

Talent

JONES KEEPS UP 'New Song' Singer Surprises By Performing Without Band

By ETHLIE ANN VARE

LOS ANGELES—The most unusual thing about Howard Jones, whose Elektra single "New Song" climbs to number 27 this week, is that he performs without a band, even in large venues.

"Working alone was scary at first," says Jones, "especially when people don't know who you are or how you're doing what you're doing. Now people know what I'm about, so it's gotten easier."

In concert, Jones wears a radio-controlled headset mike and is surrounded by a system which took him three years to design. It consists of

two Drumulators, a Series SDX-6 polysequencer, a Jupiter 8, a Juno 16, a Prophet T8 and an Oberheim DX7.

The only other person on stage when Jones performs is Jed Hoile, a mime, who comes on for four or five songs per set. Hoile's involvement developed naturally: He used to attend all of Jones' gigs and do his routines right in the audience. Now, he's an integral part of both the show and the videos.

At 29, Jones is a veteran songwriter but a neophyte performer. He plans to tour the U.S. at the end of April, increasing his rapport with fans of his album "Human's Lib" and

single "New Song," which is climbing the charts with its positive message and hummable hook.

"I wanted to start with a song that was catchy, that takes two minutes to get into your head," says Jones, a quirky figure in multi-colored hair and harlequin suspenders.

While Jones is only now breaking in the U.S., he's already a big name in Britain. He placed two singles in the top five there before ever releasing an album, and when the "Human's Lib" album did come out in the U.K., it debuted at No. 1.

Jones has an unconventional way of staying in touch with his audience.

He lists an address on the back of every single where record-buyers can send away for a free copy of Risk, his personal magazine.

"It started out as a sheet we'd give away at gigs," explains Jones, "just to tell people where I was playing next and what's happening. Then we started putting a few pictures in. Now it's gotten to be 24 pages. To me, it's very important to keep in contact with the people who like you."

That attitude, and the rest of Jones' "go ahead, have a go" musical philosophy, have caused him to be described as a "one-man mental health movement." Jones is a little leery of that label.

"Personal growth or personal change isn't necessarily something that's boring or a drag," he says. "It can be stimulating and fun. I'm just asking people to open their eyes and decide for themselves."

Wang Chung Aims For New 'Architectural Harmony'

By MARY ANNA FECZO

NEW YORK—Jack Hues of Wang Chung has mixed feelings about Geffen Records' choice of "Don't Let Go" as the first single from the group's debut album "Points On A Curve." Hues agrees that the song is probably the most commercial cut on the album, but he says it reveals little of the group's musical sophistication.

Guitarist and lead vocalist Hues, who is teamed with bassist Nick Feldman and drummer Darren Costin in the three-year-old English trio whose Chinese appellation means "perfect pitch," holds views about harmonic progressions that are as high-minded as the band's name. In fact, Hues would like to see a "branching out away from the traditional harmonies of jazz and rock, into a whole new area of architectural harmony."

Hues, who studied composition at the Royal College of Music, and is the group's only classically trained musician, cites as major inspirations Schoenberg, Stravinsky and especially Berg: "They were working in a worn-out medium and had to put things in a new way." Both Feldman and Costin bring ideas in a fragmented form to Hues, who says his aim is "to balance the whole thing."

Basically happy with the tracks on "Points On A Curve," Hues takes in stride the fact that the English press did not receive the album kindly. "England is more intellectual about what she stands for socially, and therefore the critical approach that the English take is anti-musical," he says. But he has praise for the "public sorting it out for themselves and buying the record. I like to think that rock is growing up a bit, instead of recycling."

Wang Chung, which hasn't toured in more than a year, is set for a series of concert dates through the West and Southwest and also in Canada, opening for the Romantics. The tour begins in Dallas on April 3.

New On The Charts

MR. MISTER

Mr. Mister made a double debut recently, with their RCA single "Hunter Of The Night" jumping on both the Hot 100 and MTV's rotation. Clean-cut in appearance, the group specializes in a fairly rugged brand of rock'n'roll with haunting undertones.

Nucleus of this quartet is vocalist/bassist Richard Page and keyboardist Steve George, who go back 18 years to their school days in Phoenix. After relocating to Los Angeles, the two released three albums under the name Pages. A few years as studio musicians followed, during which they backed artists ranging from Molly Hatchet to James Ingram, wrote songs for Donna Summer and Al Jarreau and made a Budweiser commercial.

When George and Page formed Mr. Mister in mid-1983, drummer Pat Mastelotta and guitarist Steve Farris joined. Men At Work's producer Peter McIan reportedly offered to produce the group with or without a label deal. RCA was quick to capitalize on McIan's enthusiasm, and

the result can be heard on Mr. Mister's album "I Wear The Face."

The quartet will be appearing next month on tv's "Thicke Of The Night," "Solid Gold" and "American Bandstand." Already lined up are West Coast dates with Berlin.

The group plans to release a second album in late summer, with a national tour to follow in October.

The group is managed by George Ghiz, (213) 874-4261.

PINKARD & BOWDEN

Time was when song parodies were staples of country music, thanks to the comic wizardry of Homer & Jethro, Ben Colder (Sheb Wooley), Don Bowman and other lyrical zanies. Well, it may be that time again.

Sandy Pinkard and Richard Bowden are now doing their best to regenerate that spirit of jolly irreverence through their "Adventures In Parodies" collection of musical japeries. "Adventures" stands at 77 on this week's country singles chart.

Prior to his incarnation as a comic, Pinkard was best known as the writer or co-writer of such country hits as "Coca Cola Cowboy," "Pecos Promenade" and "You're The Reason God Made Oklahoma." Bowden made his name chiefly as a guitarist for Linda Ronstadt, Roger McGuinn, Dan Fogelberg and Blue Steel. The two began to focus their comic visions after they came to Nashville (separately) to write for Jim Ed Norman's publishing company. Norman produced the Warner Bros. "Writers In Disguise" album, from which "Adventures In Parodies" is excerpted.

The duo is managed by the Woody Bowles Co., (615) 754-2044.

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AMUSEMENT
BUSINESS

Survey for Week Ending 3/31/84

Boxscore

The following are among the top concert grosses nationwide reported through the survey week. Included are act(s), gross, attendance, capacity of facility, ticket prices, promoter, facility, city, number of shows, number of sellouts and dates(s).

Among the top concert grosses through March 20.

- LUTHER VANDROSS, DEBARGE, DEELE—\$209,444, 15,286 (19,113), \$14 & \$12, Dimensions Unlimited, Capitol Center, Landover, Md., March 17.
- DURAN DURAN—\$193,782, 13,000, \$15 & \$12.50, Cross Country Concerts, Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center, sellout, March 13.
- OZZY OSBOURNE, MOTLEY CRUE—\$191,946, 13,919, \$14.30, \$13.20 & \$12.10, Feyline Presents, McNichols Arena, Denver, sellout, March 12.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$181,617, 12,415 (17,017), \$15 & \$12.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Omni, Atlanta, March 3.
- ALABAMA—\$160,000, 12,800, \$12.50, Keith Fowler Promotions/Salem Spirit Concert Series, Cumberland County Coliseum, Fayetteville, N.C., two sellouts, March 14-15.
- BILLY IDOL, GUN CLUB—\$159,825, 13,569, \$13.50, Avalon Attractions, Long Beach (Calif.) Arena, sellout, March 19.
- YES—\$155,865, 12,670 (13,882), \$12.50 & \$11.50, Contemporary Productions, Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Mo., March 12.
- ALABAMA—\$154,762, 12,381, \$12.50, Keith Fowler Promotions/Salem Spirit Concert Series, Carolina Coliseum, Columbia, S.C., sellout, March 16.
- DURAN DURAN, PRINCE CHARLES AND THE CITY BEAT BAND—\$137,166, 10,248 (14,115), \$13.50, \$11.50, Electric Factory Concerts, Spectrum, Philadelphia, March 18.
- OZZY OSBOURNE, MOTLEY CRUE—\$137,500, 11,000, \$12.50, Schon Productions, Omaha (Neb.) Civic Auditorium, sellout, March 10.
- OZZY OSBOURNE, MOTLEY CRUE—\$121,405, 10,557, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Feyline Presents, Tingley Coliseum, Albuquerque, N.M., sellout, March 13.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$114,685, 8,574 (10,596), \$13.50 & \$10, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Orange County Civic Center, Orlando, Fla., March 11.
- LUTHER VANDROSS, DEBARGE, DEELE—\$113,600, 9,543 (12,352), \$12 & \$10.50 C.P.I. Entertainment, Carolina Coliseum, Columbia, S.C., March 18.
- ALABAMA—\$104,364, 8,028, \$13, Keith Fowler Promotions/Salem Spirit Concert Series, Civic Center, Savannah, Ga., sellout, March 17.
- BILLY IDOL, CHEQUERED PAST—\$103,062, 8,500 (8,750), \$12.75 & \$11.50, Fahn & Silva Presents, Del Mar (Calif.) Fairgrounds, March 15.
- ALABAMA—\$101,987, 8,159, \$12.50, Keith Fowler Promotions/Salem Spirit Concert Series, Augusta (Ga.) Civic Center, sellout, March 13.
- BILLY IDOL, DEZ DICKERSON—\$101,916, 8,800, \$13.50 & \$12, Avalon Attractions, The Hollywood Palladium, two sellouts, March 17-18.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$99,356, 6,925 (11,063), \$13.50 & \$11.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Sun Dome, Tampa, Fla., March 10.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$94,752, 6,657 (18,724), \$12.50 & \$11.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Rupp Arena, Lexington, Ky., March 4.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$94,666, 7,049 (11,834), \$12.50 & \$10.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Charlotte (N.C.) Coliseum, March 5.
- ALABAMA—\$90,250, 7,220, \$12.50, Keith Fowler Promotions/Salem Spirit Concert Series, Civic Center, Montgomery, Ala., March 18.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$88,316, 7,301 (12,352), \$12.50 & \$10.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Carolina Coliseum, Columbia, S.C., March 7.
- .38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$83,454, 6,710 (9,626), \$12.50 & \$11.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Omni, Atlanta, March 8.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$81,062, 6,528 (10,276), \$12.50 & \$11.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Jacksonville (Fla.) Coliseum, March 9.
- WILLIE NELSON—\$74,661, 5,975 (11,766), \$12.50 & \$10.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Univ. of Tenn.-Chattanooga Arena, March 6.
- CONWAY TWITTY, RONNIE MCDOWELL—\$74,310, 7,431, \$10, Jayson Promotions, Columbus (Oh.) Veterans Memorial Auditorium, two sellouts, March 17.
- TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SHANKER GROUP—\$70,998, 5,200 (6,400), \$15 & \$13.50, Bill Graham Presents, San Jose (Calif.) Civic Center, two shows, March 18-19.
- TOM JONES, GEORGE WALLACE—\$70,311, 4,424, \$20, \$17.50, \$16, \$14 & \$12, Sound Seventy Productions, Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, sellout, March 13.
- BARBARA MANDRELL, LEE GREENWOOD—\$69,204, 5,991 (12,200), \$12.50 & \$10.50, Varnell Enterprises, Baltimore (Md.) Civic Center, March 18.
- JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP, DAN ROSS & THE BRUNETTES—\$68,389, 5,982, \$12, \$11 & \$10, In-house/Jam Productions, Elliott Hall of Music (Purdue Univ.), W. Lafayette, Ind., sellout, March 17.
- TOM JONES—\$63,130, 4,211 (10,584), \$15 & \$12.50, Concert Promotions/Southern Promotions, Albany (Ga.) Civic Center, March 5.
- JUDAS PRIEST, GREAT WHITE—\$55,721, 5,300 (6,000), \$11.50 & \$10.50, Cross Country Concerts, Springfield (Mass.) Civic Center, March 18.
- CONWAY TWITTY, RONNIE MCDOWELL—\$53,850, 5,385 (5,862), \$10, Jayson Promotions, Cincinnati Gardens, March 16.
- JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP, DAN ROSS & THE BRUNETTES—\$53,422, 4,424, \$13.50, \$12.50 & \$10.50, Sound Seventy Productions, Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, sellout, March 11.
- TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SHANKER GROUP—\$52,942, 3,959, \$13.50 & \$12.50, Bill Graham Presents, Sacramento Memorial Auditorium, sellout, March 17.

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