*For us New Zealand kids, growing up and going to high school in the nineteen eighties, watching Radio with Pictures, on Sunday nights, was a was a much-awaited weekly treat before the grind of school on Monday. It was on Radio With Pictures where I got my first taste of hip-hop, watching the video of The Message, with my father beside me. With his hands in his pockets, he turned around and said, “That's an interesting new kind of music.” And it was on Radio with Pictures later on in 1985, where I watched Leonard Cohen's videos to do Dance Me to the End of Love and Hallelujah with my mother. Not many people seem to have watched the cheap-looking Eurovision-style video of Hallelujah when it came out as the second single from Various Positions, with the young university students who emerged from behind the stage pillars somewhat awkwardly to join Leonard on the big choruses. And it was also on Radio with Pictures, where I was confronted with the work of Chris Knox(and his crocodile mouth) for the first time. I watched a snippet of a song from his first band, The Enemy, a song called Pull Down The Shades, in their famous, inimitable, bulldozer punk rock style, which someone also had described as a tractor. It was fast but the wheels seemed kind of slow-moving. Like a bulldozer slowly transporting dirt over a bleak South Island dreamscape, driven by someone in a woolly jersey. I came across quite a good little documentary about The Enemy, in which Chris Knox reminisces about his band's first and greatest show. It's quite cute because he said they thought they were so great that it gave them the energy to carry on and gave all these other bands the energy to start, like The Clean. Yeah, I'd heard The Enemy had caused all these other bands to start like The Clean but I didn't realise it was from the first gig. That amazing feeling when you first try something out, and amazingly it works. You could say and it sort of set the scene for the that melodic strain of New Zealand music. In Pull Down The Shades you can hear all the usual important punk influences, like Iggy and the Stooges, but, it also has a particular melody driven inflection, probably thanks to Chris Knox's love for the Beatles and the influence of Split Enz on him as well of all us New Zealanders who were lucky to grow up with their songs in the top 40, on New Zealand radio and TV throughout the 1970s. Split Enz songs like Shark Attack,  That Was My Mistake, seem from the same family tree.*

[*https://youtu.be/p8ev-GzGZN0*](https://youtu.be/p8ev-GzGZN0)

[*https://youtu.be/bVuMMdCtDxQ*](https://youtu.be/bVuMMdCtDxQ)

[*https://youtu.be/ccGz-li\_rgM*](https://youtu.be/ccGz-li_rgM)

[*https://youtu.be/51ib\_El-yh4*](https://youtu.be/51ib_El-yh4)

*//////////////*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcR3-7KQ6yg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpWec6xBIjY>

*Before I met Yuri, I was also staying up late with my little brother Andrew Johnstone, later of the ecological punk bands Avil Retards and Acid Reign, to watch Radio with Pictures. He used to play along to the tunes on this guitar, as he did to ads. What a legend. Anyway, I was especially blown away by The Bangles’ videos of ‘Hero Takes A Fall’ and ‘Going Down to Liverpool’ from their first LP All Over The Place. They looked so cool and dressed so well in their layered op shop chic. This was before, in the words of the drummer Vicki Petersen, their management made them over as “sex poodles”.*

*Get the full story here in The Bangles: Behind the Music.* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1iEqayp5yQ*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1iEqayp5yQ)

*I remember trying to curl my words like Susanna Hoffs when singing. When I bought that first LP home, I was amazed at how they managed to translate the feel of the 1867 poem Dover Beach by Matthew Arnold, which we studied in at school in Seventh Form into their own song Dover Beach. The great sadness and melancholy. How they condensed his sentiments. When we write in the band, we’re often prompted by specific poems or text from novels, we have great respect for the written word. I get quite worshipful. Cinnamon Sea was inspired by an Isaac Bashevis short story called ‘Alone’, in which he asks “Who is behind the world of appearances?” Indeed! And describes “a seagull trying to decide whether to catch a fish.”*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZsS53aPjKc>

*I think seeing them and other all girl bands like Flying Nun group Look Blue Go Purple meant I never thought twice about being a girl in a band. Besides if you had any sort of classical training, the boys I hung out with always treated you with kid gloves. I’d spent my school years at Wellington Girls College in various quartets and orchestras, so bands were just another type of music group.*

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FWMBqjxX20*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FWMBqjxX20)*.*

*At school, we played a lot of baroque music, and I’ve always thought that genre was similar to rock and pop music in the melodies and repeated sections. Also it is metronomic. Maybe this is why it often gets remixed into dance music by DJs. One beautiful piece we performed I still listen to is Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater, a setting of a 13th century hymn to Mary. It was super serious and religious, I remember those early morning practices and warming up our hands in mittens, being in awe of the refined choir singing.*

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ACgCmBubb4*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ACgCmBubb4)

*Like Yuri’s mother, mine liked Leonard Cohen too. Not really into music, The Best of Leonard Cohen was one of the only CDs she ever bought. And the only time I saw her dance was the evening after my father was cremated - to ‘So Long Marianne’. She flitted around the room like a Sugar Plum Fairy doing circlets of her favourite furniture.*

 *(He could certainly reach deep into the hearts of women.)*

*I like Leonard because he takes HIS time, which we certainly do.*

*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toEk9DaLrgs*

*Of course, we named ourselves after a line from Leonard’s Suzanne – “And she shows you where to sit among the garbage and the flowers.. People often looked perplexed when we announced our title at parties. We stuck out like a strange weed in the Wellington scene, among more boysy bands who played live with socks on their dicks and were named after body parts- like Vas Deferens.*

Here is Len looking somewhat petrified with Judy Collins, and sporting helmet hair.

*I only heard this song a few months ago after Buffy St Marie was being interviewed on Australian radio during which her cover of her friend and fellow Native American Patrick Sky’s folk standard Many A Mile was played. It was then that I first heard about how this folk troubadour’s otherwise burgeoning career was abruptly cut off by his recording of a fifth album called “Songs That Made America Famous” which his major record label refused to release due to its political as well as potentially offensive content. It was finally released on an independent label in 1973 but, as the Australian radio announcer pointed out, many of its songs would still be deemed so politically incendiary and even incorrect that they would still have trouble getting played on the radio today. Thank goodness for YouTube we can enjoy singing along to the album’s opening track, Fight for Liberation, whenever we like now and my whole family do – including my 12 year old son, Finnegan, and 10 year old daughter, Olive, who have learnt all the lyrics off by heart. The original studio version is fantastic (and the YouTube video is worth watching just for showcasing the album’s cover art alone) but the live version is even better. The tune itself is a rip-off of the American Civil War classic, Tramp, Tramp, Tramp. To me it helps point towards possible future song directions along the far left political line now that we have Red Star under our collective, hammer and sickle cowboy band belt.*[*https://youtu.be/azcHNglzJ38*](https://youtu.be/azcHNglzJ38)[*https://youtu.be/rHdgyl2lJ0k*](https://youtu.be/rHdgyl2lJ0k)

***Albert Ayler - 'Masonic Inborn (Part 1)'***

[***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8***](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8)

***'Masonic Inborn (Part 1)' feels like being swept away in music. The two basses (panned hard to left and right) move fluidly and cushion the ears while Bobby Few's piano cascades over Ayler's bagpipes. Pretty cool.***

xx Dan

Dan Lewis plays guitar and keyboards in The Garbage & the Flowers with us now. He’s a fellow Kiwi domiciled in Australia like Helen and me and has played in heaps of bands over the years, most notably Violet Crumble and Aktion Unit. He also plays a powerful brand of neurosympathetic improvised music as Rinse Dream. As well as enjoying a flourishing career in the bars and clubs of Melbourne as a DJ Extraordinaire. Free Jazz has followed us throughout the life of the band in one way or another. The night in 1991 before we went into the studio to record what would become our first single, *Catnip*, which was released on Wayne Roger’s and Kate Biggar’s Boston label Twisted Village, Helen and I put on the Ornette Coleman Double Quartet record, *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation*. I don’t know whether we really understood it or knew how to listen to it properly but we were able to use it to map out a method of recording *Catnip* the next day that accentuated the improvisatory qualities of a song that had always been noisy anyway. As it turned out, the studio where we were recording – Angry Dog – belonged to Brendon Ryniker and Stuart Porter and Stuart had been the doyen of Wellington’s avant garde jazz scene in the early to mid 1980s which was based around the Braille Records Collective and The Primitive Art Group. [(107) The Trouble With Music –1985 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtnYPDwFI0) Back in those days Braille competed for the attention of Wellington finest young militant musicians with the post punk pop scene centred around bands like Shoes This High and The And Band [(107) The And Band "We Are Right" (1981) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7sX652505c) but there was also a degree of cross-pollination between the two scenes. Helen and I were too young to be part of any of that, we just remember seeing the weird and cool looking jazz groups playing in Wellington’s vegetarian cafes of the time when we were still kids. Stuart ended up joining The Garbage & The Flowers and Helen joined his band Tongue for a while too. Later we collaborated with Stuart again in Dress as well as with another erstwhile member of the Braille Collective, Gerard Crewdson. A record by Dress is in the pipeline of being re-released at the moment on…. a plug for the Dress record here including a link to Matthias’ site.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWG2dsXV5HI

Yes, we certainly did listen to a fair chunk of free jazz on the soft couches at Yuri’s place and often wouldn’t get round to rehearsing. We were too comfortable with our snacks and vegan pies and beers. Which lead to other contingencies. The general vibe being, “As long as we know the chords I”ll just riff on them. Look, that’s what the John Coltrane guys do on My Favourite Things. Full bellies helped the analysis. And we could never hear each other on stage anyway. Just like Ayler, Coltrane’s horn in high octaves takes flight like a bird - just zooming. You feel so free. This track was a reminder it’s not just about the notes but the tone. His seemed beautiful and dark. We read that he employed “notes in uneven groups like fives and sevens in order to get them all in’, and tried similar syncopation. It isn’t until you read about these musicians’ approaches that you realise the way they improvised was really considered. A lot of technique and decisions went into sounding effortless and organic. Elvin Jones’ drumming pre-empts hip hop in holding the instruments in a morphing net of beats. Torben followed his cue.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ993nvWqjk>

Radio with Pictures showcased all the Flying Nun bands, including the prime purveyors of slowed down Byrdsian riffs, The Sneaky Feelings.

This may not seem related to free jazz but the lurching Not to Take Sides really imprinted on me that a song doesn’t have to know when it’s going to end. Like improvised music, it can be looser. It was probably accidental on the Sneakys’ part and happened to be their best take, live in studio. The lyrics are quite histrionic but that suits the erratic pace. In the YouTube photo, they are rugged up against the cold, leaning on the walls of an old swim club. The white Oamaru stone is typical of mythical Dunedin, which was our musical Jerusalem for a long while.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5neKNaRMq0>

A dream boat in song form.

Dennis Wilson effortlessly offering to the world this pearl on a B side solo single.

Marilyn Wilson and her sister Diane Rovell recording the song in Brian Wilson’s home studio.

Precious moments of imperfection scattered throughout the album, “Fallin’ in Love” devoid of such imperfections but a gem nonetheless.

x Paul.

The Garbage & the Flowers is lucky to have Paul Williams on drums. We first met Paul many years ago when he was still beating the skins in the infamous Melbourne trio, Panel of Judges, who The Garbage & the Flowers played with a couple of times in Melbourne and Sydney before we went on a short tour of New Zealand with them in 2007. I guess these days you might call Panel of Judges proto-dolewave and they certainly did influence a lot of the jangly Melbourne guitar pop bands – like The Twerps – that would follow in their wake. <https://youtu.be/tBwxkA09iO8>

[Preview YouTube video JUDY COLLINS & LEONARD COHEN - Suzanne 1976](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oL1AJdA7aI&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oL1AJdA7aI&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oL1AJdA7aI&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[JUDY COLLINS & LEONARD COHEN - Suzanne 1976](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oL1AJdA7aI&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video albert ayler - masonic inborn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[albert ayler - masonic inborn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84rcfptKrP8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video The Trouble With Music –1985](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtnYPDwFI0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtnYPDwFI0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtnYPDwFI0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[The Trouble With Music –1985](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtnYPDwFI0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video The And Band "We Are Right" (1981)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7sX652505c&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7sX652505c&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7sX652505c&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[The And Band "We Are Right" (1981)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7sX652505c&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video American Spring "Fallin' In Love"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5neKNaRMq0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5neKNaRMq0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5neKNaRMq0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[American Spring "Fallin' In Love"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5neKNaRMq0&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

[Preview YouTube video Panel Of Judges - Dream Satisfaction](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBwxkA09iO8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBwxkA09iO8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBwxkA09iO8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

**[HeHewtion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBwxkA09iO8&authuser=0" \t "_blank)**

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXTiOJpQR3I>

Probably Influencing Panel of Judges and from a slightly earlier Melbourne scene, originating in Brisbane, came Minimum Chips. One of my favourite records ever is their 1996 polycarbonate EP ‘Blip,’ here represented by ‘Out of Touch’. It seems to pickle the essence of nostalgia so sweetly, gently. In 1997, TGATF were in Sydney for the What Is Music Festival and so was Ian Wadley of the band, and he guided us through densely packed terrace houses to where he was staying in Chippendale to give us a copy. It was the icing on the cake after days of rolling sun. I keep it near me, in my bedroom.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1khvQRvmcVQ&t=3s>

I can’t mention Ian Wadley without telling you about the 1998 Side Projects EP by Small World Experience. Ian on drums, singer/guitarist Pat Ridgwell and Julian Patterson on bass lay down the dense carpet of sound, chronicle messy flats, sexual frustration, incestuous scenes.… “I love you, so let’s form a band” sings Pat on the eponymous 3rd track. “Think of me, if you’re free, can I have some effects.” It’s a song for anyone who’s ever fallen in love, within their band, requited or unrequited.” I mean, how else do you meet people? Every song is like a short story, the lyrics are impeccable.

Caroline No.

Johnny. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElKUQNpSqmo>

2023 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPhf600oxMw

Another master of the pop song genre, I had the privilege of playing keyboards

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoYzpM3rQIk>

Melbourne’s Ben Wright Smith was our producer on Cinnamon Sea and also plays guitar with us. He’s also a substantial songwriter and this one of our favourites.