

# UNEASY LISTENING

PICTURE: CHRIS HUGHES

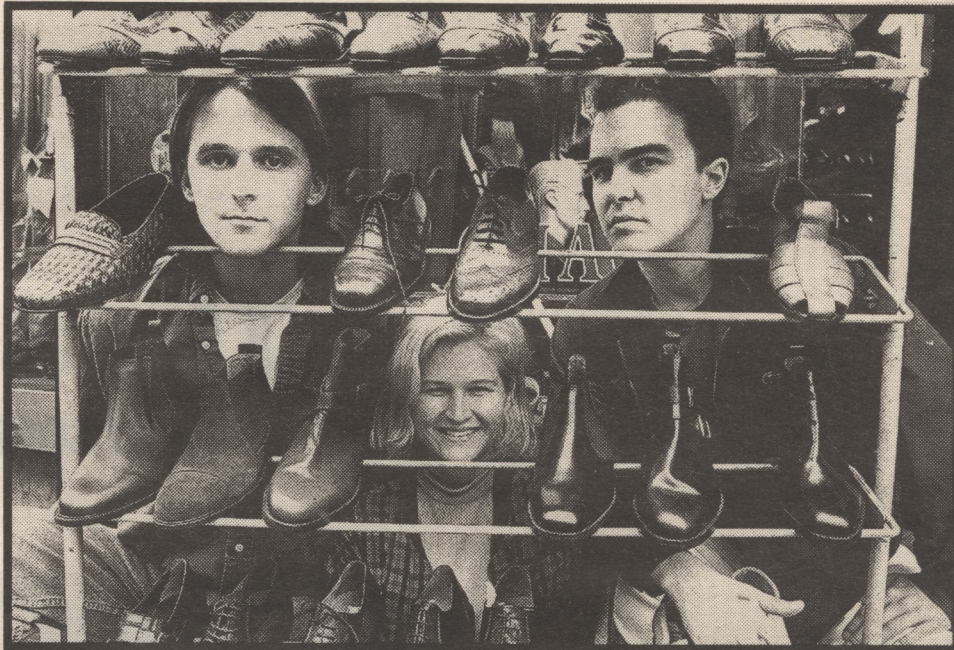
"Since I've been here, I've been offered ten cups of tea! That's in *one day*!" Mark Robinson, singer/guitarist/smiler in the twitching pop beast that is **UNREST**, is a puzzled man. And so he should be: it takes him ten years to get his band over to Britain, and then he comes face-to-face with our 'quaint' old customs.

"That's nothing," snorts drumming companion Phil Krauth, "I've HAD ten cups of tea..."

Bands come, bands go. Fifteen milliseconds of fame, anyone? A few, however, manage to lounge around doing their own thang away from the record-buying eye until they either choose to make their presence felt or fate decides to stick its nose in. Take Mercury Rev's apathetic ticklings, or Pavement's genteel cravings, and then add Washington DC's Unrest to the listless list. They've a long story to tell, and Mark has the highlights...

"Me and Phil played in High School together, then I saved up my money and put out a seven-inch and an LP, and then someone at Caroline Records was interested so we kinda went through a reformation. Oh, and we had this guy called Dave who was playing bass and then he got married and quit I guess, like, two years ago. Then we got Bridget."

Says it all, right? Four albums into Unrest's career, Bridget Cross is telling tales about a woman who had her intestines sucked out of her backside by a violent aeroplane toilet, and Mark's very own Teen Beat label (home for anything from "avant garde rockabilly to a Herb Alpert



**The Unrest is yet to come (l to r): Phil, Bridget and Mark**

kinda band"), is hitting these shores via a one-off LP distribution deal with Guernica Records (set up by Ivo at 4AD).

'Imperial frrr' is the album, natural simplicity is the key. Unrest practise strange music, a mix of the acoustically jaunty ('Suki'), the sonically bonkers ('Firecracker') and the majestically comatose ('Imperial'). Mark puts such eclecticism down to "a very evolving process", says that his favourite colour is "bottle green", and mumbles something about a clutch of American bands being united by a "laissez-faire" attitude.

This is the American underground in full effect, where the likes of Mark and Superchunk fund their own vinyl releases in a country where CDs rule the industry. Oh, and you can sing about sex and not

sound like Whitesnake. So, tell me Mark, what are you trying to say in 'Cherry Cream On' with lines like "Cherry, Cherry, Cherry suck on/I just want to see your insides"?

"Oh, erm, that's from my little personal world of lyric writing," the singer stumbles. "I guess... well, you're not supposed to read the lyrics. Then

again, I guess we *did* print them on the sleeve..."

"It's more of a singalong kind of thing," decides Phil.

"Everyone I know says that they can't *not* sing along to 'Cherry Cream On'. It's like a schoolbus cheer!"

Naturally. No Unrest for the wicked.

**Simon Williams**

## TURN ONS

- |    |                         |   |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 1  | METAL MICKEY            | Suede (Nude)                                |
| 2  | GOODYBYE                | The Sundays (Geffen)                        |
| 3  | ROCKING THE FOREST (LP) | Sebadoh (Roughneck)                         |
| 4  | THIS IS NOT A SONG      | The Frank & Walters (Setanta)               |
| 5  | TAM ONE                 | Smashing Pumpkins (Hut)                     |
| 6  | COPPER BLUE (LP)        | Sugar (Creation)                            |
| 7  | CREEP                   | Radiohead (EMI)                             |
| 8  | WHEN IN HEAVEN          | Kitchens Of Distinction (One Little Indian) |
| 9  | IMPERIAL frrr (LP)      | Unrest (Guernica)                           |
| 10 | OOMALAMA (LP)           | Eugenius (Paperhouse)                       |

What's going On the NME stereo