



"Do we look 'new wave' enough now?"

I FIND MISSING PERSONS

by John Mendelsohn

The germ of the union that would one day become countless hundreds of thousands of fans' favorite new New Wave attraction of 1983, wiggled into being one afternoon in the late '70s when a carnivorous cutie called Dale strutted onto a soundstage somewhere in America to say hello to her old buddy Frank Zappa. "Everybody in the band and crew," recalls Terry Bozzio, who was then the drummer in the former, "was going, 'Oh, my God—what a beautiful woman.' She hung around and watched me play, and apparently was so infatuated with me as I was with her, 'cause later that night... blah-de-blah. And a couple of years after that we were married."

Slightly thereafter, when the newlyweds would display themselves in public with their close personal friend Warren Cuccareullo, "people would go, 'Hey, you guys in a band? You look like you are. Blah-de-blah.' Cuccareullo had become a Bozzio buddy through the Zappa band. "I'd never missed a gig of Frank's within 500 miles of New York City," Terry reveals. "He'd know little changes in arrangements almost before the band did. When I heard a tape of him playing the guitar, I thought to myself, 'Hey, this kid's going to be great some day.'"

While Terry was on his final tour as a member of the famous progressive rock combo U.K., the Cuccareullo boy and Dale began work on a song called "I Like Boys." When Terry got home and heard it, he exclaimed, "This is incredible. This is what I want to do."

Before we get carried away, we ought to note that Terry's the nicest guy in show business, a fellow of such largesse and personality that he gladly divulged his dad's coveted recipe for presto sauce to the man from America's only rock 'n' roll magazine that bills itself as such even before the two of them had established what seasoned journalists often refer to as "a rapport." Presto is that for which Garco, whence the Bozzio clan springs, is most celebrated gastronomically.

Once having written a few times together, the three young people resolved to acquire a recording contract—but not before shining on such illustrious prospective employers as Journey, Asia, Zappa, and Jetton Tull to pursue their own mess. Terry recalls that they thought, "With our backgrounds? No problem!" particularly after they got Ken Scott, the inauspicious Ken Scott, to manage and produce them. But every record company in America, or at least all those they went to, spurned them. "The last place we got turned down was Bomp." Terry reveals. "I called them up and said, 'Hi, I'm Terry Bozzio. I've played with Zappa and U.K., and now I've got this



great new band. I'd like to come in and play you some of our stuff." They said, "To tell you the truth, Terry, if it's anything at all like what you've done in the past, we aren't interested. I swear on my hands and knees that it wasn't. No," I said, "Please! Wait! It's real modern and real commercial, real pop and blah-de-blah." Eventually they offered us a typical point deal, but no advance, and no budget to go in and make the album.

"At that point, I said, 'Fuck all these assholes.'"

But his brave bride refused to let the group's spirits droop. "She got us into the frame of mind where we could really think positively," he explains. "She reads a lot of those books, and now we all do."

"I've proven to myself in my own experience that what you think can become tangible," Dale affirms, citing Atkinson's *Blind Power* as a particular influence. "It stems from my brother, who's a lot older than me, so I guess it just fell on to my shoulders."

That Mrs. Bozzio's is a most distinctive mode of self-expression became manifest to the man from America's only rock 'n' roll magazine that bills itself as such only moments after he started the conversation: a hell rolling by asking about her hair-possessing bout with pneumonia. "I'd been working without a break for three years," she said, "so I think I deserved to get pneumonia."

But back to our story. Having been told by every record company they went to that their songs would get no radio airplay, and then having said, "Fuck you. You're all wet," the Persons borrowed \$3000 from Warren's father, who, "as a typical father, believes in and lives for his kids," and pressed their own EP. Thanks to the fact that they were able to persuade no fewer than 22 stations around the country to play it, it sold 10,000 copies—more than enough to inspire Capitol Records to say, "Gosh," and re-release it bearing the logo that had earlier adorned Beatles and Knack product. Perhaps their biggest break was getting it played in heavy rotation at KROQ, the much-intimated FM station to which one listens in Los Angeles if he has an implacable longing to hear the likes of "Teenage Extreme Nurse" and not particularly reusable Iggy Pop album tracks nine times a day, and can't receive the infamously expensive KQLU, the superb-but feeble syndicated station of a nearby Catholic university.

By and by, the EP, competing songs that all of America's record companies had agreed would get no airplay, became the biggest selling EP by a new act in history. Whereupon the group had only to survive the fierce antipathy of the critics, who generally contend that they're a cynical attempt by ailing progressive hotshots to exploit the less discriminating sectors of the new wave audience by having the otherwise talentless Dale make a spectacle of her fit in almost precisely the same way that the wonderful Wendy Williams does.

As might be anticipated, Terry gets more than a little annoyed when confronted with such charges. The first one he takes on is that he and the other boys in the band are slumming. "We were tired of what we'd done before," he explains, "and tired of achieving the results that we had



What a "pooh," eh?

Art Evans/Photo Disc Inc.

“**Everybody obviously wants to show off what they have.**
—Dale Bozzio”

before—reaching only those of higher intellect, or at least trying to be the hottest showoff drummer—putting as much garbage in every bar as I could, and

destroying other people's music. Aside from fast, or violent, or loud, the average person couldn't really understand any of it. It was like speaking Japanese to someone who didn't understand it.

"Now you're taking our cue from composers like Satie, who had tons of chops and could have written thick symphonies, but who chose instead to write simple little piano pieces with three notes that could make you cry just as much as all of Beethoven's fury.

"And no one tells Dale what to do. Obviously, I tell her what notes to sing in the songs I've written, but otherwise she takes orders from no one. She's always been sexy—always been the sort of woman who attracts attention, who's always walking into a club or a 7-11.



"We are calculating in our approach to the business end of things. We know that a pretty girl sells the car and the package of cigarettes, and we have a product to sell too. Just like a flower attracts a bee with its scent, we have Dale, with her free-thinking sexual outlook and Playboy Bunny background. But she never wears anything she could be arrested for on a public beach, and we don't think it's in bad taste.

"And you've got to keep in mind that all the things they say about Dale—that she's flaunting her sexuality and can't sing—they said about Elvis, too.

The man from America's only rock 'n' roll magazine that bills itself as such agrees that such things were indeed said about Elvis, but notes that they were said by people who thought Bing Crosby, say, was what pop music should have been all about. On the other hand, many of those who've deplored Dale in print positively adore the likes of X and the Blisters and Talking Heads.

Dale snorts derisively at the mention of the world's Ms. Williams, and her alleged influence on her own stagewear. "That's totally ridiculous," she notes, "cause I'm not wearing black leather. I'm wearing plaidgals. And we were out playing the streets long before I ever heard of Wendy O. Williams. And it was done well before her, beginning with Mae West and the B. Tina Turner and Marilyn Monroe 25 years ago. Sex symbols will always be here, until eternity."

Syntactically, Dale comes across the Coxy Stengel and Gracie Allen renaissance, but with a proclivity for the use—or, actually, misuse—of the word aspect that's all her own, and every bit as rampant as her husband's for blah-de-blah. "Everybody obviously wants to show off what

they have," she asserts, "and I don't think that what I wear is any worse than people walking around on the main streets wearing just black leather pants with jock

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We
have a product
to sell.
--Terry
Bozzio
”

"If it protrudes, it protrudes!"



"Of course, we're massive, but at least we're pretty ones!"

straps underneath to protrude their penis.

"When we first tried to put out our record, no one would pay any attention to us. But once we put it out on vinyl and put a girl [herself] on the cover, then they paid attention, 'cause probably everybody in the record industry is male-oriented and as soon as you get somebody who looks pretty with tits and ass on the cover they open their eyes. Then people started saying, 'Wow, this music is really great,' because they had something to relate it to. When people get past my tits they see that I can sing and that we have really incredible music and the things that are going on musically aren't happening with any other musical band in this time of music right here in earth."

If you haven't yet got the impression that Betty Friedan, say, is unlikely to suggest that Dale join her for a couple of beers, wait until you get a load of her response "that any woman in this day and age, unless she's totally into the feminist aspect, is a sexual object 'cause that's been instilled in the humanitarian aspects of living and life. The woman is the wife and mother, and the man has to poosh the woman to present the child. So in that factory, the woman has to cook and clean and raise the children. Woman is always going to be looked at in the light of the maid or the servant for the man. And you hope to God you'll be a pretty one, 'cause if you're lacking in those aspects, it's even probably twice as hard. So I don't think that's a bad thing. I will always try to keep up and look my best. It that brings me into being a sex object, then more power to me."

Dale has a provocative answer to the question of why critics hate her group so vehemently. "If they can't poosh me by the end of the night, they become hostile. But obviously that's their problem. I mean, I don't know, you know? To me, critics are really uptight. Probably they wouldn't be so critical if they could play a musical instrument and see what it really takes to sit down 24 hours a day and have to write music and put a package together and present it and keep it up in a 'low.' Harsh words, the man from America's only rock 'n' roll magazine that bills itself as such thinks to himself, from one whose own musical expertise extends no farther than the second or third page of Lene Lovich's *How To Sing New Wave*.

Terry jumps back into the conversational fray with both feet. "When we started this whole thing," he points out, "ROCKO was a little shit underground station, and everybody told us that we'd never get anywhere. We just did what we believed in. We're not selfish. We're not covetous. I believe in Missing Persons 1,000 percent!"

He considers his interviewer's reiteration of his Elvis/Dale analogy, and agrees, "You don't hear Talking Heads on the radio, but our album was the second most added record in America when it came out. They just don't know how to hit on that tone that we hit on. We make no bones about wanting to be accessible and successful."

"They call us a cross between Blondie
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PETER GABRIEL

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and Dance festival WOMAD represented an ambitious musical interaction, bringing together international masters from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean—from calypso king the Mighty Sparrow to Nigeria's celebrated Prince Nico Mbanga—to share billing with big-haired British rockers such as Gabriel and the (English) Beat. While attendance at the fest didn't cover expenses, Gabriel considered the experience worth it in ways that money can't measure.

"The financial thing was a grueling headache," he related, "but the thing itself, seeing like 50-year-old Chinese classical soloists getting standing ovations from the rock audience. Moments like that, they're magical, and it was a real buzz to be involved in it...."

"Say, most Western audiences didn't know that the Bo Diddley rhythm is related directly to an African rhythm, which it is. It seemed that if people can find that exciting and attractive, that a percentage of them might be able to follow through on a stage further back."

In order to pay off WOMAD's debts, Gabriel's old mates in Genesis offered their services for a one-time reunion concert. "They were very friendly, and it was very generous of them to help us out with the festival," said Gabriel, adding that there would be no film or record to further capitalize on the reunion. "I think that both they and I didn't want it to be filmed or recorded so it wasn't seen as a commercial or a career move, but mainly what it was, which was a benefit to raise money."

He doesn't use much likelihood of working with the band again. While he doesn't reject the work he did with Genesis, he seems to treat the early-'70s era of misguided "progressivism" as a period from which he—and perhaps rock itself—has grown up and out.

"Some people who came in the same time that I did definitely suffer from identity problems—they want to discuss their past," he said. "To me, I would take a more healthy analyst's view of it, to see it as a normal part of growing up. That's how I look back on it. I can see a lot of flaws, a lot of weaknesses, a lot of places where I would change now. I'm trying to work with a lot less. You can criticize some of that stuff as being a bit pompous."

As part of the "Frog the hell out of it" phase in which he's currently engaged, Gabriel says that he still has his touring, just so long as it doesn't overwhelm his other projects and interests.

"I think three months a year is a healthy balance," he said. "What it is for me is that there are other projects that could be more interesting for me now than spending a lot of it on the road. I think you come into the business very eager to even pursue, find your place, all the rest of that."

"I'm 32 now; I feel like I've done that at least once. So things like the festival I got involved in last summer and video experiments and things like this do seem very attractive, just for my own self-satisfaction."

As for the future, Gabriel has his own vision of Fantasyland, which he's planning to spring on an unsuspecting world.

"I've been working for about 10 years now," he revealed of his project, which is still in the dreaming stages. "It'd be sort of like Disneyland, but an interactive place, which has gardens, situations, whatever—designed by psychologists, ministers, artists, painters. I think it's done like a Disneyland, and doesn't have any of the pretenses of culture or art galleries—an all-conceal welcome idea, if you like—it'd be very refreshing."

"In rock or whatever, you're restricted to part of the population. You're not getting through to all the people who might get something out of it."

So much for the future. And so much for Africa, for that matter. The time is now (more or less). The place is Bloomington, Indiana. And Peter Gabriel has a job to do.

Can a British rocker with pan-cultural influences find happiness in the heart of John Cougar country? Will an audience more accustomed to the meticulous precision of Bobby Knight's Big Ten basketball peripherals be able to "Shuck the Monkey?" No problem.

From the opening of the concert—which found Gabriel and band parading from the back of the hall and beating drums, one and all, for the beginning of "Rhythm of the Heat"—the artist had his audience mesmerized. The band—including bassist Tony Levin, drummer Jerry Marotta, guitarist David Rhodes, and synth-wiz Larry Synergy Fast—combines technological flash and rhythm depth more effectively than any act working today. As for Gabriel, he's toned down his theatrics some, but he continues to use his hands and face for maximum expression. As with the development of his music, he makes less cost for more.

"We love you, Peter," shouted one straggled fan during a brief lull in the proceedings.

"I thought we were trying to keep it a secret," deadpanned Gabriel.

While synthesizers have long played an important part in the sound of Peter Gabriel, what made this particular performance so striking happened not because of technology, but in spite of it. There had been problems with the electricity in the hall throughout the early-evening sound-check. By the end of the two-hour set, various power problems caused the banks of synthesizers to go out of tune and blow their memory banks.

Although the band had patched together arrangements the best it could, it finally became necessary to drop an extended chunk of material from the show. This is the point where most of the synth-saturated upstairs would find themselves either waiting for the electrician or pecking up and going home.

Gabriel, however, came out for a final encore, without the band, and played the most stirring version of "Here Comes The Flood" you'd ever want to hear. Just that plaintive voice and some stark piano chords. I don't know if it had been planned as part of the set (it wasn't included in his Chicago concert a couple of weeks later), but it was easily one of the most moving musical moments I can remember.

After the show, still a little disturbed by the technical problems of the set, he had

backstage personnel sent home early while he went outside and signed autographs for over half an hour.

This may or may not be beside the point. Gabriel told me that if he'd had a second chance, he wouldn't have tiled his new album *Security*. He would have called it *Concor*.

MISSING PERSONS

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and the Pleasants. Well, Dale's had blonde hair all her life. When we first went around to record companies, they told us that, since we were bound to be compared to Blondie, they'd only consider us if Dale dyed her hair black and we changed the name of the group to Joan of Arc. But we wouldn't. We did what we wanted to do, and we made it work. If people want to hate us for that, that's their privilege.

"I really don't care what the critics say. As far as I'm concerned, they're impotent—drop without touch. In the old days, on Broadway or something, but nowadays nothing that anybody writes in a newspaper is going to influence people that much, not as long as TV and radio are exposing us to people face to face. We go directly to the people!"

"But so," the man from America's only rock 'n' roll magazine that bills itself as such notes, "did Mouskies?"

"Yeah," Terry acknowledges, "but are we really doing something evil? I believe 100 percent in Missing Persons. We have done right. We are good musicians, combined with somebody new and fresh. We've stuck it out and we'll continue to stick it out. They'll all come around when we're great."

He offers no explanation of his 9000 percent drop in conviction over the course of five paragraphs.

Blah-de-blah.

ENGLISH BEAT

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singles, the band's stunning debut album *I Just Can't Stop It* (don't have a party without it) established the Beat as not only danceable but aware and articulate as well. The musically more relaxed follow-up *Whisper* was even more overtly political, tackling nationalism, the haves and have-nots of capitalism, insecurity, and paranoia, while the band came out in interviews against nuclear weapons and fascist politics.

The English music public is extraordinarily tickle, however, and media darling the Beat found that by the spring of 1962 that popular attention had wandered off to the next passing fad. Their singles were no longer instant chart successes, but luckily, with the release of their latest LP *Special Beat Service*, the Beat have found that America is finally catching on to their music. The album has reportedly already surpassed the sales of both of its predecessors, enabling them to headline here as well as play the much-hesitated Us Festival in California this past summer.

"We'll do anything weird once," bassist Steele remarks in reference to the '80s version of Woodstock. "We're compromising to a slight extent what we do things

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DALE BOZZIO

