

by Chris Nickson

"I come from a land down under" was the cry at the start of the eighties, and Men at Work certainly did seem to make Australia inviting. It almost seemed as if they were the first act to emerge from there since England began shipping convicts to Botany Bay in 1788. Of course, that wasn't the case. AC/DC were quite Australian, and before them, the Easybeats had scored a couple of huge pop hits.

But there's more to the Antipodes than one country. What about the land under the land down under - New Zealand to the geographically challenged. In many ways they've had a more fertile music scene than their bigger cousin. There has been a slew of indie bands, but far more importantly, two big names - Split Enz, and the phoenix that rose from its ashes to even greater heights, Crowded House.

From the mad and bizarre to some sublime pop, these two bands have followed a course that crossed continents, taken them into the charts around the globe - and ended it all while it was still fresh. Not a bad way to go at all.

It began with Tim Finn, who was born in Te Awamutu, New Zealand, was educated at a Catholic boarding school, and then headed off to Auckland University to study philosophy and politics. There he met Phil Judd, a guitar player.

"Phil and I had our first play together in '71," Finn recalled. "I was singing and he was playing acoustic guitar."

The pair of them took to hanging out in the music room, Room 129 (celebrated in an early song), where some like-minded souls also gathered - Miles Golding, a classically-trained violinist, flautist Mike Howard, bass player Mike Chunn, and Noel Crombie, who liked what he heard, although he had nothing to contribute but spoons.

Like many others before and since, Tim enjoyed music more than school, and dropped out to follow his dream. At that point the band, known as Split Enz, was strictly acoustic, making their debut in December 1972 at Auckland's Wynyard Tavern. The following year they were playing festivals and doing a university tour in New Zealand, prompted by the release of their first single on Vertigo. A second single (this time on EMI) followed seven months later, with another on yet a third label in March '74. By that time the lineup had already undergone several changes (including the addition of keyboard player Eddie Rayner, who'd be there until the bitter end), and the sound had changed. More than anything it was now reminiscent of early Genesis, but with far less emphasis on the pomp,

Split Enz to Crowded House: Phoenix Rising?

and a great deal more on the circumstance. Most certainly there was no one like them in New Zealand.

Or anywhere else for that matter, as they discovered when they made their big push for stardom by moving to Australia in early 1975. Unfortunately, advance publicity had called them "New Zealand's raunchiest rock and roll band" - a description that couldn't have been further from the truth. A month later they opened for Skyhooks, a huge Aussie band, and bombed in front of 6000 fans - not the most auspicious way to start. Skyhooks, however, liked what they heard, and dragged Michael Gudinski, the head of Mushroom Records, to see the Enz (the name had changed a year before); he was convinced enough to sign them, and they began work on their first album, *Mental Notes*.

Released later that year, it didn't exactly shake the earth (although it did make brief chart appearances in NZ and Australia). Neither did a new single released in March '76. But "Late Last Night" did see the band becoming (slightly) more straightforward, the start of gradual progression that would take them out of musical left field.

It might well have stayed an Antipodean thing but for the intervention of Roxy Music's Phil Manzanera, who

caught the band while Roxy were touring down under. Through him the band was signed to Chrysalis for the rest of the world, and they decamped to London to try and "Make It Big." With Manzanera producing, they started work on *Second Thoughts*, which included re-recorded versions of some tracks from *Mental Notes*.

They were still supremely arty, although it was impossible to deny the strong sense of melody in their songs. However, the bizarre stage clothes and haircuts (all the work of Noel Crombie, who'd also done a pioneering video clip for "Late Last Night") meant that no one in Britain had a clue what to make of their live. "Oddly fascinating" was the opinion of *New Musical Express*, and that about summed it up.

Of course, they couldn't have chosen a worse time to unleash their strange selves on England, just as punk was getting underway. The old was being rapidly swept away by the new, and the Enz's music and image lumped them in with the dinosaurs.

"Both Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious saw an early London gig," Tim recalled. "Sid hated us. He used to single us out in interviews as one of the bands he really disliked."

That didn't stop *Sounds'* naming *Second*

Thoughts the best debut LP for 1976. Nor did it stop them touring, both in the U.K. and Australia, followed by a short jaunt to the U.S. early in 1977.

However, it was about time for a few more personnel changes. Phil Judd left, Malcolm Green came in on drums, and Nigel Griggs took over from Mike Chunn on bass - but not before Chunn had recommended Tim's little brother Neil for the vacant guitar slot ("He's hopeless now, but he has potential").

Neil, six years younger than Tim, had originally wanted to be a priest, before the music bug hit. In 1977 he formed After Hours, which just happened to include Mike Chunn's brother Geoff, on drums (a Split Enz alumnus himself). Two weeks later, Neil got a call asking him to join the Enz. He arrived in London on April 7, 1977, and immediately began rehearsals for the band's first headlining tour of Great Britain. Two months later he was in the studio for the first time as Split Enz began work on *Dizrythmia*, with the illustrious Geoff Emerick producing.

It was well received, especially by the supportive *Sounds'*. "As wacky a bunch as you'll ever see, Split Enz make some disarmingly appealing music in spite of their bizarre appearance. Their music is so good, in fact, that they should drop the mondo bizarre appearance and merely let their music speak for itself. If you're into something a little different, *Dizrythmia* will entertain and amuse you."

It certainly amused audiences in Australia, where the record went gold, and the single "My Mistake" gave the band their first top twenty hit. Elsewhere, though, it might as well not have been released at all.

Chrysalis dropped the band, which left them pretty much stranded on the beach by the New Wave, half a world from home and broke. They'd split from their managements, and after a February 1978 U.K. tour found they couldn't get gigs to save their lives. It was as if the bottom of their world had fallen out.

In retrospect, it might have been the making of them. They signed on for unemployment, bringing in just enough to get by, until the Queen Elizabeth Arts Council in New Zealand gave the band a grant to see them through the year. Immediately they headed off to deepest Wales to rehearse new material, where they met producer David Tickle. By June, along with Tickle, they were at Quest Studios in Luton, laying down what would become known as the *Rootin', Tootin' Luton Tapes* - the songs from which would form the backbone of *Frenzy*. Included in there was the catchy "I See Red," a song about their frustration, but which musically fitted perfectly into the New Wave spectrum with its zippy pace, strong chorus and cheesy keyboard



sound. Released in Australia, it shot to the top of the charts.

What they'd recorded with Tickle was fine, but they were essentially demos, and that was reflected in the sonic quality. So, come December, it was back to the studio to re-record with American producer Mallory Earl. The band found themselves at the Manor, outside London, putting in fourteen hours a day working on this material. The only problem was that it just didn't have the feel of the demos (there would eventually be two versions of *Frenzy*). One would be the Earl production, which came out in Australia on Mushroom, and A&M would eventually release the Tickle productions, with fully half the tracks being different. Not that it mattered. In early 1980 the album went gold in Australia and New Zealand, where the band was touring.

They'd gone back to NZ for the Namabassa Festival, but while rehearsing for the gig, a fire took out \$30,000 of their equipment - quite a blow to a band that was just beginning to come back from nothing. Undeterred, they carried on with their tour, getting raves for the album. *Ram* magazine wrote: "As they stand right now, Split Enz are the bumble bees of rock; electric cross-pollination, with a sting. The best thing is, they've only just started to flex their muscle."

That seemed to be true. Musically they were much leaner and meaner, with all the arty excesses (although not the eccentricity) trimmed away. The costumes and bizarre haircuts had vanished. The complete rethink they'd given themselves while down and out had resulted in a band that could emphasize the pop without cheapening the musicianship or the writing, quite a remarkable achievement. They'd given themselves a new base from which to develop, and that was exactly what they did. After almost a year spent trekking round the Antipodes playing shows, the band settled down to record their next album, and this time David Tickle was behind the board.

True Colours was the record that broke them internationally, thanks in large part to Neil Finn's slinky "I Got You." The album and single reached #1 in Australia and New Zealand, which prompted A&M to offer the band a worldwide contract. "I Got You" rose to #40 in the U.S. (as did the album), and #12 in the UK (the album peaked at #42 there). It was an age of gimmicks - the 12" single, multiple sleeves, all kinds of tomfoolery, but the American version of *True Colours* outdid them all, by being the first LP released on laser-etched vinyl - which essentially meant there were nice patterns if you held it up to the light. Whatever, it worked, and the album spent a solid six months on the charts, even going platinum in Canada.

True Colours was, in many ways, the distillation of everything that had gone before, and the very definition of quirky pop. The band refined the more straightforward approach to writing that had characterized *Frenzy*, but there was a greater depth to the material, with Neil Finn, in particular, stepping forward as a rapidly maturing songwriter - and singer - although there was no doubt that brother Tim was still very much the leader (as an interesting footnote, their US manager at the time was Tommy Mottola, who'd go on to head Sony, as well as marry, and divorce, Mariah Carey). Their pop music was far more confection. It fitted in with the idea of New Wave, but the abilities of the band, especially Eddie Rayner, set them well beyond the three-chord retro bash that characterized the movement.

Needless to say, they hit the road, but during a break in touring, they did record a follow-up, *Waizata* (the Polynesian word for party; in Australia, it was called *Corroboree* - the same thing in Aboriginal). With *True Colours* on its way to selling some 700,000 copies worldwide, labels were hungry for more.

Waizata/Corroboree appeared in April 1981, and given the momentum of the previous record, sold pretty well, reaching #45 in the U.S., and staying in the charts for 19 weeks (of course, it was huge in Australia and New Zealand; that can just be assumed. The band had already reached godhead status there). It even managed to toss out two minor hit singles - "One Step Ahead" and "History Never Repeats" (tellingly, both were Neil Finn compositions).

It was certainly helped by the fledgling MTV network, which desperately needed videos to broadcast. The fact that the Enz had clips for all their recent singles ensured they were quite visible and helped them develop a strong enough U.S. fanbase to tour, sharing equal billing with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. At the end of the tour, Mal Green quit, and Noel Crombie took over on drums.

For *Time and Tide* they elected to co-produce with Hugh Padgham (Police, etc.). While it topped the charts in the lower corner of the world, it didn't do much in the U.K. (peaking at #73) or the U.S. (#53). It did, however, manage to stir up some controversy when the single "Six Months In A Leaky Boat" was banned in Britain. The Tim Finn composition, which was actually about the hardships the first European settlers of New Zealand endured on their journey there, was perceived to be about the Royal Navy in the Falklands (this was, after all, 1982, and the time of the Falklands War). But even that didn't help the record's success, which was a shame, given that it contained some of the band's strongest material to date. "Six Months..." was a glorious song, while the effusive "Hello

Sandy Allen" and "Dirty Creatures" stood with the very best of the band's catalogue to date.

The following year, Tim took time away from the band to work on a solo album, *Escapade*, the first in what is now a long series of solo ventures. He returned to the fold later that year to the recording on *Conflicting Emotions*, which saw a richer musical sound to the band.

But it was, to all intents and purposes, the beginning of the end for the Enz. Neil contributed six tracks, with Tim only offering four, and they wrote separately. Neil was taking more of the lead vocals, and the instrumental glue holding everything together seemed to emanate from Eddie Rayner's keyboards. You could make a case that this version of the Enz was the weakest. The songs weren't that strong, and the eighties production, with its massive drums and little studio quirks, did them no favors, tending to drown out the material, like the exquisite "Message To My Girl." It would be the Enz' last American release.

Following the album, a new drummer, Paul Hester, was drafted in, with Crombie returning to percussion, and shows on the ensuing tour were recorded for a live double album (*The Living Enz*, which also included some performances from 1982). But it was the end of an era. Tim jumped ship in 1984 and moved to London, leaving Neil to helm a somewhat stripped-down Enz for their swansong, *See Ya 'Round*.

By this time, it was Neil, Eddie Rayner, Noel Crombie, Nigel Griggs, and Paul Hester - in other words, two of the members of the future Crowded House were already in place. Most of the writing was by Neil, and the responsibility seemed to bring something out in him. There was a maturity in his writing, poppy without succumbing to the lowest denominator. It was very much the precursor of Crowded House (in fact, a somewhat simplistic version of "I Walk Away" first appeared on this album). Neil's voice was on its way to being the appealing instrument it would become.

It was apparent, though, that they'd reached the Enz of the day. Only one original member was left, and that was Noel Crombie, whose early involvement had been non-musical. Along the way, however, they'd become the biggest band ever to come from New Zealand, putting the country on the musical map. Even so, the legend wouldn't die. In 1993, they reconvened for some shows, which resulted in the *Anniversary* album. Then, in 1996, under the direction of Eddie Rayner, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra performed a tribute to the Enz, recreating many of their songs with different vocalists - including the Finn brothers, resulting in the *Enzso* album. A second *Enzso* album saw the light of day

in 1998, and finally, to see out the millennium, Split Enz got together for a pair of (final?) New Zealand shows.

If it had gone no further, it would have been quite enough. Throughout Australasia, the Enz were massive, and they'd achieved a considerable amount of success in Britain and America. However, the desire to make music hadn't left the Finns. As Tim continued with his own career, Neil pondered what to do.

See Ya 'Round had distinctly post-New Wave overtones. It was very much an album of its time, much as *Conflicting Emotions* had been. That was fine, in its way, but Neil's vision was more stripped-down, and to that end he took Hester, bassist Nick Seymour, and guitarist Craig Hooper and formed the Mullanes (Neil's middle name was Mullane). They toured, and even recorded some demos, before Hooper quit. He wasn't replaced; there was no need.

In the middle of 1985, the trio took a deep breath and traveled across the Pacific, in search of a major record deal. While the Enz hadn't been big in America for a while, the reputation (and quality of the demos) convinced Capitol to take a chance - as long as they'd change the band name. In Los Angeles, the band settled into a small house off Sunset Boulevard and began playing small acoustic gigs, billed as the Largest Living Things, which eventually became Crowded House, a reflection of their somewhat cramped living conditions.

In the studio, they hooked up with producer Mitchell Froom, who in the mid-eighties was still something of an unknown quantity, to make the *Crowded House* album. The big problem was that, having released it, Capitol seemed indifferent to its fate, so, Neil explained, "We did a couple of acoustic shows where we just busked. They were so riotous and so exciting and there was so much interaction going on that we told the American record company that we wanted to do a series of those shows. We did a series of restaurants. We did an Indian in New York and a Japanese in L.A. It was very downmarket, but at the time nobody was really doing it. Everybody came along and it really connected and we learned how to do it really well. We learned how to sing together too. We learned how to relate to each other onstage."

There was no doubt that this somewhat unorthodox approach to gigging created a bit of a buzz in the music industry, and it did get the band on a few talk shows, as well as some radio play. In February '87, some six months after its release, *Crowded House* eased into the top 40 albums, eventually rising all the way to #12, helped by the fact that "Don't Dream It's Over" became a massive hit, (#2), followed three months later by "Something So Strong" (#7). They were on a roll, or





so it seemed, especially when the band won Best New Artist video at the MTV Video Music Awards (they also performed there). Add to that the fact that "Don't Dream It's Over" had reached #27 in Britain, and they really looked to be going places. They toured - playing places somewhat larger than restaurants - with Eddie Rayner filling out the sound on keyboards.

Unfortunately, it proved to something of a flash in the pan. While they were instant megastars in Australasia, going multi-platinum, their next American single, "World Where You Live" could only rise to #65.

It was an odd situation. Here was a band making classy pop music, with two big hits behind them, but who couldn't continue the streak. They had tunes you could hum (or whistle), lyrics with some meat and depth. What was the problem? Well, it might have been that they were too good, in an ironic way. The public in general likes its pop to be straightforward, and pop music, as a medium, has always tended to be disposable - a song that's great until the next great song comes along to unseat it. In the modern (i.e. post-Beatles) era, great songs have tended to be album commodities, rather than singles. So, looked at from another angle, you could say that the House had actually been lucky to have had two massive hits.

Whichever way it worked, it did mean they were known in the U.S., and they went into the studio (again with Mitch Froom) to record their second album, *Temple of Low Men* (whose working title was *Mediocre Follow-Up*).

Released in August '88, two years to the month after the debut, it was a much darker record lyrically, full of self-doubt and guilt. At the same time, it was a much better album - Neil's songwriting had truly found its groove, and the band worked perfectly together. Time had sharpened them as a unit, and the arrangements for the material were perhaps the most sympathetic Neil's work would receive. Songs like "I Feel Possessed" and "Into Temptation" were simply glorious, the choruses resolving themselves out of the verses. However, record buyers didn't see it that way, and in the U.S. the best the album could manage was #40, with the extracted "Better Be Home Soon" only climbing to #42. In large part, the fault lay with Capitol, who did very little to promote the record, for some odd reason. True, it wasn't as obvious and immediate as *Crowded House*, but it was absolute quality.

However it came down, things didn't look good. Even another appearance at the MTV Video Music Awards didn't set things alight. A proposed U.S. tour had to be abandoned, and by the middle of 1989 it looked as though the House was going to collapse. In fact, during 1989, the only recording the band did was backing Roger McGuinn on versions of "Eight Miles High" and "So You Wanna Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star," which appeared on an EP under the collective name of Byrd-house.

Later that year, Neil and Tim began writing together for a Finn Brothers album. It was a natural project, really. At that point they hadn't worked together in six years, and both had grown as artists. The fraternal connection was still strong, and between them they quickly penned a total of fourteen songs. It seemed to spark something in Neil, because once the brothers had begun sessions for the record, Neil began writing for a new

Crowded House album, although the sessions for that proved less than satisfactory. About the only usable thing to come out of them was a cover of the Zombies' "She's Not There," which cropped up on the soundtrack of the movie "The Crossing." In an inspired moment, the Brothers Finn realized that Tim would fit in perfectly with the House, sharing vocals and taking on keyboard duties, and it was decided to take the best of the songs they'd penned together, and some of the songs from the aborted third album to make the next proper Crowded House album.

And so *Woodface* was born. Among the additional musicians who contributed to the record was an American called Mark Hart, who was playing with Supertramp, and who hit it off well with the Antipodeans. His name would be kept on file...

Once again, Mitch Froom was behind the board, the band having established a good, productive relationship with both him and his engineer, Tchad Blake. His style seemed to suit the band's material and style.

The majority of the songs were co-written by the Finns, and were, perhaps, the richest pickings they'd yet had, individually or collectively, from the slight strangeness of "Chocolate Cake," which seemed almost a throwback to Split Enz days, or the luscious "Weather With You," while Neil alone contributed the album's best ballad, "Fall At Your Feet."

Of course, one of the things that neither brother had considered was the way the dynamic had changed since they'd last performed together in a band. Back then, the Erz was definitely Tim's band, with Neil as part of the group. Now it was very much the other way around. But it seemed as if things could move ahead without any problem.

The band did tour the US to promote the album, even appearing on David Letterman's show. However, they'd never quite managed to recapture the initial surge of interest in their music, and the best *Woodface* managed in America was #83. They did, however, have the pleasure of playing a secret gig in L.A. as the Largest Living Things, which included Phil Manzanera on guitar, and a cover of Roxy Music's "Love Is The Drug." By now, the House had acquired a reputation for its live performances, which could go off on odd tangents from night to night. There was a definite banter between Neil and Paul Hester, who showed himself to be quite the comedian, with bassist Nick Seymour playing the straight man. There'd be discussions over what to play next, little songs made up on the spot, and even what some people would call performance art.

"I think in Holland we had a 'happening' where Nick was painting on-stage," recalled Hester. "We had a four-by-two canvas set up and Neil was interpreting his work with the acoustic guitar... We used to do this human pyramid for concerts. Three of the crew would come out and make the base and we'd get on top and I'd be on the very top. Stunts and hits, that was our recipe for big shows."

Seymour recalled when "we were in Georgia and this girl was very loud and wanted us to notice her, and when we got her up onstage she had nothing to say. So because she was wearing this red gingham shirt we decided to lie her on the drum riser and eat a picnic off her shirt. The crew raced straight to the band room and brought all the food out of the rider

and just placed it on her, and we sat around and ate food and just talked to each other."

So, live, they were somewhat different from most bands around then...they weren't the world's best instrumentalists, none of them virtuosos. But the real strength lay both in the songs and the unpretentious way they presented them - and themselves.

While the window of opportunity appeared to have closed on them in America, it was finally beginning to open in Britain, where the album made #34, and the singles "Chocolate Cake" and "Fall At Your Feet" made the charts (the latter reaching #17). At that point, a U.K. tour made real sense, and it's what they undertook in November 1991 - only to have Tim Finn quit in the middle "by mutual consent," leaving them to continue as a trio, until they had a chance to bring in Mark Hart, who'd helped out on the album, to offer his multi-instrumental talents.

Instead of halting things in their tracks, the momentum on the far side of the Atlantic continued. "Weather With You" went all the way to #7 (it had been aired frequently as part of a sponsorship deal with Chiltern Radio's weather forecasts), and that brought *Woodface* back into the charts, where it would hit #6. During 1992 the success would mean the release of two more singles from the album, "Four Seasons In One Day" (#26) and "It's Only Natural" (#24).

The focus had shifted. The United States wasn't interested, but Britain was. Over the past twelve months, Crowded House had developed into a major band there. Belatedly, interest had caught up. Of course, Down Under they remained huge, some of the biggest stars ever to emerge from Australasia. In 1993, that would be reflected when Tim and Neil Finn were both awarded the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.), in Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Honors list, given for service to New Zealand. It put them in an extremely elite group of musicians to have been given awards.

The early part of 1993 saw Crowded House working on a new album. For this one they ditched Froom and elected to work with English producer Youth. Youth's reputation had come with post-punk British bands whose sound was quite unlike the inviting melodies of Crowded House, but it was time for a change.

That change was signaled in more ways than just a change of producer. Instead of a regular studio, the band settled into a house at Kare Kare beach in New Zealand (the first time they'd actually recorded in NZ). With its rugged landscape, and the fact it overlooked the sea, it offered something unique - not to mention quite isolated. There were no shops, and TV reception was impossible.

"The album budget was full of things like bridges which were built to deliver equipment over and gravel was bought," recalled Hester. "The Americans looked at the budget and said, 'gravel? Lots of marijuana was bought and hidden in drawers and pillows and it was all gone in a couple of weeks.'"

It should have been magical. The setting was unlike anywhere they'd ever recorded (but when a band wants such a drastic change, it can be either a very good or very desperate thing). Youth was something of a latter-day hippie, playing Cat Stevens' *Tea for the Tillerman* every evening, and talking of crystals, and so on. But it proved, in the end, to make for



a difficult birth for the fourth album. Living together, working together, being together twenty-four hours a day while trying to create wreaked havoc on the relationship between the band members, and, Neil would admit later, "We lost our innocence in that experience, much as it's my favorite record...I don't think we got the full moneys worth [from Youth], and I kind of gave up on it near the end of it. It didn't end all that well with Youth. I felt a bit let down by then and he probably thought I was a bit of a fascist."

It was, as anyone would have expected from the House, an album of songs. But it could have taken another direction. On at least two tracks the band ended up jamming, which, in the end, Neil chose to fade early, although later he wished he hadn't.

When it came time to mix, the band met up with Bob Clearmountain in Melbourne, Australia to work on the tapes. It was perhaps at that point that the Kare Kare experience became apparent when Clearmountain announced,

"I cannot mix this song because there's no track sheet, there's just pictures of mushrooms and crystals! Where are the drums?"

For all of those problems, however, *Together Alone* turned out rather well, entering the UK charts at #4, shortly after the first single, "Distant Sun," had reached #19 (by that time the band were in the middle of a short U.S. tour, the highlight of which was playing the WOMAD festival in San Francisco). Obviously, they'd finally managed to win over the UK in a big way, which was only emphasized when, in February 1994, they won the BRIT award for Best International Group.

Interestingly, when Finn presented the album to Capitol, they'd asked him to go away and record two more tracks - as the cliché goes, they couldn't hear a single. He heard them out, and to his eternal credit, refused. So, in the end, without a great deal of publicity, the best the album could manage in the U.S. was #73.



Whatever relationship they'd once enjoyed with the American record-buying public had obviously vanished. But that didn't stop them undertaking a long North American tour. It proved to be too much for Paul Hester. For a while he'd been suggesting the band work only six months out of every year, and then just concentrating on the markets where they were big - a nice idea which was turned down.

Finally, in April, as the tour rolled into Atlanta, he reached the breaking point. The suicide of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain weighed heavily on him ("I just thought, 'How can you do that with a kid and a girl? All right, your band thing's fucked, but...it just made you think about all those things'). Then he became sick, and realized the madness had to stop. In many ways, Hester believed, when he told the others he was leaving, he was simply uttering the words Neil wanted to say for himself.

Of course, there was no question of abandoning the tour. A couple of stand-ins helped until a new drummer, Australian Peter Jones, could arrive, and the band moved triumphantly on to London, where they headlined the Fleadh festival.

After that, the four-piece (Finn, Seymour, Hart, and Jones) did some recording, laying down fourteen new songs in New Zealand, which everyone assumed would be the basis of the next album - "There were some very good moments," said Seymour.

But Neil moved away from that, to finally get down to recording with his brother (however, in January of 1995, the group would reconvene for a major show supporting REM in Sydney, Australia). Finn was very much a family affair, with the brothers playing virtually everything (David Dobbyn played bass on one track - a fair repayment for Neil producing his album, *Twist*, which went platinum in NZ). It was a very low-key, ramshackle affair, and obviously done more for the joy of working together than with any huge commercial aim, although in

Britain it would reach #15, with the single "Suffer Never" hitting #29.

The rest of Crowded House assumed this was simply a side project, and that the band would be back on track very soon. After all, they'd gained some momentum, and it seemed a shame to let all that go to waste.

Instead, Neil seemed to turn introspective. Maybe it was Hester's actions that had stirred him into thought, or possibly it was something that had been brewing inside him for a while (as the others seemed to believe), but early in 1996, he called the others and told them he was leaving. Obviously, without Neil, there was no band, since he'd been the linchpin, voice, and songwriter.

Curiously, it was a decision that wouldn't be communicated to the public for several months, in part because the band was committed to go and play in Britain to promote *Recurring Dream*, a greatest hits package (which included three tracks recorded at their last sessions), bowing out with a major gig on June 3. It was only the day after that show that Neil announced the breakup of the band, with a real blowout final show to be staged November 23 in Sydney, outside the famous Opera House (in fact, the show would be postponed for 24 hours, due to heavy rain). It was a real way to go, performing in front of thousands upon thousands

of people (estimates ran from 100,000 - 150,000), with the proceeds going to Sydney Children's Hospital Fund - a magnificent gesture. They finished, perhaps sentimentally, perhaps ironically, with "Don't Dream It's Over," the crowd singing most of the words. For ten years Crowded House had been a musical force. But like all bands, its time had ended, the cycle over.

Neil Finn might have broken up the band, but that didn't mean he'd abandoned music. In 1998 he released *Try Whistling This*, still full of melody, but with much thicker textures. At least in America, it wasn't a roaring success, but still a very satisfying listen to anyone who appreciates classy pop music. And Tim continues with his solo career, too, having just issued *Say It Is So* early in 2000, a record made in Nashville, but quite definitely not of Nashville.

Does the story ever end? Probably not. Late 1999 saw not only *Afterglow*, a collection of Crowded House out-takes and demos, but also *Other Enz*, a double CD which offered forty-one tracks from Split Enz offshoots and affiliates, full of rarities, plus some tracks off albums that hadn't made it out of Australasia. People just won't let the Enz or the House go to rest in peace, it seems. The biggest bands ever to come from New Zealand remain just that.

Discography

Split Enz

Singles:

- For You/Split Ends (NZ Vertigo)
- The Sweet Talking Spoon Song/One Two Nine (NZ Erni)
- No Bother To Me/Home Sweet Home (NZ White Cloud)
- Maybe/Titus (Mushroom)
- Late Last Night/Time For A Change (Mushroom)
- Matinee Idol/Lovey Dovey (Mushroom)
- Another Great Divide/Stranger Than Fiction (Mushroom)
- My Mistake/Crossroads (Mushroom)
- Bold As Brass/Sugar and Spice (Mushroom)
- I See Red/Hermit McDermitt/Message Boy (Mushroom)
- Give It A Whirl/Frenzy (Mushroom)
- Things/Semi Detached (Mushroom)
- I Got You/Double Happy (Mushroom)
- I Hope I Never/Hypnotised/Carried Away (Mushroom)
- One Step Ahead/In The Wars (Mushroom)
- History Never Repeats/Holy Smoke (Mushroom)
- I Don't Wanna Dance/Shark Attack (live)/What's The Matter With You (live) (Mushroom)
- Dirty Creature/Make Sense Of It (Mushroom)
- Six Months In A Leaky Boat/Fire Drill (Mushroom)
- Never Ceases To Amaze Me/I See Red (live) (Mushroom)
- Next Exit/Two Of A Kind/Remember When (Mushroom)
- Strait Of Line/Parasite (Mushroom)
- Message To My Girl/Kia Kaha (Mushroom)
- I Wake Up Every Night/Conflicting Emotions (Mushroom)
- I Walk Away/Overdrive (Mushroom)
- One Mouth Is Fed/This Is Massive (Mushroom)
- I See Red/I See Red (live) (Mushroom)

Albums:

- Mental Notes* (Mushroom)
- Second Thoughts* (Mushroom)
- Dizrythmia* (Mushroom)
- The Beginning of the Enz* (Mushroom)
- Frenzy* (Mushroom)
- Frenzy* (U.S. A&M SP-3153 - many different tracks)
- True Colours* (Mushroom)
- Corroboree* (Mushroom D19473)
- Time and Tide* (Mushroom MUSH32335 2)
- Conflicting Emotions* (Mushroom D19543)
- The Living End* (Mushroom D 45029/30)
- See Ya 'Round* (Mushroom D19540)

Compilations:

- The Split Enz Collection 1973-1984* (Mushroom)
- The Best of Split Enz - History Never Repeats* (Mushroom)
- The Gold Collection (?)*
- Spellbound (?)*
- Odds and Enz* (Mushroom, 6-CD box set)
- Rear Enz* (Mushroom 6-CD box set)
- Other Enz - Split Enz and Beyond* (Raven RVCD 100)

Crowded House

The Crowded House singles discography is so convoluted that it's virtually impossible to catalogue.

Albums:

- Crowded House* (US Capitol 7243 8 35105 2 8)
- Temple of Low Men* (US Capitol 7243 8 35106 2 7)
- Woodface* (US Capitol 7243 8 35107 2 6)

Together Alone

Compilations:

- Recurring Dream - The Very Best of Crowded House* (US Capitol 7243 8 522482 9)

*Note: one edition also contained an extra live album.
Afterglow (Capitol 7243 523722 2 5)
(all Australian / New Zealand releases)

