drummer started testing his bass drum.

screamed "F-ING SHUT UP!" Total

silence. Everybody looked away in, I

on to his chest, rolls his eyes at me

year old refusing to eat his brussel

"Because they're mad."

me and nods demonically.

and . . . pauses. With the evil petulance

Pardon? Dave makes boggly eyes at

"Rationality and art are mutually

seem to be bound by the strings of

exclusive to some extent. Tracy doesn't

rationality. Not a loony as in she's daft or

mad, she's very intelligent but at the end

of the day she's just off in her own world.

Of all the bands I've worked with they

Originally Tracy wanted to call the

band the Fashion Don'ts. Balfe barfed.

Then she wanted to call the band Dear

'Which is brilliant! When I think of that

band I think of dominant women. When I

John. Not on my label you don't, said

Dave. Then she came up with VOTB.

dominated society. I mean those two

Slooooooooog! Pang! It makes you

discover that Dave left Dalek I Love You

He then joined the strange but brilliant

in December 1977 after deciding (two

years too early) "that punk was dead".

Big In Japan (probably the only good

band to come out of Liverpool since The

think of bees I think of a female

women are just like bees, full of

adrenalin, running around going

Gooooooooooooork! Blit!

By consulting Pete Frame you

bleeeeeeeeegh!

The trendy bastard.

think of bees. Doesn't it?

are the ones I have least control

of a scabby-kneed hyperactive seven-

smiled, nicely.

sprouts he says

Mike leapt to his feet, balled his fists and

swear it, real fear. Micheal sat down and

hy are Voice Of The Beehive

the best pop group in the

world? David sinks his chin

JESUS JONES. Mad Manc yup or McLaren-style **Svengali-Baba? STEVEN WELLS** exposes the dark and secret source of his strange power. TIM JARVIS captures

his foul image for posterity.

atan slicks back a quiff oiled with baby seal fat. He wipes blood off his blue suede shoes with a cloth made from the skin of an A&R man who has recently been rewarded for his sins by being reincarnated as a higher life form, a slug.

Satan presses buttons on the infernal Rock'n'Roll telephone. It is time to check up on his earthly operatives, the mortals whose mission it is to inject pop-infected semen into the arteries of the common mind. Up on the surface of the planet, in the Rock 'n' Roll quarter of London, England, a phone is picked up.

"Hello, Dave Balfe speaking. . ."

ave Balfe Management it says on the door, right next to Food Records. It's a throbbing beehive of pop activity. Phones ring, computers bleep and the fax vomits. Press officer Andy Ross, a wideboy whose dress-sense owes much to the fat Lancastrian comedian from Hi-de-hi, begs us to sit down while he sees if his boss "is finished with his meeting yet". We've just come back from the pub, me, Andy and Tim Jarvis. We played the quiz machine. Andy was crap on all the questions about sport and science.

Then the machine asked "WHO IS YOUR LORD AND MASTER?

- a) Jesus Christ?
- b) Mrs Thatcher?

c) Beelzebub?" Andy's eyes rolled back to reveal horrible whites resembling salmonellainfected pickled eggs, blood poured from wounds in his hands, feet and from

his side. He started to vomit frogs We were thrown out of the pub. Andy goes into David Balfe's office to see if his 'boss' has "finished his very important call yet". "You can go in now," says Andy. There is spittle dribbling from the corner of his mouth.

Dave Balfe was once a Wolfie Smith type leftie-punk playing bass with Liverpool punk rockers Radio Blank who became the slightly better known Dalek I Love You. Standing in front of a Pete 'King of the Trainspotters' Frame family tree of 'The Liverpool Bands' Dave informs us that he is "no Paul Newman". We chuckle. He asks if he can look over the photos before they are published. We hoot.

At first Dave trys to convince us that he is Malcolm McLaren.

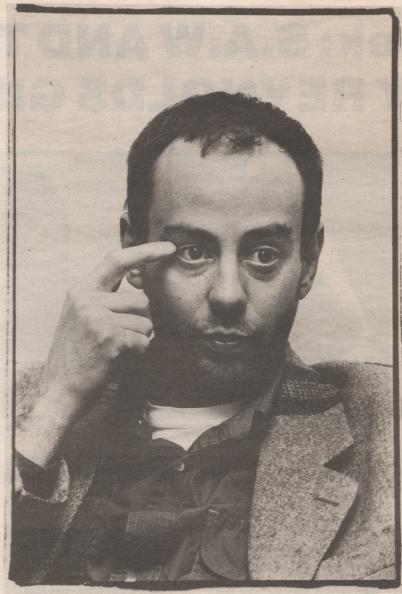
"When I was 18 I stole a drum machine, no, make that a synthesiser, I stole a synthesiser in a smash and grab raid..." Which is absolute bollocks. Dave looks cunning but he also looks as if his crim activities were strictly limited to the usual naughty drugs as a youth and maybe a bit of present-day chart fixing. He is not a borstal boy Rock'n'Roll outlaw and I seriously doubt whether his daddy was a bankrobber.

Look, I tell him, this 'Svengali' bit is old hat. Why don't you pretend to be the

Devil? "OK," says Dave.

he reason I'm really here is that ninety per cent of pop is, and always has been shit. Sometimes a band comes along that simply stuns.

Two such bands are Voice Of The Beehive and Jesus Jones.



Balfe displays his eye for an act

Beatles) where he replaced a "flakey" Holly Johnson. And then he teamed up with Bill Drummond and formed Zoo, a label which became a management company and a publishing house which inflicted GLORIOUS FOO

VOB are two gangly post-Thatcher Valley-Dolls who front a pop band that take the definition of "classic pop" (the Beatles via The Monkees via The Buzzcocks) and successfully redefine it in a way that ALL the C86 band so miserable failed to do.

Jesus Jones are quite simply the only "best band since The Beatles" to have emerged this year. 'Info Freako/Psycho' was the Beatles meets Duran Duran

meets Public Enemy meets Freddie

The best pop group and the best

Rock'n'Roll band in the world - Dave

manages one and has the other signed

up. In a world where most of everything is shit and the major labels insist on

ramming the statistics down our throats

by sloshing out a tidal wave of aural

effluence every week. Dave Balfe is

some kinda freak. For this we might

even forgive his merely 'good bands' – Crazyhead and Diesel Park West.

The lead singer of Jesus Jones is

called Jesus but his real name is

And The Dreamers. They are this

week's "future of Rock'n'Roll"

Left to right: Zodiac Mindwarp, Voice Of The Beehive, Jesus

Michael. He is a very, very nice young man. He is the epitome of the nice middle class white boy in a rebel rock

"The thing that's very interesting about Mike," says Balfe is "he seems very rational, very prepared to listen to other people which isn't normal for a musician, most musicians are so

upon us the mewling acidic pop of The Teardrop Explodes and Echo And The Bunnymen. Oh yes, and the Naughty

Contact with the raging cosmos that is the inside of Drummond's head steered Dave away from his early flirtation with Leftie rhetoric and started him on the puzzling path to the Bhuddist/Yupnihilist creed that he professes (at great length) today. That's all he wanted to



"Food Records and Dave Balfe Management are two schemes I came up with to steal money from musicians . . .

defensive. It seems to me that what he's singing about and the noise he's making is very noisy, very aggressive. And it's contrasted with this sweet, nice guy who's basically a polite meglomaniac."

I know what Dave is saying. I sat chatting with young Mike/Jesus before a gig once. I was thinking - Cheez, worra wimpy middle class wanker! Then the

talk about really. "I'm an incredibly pretentious

Dave founded Food on the back of the band Brilliant (sticking out The Woodentops' first single on the way). Through Brilliant he met Zodiac Mindwarp and changed the course of Rock'n'Roll history . . . forever.

ames Brown, hardened rock hack, staggers into the NME offices, falls over, crawls into the editors office and vomits all over the stereo (This is true! - Ed). We nod understandingly, he has just interviewed Zodiac Mindwarp, he is lucky to be alive.

Dave first spoke to Zode when he discovered that the Bradford psycho had done the pretty pictures on the front of a solo LP put out by Youth, mainman of Brilliant.

Meeting the man-monster, Dave was shocked to realise that it was the very same devil-bearded greasy biker "with a totally evil looking Bill Sykes pit-bull terrier" who had been terrorising the staff of his local supermarket in recent months. Dave realised that Zode. although evil, was not bad.

"It was his Bradford accent. You can't be Mephistopheles with a Bradford accent." The devil is not a Yorkshireman.

Zode wanted to make an album that combined Heavy Metal and hip-hop. He failed "but his talent was such that it succeeded on a completely different level". Months later Run DMC and Aerosmith showed how it should be done with 'Walk This Way'. Zodiac Mindwarp and the Love Reaction may have failed to make an impression on Rap but, according to Dave, they wreaked havoc on Heavy Metal. It's a fact that from the first washed-out, swastickered photo in The Face, Britain has seen Zode and the boys as a good joke. In the USA, heartland of metal, they are taken totally seriously.

"Zode is the man who took rock out of lurex. Guns 'N' Roses saw him as an inspiration, The Cult ripped him off to f ... He's also largely responsible for the fact that it's now totally OK to like Heavy Metal.'

Dave thinks Zode could have conquered the world.

"He is so meglomaniacal that he got a bit deranged for a while and we cocked it all up. Other people just ripped us off. I mean. I don't want to sound like everybody else whining on about howit's-not-fair-they-stole-all-our-ideas. But

that's what happened. . Is Zode mad too? "Every talented person is a

meglomaniac..."

Is he evil? "He has a deep seated amorality which is not just the plain badness which a lot of people think it is.

Oh yeah, but he's not nasty is he? "Yes," says Dave. "He is.

o, is Balfe the mouth merely the capitalist exploiter of the fruits of true genius? What is his input? Well, take 'Info Freako', it's brilliant! Even Bruno Brookes likes it. What's the secret? I wish I knew and I'd churn 'em

"Some people have the good fortune to go in to the studio, do what comes naturally and it works for them. They are the lucky few . . . spontaniety and talent are important. But putting that talent in context - which is the job of the record company and the management - little things, a single photo even, can totally transform a band's image, just doing it

What about the JAMS' manual, Dave, is that how it works?

Dave decides to lie. "Genius! The most profound book by it's all TRUE!"

What's your motivation, Dave? "Well Food and DBM are two schemes I came up with to steal money from musicians. I set up Food because I got sick of merely being an advisor to musicians which is essentially the manager's role. The record company gives me real power over the acts. You can just say 'No' to their stupid ideas rather than pleading with them. Plus you

make more money. Andy Ross sticks his head round the

"Give me a good mention," he snarls, pointing a gnarled finger at his boss, "or it's a kneecapping!'

I tell the poor lad that he hasn't been mentioned once.

"You bastard!" he screams at Balfe. The pop business. Where else do you call the boss "bastard" to his face to let him know you love him?