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SCOTS
ROCK
THE
WORLD



**REDFORD ON
THE RANGE**



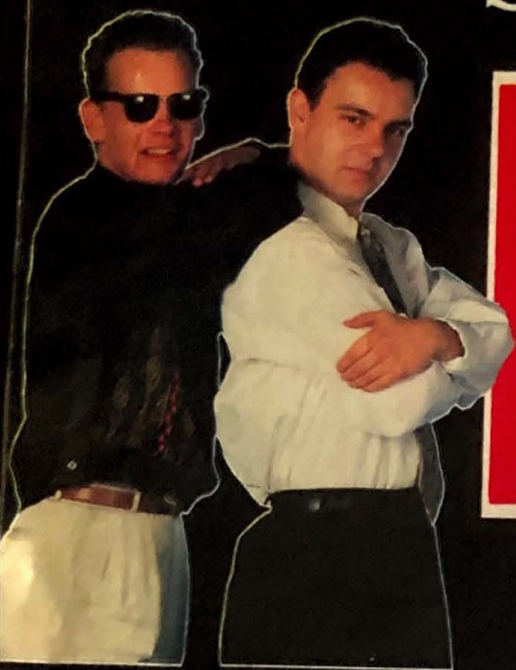
**JR's WIFE
- FASHION
SPECIAL**

Pop Special

SCOTS BANDS WHO

ROCK

THE WORLD!



NEIL TROTTER talks to the
"stay-at-home" Scots
who are spinning their way
to fame and fortune.

IT started as just another day for Justin Currie ... turning hamburgers as a short-order chef in Glasgow's Spaghetti Factory.

He wasn't to know it, but that day was to change his life...

For someone walked in off the street and told him Lloyd Cole's band had just signed with a record company for £80,000.

Justin, lead singer with Del Amitri, the latest Scots band to make it big in the charts, says: "They had been our contemporaries in the city. I just thought 'Great! If they can get a record deal, anyone can.'"

It was the spur he needed, for Del Amitri already had one disappointing record deal behind them. Their record company Chrysalis had dumped them into obscurity and poverty in 1986.

Justin, the son of a classical musician, went back to his song writing and ever since the hit single "Nothing Ever Happens" he's never looked back.

Now more and more Scots bands are finding fame and fortune as London record men flock north to sign up our groups.

It's like Liverpool in the Sixties, says Bruce Findlay, manager of megastars



● The best of Scots — Opposite page. Hue and Cry (top) and Runrig (bottom). This page. The Spaghetti Factory (top) where Justin Currie used to work. Del Amitri (middle) and Goodbye Mr Mackenzie.

Simple Minds. After the success of the Beatles then, record executives rushed to the city to sign up anyone who even looked like the Fab Four.

"It's uncanny how many bands are good and deserve to be signed," he says. "It's just one of those periods of time that certain areas of the world go through ... it could be the West Coast of America, it could be New York, it could be Liverpool."

He warns: "There's an element of trendiness about it. If it moves and it's Scottish, sign it. Give them £100,000 and make a record."

But all Scots groups — from international stars like Wet Wet Wet, Deacon Blue and Hue and Cry to newer names like Texas and Gun — are following in the tracks of Simple Minds.

It was their astonishing worldwide success — and their determination to stay in Scotland — which put us on the music map.

In 1977 as punk group Johnny and the Self-Abusers, they released their first single "Saints and Sinners". But they split up the day it came out and reformed with a new name and a new record company. Nine albums later they're still at the top.

Bruce Findlay says: "Simple Minds have not only been Scotland's biggest band in the last 10 years but the single biggest influence.

"I'd like to think our influence has been that we did it from here. We did it, therefore you can do it."

Tricia Reid, of His Latest Flame, gladly acknowledges her debt to the band. She says: "A lot of things to do with bands are to do with role models. People say, 'Oh look, there's Jim Kerr. He's from Torglen, I can do that too.'"

"I think that spurred a lot of people on and from there it snowballed. That's important in terms of people getting bands together, thinking 'I can be successful at this'."

But Tricia is wary of jumping on the Scots bandwagon. "I'd hate to get into the idea that Glaswegians have got something in their water that makes them better song writers. I don't think that can possibly be true.

"A lot of it has to do with tradition. There are something like 5,000 chess grand masters in the Soviet Union — that's not because they're cleverer than everybody else, it's because they ▶



ROCK

● The Proclaimers (left). Gun (above) and Wet Wet Wet (below).

play chess more than everybody else."

Simple Minds were also the force behind the infrastructure of studios, managers and media that meant Scots bands didn't have to hike south.

In four short years Deacon Blue, Wet Wet Wet and Hue and Cry have gone from playing tiny dives to international success.

Yet they, too, are committed to staying in Scotland. All three have Scottish management, use Scottish studios and road crew and employ a pool of expertise which helps young bands coming through.

Gun and Slide, who were in short trousers when Jim Kerr was experimenting with safety pins, released their first albums last year. They, too, have benefited from the network of music connections which now exists in Scotland. And with brothers and sisters involved behind the scenes, rock music here really is one big happy family.

That infrastructure is the reason why so many young bands come to the attention of London based record companies, according to Ronnie Gurr.

Gurr, Virgin's man here, says: "The great thing about Scotland is there is a self-contained scene. Every town in the country has a local radio station. There's TV, newspapers and our own music press with magazines like 'Cut', and there's 'Tennents Live News'.

"If you've got a demo tape which is halfway good you can find the people to generate interest within Scotland."

He points to recently defunct Dundee band Danny Wilson as a good example of how the Scottish scene succeeds.

"Danny Wilson went to London and didn't have any success. They were there five years and nobody was interested.

"They came back and did a gig in Dundee and everybody wanted to hear their demo. 'Mary's Prayer' was on their first demo and that's a smash. ►

