

TALKING

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BYRNE BY H. B. STILLANO

Q: Why hasn't the band played Florida before?

A: We asked ourselves that. When we first wanted to go to Florida, there were no clubs that wanted us. Then we weren't big enough to play bigger places.

Q: Tell me about your new material.

A: We are doing a little bit of new material on the tour. It still has a lot of rhythm, but less instrumentation. We are down from a nine-piece to an eight-piece. (Guitarist Andrian Belew departed for King Crimson.)

Q: How did the decision to expand the band from the basic four come about?

A: I can't remember how it came about. Jerry (Harrison) had a lot to do with it, finding the people. We had no idea originally how long it would last. We were only going to do it at Heatwave (the punk Woodstock in Canada, Aug. 1980) and at the show in Central Park. "We'll see how that goes," we said. Then we were pleased with it.

Q: And the next album will continue in that vein.

A: More or less. The album is maybe two-thirds recorded. We've been working on it on and off. We recorded before our Japanese tour. We have to add some vocals and added touches and do mixing. It should be released in January.

Q: Do you have a title?

A: No, there has been no decision.

Q: Are you writing songs on the tour?

A: I haven't been able to write songs while touring. But I make notes and take down ideas for instrumentation.

Q: The University of Miami date (Sept. 22) is the end of the tour...

A: We can't continue playing with Tina pregnant. The baby is due in late November.

Q: How did you get involved with "The Catherine Wheel?"

A: They called me up and asked me if I wanted to do it. I went to a couple of rehearsals when they had a rough version. It turned out to be a collaboration with Twyla Tharp. I just read in the paper it is going to be on "Dance in America" (PBS television).

Q: What records are you listening to?

A: I'll look at what cassettes I have here. (pause)

HEADS

African pop. King Sunny Ade and His African Beats; that is guitar pop. Some Prince. Some McGarrigle Sisters. That's very good. It is in French.

Q: Have you heard any music from Florida?

A: The last ones I knew were George McCrae and TK records in the early '70s.

Q: How was the live album ("The Name of This Band Is Talking Heads") put together?

A: We decided pretty much to do that one from the beginning, a mish mash of early and later songs.

Q: What happened to "1 2 3 Red Light?" (The original, three-piece band used to perform the 1910 Fruitgum Co. bubblegum classic in live shows, and it has turned up on bootlegs.)

A: We couldn't find a good tape of it. All we had was a cassette.

Q: You used to play on the same bill as Blondie at CBGB. Do you follow what they are doing?

A: Yes. At the time (1976-77) people saw more similarities between the groups than there really were. Blondie wanted to be a hip pop group making AM records. They got what they wanted.

Q: Does it bother you that Talking Heads were classified as "punk" or "new wave" - and still are, by some people?

A: I hope we are getting out of that. We never felt we were in those categories. It took some time for people to see us beyond the categories.

Q: After your work with the B-52s, do you have plans to do more outside production?

A: It is now tied up in the business end, but I will probably produce a British group that is not well known over here. There is no contract yet.

Q: So you won't name them?

A: Not yet.



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