



MICK GREEN – GNR/VCLS
JOHNNY SPENCE – BASS/
LEAD VCLS.
FRANK FARLEY – DRUMS/VCLS.

joined onstage by Feelgooders' Lee Brilleaux and Wilko Johnson (who kept on jabbering, "I've waited fifteen years for this moment"). The Pirates were off in a corner talking shop with former A&M chief and Warner Brothers' talent-broker Larry Yaskiel. By the time last orders were called, The Pirates agreed Yaskiel's offer was too good to pass up.

FOR BOTH parties concerned, it was something of a re-entry into the deep-end of a game. The Pirates hadn't seriously contemplated accepting any further engagements after that night while, having just returned from an 18-months sabbatical in Israel, Yaskiel was searching for just the right act with which to launch 77 – his new independent record production company.

Yaskiel's wasn't the only offer, but The Pirates took into consideration his ability to nurture both emergent and underestimated talents – like Leo Sayer, Peter Frampton and ELO – which, before his departure had earned him a reputation as one of Europe's premier record men and accounted for over 55 million records sold in North America alone.

THE PIRATES were caught right off-guard by the sudden upsurge of interest in their Second Coming. They undertook those first few crucial gigs

with a makeshift programme; numbers they could blow on without rehearsal.

But events overtook them so rapidly that, without coming off the road to replan their strategy, they amended their original set as best they could. With their backs against the wall and their reputation on the line, not only did they refurbish their repertoire but began writing their own material. They didn't have time to stop and take stock of the situation they had suddenly been catapulted into and it was this sense of urgency that helped them sustain the momentum.

Having prepared themselves to die the proverbial death, they were not, as they had anticipated, being supported by first generation necro-teds, but 18-year old spike-heads.

Sure, The Pirates had to graft to keep abreast of themselves, but starting all over again from scratch wasn't as difficult as they had first envisaged. In fact, it proved to be something of an asset.

"We're not interested in how the Pirates sounded ten years ago," Green confided to me after one gig. "We're only interested in what's happening right now. You see, we owe it to ourselves to try and so something constructive as The Pirates."

"Sure," says Spence, "we play a few songs we played in the old days, but we perform them as we all feel they should sound today, and it's because of this approach that we're drawing such a very young audience."

"The kids come along expecting nothing," argues Green, "and as far as

they're concerned those numbers sound brand new to them. If they didn't, they wouldn't want to know."

IT'S ONLY a matter of time before the Feelgoods connection is brought up in any conversation. It's absolutely no secret that Wilko Johnson modelled himself lock, stock and Telcaster on Mick Green and, as it transpires, it was Wilko who continually pestered Green to seriously consider a permanent Pirates reformation.

It is Green's unsolicited opinion that The Pirates owe as much to the Feelgoods as the Feelgoods are indebted to The Pirates.

"The first time I ever heard the Feelgoods on the radio", admits Green, "I really thought it was us. Fine, so the Feelgoods made it by using many of the things that The Pirates developed – as far as we're concerned, that's great and shows how valid our approach has always been."

"When we first went to Hamburg with Kidd," growls Farley, "we were just what people used to call, a *typical beat group* – and then we heard all these Scouse bands playing all these fabulous songs which we'd never heard before... 'Casting My Spell' and 'A Shot Of Rhythm & Blues' were just a couple of 'em. When we came back to this country we were a different band entirely."

"In fact," he recalls, "our own 15-minute set, which we used to play before Kidd came on stage, was always far more R&B slanted than his part of the show."

Spence corroborates this statement. Johnny Spence may have become The Pirates vocalist by default, but as the four originals on their already-completed-soon-to-be-released-but-I'm-not-sure-on-which-label album substantiates, the man has improved beyond all recognition.

Comprising seven songs recorded one Saturday evening "live" at the Nashville and another seven cut in just three days down at Rockfield, this Vick Maile-produced debut illustrates the style and confidence which now graces the band's vocals.

Cuting an album on the run in just four days has had the desired effect, for this is how The Pirates should be enjoyed: no-holds-barred – reaching a zenith on such originals as "Gibson Martin and Fender" the manic "Don't Munchen It" and the insidious throb "You Don't Own Me," which they co-wrote with Quo's Alan Lancaster.

Crafting material that can accurately showcase The Pirates' instrumental prowess has come quite natural, and to their collective credit, they haven't taken the easy way out. Fourteen tracks on one album substantiates that they haven't become complacent and cut Mick Green loose for endless guitar solos. As it happens, guitar breaks are kept to no more than a chorus or two, and because of this kind of discipline, The Pirates generate optimum energy.