in the way that people dress — people wear sort of functional baggy pants and gym shoes and their little sweaters with boring messages written on them that everyone wears. I see that perhaps the Church and other bands like the Church, whether it's R.E.M. or Echo & the Bunnymen are just these sort of . . . it's just showing some other side of the coin, that perhaps there is more to our whole existence, more to humans than just sort of making money, bringing home the bacon and that type of thing, and I refuse to be told that I can't step outside this boundary — that once Elvis Presley sang *Jailhouse Rock* and *Heartbreak Hotel* and that 30 years later Steve Kilbey is a fucking pretentious wimp because he wants to write about Jesus Christ or Columbus or any of the multiplicity of subjects that are available to a thinking human being."

"There are lots of very horrible bands, especially in America, that sing about blowing up teacher and getting in a Chevy and driving over the speed limit and getting drunk. And songs that are endless odes to how wonderful rock music is, but without saying why . . . I mean, what's so great about being able to turn up a guitar at full volume and rock till you drop? There's nothing inherently or intrinsically clever about that, and I think that anything that is anti-thought — which I think those songs are — is bad."

What does motivate Steve Kilbey?

"I write songs because I get a lot of pleasure out of writing a song, putting it on a record and someone enjoying it. It just seems a normal thing to do to me. You start out doing these things . . . When I was eight years old, I had a plastic guitar and I used to stand in the lounge room at home and put on Beatles records and pretend I was playing it. You don't question all these whys and wherefores, you don't think about ego-gratification and stylistic devices and marketing . . . All these things are just the debris you start collecting behind you. As you pick up momentum you realise that it isn't just standing on stage and playing guitar, it's all these other fucking things that you don't really want to know about; and I'm the same. I want to show off my

responsibilities and I don't want to have to think about all this economic, logistic stuff. It's just something I do, and I'd like it to be as pure and innocent as it was all those years ago when I was miming to the Beatles." So Steve Kilbey has grown up. Exit the young cynic — enter the aware, artistic, mature human being . . .

"I think I'm like everyone else. Whatever mood I get up in on that day . . . today I got up and felt really happy, tomorrow I could get up and feel awful. As opposed to meeting someone every day and seeing them go through their moods. Someone reads an interview with someone else and they're a cynic for six months, until they read the next one. I did some deep meditation, I did some yoga and then I did some relaxation last night and I really woke up and felt good today."

SO, the secret is out . . . Kilbey has been meditating since 1977 and took up yoga studies this year — initially to ease a bad back.

"It's paying dividends in every respect, I think. The lyrics have improved, and I've started reading books again. I hadn't been reading books for a long time. The lyrics owe a little to this, and to a lot of other minor discoveries I've been making."

This quietly modest Kilbey cuts an entirely different figure from the shallow, arrogant loudmouth he was portrayed as in the days of that first rush of success. But he maintains he was never a cynic — merely playing the part on occasions was little more than a self-conscious defence mechanism.

It's a reflection of his new-found confidence that the Church appear destined to break through on foreign soil, whilst they continue to be unjustly ignored in local terms. With an influential American management base, the final irony could mean that the Church will attain international domination and retain a loyal cult faith at home.

One can only wonder at the logic of such a fate.

It wasn't until I passed the paisley bin on the way out that I remembered the burning question that had remain unasked, and unanswered.

What the hell is spirulina, and where can I get some?





★ THE CHURCH ... row over.

Church crisis over

THE often-maligned Sydney band The Church has recovered from a major crisis on the eve of its latest bid to crack the lucrative US market.

Guitarist Marty Wilson-Piper quit the band midway through an European tour to promote The Church's fourth album, Heyday.

Wilson-Piper reportedly had a vitriolic dispute with fellow Church members, including singer Steve Kilbey and their management.

But after a week of frantic and protracted negotiations between Wilson-Piper and the band he was persuaded to rejoin.

The Church completed its European tour as support act for Echo And The Bunnymen and Wilson-Piper flew to the US with other band members to promote Heyday.

Heyday entered the prestigious Billboard magazine chart at No. 174 and is climbing higher as it gets extensive airplay.

New album by Church

The Church release their long awaited album Heyday on January 27 through EMI.

The track listings are:

Side One: "Myrrh" "Tristesse" "Already Yesterday" "Columbus" and "Happy Hunting Grounds".

Side Two: "Tantalised" "Disenchanted" "Knight Of Light" "Youth Worshipper" and "Roman".

The LP was engineered and produced by Englishman Peter Walsh.

The Church are expected to announce details of a world tour. Watch out for an upcoming feature.

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& Special Guests:

THE SCREAMING TRIBESMEN

WED 8th - GRAINSTORE TAVERN
FRI 9th - THE VENUE
SAT 10th - EXCELSIOR HOTEL



Steve Kilbey is reserved, refined and something of a raconteur. Sipping mineral water (he'd asked for something healthy) in the board room of EMI Records, his polite answers are delivered in a clipped, almost calculated manner that does nothing to belie his image as one of the intellectuals of Australian music.

The Church has been together for 150 years, having grown out of the slaziest backwater pubs Sydney has to offer. Now they have cultivated what Kiley describes as "a large old, following all over the world," which is gradually building to a ground-swell of international enthusiasm. "We can go to any major city in the western world and pull 1000 to 2000 people. Our 'sermons' still moderately well and get into independent charts, so we're not mega-huge but it's graciously building," Kiley said.

ward to their cause — many of them were gay. Willson-Piper was enlisted shortly afterwards, having just arrived from his native England where he'd worn out his welcome for being a drunkard, a brawler for a crust — they began logging themselves around Sydney's hotels, often playing for nothing, but if they were *really* lucky, picking up the (large and small) donation here and there.

1980. Although the Christmas rush was over, however, to some extent it generated enough interest to send their new release, "The Unguarded Moment" into the national Top 20 the following February. The band had attracted interest not only from the record-buying public but from a most impressive man called Bob Clearmountain, who has produced records for the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, Roky Music, Chic, to name a few. The Church sent all their raw recordings to him in New York, where he used his expertise and the facilities of the

The rest, as they say, is history! Nick Ward was replaced on drums by Adelaide expatriate Richard Ploog, and the band's next two albums brought them considerable notice from the Americans and English.

Maybe that attitude goes some way in explaining why the band is thought of as somewhat elitist, or even "arty," when they get a lot more fun out of them than, say, someone like Men At Work, who probably sell 50 times more records than we ever will. I don't think people are going to sit down and get the same amount of pleasure out of that as the minuscule amount that we sell...

other people to decide what it's about. I read a really good statement by Ian MacCulloch from Echo and the Bunnymen who said you don't write a book of poetry and then write another book explaining what that poetry was all about. I think the same argument can apply to a song, in that part of the interesting thing about a song is that it is interpretable on many levels. And the

His ambiguity has led some critics to compare his lyrics to "fourth form poetry," he laughs. "But that doesn't necessarily mean it's crap because I used to like fourth form poetry — especially when I was in fourth form!" In fact he says his songs — any songs — are set up as "suggestions for people listening who are on the 'wavelength' to use a hippy word, to get what they want out of it. A sort of open-ended. Like when you buy model kit — I used to buy model kits

Kilbey claims that five years of The Church has matured the four members to the point where they no longer rely on outside influences for their musical inspiration. "It's a bit late in the day for that," he explained. "I think we have a very well defined sense of what The Church is and that is our influence. But I like the traditional old Dylans and the Bowties and the Beatles. I think all those people are great."

Kilbey does seem to fit into the sensitive, intelligent mould of which he speaks so eloquently, though one gets the impression it is not something he often converts to concrete thought — unless, of course, he is provoked. He says the driving force for the Church is a desire to provide people with a "strong, positive, traditional rock and roll series," but not "whether we excite someone to the point where they became quiet and thoughtful." Indeed, he may elicit the required reaction from Australian audiences — which he maintains are regarded by many musicians as the worst in the world — but it does vary...

"But I think that's got a lot to do with beer," he adds with a grin.

A recent short tour by The Church up and down the eastern Australian coast was their first tour in a long time.

September to December last year they spent touring America — where they are greeted enthusiastically by people who have been buying Church albums at astronomical import prices for years and who waited a long time to see the band live. ("We often remarked to ourselves that we do a show out here that gets a lukewarm response and we think that if we'd done that show in America people would be bringing the house down.")

"Once you've written a song and it's gone down on vinyl it becomes it's own entity, it isn't really you or part of you any more because there is so much in it that comes from other people. But even with this record I've done myself, on which I play everything except the trumpets, and where there wasn't any in-put from anyone else—I did the cover and almost everything—now it's just something that has a little life of its own. It doesn't stand for me and I don't stand for it. It's just a little pop song out there for people to enjoy."

That the band ever gets anything done as a collective is a constant source of amazement for Kilbey, simply because he is, by his own admission, extremely lazy. Rehearsals for the last tour were to take two weeks — one week to rehearse the old songs and one week to rehearse the new songs, so their live performance would be a 50-50 showcase of both. It never happened! And if he didn't have the Church to motivate him (after a fashion!), Kilbey says he'd probably have

"I often wonder what I'd be doing now if I wasn't in The Church. Maybe I'd be working in a record shop. Or maybe," he muses, almost enthusiastically, "I would have worried my way on to radio. It's really hard to say. I'm not very good at anything very well and I don't think I'd be doing very much. I'm certainly going to pursue The Church until it stops happening. I don't know what else I can do, so I've got to keep doing this."



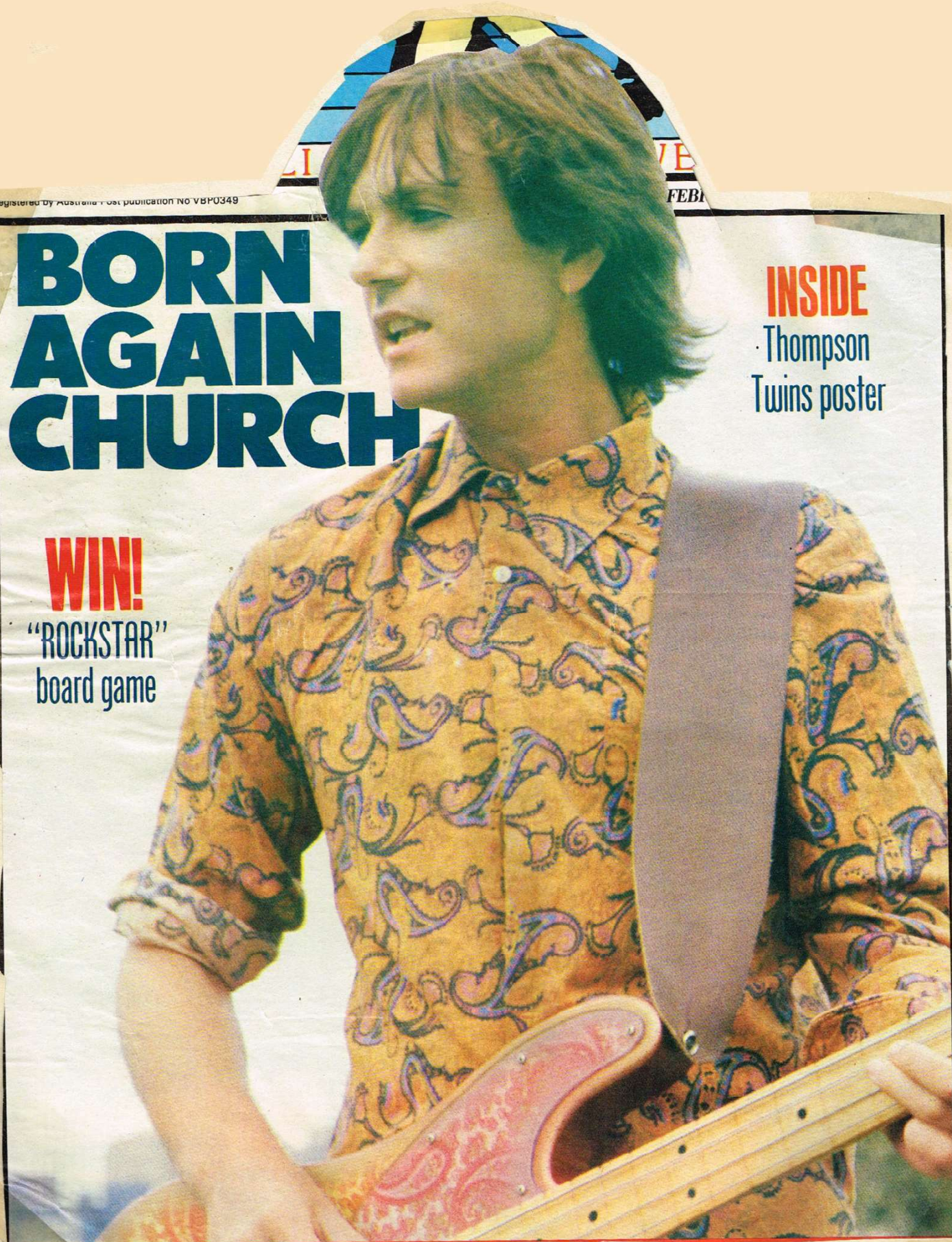
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FEB

BORN AGAIN CHURCH

INSIDE
Thompson
Twins poster

WIN!
"ROCKSTAR"
board game





Marty Willson-Piper (pics by Adrienne Overall).

HERE COME

"AND EXPERIENCE IT AS THE PAST..."

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, the 18th century master, once told of the king who summoned his counsellor.

"I have read in the stars," he said, "that all who eat of the next harvest will be driven mad. What shall we do?"

The counsellor advised that he and the king should eat the previous year's dwindling food supplies and let the population eat the tainted stuff.

"I don't wish to remain lucid in the midst of a people gone mad," replied the king, "so we shall all enter madness together. When the world is in a state of delirium, it is senseless to watch from the outside: the mad will think that, we too, are mad."

Yet the king also desired to keep alive the memory of his decision and of his former state.

Putting the arm around the counsellor's shoulder, he said, "You and I shall therefore mark each other's forehead with a seal, and every time we look at one another, we shall know that we are not mad."

When THE CHURCH sing "you hold onto their essence like a parachute" in their new LP, they could almost be referring to their sense of depth and quality.

By Christie Eliezer

"AND THEN TO BABYLON"

Years later, Steve Kilbey will — totally unconnected — write a song which goes:

*The king had something changed within him
I should have told him no
I wish that you could see us now
We don't possess a single empty tear
Or furrowed brow
I can't change any of you
I can't change myself
The man had something strange about him
You should have let me know*

"Columbus" — "Columbus" — One of Rabbi Nachman's last wishes was "make my tales into prayers". Steve Kilbey probably wouldn't even know the works of the good Rabbi, but no other contemporary Australian songwriter has so lovingly turned such tales into cinematic displays. Poor melancholy baby! Yet, by stirring up the sanity and wisdom of the past, he somehow turns those picturesque phrases into statements of modern day sadness. Kilbey's characters tend to live on the edge of experience; through them, we are revealed our own seals of madness (and uniqueness).

On the Church's haunting new LP *Heyday*, a lot of the song titles and characters seek more into the distant past than before... the desert dust of "Myrrh", the spiritual instrumental "Happy Hunting Grounds"... "Roman" with its loving memories of satyrs and battlecries, "Youth Worshipper", about those ancient remedies by emperors to preserve fast fading beauty.

In a subtle way there seems to be a concept throughout. But, then again, paradoxically, there isn't. Steve Kilbey is hardly the one to shed any light.

"In retrospect, when we'd finished the album, we realised there was some sort of concept although there wasn't a conscious effort to have one," says Kilbey, at his home in Sydney.

"A lot of the numbers are credited to Church, and that's because a lot of them came together from jam sessions, and the lyrics came after that. In fact, a lot of the tracks were just known at "Jam No 1" and "Jam No 2" when we were working on the album. The track 'Columbus' came together simply because we were in Columbus, Ohio, at the time and we decided to call it that for the sake of convenience, and somehow the title remained.

"Happy Hunting Grounds" was another jam, which seemed to have a Red Indian quality. By strange coincidence I'd been reading a book on the Indians, called *Astral Plain*."

"AND WE TALK ABOUT THE WAY PEOPLE TREAT US BACK THERE"

*How can you be so invisible?
Give me the nerves to see*

— "Myrrh" — As they'd say in the B-movies, "what we have here is a failure to communicate."

In their own quiet way The Church have seen themselves carrying on a mission of their own. The dragons! The inept bookers! The managers! Eye-patched critics! The trendies! They had great regard for their own music, were quite happily arrogant about it and didn't care too much who knew it. Or how many toes they stepped on.

Like most Australians, I'd thought "Unsungured Moment" (gosh, was that really five years ago?) was a catchy piece of single, but the first LP was promising. If patchy *Blurred* like *Se* was good, but the last couple of tracks like *ance* and *Persia* were pretty ho-num. In fact, they could quite easily have broken up in this

country, and not had too many people flinging themselves in despair out of windows.

It wasn't until 18 months ago, when I did a quickie through the US and Europe where, by coincidence, I virtually followed in their wake, that I began to realise just how much dust these hombies kicked up overseas.

At the New York Riiz they drew a packed house and caused such a furore that they gained an American manager that very night. MTV started to pick up on their videos, *Seance* and *Persia* sold well at the British and European import shops. American magazine *Creem* hailed them as the best band of the '80s, an over-the-top analysis that was also shared by *Melody Maker's* German correspondent. US teen magazines impart knowledge about their fave colour and which kind of breakfast cereal makes them break out in acne.

It's a pity the Church got lumped into that whole REM/Green On Red/Rain Parade psychedellic rave-up simply because The Church had been going much earlier. But then, it wasn't exactly bad company, either.

"In LA we play to 1000 people and get ecstatic reactions, and in New York we play to 1000 people and get ecstatic reactions," says guitarist Martin Willson-Piper. "In Minneapolis we also played to 1000 people at the coolest club, went to a record shop and signed 250 autographs. These people had been queuing up outside the shop for hours, and they just CLAPPED when we walked in!"

Then the punch-line.

"It would NEVER happen in Australia."

Followed by a confession.

"But in Pittsburgh, we only pulled 50 people and that's the way it is in America. You're almost megastars in one state, and across the border you're nobodies. In America we get the sort of ecstatic responses that in Australia we'd get only at the Tivoli in Sydney or The Club in Melbourne.

"Sometimes we'll play the sort of shows where in Australia they'd appreciate it but there'd be a 'so, big deal' after it, while in America the crowds would have torn the place apart. Maybe it's because Australia is such a reasonably comfortable country. If you live in Liverpool where there's very little of anything, you'd really go out and work at enjoying yourself when you went out for the night.

"If you're not on *Countdown*, then people think you've broken up, and a lot of people thought about The Church. I mean, who'd ever think that?"

(The last statement delivered with a perfectly straight quizzical face.)

Marty Willson-Piper is a tall, good looking lad with a penchant for leather jackets and trousers, swinging gypsy ear-rings and scarves. After The Church sacked its last manager some years ago, he took over the accounts. He and his Swedish girlfriend Ann commute between Sydney and Stockholm, where they have a flat. Marty loves the atmosphere there, and the fact it's one of the two cities (the other being London) where guys also make the effort to dress smartly.

Over Christmas the pair were in Stockholm and then flew to Wales to spend some time with Marty's parents, who live in a picturesque village near the west coast.

In February Marty flies back to Sydney to start rehearsals with the rest of the band, before they take off on a semi-world tour (starting in Australia) to promote their excellent new *Heyday* album.

If The Church was obviously more appreciated overseas, why hang around here?

"It's a strange situation, I suppose, that when *Melody Maker* was calling us the band of the '80s, and another American magazine said we made the best album for '83, while in Australia we seemed almost like a dartboard for years.

"But now I think people listen before they listening to the album up on the way we seemed to be more ever important."

looked, as if I stay in Australia?

Yes, nefarious reasons, really. In Australia you make money, or break even, when you tour. In Europe, you're in debt just by the simple process of getting into a plane and going there! That first tour of England we lost money, when we toured America in 1984, we lost a lot of money. It's the way to get to people,

THE PARACHUTE MEN

and we're going to be doing a lot of that during 1986."

A few years ago The Church almost split up because they worked themselves into the ground, the way all good Australian bands are supposed to (unless, of course, you die of a drug overdose, by which you get 10 extra points).

Now they're looking after themselves (with New York entrepreneur Michael Lembo co-ordinating their overseas activities) and Willson-Piper insists the band's in a much better shape for it.

*"I let their promises bind me
I let seductive logic blind me
I embraced a machine, I went through the routine
And I hid from the people who were trying to find me"*

So, does Marty handle the business side himself, or does the band pitch in?

"No, because I subscribe to the theory that too many cooks spoil the broth. When I do it all myself — from paying the road crew to dealing with the (booking) agency, to picking up the money (from the promoter) at the end of the night — then I know what the right hand is doing and what the left hand is doing."

"I mean, why would I want Peter or anybody else to help me, 'cos I'd only be wondering what somebody else's hand is doing."

Had he been particularly good at mathematics at school?

"No, I was quite bad at it, actually. I was more an English language and history student. But

and Ploog lived in tents in Jamaica and Thailand. If they needed time to reassess if they needed The Church in their lives, this was the time. More than anytime, there was a focus of emotional attachment to the band and to each other. There's an intensity, a strength, in the playing on the LP that's irresistible.

(2) they had such a stockpile of songs (80 to be exact. When you have the (remote) luxury of being able to choose out of so many songs, you're moving away from square one already.

(3) replacing John Bee with Englishman Peter Walsh, fresh from his conquests with Simple Minds, as producer.

Steve: "He was much younger than I thought he'd be."

Marty: "He was a creative catalyst for sure, and he was most helpful in the arrangement area. I mean, in the past I've never been paid just what a producer does. I know they get paid a lot of money, but when people asked me what a producer did, I had to tell them I didn't quite know."

"I couldn't believe it when Peter came into the rehearsal studios for 10 days, before we went into the studios. What-a-a-t? He developed a real understanding of what we were trying to do, and he'd offer great ideas on what songs to drop, what to develop, how to make something more dynamic."

Steve: "Peter's very mild and good natured, which is great when you're recording because there's always tensions when you record. With Peter, he's half producer and half psychiatrist! If I thought I couldn't do something, he'd say 'I think you can do it' and talk you into it. There's a sense of warmth on the LP which he had a lot to do with."

"The one thing I want to emphasise is that Peter insisted that the instrumentation be as natural — the strings and brass we used are not synthesizers, but the real thing. We had a 10-

piece string section, an eight-piece horn section and a great arranger called Tony Ansell who worked to perfection."

I tell Steve that Heyday feels like the pieces falling, that the next one (as long as it is done with Walsh again) could be a killer.

"Yes, I'm looking forward to the next one already," he smiled. "When Peter went back to London I drove him to the airport and the last thing I said to him was 'this isn't the time to ask, but will you do the next one' and he said 'nothing would please me more.'"

"EMERALD HAUNT IN OVERDRIVE"

When Steve Kilbey was growing up in Canberra, every week he'd pick up his pay packet and go to an import shop run by friends, and buy about 10 albums. He'd buy Be Bop Deluxe, Can, Cockney Rebel, Jobritha... and when good albums were scarce, even Hall & Oates (pre-bland out).

As he'd tell one American interviewer: "I sort of lived in my own little world. This was in Canberra — I lived in my own little world and used to spend most of my time just listening to the records and talking to people who liked the same music as I did. It didn't even occur to me that I was in Australia."

In the late '70s, Kilbey's tastes remained unheralded classics — Television, Big Star, John Cale, Nick Kent & The Subterraneans.

In the meantime, Marty Willson-Piper was eagerly devouring records by German experimentalists Can and its offshoots.

"I still buy their stuff. In 1982, when we were in Germany, I met Holger Czukay, and it was such a thrill. I mean, he's about 50 and quite old, but you look at this guy and think 'woooo', 'cos you were really liking his stuff when you were 16, and he's influenced everybody from Bowie and Eno to Scattered Order."

"I listen a lot to that experimental German music, it's part of my nature to like music which is experimental."

As The Church will tell you time and time again, they're well aware of what a good band they are and what a great chemistry they have... and too bad if anybody disagrees.

"People ask what it feels having all these journals hail you as the Band of The '80s... the thing is, you've got to know what they're comparing you to. Now, the guy at Cream, when he said that, was comparing us to the schmalz that you find at the top of the charts, and he found depth and quality in Church's music."

"I like a hell of a lot of bands, and there are a lot of bands I don't like, and a man like that knows his bands. What I've always liked about Church's music is that it not only has depth but it's also executed well. I mean, we can play... and a lot of bands that have depth can't play. But we can."

"What I want to know is, what happened to that huge album buying market of the '70s? They're probably now 35, sitting in pubs with a pint, wondering what to do with the albums they listened to, and I'm not aiming for them, but a new generation of similarly-inclined buyers, the ones who're educated about music."

"The problem is that record buyers today are so susceptible to hype and promotion. People would rather listen to a promotional campaign on TV than a moving piece of music. It becomes a bit much when clever men in grey suits start pushing things down your throat. You can choke or swallow, and people just prefer to swallow."

"In a lot of ways, the fact that Church are still around after all these years making records is some sort of evidence that maybe we have contributed to crowds appreciating quality music. We have not nudged an inch from our bottom line of quality, and yet there are aspects of the album which are melodic and almost commercial without us trying to be."

And why do The Church keep maintaining they are not influenced by the '60s?

"How the f-k can we be, when I wasn't even listening — or I don't remember listening — to music then. I was listening to stuff like Steve Harley and Be Bop Deluxe, who have those

essential features that people keep telling us came from the '60s."

"I mean, Peter can't even remember the '70s, he was too young for that, even!"

Do you think touring heavily and adopting a high profile in the USA and Europe is the best way to educate people that they're not another REM ripoff?

"Well, anyone who thinks The Church are influenced by REM is an uninformed idiot."

People still think that, dammit, that's my point. How are Church going to offset that?

"I think there were aspects about REM that Church don't have and vice versa. I've got a picture of REM's bassplayer holdin a copy of our first album, maybe we can use that as a promotional campaign (laughs heartily)."

"I think one listen to Heyday should put those comparisons down, because Heyday is about as little nothing like Fables Of Reconstruction. You can only explain in interviews that we were not influenced by REM, that we were doing this a long time ago, and also explain that what we're all doing wasn't a case of influencing each other, but each doing the same parallel thing by coincidence."

And if that doesn't work?

He shrugs, exasperated. "Well, people like Lloyd Cole and The Smiths have been compared that way to REM and it hasn't hurt them any."

"YOU CAN LIVE LIKE A KING ON A THRONE OF TEARS"

Call it occupational hazard, but I must confess I succumbed to what is known as "hack sensationalism". Try for the gossip, the sensationalist angle, nudge nudge, wink wink.

Usually, personality/musical/religious/ideological difference between band members erupt into swathing swipes at others, the interviewee's huff and puff sounds almost drowned out by the hack scribbling down the juicy morsels on his/her shorthand pad. (I tape all my interviews, as a matter of course).

Back in the early '80s when Steve was shooting his mouth off in the rock press and getting himself and The Church slagged to high heaven as a result, I ask Marty with as much casualness as I can muster, how did the other three members react?

Marty doesn't bait, the bastard.

Staring at me evenly he says, "Well, everybody has their ups and downs; the band's gone through so many changes. When you're living so close together and getting involved in everybody's emotional extremes. We're still here, we've got the same ideals as when we started out, and we're still aware there's a special chemistry at work."

Yes, but how has his relationship with Kilbey changed through the years?

"I don't think of things as changing," he hedges, much to my irritation. "Things follow a line, in double circles, and you connect sometimes. It's a case of swinging in and out, and each finding a happy medium."

He talks about the "invisible thread" that kept the four in spiritual touch when they were flung to the four corners of the Earth last year.

However, the hack, sulking because he's got no juicy copy, refuses to follow it up.

Marty laughs silently to himself.

"ALL THAT GLITTERED HAD ME MESMERISED"

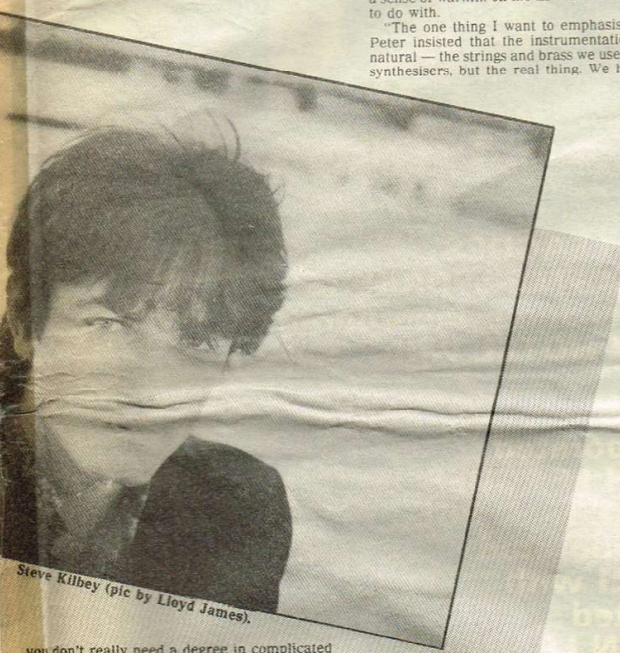
I ask Steve why the lyrics tend to be so 'historical' in concept. He says maybe it is because he's been reading a lot. He's not quite sure why.

I ask why the lyrics are so religious — had he gone through some emotional upheaval or religious turnabout?

"I think it's spiritual without being religious. I think there's a very strong difference there."

"The four of us have gone through some experiences together and apart. But basically, we've been trying to change from being material-obsessed people to something nicer. It's an ongoing process."

● All sub-headlines and lyrics (c) Funzalo Music.



Steve Kilbey (pic by Lloyd James).

you don't really need a degree in complicated equation to work out what goes in the In column and the Out column. It's so easy, and I'm absolutely astounded that some of the people we had working for us couldn't get it right before!"

"ALL MY LIFE SPENT SEARCHING FOR PROWESS"

Until now, The Church's overseas record company situation has been something of a fiasco.

Their first LP was released in America in 1983 on Capitol. The label had heard "Unguarded foment" and thought it was on to a hit. They edied a minute out of it without the band's consent and put it out with no promotion except for 10 religious slogans that had nothing to do with The Church. The single bombed, the album bombed, and The Church were drop-kicked out of Capitol.

Blurred Crusade and Sing-Songs were not issued in the US, neither was Seance. They sold below the import charts, though.

In the meantime, their European connections were a mish-mash of labels, all who released what they liked whenever they liked. Who needs promotion and co-ordination when someone's a genius and far away as Australia? Come on.

Finally, in 1986, we have a situation where The Church are, as always, on FMI in Australia and Warner Brothers in America and Europe.

The first WB LP for them was Remote Luxury, which was, in effect, made up of tracks from the Persia and Remote Luxury EPs.

In short, there's been very little sense of continuity of Church records internationally — a dream for a band whose lifestyle is international and whose lyrics have always been global in theme.

Now, Heyday will virtually be released simultaneously through the world. In other words, there will be a co-ordinated attack for the first time on the public's senses.

So as Michael Morris pointed out in last week's preview of the elpee, it's the best LP they could launch themselves with. Every track is as if contained, there's not a weak link, although the first single, "Already Yesterday" was the wrong choice for a single (they should go with "Columbus", which Kilbey says could be the third single off the elpee). It's an aim that I play repeatedly — something we've never done with their other records. See factors contribute to why Heyday is such a fine LP.

Through the early part of '85 The Church split their time away from each other. Steve was in Sydney, Marty in Stockholm, while Rich-



OUT THE CHURCH MELBOURNE



Steve Kilbey: Preaching to the converted?
It's been a long time between visits from The Church, but finally after completing an extensive overseas tour they have again been playing various capital cities. The crowd at the Rockgarden consisted of devoted Church buffs who have no doubt been following their path to success (like I have) over the years.

Before the almighty ones appeared on stage, we were put in the mood by some rather religious sounding chamber music. Making a timely entrance, our came Steve Kilbey and the lads to deliver a set of songs that more than made up for their long absence abroad. They played a mixture from all three albums, which included favourites such as "The Unquiet Moment", "Almost With You", "Electric Tash" and "The Blurred Crusade". During their set tucked away towards the rear of the stage was an inconspicuous keyboard player who also contributed to their new fuller sound.

To my surprise there was not one paisley shirt in sight, instead Steve Kilbey favoured plain red while drummer Richard Ploog wore some rather far out love beads and an embroidered waistcoat circa 1972. They have never really been a very physically active band and that aspect of their performance seems not to have changed. Their playing seems to have improved since last time around with Marty Wilson-Piper mastering guitar like never before. They have reworked a lot of their old material into a newer, slower format, but nevertheless it sounded just as good.

Now we can only wait for a new album which will hopefully bring with it the success The Church deserve.

Robyn Dorsian



The talented twosome: If only we had matching guitars!

the Rock Garden

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Venetians

THURS 20th PHANTOM BAND

FRI 21st SPECIAL R & B NIGHT
CHAIN 9.30 11.00
Dutch Tilders 8.45 9.30
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THE CHURCH

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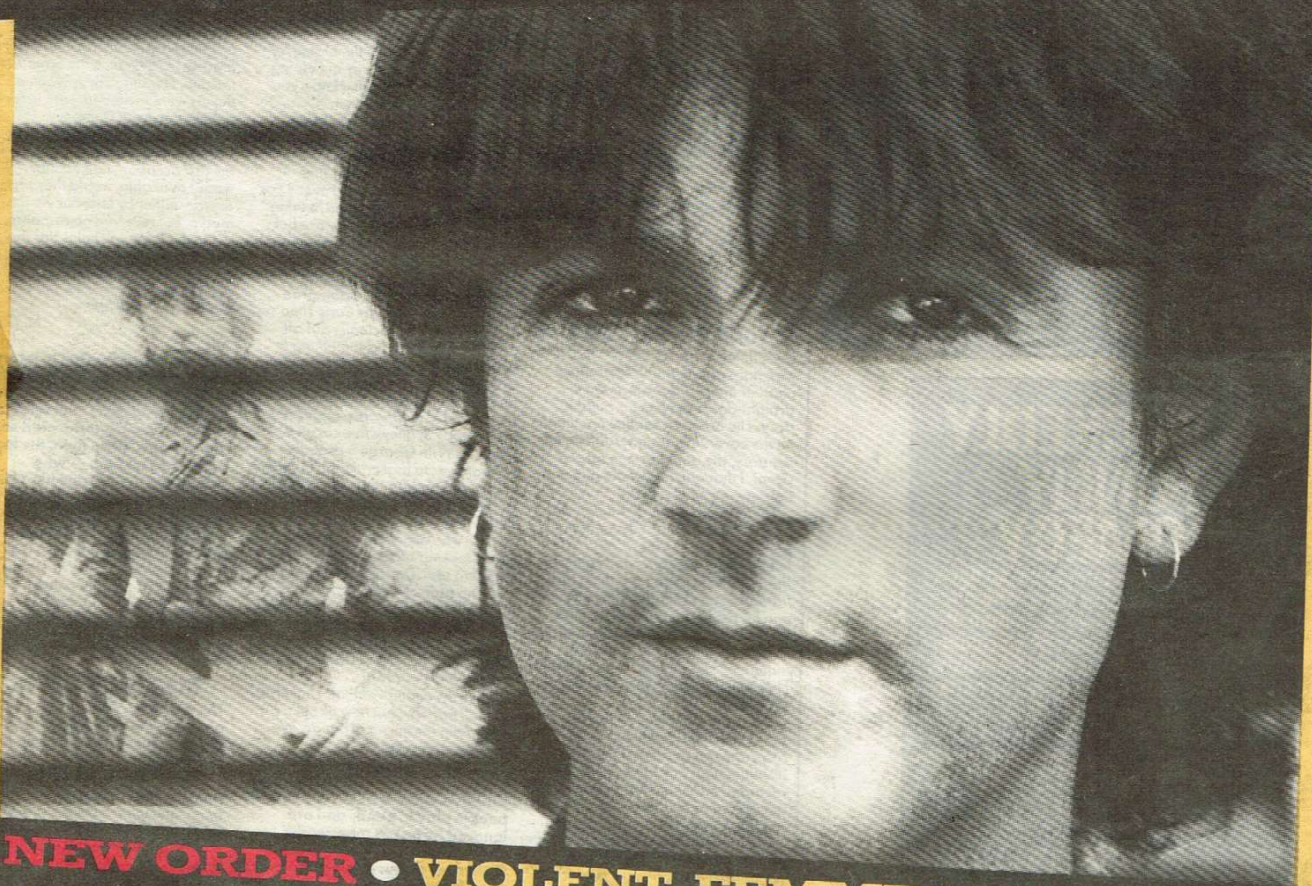


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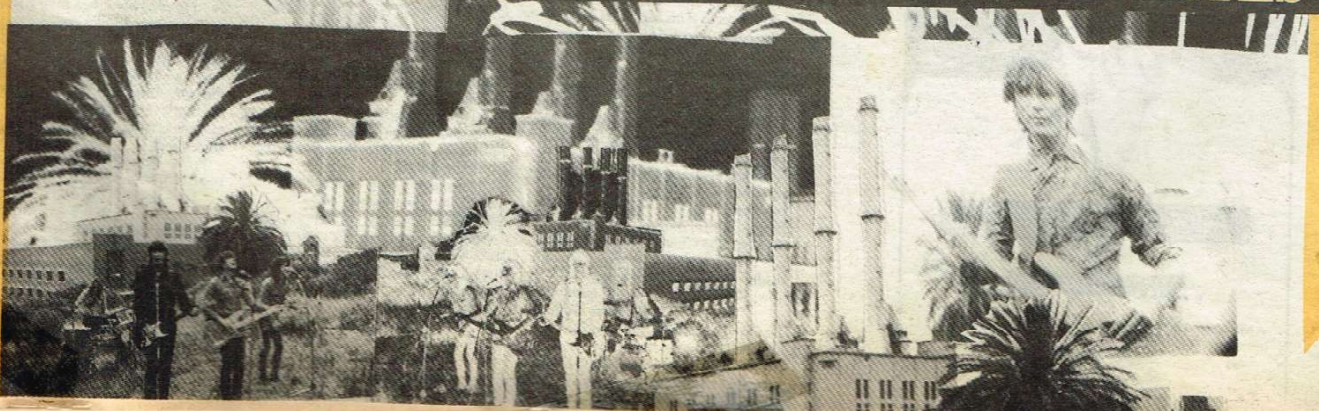
RAM

THE CHURCH

MAKING HEYDAY



NEW ORDER • VIOLENT FEMMES • REAL LIFE •
LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS • APARTMENTS •
CRIME & THE CITY SOLUTION • TRILOBITES



STATIONS OF THE CHURCH

DIALOGUE

INTerviewing Steve Kilbey reminded me of the quote from Camus. Kilbey, like Camus before him, is intent on meaning, of seeking to understand what is, of uncovering what is not.

In this respect, rock'n'roll has presented itself as one billowing phantom. Something to be probed, experienced, demythologised. A spirit that contains, sustains, lauds, applauds, discards, denudes, denigrates and destroys with equal relish.

When Steve Kilbey declared he was God's gift to songwriting, the phantom of insufferable narcissism reared its head. When the Church let fly with the jangle-jangle paisley pop of *Unguarded Moment*, the phantom of fame swallowed him whole.

When he ceased to be this year's colour glossy poster, the phantom of cult obscurity handed him over to the demon of critical backlash who subjected him to an endless tape loop of the Byrd's Mr Tambourine Man.

When Peter Walsh flew in to produce Heyday, the phantom of enigma declared 1986 the year of the comeback. When Steve Kilbey was asked how he felt about this, he said, "We never went away".

Heyday, though, is the watershed album for the Church. It comes at a time when the band has linked with positive new management, enjoys the considerable support of EMI Australia and Warner Brothers America, and internally is probably in better creative shape than it has ever been in its six-year history.

Heyday reflects the upswing. It is a distillation of all that makes the Church. From the jangle-jangle guitars of Marty Willson-Piper and Peter Koppes to an invigorated and melodic Steve Kilbey, the sound remains the same, but the spirit that informs the sound has been sharpened, honed and deepened.

The songs themselves retain the trademark poetic density, but have evolved into an even richer aesthetic, and it was this notion of aesthetic that dominated the interview with Steve Kilbey...

What does Heyday signify to you?

"It's our fourth album — or depending whether you live in America or England, it's our fifth album — and it's our first album for two years, and I guess we're hoping for a quantum jump from this rung on the ladder where we've been languishing for a long time to be able to get somewhere else.

"More importantly than that, I just hope that people buy it and enjoy it because that's the main reason you put an album out."

You have described the Church's creative process as a "musical gestalt of intuition". What do you mean by that, and how did that manifest in the making of Heyday?

"I would imagine any bunch of people, whether they're playing basketball or whatever together in a team for as long as we have, start to realise how it all works. We get to the stage where one guy can pick up his instrument and start doing something and everyone will automatically join in and we can write a hundred songs a day. They're not all good ones!"

"You just keep doing it because you understand your part and understand what other people are doing in relation. Peter (Koppes) always does the slow, lazy, echoey guitar parts and Marty (Willson-Piper) either does the intricate little fiddly bits or the quick up-and-down slashing type things.

"Richard (Ploog) and I always seem to anticipate what we're doing, especially when it

comes to climaxes and laying back. We just went into this room and started jamming, and when Peter (Walsh, the Heyday producer) turned up, he just picked the ones that appealed to him.

When did the Church first experience this gestalt?

"Well, that started happening ages ago, but we've had some very frustrating moments, because for the first three years we never really got a chance to rehearse because we were always working, and the only time we ever seemed to learn new songs was when we were rehearsing for a new album.

"We never got a chance to muck around much. The only time was at soundchecks, and always something good would start happening and the sound-man would say 'Just the drums, just the drums!', and we'd go, 'But we're writing this really good song.' It was really frustrating not to get a chance to jam together, and when you come off the road, the last thing you really want to do is get together and jam.

"So Heyday was really the first chance we'd had in four or five years to just do that, go and know nothing. I'd written ten or 15 songs that could have been used in an emergency, Marty had written a couple and Peter had written a couple, but when we went in there it was just ridiculous!

"We'd write something together and then say, 'OK, let's really work it out now', and then we'd be off again writing something totally new. Peter Walsh would go away and say, 'I want you to get that piece you've just done down', and then he'd come back and we'd say, 'We've written a new one.' It was an overflow of ideas.

It seems to me 'intuition' is a key word in your landscape. How does intuition work for Steve Kilbey?

"I guess it's just a whim, it's just a feeling you get that something can/is going to work. It's beyond analysis. As I become older and wiser and work on improving myself instead of being a rash young hothead, it's starting to work more and more.

"With Peter Walsh, I guess we could have had whoever we picked, and I guess that sounds pretty spoilt but EMI and Warner Brothers America were prepared. There was talk of Dave Gilmour and maybe Bob Clearmountain again, and I just wanted Peter Walsh. The New Gold Dream thing was important (Walsh produced that *Simple Minds* album) and I knew he was the right person, and he turned up and he was."

What did you learn from Peter Walsh?

"Patience. Not to underestimate ourselves, I think. I'd always thought I was stuck with this really bad voice, and all I could do was mumble and groan, and Peter spent a long time coaxing a good performance out of you. Which no-one had done. In the past, everyone would go in and do their part and if it was suggested that they could do it better, you'd say 'No. No, no, that will do.' Whereas Peter got me to sing quiet melodically.

"With the whole band there was none of this 'Let's do something simple and fix it up later', or this 'We've done it ten times already, let's do it now because it's easy, let's just put it down, we're tired of that track'.

"Whereas with Peter it was 'Let's keep going, let's keep going, you did something good on that track ten times ago, let's go back and try it again'.

"Peter handled the band in a non-inflammatory way. He just had a way of cooling the situation down and getting the very best. We spent eons and eons doing acoustic guitar parts with March and Peter. It would take a day just to get one part, just to get it right."

How did he bring your vocals out?

"I did the singing on the album, all of the harmonies and everything, bar one or two bits. He would say 'We need a high part here' and I would say 'I just can't do it', and I'd semi-deliberately crack my voice, and he'd say, 'Have a go, have a go' — just keep encouraging me over and over.

"He was doing clever things. Normally you think, well, we need to do this part about ten times in the song, and because you'd have this daunting or difficult prospect of having to sing this high part ten times, you'd think, 'I'm not even going to try'. What Walshy would do is do it twice and overlay.

"He'd use that one perfect time and overlay it into the track in the other parts. So it was much easier knowing that if you did something right you didn't have to duplicate it every time. Every time you did a nice harmony, he'd say 'Right, now do it again' and get it in stereo, and then he'd say 'Right now, we'll get four of them.' He'd just bank them up, and use them all over the song."

Was there one song on Heyday that proved a vocal breakthrough?

"*Tantalised*. In the past on records I've tended to sing very low, and on this one it was really a very angry shouting high pitched vocal, and I didn't think I'd be able to do the harmonies on the chorus parts. I was really surprised."

You have described the process of writing lyrics as an act of the subconscious, and your function in this dredging to act as the bridge between word and music. When you were writing the lyrics for Heyday, was there any one song that typified this approach?

"*Myrrh*, the very first track. That was the first lyric I wrote. I just came home, I didn't even think about it, I was going to write some poetry, and I was just listening to a rough mix of the music, and I was writing and thought, 'well, this is going to fit perfectly with the song'."

If *Myrrh* is a journey, what is the nature of the journey?

"It's a bit of a worry for me interpreting things too closely. There's a lot of talk about the new Christ or anti-Christ rising in the Middle East. I see it, as the lyrics are saying as a sort of nightmare journey into those things, and actually meeting this character, and realising the things people are going to ask from the new Christ aren't peace and love and understanding but power, material things, and the song starts to break up and become disjointed after a while — but then, that's the nature of a journey.

"On a journey you haven't got time to tell the whole story anyway; you have to let people fill in the missing gaps."

In the Guy Allenby interview (RAM #275), you mention some of the books you were reading at the time of the Heyday sessions...

"Let's see, I'd just read a book called *The Mind's Eye*, which was a very thick book by Douglas Hofstadter on brains, minds and artificial intelligence. I was reading a number of yoga manuals and I was reading some Blake and Shelley. I wasn't finishing them, I was just picking them up, and it's like I go into these occult book shops and pick up these little thin books on astral travelling and just flick through until I find a relevant point."

Plucking images?

"It helps in that way too. It confirms experiences you have in a way. Some things you never articulate in words — you can read them in those books. It's helping you to see what you've been thinking for a long time."

In that same interview, you also described the Church as a door.

"First of all, let me say I think that was a pretty pompous thing I said. Not blaming Guy or anything. It just in that sense seemed to be a pretty condescending thing to say. I think it is putting yourself beyond being in a rock group, and saying something more than that."

Aren't rock groups capable of being something more?

"Yes, but you shouldn't say it about yourself. You should wait for someone else to say it. A door doesn't have a sign on it saying 'I am a door'. I think the Church could perhaps steer some impressionable young person along, away from what is presumed as the normal everyday world, the usual humdrum existence — not by saying 'believe in reincarnation' or 'read the Koran', just by having them thinking 'well, I hadn't really thought about that'. Even if someone doesn't know what *myrrh* is, just to look it up in the dictionary."

"I've always felt a lot of bands deal with this terribly humdrum thing in their lyrics. It's all terribly commonplace. Some of the songs sound so commonplace there is no need to write them in the first place. I think songs and poems should be a bit more otherworldly, a bit more unusual, rather than 'let's drink some beer and go to bed', because you don't need to write a song about that. It's something you can say — but of course, the charts prove me wrong all the time."

You have also described Heyday as thematically dealing with "fame, success, the aftermath and decline".

"I'm still trying to get the whole thing into perspective. Like most people who do something, I work out what it means later. I'm still trying to figure out if the whole album does add up to something or not."

"OK, you've got the first track (*Myrrh*), which is about Christ in his heyday; the second track is *Tristesse*, which is something we came across when a French critic used it to describe our music as 'the sadness which comes after lovemaking'. The character in *Tristesse* is a satyr as opposed to a nymphomaniac, at the end of his life, realising he's failed to achieve anything, and he hasn't got anything to grasp onto, trying to satisfy himself through earthly pleasures, holding onto his children.

"*Already Yesterday* is a temporal thing I'm really fascinated by. Just realising how fast the years are going. Tomorrow is totally unobtainable. I've always slided out of this question in the past — if you could talk about it, you wouldn't need to write about it... *Columbus* is self-explanatory and *Happy Hunting Ground* is a sort of Hollywood version of how the Americans probably see where Indians go when they die — to musically describe that. Chief Sitting Bull forever chasing the buffalo through the Big Paddock in The Sky."

"The second side is more localised, with *Tantalised* more or less true to life. *Disenchanted* is the aftermath of *Tantalised*: someone who is cynical and tired of his success, but very unwilling to give it up. *Night Of Light* doesn't really fit in, but it is the exception that makes the rule. *Youth Worshipper* is again pretty self-explanatory. *Roman*, well I've always been interested in the Roman Empire. When you look at it, things haven't really changed that much."

What's the difference between Steve Kilbey in 1980 and Steve Kilbey in 1986?

"I didn't know anything about the music industry and I was desperate to be part of it, and I was going to be. Now I've been there and done it and you can't be the same person."

What have you learnt from the initiation?

"Well, I'm glad I've got it out of my system. I'm less materialistic, and although I sit here and pontificate about this new record, in reality on a very deep level it really doesn't matter to me at all."

"It's a funny thing, you dig into yourself and you think, 'Do I really want this album to go to No. 1 and sell a million copies, or am I really happy if someone buys it and it makes them happy? Then I go a bit further down and I really don't care what happens to it, and the irony is — and I think it is a good irony — by not caring it's got more of a chance than when I did *Seance*. What was really sort of precious. I was so confident that was the best album we'd ever done and all that, whereas with *Heyday* I'm happy and content in a parental sort of way, and if it goes out into the world and is trampled on and forgotten, I'm not going to lose any sleep."

What sort of meditation do you practise?

What is the goal of meditation for you?

"I practise TM. I learnt in 1977 and practised pretty regularly up until the band started. Like a gift you get used to I felt I didn't need to do it as much, and besides there are all of these other wonderful things to do. It's very hard to meditate when you're travelling around and sharing rooms with other guys and you can't expect them to be quiet. It felt pretty much into disuse until a couple of years ago. Now I really hate to miss it."

"Initially, meditation is to bring some shallow superficial improvement. I started because I used to get very tired in the afternoon. I'd always be falling asleep and I read where meditation helps you stay awake, the same as I started doing yoga because I had a bad back... But the more you do it, the more you realise meditation is doing all these other things."

"Like, I can play guitar five times better. When I sit down to write a poem or draw, it all comes out much easier. I don't feel like I want to go to parties anymore and I don't feel I want to beat my own drum. I don't want to do all the things I used to do. It has this slow but gradual change to turn you into the sort of person that you always wanted to be."

Introducing the wonders of Gestalt Psychology, as practised by **THE CHURCH**. **TERRY BYRNES** talks words, music and spiritualism with an expansive **STEVEN KILBEY**, whilst **FRED HILL** dissects a day in the life of the Church on film...

"A man's sole creation is strengthened in its successive and multiple aspects: his works. One after another, they compliment one another, correct or overtake one another, contradict one another too... The Great Work Of Art has less importance in itself than in the ordeal it demands of a man and the opportunity it provides him of overcoming his phantoms and approaching a little closer to his naked reality."

(The Myth Of Sisyphus — Albert Camus)



Have you met Maharishi Mahesh Yogi?

"No."

Would you like to?

"Yes, I wouldn't mind. I think my ego could handle it now. I've realised that there is so much going on in the world and it's not happening in New York in discos, and it's not happening in the backstage of the Tivoli snorting cocaine."

Would you call yourself a spiritual person?

"I don't think I've reached that stage yet. I'm still battling a fairly savage cynic inside me who thinks 'yeah, you're just going through a period'..."

The Spiritual phase?

"Yeah, the spiritual phase; that's what came after paisley. After all that they became hippies and got into TM and next year I'll be wearing a long overcoat and getting into Led Zeppelin!"

What would you ask someone who knew everything?

"I think if there is such a thing as enlightenment — I mean I've taken LSD and been enlightened, but it only lasts three or four days (if it was really good) before I turned into my old self again — I think if there is enlightenment it's something that happens very gradually, and that's what's great about TM — it's like that."

And you're in a rock'n'roll band!

"Sex and drugs and rock'n'roll... It's funny, because Peter has been meditating and we're all vegetarians and Richard is meditating and fasting. We're all a lot friendlier towards each other and a lot more patient."

"I used to go on stage and I had hangups like how much am I impressing the audience, are they really enjoying it, and a lot of times we'd be smoking all day and drinking all day and by the time everyone got up there you were a paranoid, tired wreck, in no shape whatsoever to deliver a good performance. You'd walk on and think, 'Am I really good, is it true what they say?'"

"Now it just doesn't seem as important, and we can walk on and smile and be more cheerful about it. Everyone in the band is the same: far more relaxed. It's wonderful getting paid to do what I like doing and I don't have to go to work tomorrow. I feel lucky and privileged."

"I don't want to get into this 'I'm a sad, depressed person, I want you all to get into this. I just don't want to go through that anymore. There are people who enjoy that, and that's what they want — so maybe a few people will drop off as the Church starts to explore happiness again."

SCREENPLAY

MAKING a video clip can be the most frustrating and boring exercise in musical futility a band can encounter. Being turned from serious musicians into pantomime artists for a live clip, or into pseudo-actors for a 'concept' extravaganza (if they're in it at all) goes

against the very nature of the music.

It's no wonder then that the Church did not approach their 14th video clip with a great deal of enthusiasm. Their last production for *Already Yesterday* ended with a generator blow-out that forced everyone to pack up by the light of a single torch in Sydney's Botanic Gardens. And the Church were not exactly smitten with the final result, as can often happen — the shortfall between conception and delivery.

Continued on next page.....

When it comes to videos, Steve Kilbey is perhaps the least enthusiastic member of the Church: "I acknowledge their importance in the marketplace, but they're an unnecessary intrusion in the music. Music is capable of saying things that no other art form can express. A pop song is like a book. You open it up and your imagination weaves the images as your eyes read the words — it can mean anything to you."

"But if you see the movie, like the clip of a song, you're stuck with the images that a filmmaker has assembled as his translation of the subject. Sometimes it takes away your imagination, and the shame of it is that sometimes the musician is mismatched with a clipmaker whose visual interpretation so overpowers the song that all it is ever remembered for is a series of fast edited scenes, visual clichés or smarmy plot."

So if Kilbey and the rest of the band felt so strongly opposed to making videos, why did they consent to crank out another one for *Tantálised* from their new *Heyday* album? It wasn't the big budget that Warners in the US offered to put up. Nor was it the opportunity to work with two top American directors, Leslie Libman and Larry Williams, who've made three Dream Academy clips including *Life In A Northern Town*, and the latest for Michael McDonald, as well as the angles' *Manic Monday*.

As Kilbey relates: "When I met with our manager Mike Lembo and Karen Berg of Warners last year, I proposed that we do something different... like not make one! But they offered the logic that one great clip can do more than three months of constant touring. Plus, there was the challenge and the opportunity to work with two experimental film makers who had some very unique and startling ideas."

Leslie and Larry were first approached in October with the song *Tantálised* as a potential vehicle for their talents. As Larry recalls, "The song immediately hit me and a montage of images raced through my mind. Leslie caught the same enthusiasm and we came up with some fairly radical ideas which took a long time to put in a storyboard form."

One of the first pieces of film they thought of injecting into the clip was footage Larry shot on a Super 8 whilst riding on the hood of a car as it wandered the streets of Tlalaxaca, Mexico during the *Day Of The Dead* festival. It was eerie black & white film of the locals running up and down the streets dressed in skeleton costumes. But some editing time, the footage was not used.

As Leslie describes it, "The attitude is nematic Darwinism — to shoot anything and discard the things we found in the end that we didn't want to use. But to keep coming up with images and blending them to a montage that enhanced the song, simulated thought and most importantly, matched the image of the band."

The ideas were the easy part. The realisation was to be slightly more difficult. The directors decided to shoot in Sydney where the band would be more comfortable, and where they themselves could be exposed to entirely different locations and visual environments than those they were used to in Los Angeles. "It's a common experience with all clipmakers," Larry explains. "You live somewhere and you tend to use the same locations for different moods. You find that when you go somewhere new, your ideas get fresher."

But on arriving just before Christmas to start pre-production, the clipmakers ran into a few problems. Not being familiar with the city, they had to spend days being driven to potential locations before setting up a series of schedules to encompass the many shoots. But all the while, Larry used his trusty Super 8 to grab snatches of imagery which could be used for this or other clips.

In the end, they found a vacant lot in Ultimo sandwiched between two crumbling terraces, with a backdrop of the city's skyscape. For underwater shots, the rooftop pool at their hotel would be both convenient and private, as well as perfectly lit.

Larry took his Super 8 to the streets late at night and discovered a few alleys for scenes and atmosphere, all the while grabbing shots of some 'tantalising' characters. Steve Kilbey's house could easily serve as an interior, while Peter Koppes showed Larry a stretch of beach at Tamarama which he thought would be a good locale for one of the more picturesque segments.

A crew of top technicians was assembled and the gear gathered for the shooting schedule. One problem was obtaining equipment over the holidays, as shooting would commence shortly after New Year's Day. But the major problem initially was locating a large piece of flexible reflective Mylar, which would be bent while the camera shot the mirrored reflection of the band. Only a small piece could be mustered — it just had to do.

Because the band had decided that individual members would be featured rather than using group shots, the first day's shoots were taken one member at a time. Richard Ploog plunged into the Sebel pool at the crack of dawn for some underwater shots. After two hours, the crew trucked over to Kilbey's house for shots of Steve zooming through the air in a hammock followed by a set of shots of him in a paddock being pushed around by the cameraman. Marty Willson-Piper had just arrived home from Sweden the day before and was filmed in a dirty basement playing his guitar. Odd sequences, true, but just another part of the video puzzle that would later be assembled.

The next few hours were devoted to filming a transsexual going through her act at the Britannia Hotel. 'Jay Jay' was a dead ringer for the pneumatic 50s bombshell Jayne Mansfield; as Larry explains, using Jay Jay in a variety of costumes and doing a dance routine was not a tactic to incorporate a token risqué element.

"She was sexy but shocking, sensual... but something was wrong. It was a disturbing sensuality — tantalising on the surface, but on closer inspection, there was only the illusion of seduction."

Kilbey agrees with Larry and Leslie's decision to put the transsexual in — even

though the final clip contains only a few seconds of the dance. "We wanted something that was grotesquely erotic rather than a Hollywood sheen. The song's lyrics are a rejection of sensual pleasure rather than an endorsement."

THERE was to be no pleasure for the rest of the day's shoot. Leaving the Britannia, the crew were greeted by rain. They decided to head for the hilltop location hoping the storms would pass, but after hours of waiting and pre-setting the lights and band gear, Larry conferred with the crew and asked for their opinions as to whether to stay or wrap. Hardly had the words passed his lips when a bolt of lightning struck close by with an ear shattering thunderclap.

"The decision has been made for us," he said with a nervous chuckle.

It was agreed to meet at the location at 8 a.m. the following morning for shots of the band playing. One crew member, however, forgot to wake up — and of course he was the one with all the instruments. After a two-hour wait, one part of the crew left to shoot a few scenes of Steve driving a car while the others got ready for an evening shoot with a full PA.

The band intended shooting their performance footage with the music at concert level; the producers had wisely treated the neighbourhood to dinner that night, so they would all be away for the sunset shooting. The hilltop location was ideal for a stage, with the starkness of an anonymous city in the background, and the band hemmed in by the walls of adjoining terraces. The lights would bounce off the walls for the most important part of the clip's shoot, a simulated performance.

But there was no simulation as the band ripped through the song at full volume. Richard could play his drums to the max, while the rest of the band got into the groove of playing together. It was decided to use hand-held cameras for the performance segment, and the crew were moving lights around while the cameramen filmed, adding to the chaos.

As Larry describes it, "it was pure pandemonium. One scene was lit entirely by road flares, another by the biggest strobe we could find in Sydney. In another, we used police lights and rear screen projection of battle scenes. Empty film cans were filled with metho and set alight as the camera shot through the flames, driving with the beat of the music."

Larry used strange lenses, shooting the

band members in the bending Mylar mirror that warped and distorted the backgrounds and players. Every once in a while, he would put a filter over the lens of his camera.

"I use embarrassingly cheap special effects filters that you can buy in photographic shops. They may be funky looking, but they produce rainbows, split images and a wide range of effects that any young clipmaker can use, as opposed to putting in effects in the studio after shooting."

The sonic and lighting assault certainly shook the neighbourhood, and a crowd gathered to watch the proceedings. The 80-year-old lady in the house next door got into the spirit, and at meal break she made tea and scones for Marty when he decided against the catered vegetarian pizza.

Back for a final few shots of the band, the directors and players were so exhilarated by the proceedings that at the last shot, Larry tossed the camera at one of the crew while the film was still rolling and shouted, "Shoot it!" Then to the loading out, and a final few shots around town — including sequences at the fun rides of the Festival Of Sydney in Hyde Park, an alleyway scenario with manager Mike Lembo and booker Sam Righi acting as barkers at a King's Cross strip club, and a few more Super 8 crowd shots of the passing hordes on the street.

The next day, it was decided to hold a camera at water level while a speedboat zipped across the harbour toward the city. The crew were soaked by fireboats as they sped through the spray.

As soon as the primary shooting in Sydney was finished, Larry and Leslie jetted back to Los Angeles for the week-long process of editing the variety of footage into cohesive form. On the way, they stopped in Fiji long enough to whip out the Super 8 one more time for some fiery Fijian dancing to add to the clip. Once the stock footage, performance segments and special effects were edited in, the final copies were delivered simultaneously to programmes in Australia and their counterparts in the US, Canada, UK and Europe.

For the Church, it was hardly just another clip in a long line of productions. As Kilbey remarked, "Sometimes you are forced into a corner to make a clip, and the director tells you to walk this way, get the hair out of your eyes, pout, smile now, twist around and hold that pose. With this clip, we could be more natural."

"Also, working with experimental filmmakers like Larry and Leslie, you feel more confident in proposing ideas which they get excited about and implement. It seems hard to come onto the right people in making music videos, but we seemed to have fluked into this one."

"It was the most enjoyable clip we've made."



PIC: ADRIENNE OVERALL

Church sounds a fine alternative

The Church were a little nonplussed when they were signing records in Austin, Texas and someone wanted them to sign the vinyl.

"We told him it would make the records totally unplayable but he said it was okay because his friends had all our records and he could get tapes," said guitarist Peter Dinklage.

That's the kind of response that chuffed the Church as they headed across America and Europe this year.

"All over the world there is an alternative variety of people, even in Austin, Texas. The numbers weren't always good but the reactions were great," Peter said.

"We went to Europe in 1982 and we didn't know how successful we'd been. But we found the band is still respected as an entity, even if it's on a cult level," he said.

Peter said being classed as "one of Australia's finest bands" and receiving rave reviews was not too onerous.

The Church don't lose sleep at night over the difficulties of maintaining their alternative status. In fact they wouldn't

INTERVIEW: Jane Freeman

mind gracing the airwaves of EON or XY.

"We've never understood why our music doesn't receive commercial airplay. It's not racy, noisy or dirty, it doesn't need to be censored."

"Our music is very diverse, there's certainly to be something suitable for commercial radio format and we don't see commercial radio as a negative thing," Peter said.

Peter believes if people hear a "good song" they'll like it no matter where it comes from.

"But lots of bands like Echo and the Bunnymen and Psychadelic Furs don't make it in the charts. While that surprises me it also comforts me 'cos we're not making it for the same reason."

And the reason according to Peter is lack of exposure.

"People aren't given the choice. I don't know what criteria the radio stations use but they don't

take any risks.

"I can listen to my favorite music repeatedly but a lot of music on the radio becomes



Church are holy dedicated.

inane after one listen. I end up hating catchy melodies and the way they stick in your head," he said.

"But I guess the all encompassing idea is to make music that stands the test of time. That's generally a silly thing to say because rock and roll changes so constantly and was originally seen as dispensable."

"But I think the Beatles have been around a long time. They're even appreciated by those older groups who used to resent them

for being vulgar and having long hair. Now you find them on Musak and commercial radio," he said.

The Church are now set to do an Australian tour to make up for the one that was interrupted when they went to America to support Echo and the Bunnymen.

Then it's back to the studio to start work on the next LP later this year.

You can find The Church at the Venue tomorrow night and the Excelsior Hotel on Saturday.