

By MICK WILLIAMS

Scotch on the rock!

Home-grown talent hits the big time

IT ALL began with the bubbly pop of the tartan-clad Bay City Rollers and now rock fans all over the world are acquiring a taste for Scotch.

Scottish bands are producing smooth and sophisticated sounds to slake the thirst of the record-buying public — and the fans love it.

Never before have so many Scots performers enjoyed so much chart success as they have over the past few years.

"It is difficult to figure out why," admits top DJ Dougie Campbell. "Why is any band successful? But there is no question that we have a lot of talent here."

The BBC Radio Scotland presenter says success has helped to breed success in the sense that the breakthrough a few years ago of groups like Wet Wet Wet, Deacon Blue and Hue and Cry has encouraged record companies to look north of the Border for more talent.

He predicts the next group to hit the big time will be Said Florence, the Bellshill-based outfit which recently signed a record deal. "That is really good news for Scotland. I have heard some of their demos and they sound very sharp."

Other bands maintaining Scotland's high profile on the music scene include current UK singles chart stormers Del Amitri, The Shamen and Wet Wet Wet.

Del Amitri are on the verge of joining several other Scots

outfits in the elite league of international superstardom.

Hit singles like Nothing Ever Happens and Kiss This Thing Goodbye have been followed more recently by Always the Last to Know and Be My Downfall. The group's latest album, Change Everything, soared into the chart at No 2 when it was released in June.

Lead singer Justin Currie has firmly established himself and the band recently returned

from a promotional visit to the States to embark on a sell-out British tour culminating in two gigs at Barrowlands in his home city of Glasgow.

Although 28-year-old Justin is proud of his heritage, he spurns the stridently nationalist image of some bands like Deacon Blue and Hue and Cry. "I feel more British than Scottish," he says.

WIN DEL AMITRI'S HIT ALBUM

DEL AMITRI are taking the world of rock by storm. Listen to their latest hit album, Change Everything, and you'll soon find out why. Now readers of the Scottish Daily Express can get the album free! Courtesy of the band's record company A & M, we have 10 copies — six CDs and four cassettes — to give away in this contest.

To enter, all you have to do is complete the following two Del Amitri song titles: Always the Last to... Spit in the...

Send entries, including name and address and stating preference of CD or cassette, by Friday August 14, to: Del Amitri Contest, Scottish Daily Express, Park House, Park Circus Place, Glasgow G3 6AF. Usual Express rules apply.

"I'm not criticising other singers for writing political songs but I'd rather write rainy, depressing ballads."

Meanwhile Wet Wet Wet go from strength to strength. Their latest single Lip Service is riding high in the charts. The Shamen too have survived the tragic death of original bass man Will Sinnot to emerge as real chart contenders with their controversial single Love, Sex, Intelligence.

Arguably the most popular Scottish group of all time is Simple Minds and others enjoying considerable success are Deacon Blue and Texas, fronted by sex bomb Sharleen Spiteri.

Their debut album Southside, featuring their best-known hit I Don't Want a Lover, is a platinum seller.

But the biggest Scots star of all must be Aberdeen-born Annie Lennox who achieved stardom as one half of the Eurythmics and is now pursuing a solo career, helped by her current album Diva.



SCALING THE HEIGHTS: Justin Currie of Del Amitri