

My sincere thanks to Dr. Frances Ruane
for her support and guidance.

	Introduction
Chapter 1. Punk Pages 2-4	What was it ? Why did it come about ? Barney Bubbles
Chapter 2. New Wave Pages 5-7	New Wave the '80s. What happened to music and culture. What styles started.
Chapter 3. The times they are Changing Pages 8-13	Printed Media. Blue Note. Format Changes. Raw, Cool, Layered but always Conceptual.
Chapter 4. Vaughan Oliver and 4AD Pages 14-20	The beginning of 4AD. The corporate identity of 4AD. Music influencing the graphics for the cover. Collaboration between Vaughan Oliver and bands on the label. The Styles of Vaughan Oliver.
Chapter 5. Comparisons between Garrett, Saville and Oliver Pages 21-23	Comparisons between Malcolm Garrett's, Peter Saville's and Vaughan Oliver's identities for independent record labels and bands. Comparisons between Malcolm Garrett's, Peter Saville's and Vaughan Oliver's styles and influences.
Pages 24-26	Conclusion
	Bibliography

Introduction

Introduction

New Wave graphic design was the pioneering work of the 1980s. Its is of great importance as it influenced mainstream graphic design in later years. The most important work of the New Wave period came from British graphic design Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville and Vaughan Oliver. In order to give a background understanding of Garrett, Saville and Oliver this thesis will first look at their backgrounds, influences and styles. They all had a first hand experience of Punk while studying graphic design in college.

To be able to appreciate their design contribution in the '80s you have to know the context in which they worked. New Wave originated from Punk, however it had a different sound, culture, and style. The club played an important role in New Wave, while the format changes from vinyl to cassette to CD led to the loss of art work that graced the vinyl sleeve.

I will also look at the Blue Note record label of the 1940s where graphic designers worked in a corresponding situation, doing pioneering work in creating a corporate identity from art work through to recording. This led the way for the independent labels of the '80s.

I intend to show that Vaughan Oliver did the major work for an independent Record Label during the '80s (4AD), developing the idea of a corporate identity from the label's identity, to the posters and sleeve designs that sell the music. I will compare Garrett's, Saville's and Oliver's approach to giving independent labels and their bands an identity. I intend to do this by examining their styles and influences.

"A change of scene, a change of style, a change of speed, with no regret. A chance to watch"

Ian Curtis Joy Division *New Dawn Fades*

These lyrics by Ian Curtis are taken from the song *New Dawn Fades*, from Joy Division's hugely acclaimed debut album *Unknown Pleasures*. The song generates awesome emotions and extreme reactions while Joy Division took music into a new dimension- New Wave. The lyrics describe perfectly the whole New Wave era where the scene, style and speed changed with no regrets.

Chapter 1. Punk

Chapter 1. Punk

It is relevant to discuss the Punk era because Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville, and Vaughan Oliver emerged from it. They all had been students during Punk, which enabled them to take on board its energy and spirit. After the messy visual reproductions of Punk, Garrett, Saville, and Oliver began to design in a new era of professionalism, but with their own individual streak. Punk has been covered in depth by Dam Graham's *Rock my Religion*, Dave Rimmer's *Like Punk Never Happened*, and Simon Firth *Art into Pop* and *Facing the Music*. I used these books as my primary source of research for this chapter, and I based this historical summary on their detailed analysis of the period.

England 1976. The scene that we now take for granted- situationist nightclubs, designed bars, independent record labels, hometown pop stars living in their hometown, art galleries and art cinemas did not exist. Mainstream disco ruled the city centre; soccer boot-boys ran wild on the estates. Pop culture, like national politics was filled with complacency. The time was ripe for change.

Then came punk. Punk was fresh! Punk was revolutionary. Punk was anything you wanted it to be. It hit England in 1977 and England was never to be the same again. Punk was like a nuclear bomb. It blew a huge hole in pop culture; in fact it turned it upside down. What happened was "pop culture" became "youth culture".

Punk in England was a very contrived event. The plans were drawn up by Malcolm Mc Laren, Jamie Reid and Vivienne Westwood. Malcolm had grown a love of the punk scene from his experiences in New York while managing the band *The New York Dolls*. On his return to England he went about creating a similar scene there. Punk Rock had its own representative images and visual identity. For the Sex Pistols Jamie Reid had 'detoured' the Queen's head by sticking a safety pin through her lip. Blackmail lettering and cut up graphics on record sleeves and fanzine pages reflected punk's violence and sarcasm.

Graham. 1993

The Sex Pistols and their manager Malcolm Mc Laren used the media to become famous in order to destroy the media and media-created fame. In other words, The Sex Pistols ultimate goal was to expose the media for what it was by forcing the media's contradictions into the open. When the Sex Pistols arrived in New York for their U.S. tour in 1978, reporters demanded permission to take photos of Johnny Rotten. He refused unless he was paid \$5.00 per photo. The reporters were taken a back because they naturally assumed that all rock stars wanted publicity of any kind and that he would relinquish control of his public image and allow himself to be freely manipulated by the press. The story was reported in the press without photos.

Why did punk come
about?

Punk marked a point of discontinuity and crisis within culture, with reverberations beyond its own music market. Punk was a passion born out of imbalance, insecurity, and the longing for something more. This need for change, the sense that there must be something else, has been appropriated by the thrill of consumption- the act of purchase where the 'look' is all important. Objects of all kinds compete for attention. Thus, the exterior of the packaging, or cover design has become of greater importance than the contents.

For a short time it appeared, both to participants and observers, that Punk showed that a youth sub-culture was able to reject the dominant cultural order and establish an alternative commodity-based culture. The new bands, new record labels and in particular new graphic designers were in opposition to the dominant culture.

Prior to Punk, record sleeves were extremely limited in their range of graphics. They relied on mythic landscapes, group photography, air-brushed pornography or more usually and especially so in the case of single releases, a record company logo or plain white paper bag. The need to define the difference of Punk from existing musical forms led from the sleeve design onwards, new sounds within new styles.

For the music industry, The Sex Pistols progress became a mockery to the generations of music that existed before Punk. Independent record labels like Stiff had keener eyes for talent and more smart ploys for promoting it than all the multi-nationals put together. Out there on the streets it all meant something dazzling and different. The Punk bands gave shape and expression to a new generation.

A dazzling different Punk designer who I particularly admired was a tragic, wonderful, mysterious designer with the curious name of Barney Bubbles. Many people who know his work do not know who designed it because he almost never put his name to it, preferring to sign it by his V.A.T. number or nothing at all. Yet many of the British designers who made their names in the 1980s, among them Neville Brody and Malcolm Garrett, acknowledge Bubbles as a vital influence. Bubbles was a key figure during Punk. He had a direct line to creativity. He was a designer who created an image, not manipulated it. His favourite medium was the record sleeve. Trivial and available to everyone, it suited his lack of preciousness about total creative freedom.

Bubbles is widely known for his work for Punk and New Wave bands on the Stiff, Radar and F Beat record labels. Bubbles increasingly worked on record sleeves and underground magazines such as *Friends* and *OZ*. The record sleeves he created for Hawkwind were unlike anything that had been seen before. The cover of *In Search of Space* (1971) (Fig. 1) unfolds to reveal a stylised, cut out hawk. Bubbles also did everything from painting the drum kits to designing the stationary. Hawkwind's Gothic sci-fi mythology was given a visual identity intricate enough to keep fans fascinated no matter how much acid they dropped. It was one of the first times that a bands visual identity and material had been treated as a whole, controlled by one person. To designers such as Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville and Vaughan Oliver, it was a lesson in what could be achieved.

Bubbles had rejected the clean Modernism of the 1960s for a more subjective and expressive approach to design, while other in-house designers were recycling the work of early Modernists. Bubbles landed in the middle of Punk and immediately realised its significance. Jake Riviera, who set up Stiff Records, got Bubbles to be the full time freelance designer for the label. At Stiff, anything went, the more outrageous the better. Ignited by Punk, Bubble's design took off. It provided the perfect medium for Stiff Records to pull stunts to make people buy records. On one occasion the company put the picture of the wrong band on the record sleeve in the hope that fans would go out and buy the correct cover a few weeks later.

Bubble's hard edge designs, with blocks of acid colour and sans-serif type, stood out from both the heavy serifs-plus-illustration of mainstream commercial design and the unstructured work of Jamie Reid's Punk graphics. Bubble's best work has roots which can be funny, oblique or difficult. A great example of one of his most audacious designs is the sleeve for Ian Dury's album *Do it Yourself* (Fig.2). Bubbles created and painted 52 different versions of the sleeve, each one covered in a different loudly patterned wallpaper. A simple idea, it is simultaneously one in the eye for good taste, is a surreally pointless gesture and yet also ties in neatly with the record title. There was also, of course, a slim chance that the more ravenous fans might by all 52 varieties.

In an interview in *The Face* magazine in 1981, he referred to up and coming young designers:- "They're so creative the kids that do the sleeves. It makes me feel so staid and boring and I think I've got to get out, it's time for me to go." These words were sadly prophetic as Bubbles committed suicide.

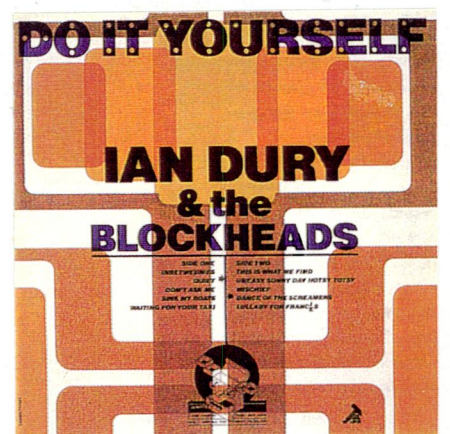
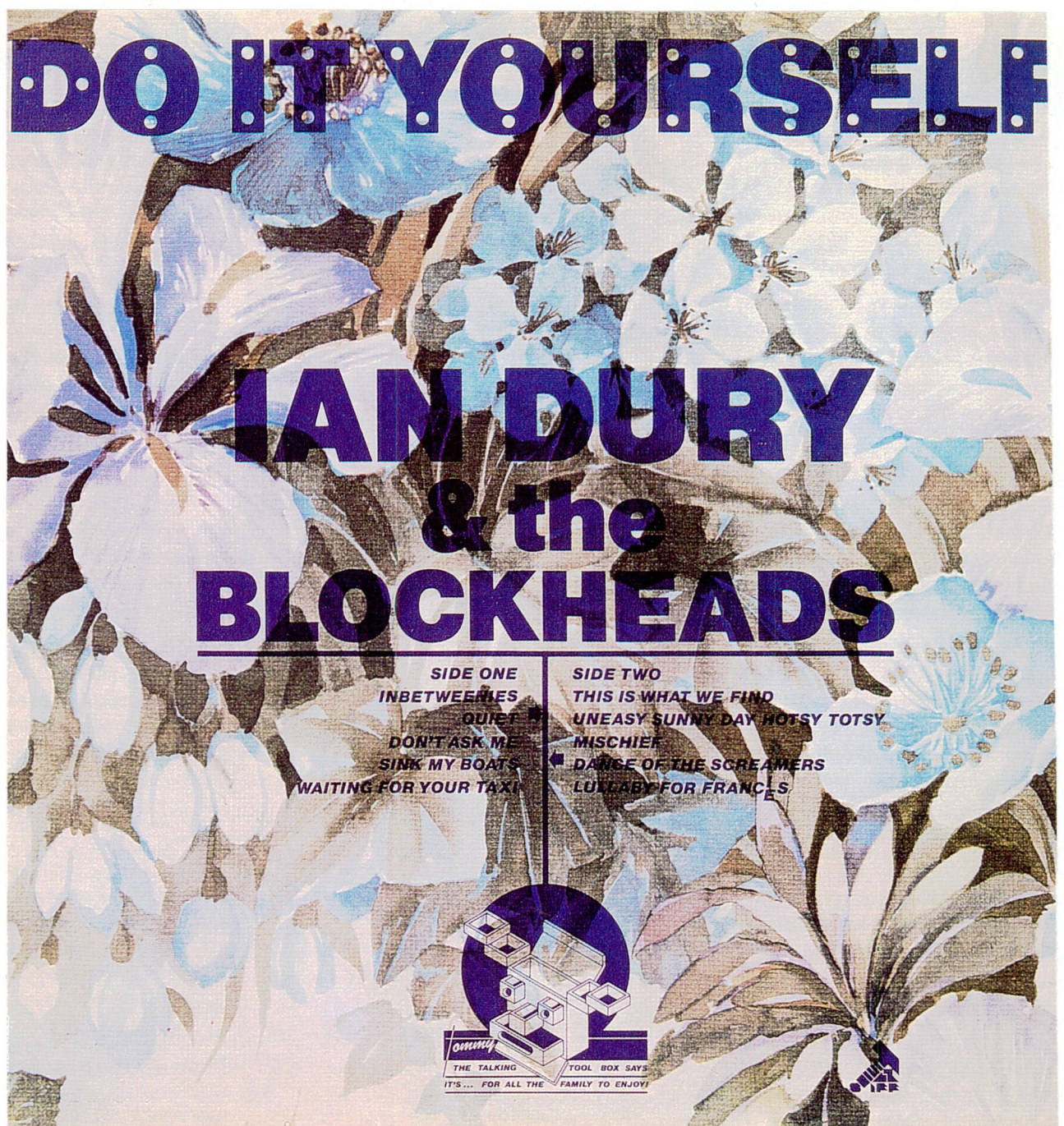


Fig.2 Ian Dury and the Blockheads *Do it Yourself*

Chapter 2. New Wave

Chapter 2. New Wave

Stiff Records, along with the other independent labels, played an important role in the development of design in the '80s. Design in this decade was fuelled throughout the '80s by an intoxicating mixture of City money and Margaret Thatcher's enterprise culture. The radical misleading led Punk rockers to find a lobby to counter the media's equation of Punk violence with Fascist neo-Nazi violence. Once Punk became exhausted, the original participants involved went back to the clubs where they initially emerged, while still retaining their obsession with style. Subsequently Punk moved towards intellectual upper middle class acceptability. Soon it came to be called Post Punk (New Wave) while still retaining the DIY ethic and spirit of Punk. Post Punk songs became the soundtrack of postmodern daily life, inescapable in airports, pubs, restaurants, streets and shopping centres. The New Wavers weren't a sub-youth culture like the skinheads or even the Punks who were content to look 'odd' or menacing. They wanted acknowledgement for their individual style.

The Liberating force of the New Wave created a scene focused outside the capital (the independent labels). For once the London music business wasn't the determining or influential factor. It's clichéd, but the post Punk ethic behind New Wave culture meant anyone and everyone could have a go. While the sound was being created in bedrooms and garages nationwide, small independent labels like Factory and 4AD took the initiative from major labels in ivory towers, who were initially too slow or too old to get to grips with what was happening at street level. The independent labels were able to employ their knowledge of the scene plus some ingenious tactics to plug and push their product.

Major labels were too slow to pick up on the new wave sound so the smaller independent labels, who were run exclusively by and for people in and on the scene, seized the initiative. The reason for the success of all these smaller labels is that when it emerged, New Wave music was too innovative and alien for major labels to deal with. That's the essence of any new music culture, being one step ahead. As soon as majors understand the process, that's it, things move overground. New Wave culture became a self-sufficient part of the music business with a whole infrastructure of clubs, record shops, record labels, magazines, designers and promotion companies. New Wave became the new pop. The reason for New Wave was down to the people who wanted to dance, pose, romance and have an obsession with style. The obsession with style had been building up for years. Punk was style, but it was too intense; it hit people and knocked them off track.

What happened to
music in the '80s

By the mid 1980s, 10 years on from the Punk explosion, the club became the most important venue in England for New Wave groups, while remaining punk bands toured the punk rooms in the provinces. For these New Wave bands, the punk label initially promised a shock value no longer available. What happened was that punk divided into a vanguard and a mainstream. Mainstream punk bands like the Clash were content to run through their original songs of rage and riot. Self-consciously experimental post-punk groups, in contrast, found themselves playing only to self-consciously experimental audiences, to critics who expected something novel everytime. They were part of the pop scene but were confined to a back field, their records mentioned only in margins of the music press.

It's only during the last hundred years or so since the advent of commercial phonography, that music has become as much a private as a public affair. These new clubs also allowed the vinyl addicted Disc Jockeys to aid their addiction by showcasing the new music coming from the era. This benefited the independent labels because New Wave was never given airplay on the radio. The Disk Jockeys and the independent labels along with the New Wavers all remain committed to vinyl.

New Wave sounded great, even allowing for the clubs notorious sound systems. Previously, the Punk sound was electric, distorted, full of feedback, that overloaded screech which depended on the relationship between guitar, amplifier and speaker. Punk was claustrophobic. With hindsight, it is possible to see clubs as open space waiting for the right music to fill it. Clubland's changing times are reflected in its graphics from the rushed, black and white photocopies of the Punk days, to the austere minimalism of the early '80s. Fashions may change, but the impulse for club going goes right back to music's age old public function: mass transcendence.

What happened to
culture in the 80's

The '80s has been the core of the pop industry. Pop implies a very different set of values to punk and rock. Pop implies no bones about being mainstream. It accepts and embraces the requirements to be instantly pleasing and to make a pretty picture of itself. Punk and rock, on the other hand, was somehow more profound, non-conformist, self-directed and intelligent. Pop in the past has always been denounced for being manufactured. This fresh species of genuinely talented practioners are ready and willing to manufacture themselves, capable contributors to the art of sell. The tendency took hold and by 1980 it eventually became dominant. New acts got a break not by playing in pubs up and down the land but by new clubs and independent labels.

What styles started in the '80s

According to Rick Poynor in his book the *Graphic Edge*, there were four types of graphic design coming out of Britain in the '80s- 'Cool', 'Layered', 'Raw' and 'Conceptual'. There are many designs that could be included in only one category but there are others that could fit into two or sometimes three categories. Poynor's categories are perfect for categorising New Wave graphic design simple because Garrett, Saville and Oliver all produced a wide diverse range of work.

In the 'Cool' category, compositions tend to be open and uncluttered with white space showing through. Pictorial elements are relatively simple and bold. Sans serif typefaces are preferred. In the 'Layered' category, on the other hand, type and imagery are woven into compositions of much greater congestion. The design is saturated with visual and verbal information, leaving the viewer to decide which elements are the most important. The choice of typeface is more varied. The design in the 'Raw' category is personal, the effects less verbal and the level of formal idiosyncrasy much higher. This is design where spontaneity is preferred to detachment, rough edge to professional finish, with emotional expression standing out stronger than good taste. Stylistically many of the 'conceptual' designs bear a resemblance to 'Cool' ones, but the work has a more personal and at times enigmatic quality. It's the kind of design most likely to be accused of masquerading as art.

While there were four different types of graphic design in the '80s, there was only one on the street. It's was not the ambition of Punk Rockers, to be called a 'poser' which was the ultimate insult. But where the post-punk bands came from 'posing' was a way of life. The majority of people who wanted to see these bands were interested in two things: enjoying themselves and looking good. Young people used to worry about pimples, now they worried about style. It wasn't a question of parading about, it was to do with how you defined yourself through every surface facet of your life.

Chapter 3. The Times they are Changing

Chapter 3. The Times they are Changing

Printed media
Lifestyle magazines

With new designers like Brody applying themselves to printed media, 1980 was the year that new magazines were published aimed at the youth market dealing with youth issues and interests. Any magazine, no matter how general its subject matter, caters to a certain market or audience. They catered for the changing needs of the youth. These magazines created the excitement and activity that occurred at this time. Lifestyle magazines catered for New Wave, unlike the other established magazines such as *Smash Hits*, *NME*, *Melody Maker*, and *Record Mirror*.

i-D magazine was the brainchild of Terry Jones, who made the magazine one of the most important British magazines of the 1980s. Consequently, the "instant design" approach of this magazine made a significant impact on the progressive graphics of that decade. *i-D* started out as a fashion "fanzine". The "instant design" that *i-D* introduced was a new graphic language, based on spontaneity, speed, low budget typewriter text, tickertape headlines, little colour, and pages simply stapled together. It was intended to feel "instant" and handmade to allow for accidents or technical error. It prowled the streets of London documenting a new form of fashion, "street style". Photographs played a journalistic role, like snapshots or news shots in a documentary study. *i-D*'s editorial approach was minimal. Early issues carried very basic information on fashion and music cabarets, clubs, gigs, etc. It offered a suitably frenzied look at an exciting period in terms of youth culture, design and fashion.

The Face started in May 1980 as a monthly publication focussing on the visual side of the music industry. By 1981 Neville Brody became the art director of the magazine (Fig.3). It also became one of the most important style magazines of the decade; it reached its heyday from 1983 to 1985. Brody's hallmark was an unconventional and experimental use of type influenced by the Constructivist work of Elisitzky and Rodchenko and, in particular, the creation and use of specially drawn logos, symbols and typefaces, which acted as visual codes for the magazine's cult audience. Brody said in an interview with Simon Esterson- "I didn't want to work on a magazine and make it look like a magazine. I wanted to surprise people and maintain a rhythm that was based on a different set of elements. I felt that if you opened a page that stopped you in your tracks, then you would want to read on". Brody also used photography because of its technological feel; "it's a news story and people are used to watching the news getting a very fast flash of images". Brody showed the so-called "youth culture" in a new and innovative way while dealing with very disposable subject matter.

Poynor , April 1988

Poynor , April 1988



Fig.3 Layout from *The Face* magazine

In this chapter I will describe the phenomenon of Blue Note- not only a jazz label but a pioneer paving the way for the approach taken by Garrett, Saville and Oliver 40 years later. Blue Note was the pioneering independent jazz label founded in 1939 by Alfred Lion, who was later joined by his friend the photographer Frank Wolff. With a small team than never numbered more than a dozen, they handled all aspects of the label from recording to talent spotting and artwork.

Lion and Wolff, through their discerning choice of artist and a willingness to take risks, tried to maintain the Blue Note music and image as a unique concept at the forefront of the independent jazz label scene. But it was Reid Miles in 1956 who made Blue Note truly complete in its status as a jazz record label and in its corporate image.

Reid Miles consolidated what Lion and Wolf had begun. The corporate identity and graphic style he provided complemented the concept and the music perfectly. Blue Note records were characterised by a depth of quality that made them prized possessions of jazz listeners the world over, and it was Miles's design that gave the label a strong, striking visual identity. Blue Note offered Miles total creative freedom. He created a number of designs whose spirit of precise improvisation matched perfectly the music they served to advertise. As Felix Cromley said-"Reid Miles made the cover stand like it knew what lay in store for the listener."

Marsh and Callingham. 1991

Blue Note, like any independent record label, had a quality unlike the larger companies, which is knowing the musicians personalities, knowing what it is they are trying to say through their music. Because of the close inter-relationship between the different areas of their small record companies, the designers also benefited. Most graphic designers, whether freelance or in-house, are often in close contact with the musicians and through their own artistic medium make an effort to evoke the sensations the music is trying to portray. Certainly Miles didn't base his work on any personal response to the music being packaged. In fact, he says, he never liked jazz and would trade the albums Blue Note gave him for classical ones. But Miles understood how contemporary the music was and, therefore, he made sure that his work matched the music.

The cool, sophisticated style Miles developed for Blue Note allowed him to introduce his own 'graphic signature', a family of styles and techniques which enabled him to maintain a coherent image despite producing a vast amount of sleeves. He often made similar proportional divisions across the covers, for instance, horizontal bands filled to the brim with photographs unconventionally, cropping them daringly, using blurred or distorted pictures, even reducing them to the point of insignificance. Coherence was partly achieved by using the same typeface on the back of the sleeves. Miles was able to span wildly divergent styles because he was a taught purist who used abstract design.

Typography might be the most prominent aspect of the sleeve. His cover for Lee Morgan's classic *The Sidewinder* (Fig.4) uses the techniques of division, cropping and bold typography. Bands are crammed with type and photography, leaving the last band starkly blank. Lion and Wolff would describe the feeling or mood of the album and Miles would interpret it.

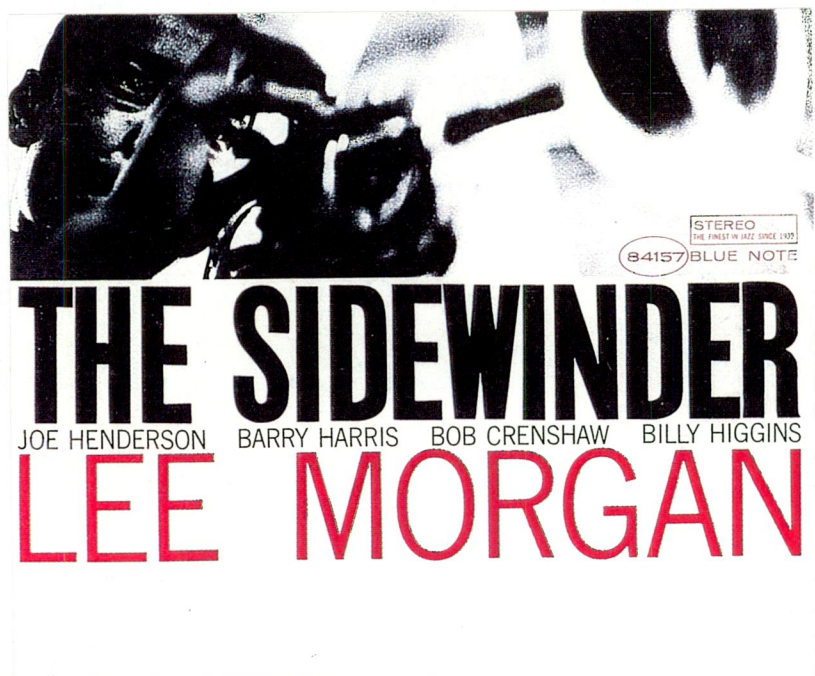


Fig.4 Lee Morgan *The Sidewinder*



Fig.5 Donald Byrd *Freeform*



Of particular interest to Miles was photography. As Ruth Lion, Alfred Lion's wife said in *The Cover Art of Blue Note Records* "They (Blue Note) were not sure with these new artists they were introducing, so many of them were leaders for the first time, so maybe the public in Harlem knew about them, but across the country they didn't...and they felt it was very important to put these men's photos as prominently as possible on the covers and they got a lot of flack from distributors across the country who felt a pretty girl would have been better".

Miles's first photo for Blue Note was a tightly cropped image of pigeons in flight for Donald Byrd's *Freedom* (Fig no5). The cover is a fine example of how Miles has placed emphasis on the free movement of the birds. Here he has subtly linked the text to his image. Here Miles makes the visual pun on the fact that the artist's surname is Byrd, in his use of imagery.

When designing a cover Miles usually cropped the photograph down to minimal proportions using his design skills to obtain the best impact from the image. Miles then integrated the text and photograph to make a more visually interesting sleeve. On occasions when Miles felt the image was not as important as the text, he either made the photograph very small or left it out totally. Reid Miles said in *The cover art of Blue Note* that-"Frank always hated it when I cropped one of his photographs of his artists through the forehead." This quote shows how well Miles and Wolff worked together. Wolff didn't like his photographs to be cropped so tightly, but he gave Miles the go ahead anyway, because he trusted his judgement when it came to overall design of the cover.

Just as Miles arrived at Blue Note, the advent of the 33 1/3 rpm long- playing record came about, which gave the graphic designers and the photographers a generous 12x12" format to use as a billboard to display their art and to sell the recording artist. This engineering and commercial event happily coincided with renewed interest in jazz. By the mid '50s the rush to produce jazz became so frantic that graphic designers had to constantly invent new ways to sell these jazz artists visually.

However, the format in which music was packaged again changed in the '80s with the demise of the long playing record. This led to the simultaneous loss of the artwork that graced the sleeve. True, you get an illustrated booklet slipped inside your compact disc, but it measures about four and a half inches square, as opposed to the inviting 12 by 12 inch square offered to artists and graphic designers by the sleeve of an LP, or more in the case of a luxurious gatefold. Nobody creates original artwork for CDs. They merely shrink the album-sized image, downgrading its role and visual impact in a stroke.

It's logical enough, given current bearings in technology and record industry thinking. The hassled contemporary consumer, dashing between the office and the gym, supposedly treasures convenience and lightweight portability over all considerations. Music, it seems, is something that comes in small packages and plugs niches in the day. If it isn't CDs, it's the even less aesthetically pleasing cassettes, Mini Discs or DCCs

I must admit I prefer CDs. They're tidier, more convenient, they sound better, you can stick them in the dishwasher, you get longer playing times and you can programme out the tracks you dislike. But there's no denying that the sleeve of an album becomes an indivisible part of the way you come to know the music. Contemplating the obsessively orderly, design conscious sleeves created by Peter Saville was the perfect way to sink into albums by Joy Division and New Order, and there was an additional sense of triumph to be derived from locating the information about tracks or production hidden in the packaging.

In 1988, within a contradicting independent music market, Factory Records audaciously issued the UK's first two Digital Audio Tapes (DAT). These pioneering format releases were significant for the artistic and commercial future of the label. The first, The Durutti Column's *The Guitar and Other Machines* (Fig no.6) and the second, Joy Division's *Substance* (Fig no.7), were chasing big sales to underwrite other projects. The new and diminutive DAT format (8x6x1.5cm) was to pose a marketing challenge for the UK music industry and the first new packaging challenge for its designers since the introduction of CDs in 1982.

Edge. 1992

The design of the Durutti Column's DAT was given to Mark Holt and Hamish Muir of 8vo. Holt described DAT as a "nightmare format" that requires resolute treatment to preserve any of the power and sense of the graphics seen at a larger scale on related releases. The importance Factory attached to this DAT release is to be gauged by the fact that part of 8vo's design also graced the retail delivery boxes so that they might sit distinctively among plain cardboard ones in stockrooms.



**Fact 204d The Durutti Column
The Guitar and Other Machines**



Fact 204d The Guitar and Other Machines

Vini Reilly, Guitar, Keyboards, Machine Programs and Vocals, Bruce Mitchell, Drum Kit, Xylophone and DX Machine, John Metcalfe, Viola and Percussion on 'When the World'

Stephen Street, Bass Guitar on 'English Landscape Tradition', Rob Grey, Mouth Organ on 'What Is It to Me' and 'Jongleur Grey', Stanton Miranda, Vocals on 'When the World' and 'Red Shoes', Pol, Vocals on 'When the World', 'Red Shoes' and 'Bordeaux Sequence'. Special thanks to Simply Red/Elektra for Tim Kester's Trumpet on 'When the World'

Written and arranged by Vini Reilly. Arpeggiator by Reilly and Mitchell. 'English Landscape Tradition' by Reilly and Metcalfe

Recorded at Suite Sixteen, Rochdale, Strawberry Studios, Stockport, and Island Studios, Hammersmith. Mixed at Island Studios. Produced by Stephen Street. Engineers: Chris Nagle, Lee Hamblin and CJ

Published by the Movement of the 24th January Publishing/Copyright Control. A Factory Communications Cassette Design. Bvo. Black and white photography: Trevor Key



Related Works

'Dream Topping' and 'You Won't Feel Out of Place' written and performed by Simon Topping, Jeremy Kerr, Vini Reilly and Stuart James. Produced and engineered by Nick Garrside at Out of the Blue, Manchester. Published by the Movement of the 24th January Publishing/Copyright Control

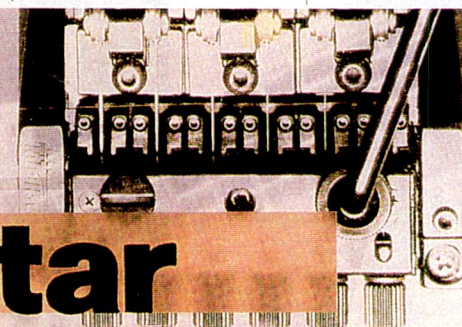
'28 Oldham Street' written and performed by Vini Reilly. Produced and engineered by Stuart James and Nick Garrside at Out of the Blue, Manchester. Published by the Movement of the 24th January Publishing/Copyright Control

'When the World' (Newson Mix) written by Vini Reilly. Engineered by Richard Scott and produced by Stephen Street at Yellow 2, Stockport. Published by the Movement of the 24th January Publishing

'Catos con Quantas' written by Vini Reilly. Recorded and mixed by Stephen Street at Strawberry Studios, Stockport. Published by the Movement of the 24th January Publishing

Fact 204d
The Durutti Column
The Guitar and Other Machines

- 01 Arpeggiator
- 02 What Is It to Me (Woman)
- 03 Red Shoes
- 04 Jongleur Grey
- 05 When the World
- 06 U.S.P.
- 07 Bordeaux Sequence
- 08 Pol In B
- 09 English Landscape Tradition
- 10 Miss Haymes
- 11 Don't Think You're Funny
- 12 Related Works:
- 13 Dream Topping
- 14 You Won't Feel Out of Place
- 15 28 Oldham Street
- 16 When the World (Newson Mix)
- 17 Catos con Quantas



The Guitar

and Other Machines

Fig.6 Proof sheet for the Durutti Column's
The Guitar and Other Machines

NEW
ORDER
—
SUBSTANCE
1987

Fig.7 New Order *Substance*

Edge. 1992

For the second DAT release by Joy Division, the designers Peter Saville and Brett Wickens used the original 1988 LP design as their point of departure. The feature modular type is Wim Crouwel's new alphabet devised in 1967 for digital printers. Perhaps inspired by the types design rationale, a modular scheme was used for the LP's layout, facilitating a painless paring down to the DAT, which was then boxed and wrapped in an enticing cellophane wrapper which turned the whole thing into a charming cultural widget. Wickens is the happy owner of a DAT player but admits that the format does not present a rewarding design experience when minuscule type is forced into plastic casing 1.5mm thick.

No Factory DAT has been sold retail since 1989. In spite of intriguing new audio formats, vinyl addiction is still endemic in the independent music population. In 1991, for instance, vinyl constituted 35% of Factory's sales. This means Factory and fellow independent labels such as 4AD remain committed to the material. In the wake of DAT's failure as a product for the home, many in the music business are nervously reassessing the nature of size and materials as they prepare to unveil more new audio products. Factory has occasionally distributed small format recordings to shops which have asked for additional 12 inch display imagery. Sony are currently consulting retailers about form and materials for the packaging of the new mini- CDs.

Punk rock already had its own iconoclastic images and visual identity, and in the late '70s it died. Three English-based graphic designers helped to redirect the ferocious energy of Punk graphics, and set the pace for the design obsessed '80s: Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville and Vaughan Oliver. Each of the three had their own individual style. Garrett's style was 'Raw' and 'Conceptual', while Saville's was 'Cool' and 'Conceptual'. Oliver's style was 'Cool', 'Conceptual' and 'Layered'.

Art jokes, playful pop culture puns and a full-speed-ahead embrace of technology- Malcolm Garrett's work has encompassed, by his own admission, too many enthusiasms for his own good. His restless pursuit of new ideas has denied him the highly defined profile of a Peter Saville or Neville Brody, the two designers he is habitually grouped with in the '80s 'design decade.' Garrett's one year at Reading University's graphic design course gave him a understanding of the discipline's tradition. The historical reference books he brought back up north (to Manchester) containing what were the blueprints of New Wave pop packaging were freely appropriated by schoolmate Peter Saville. They joined each other on the first year of Manchester Polytechnic's graphic design course in 1975. The student Garrett set about trying to start a new Dada movement. When Punk hit Manchester, Dada, as well as similar obsessions with Pop Art and typography, surfaced in his ground breaking work with a band called The Buzzcocks.

In 1978 Manchester Polytechnic final year graphic design student Peter Saville hustled Granada TV talking head Tony Wilson, who he'd heard was setting up a club, into designing a poster for it. The gig poster, for the Factory at Russell Club in Hulme, became Fact 1 (Fig no.8) in Factory Records' famously eccentric catalogue. Fact 1's main image was a noise warning sign from the Polytechnic's 3D department- reflecting both the Northern industrialism of the new Pop, and Saville's interest in Functionalism design. It was the beginning of his methodical self-education, talking in the history of graphic design and art movements like Futurism, Modernism, Neo-Classicism and Pop. Saville's voyage of discovery found its fullest expression in breathtaking image and type compositions for Joy Division, New Order and other artists on Factory Records, of which he was a director until they went bankrupt.

Vaughan Oliver studied graphic design at Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic from 1976-79. He moved to London in 1980, working first at Benchmark for one year and then at Michael Peters and Partners for two years- the latter at the forefront of packaging design in the late '70s and '80s. Whilst still at Michael Peters, Oliver met Ivo Watts-Russell, the founder of independent record label 4AD. For three years he produced occasional freelance work for the label, including its corporate identity. By 1983, Oliver had become 4AD's full-time designer, indeed, Watts-Russell's first employee. This fruitful collaboration has produced a range of record sleeve, CD, cassette and poster designs for the music of Ultra Vivid Scene, Pixies, Lush and The Breeders, to name a few.



MAY 19-THE DURRUTTI COLUMN/JLTED JOHN

MAY 26-BIG IN JAPAN/MANICURED NOISE

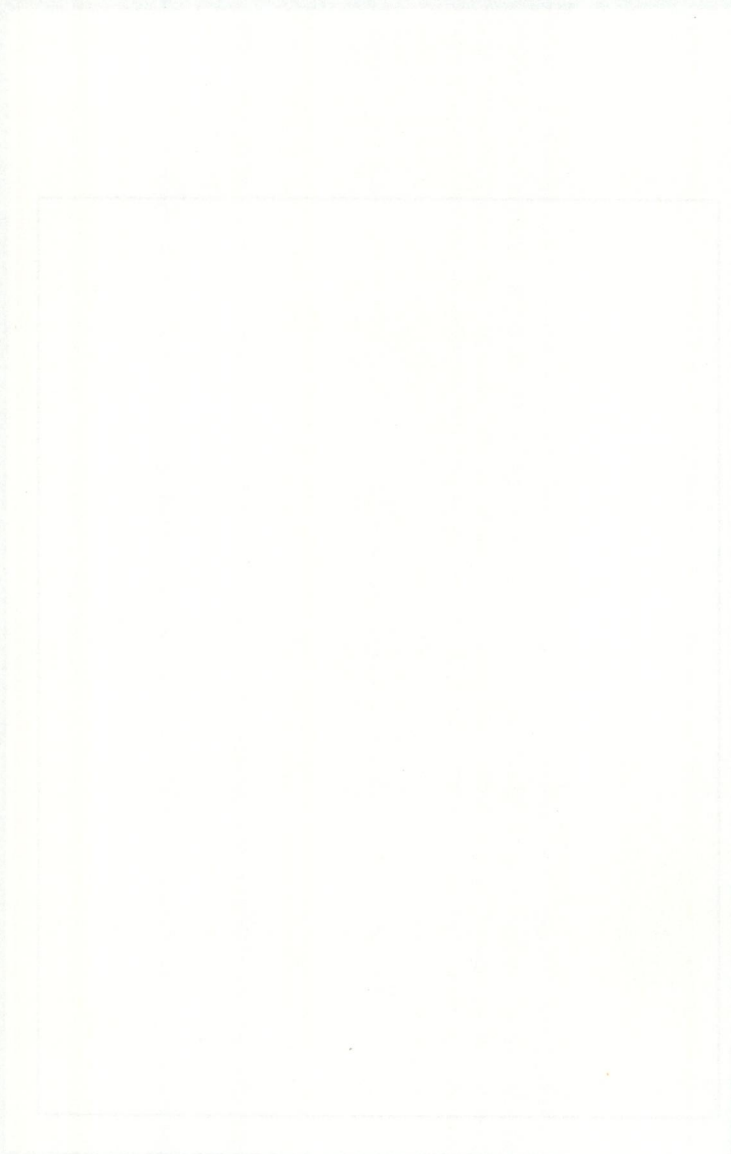
THE FACTORY

JUNE 2-THE DURRUTTI COLUMN/CABARET VOLTAIRE

JUNE 9-THE TILLER BOYS/JOY DIVISION

RUSSEL CLUB ROYCE RD MOSS SIDE

Fig.8 Fac 1
The gig poster for the Factory nightclub



Chapter 4. Vaughan Oliver and 4AD

Chapter 4. Vaughan Oliver and 4AD

The beginning of 4AD

Prior to founding 4AD Ivo Watts-Russell was managing the company 'Beggars', which was a chain of independent record shops. Watts-Russell walked out after a few months on Beggars Banquet the owner of 'Beggars'. From there he went to the States and spent time on the dole. Beggars finally became exasperated with Watts-Russell constantly bugging him about acts they should sign, so Beggars made Watts-Russell and Peter Kent a financial offer to back a new record label that was to change the course of independent music in the UK. In 1980 4AD came into existence.

In 1982 Michael Peters, who had done some early art work for 4AD, was having trouble with his personal life and was unable to complete the *Modern English* sleeve he had been asked to design. He suggested someone else for the job, who in turn, suggested Vaughan Oliver. Oliver took his portfolio along to the 4AD offices and in that portfolio was an illustration which immediately caught Ivo's eye. It was based on a Diane Arbus photograph depicting a naked couple, seated in armchairs before a television. Days before, *Modern English* had brought the same photo for Ivo to see. They wanted to use it.

O' Reighan 1994

Oliver was invited to work full- time for 4AD in 1983. "For me it has been a very fruitful relationship due to the freedom Ivo offers, my enjoyment of his releases and his attitude in running a record label. In a recent fax that Watts-Russell sent to Oliver he said, "I would prefer our appeal to be our uniqueness, commitment and pride which can be judged by the legacy of our back catalogue and not chart positions."

Myerson. April 1994

While Vaughan has been art director for the label, he has championed such bands as Cocteau Twins, This Mortal Coil, The Pixies, Modern English and The Breeders and has been influential in promoting such trends as world music and the US garage band scene. An interest in music was what originally brought Ivo and Oliver together and the music still motivates Oliver today ;" I suppose that when I started with 4AD I would buy or listen to 90 per cent of what the label was producing." The designs for 4AD were attributed to 23 Envelope, a nonsense name intended to preserve the cult of the anonymous and suggest that a much larger team had created them. 1988 saw the dissolution of 23E and Oliver's re-emergence under the name V23 with assistant Chris Bigg and Paul Mc Menamin.



Fig.9 This Mortal Coil *It'll end in Tears*

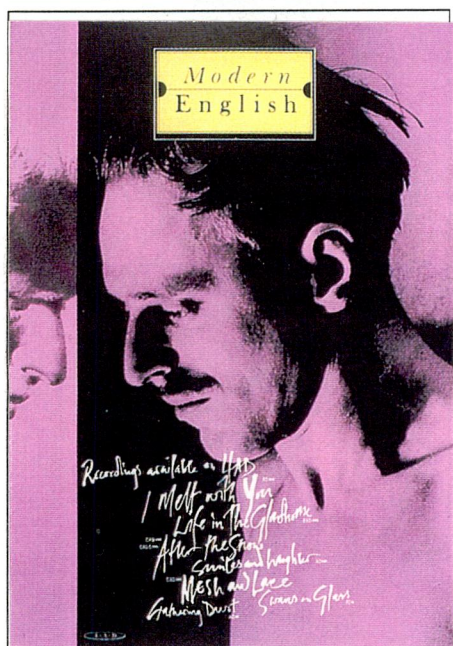


Fig.10 Modern English
(A3 poster. 1982)

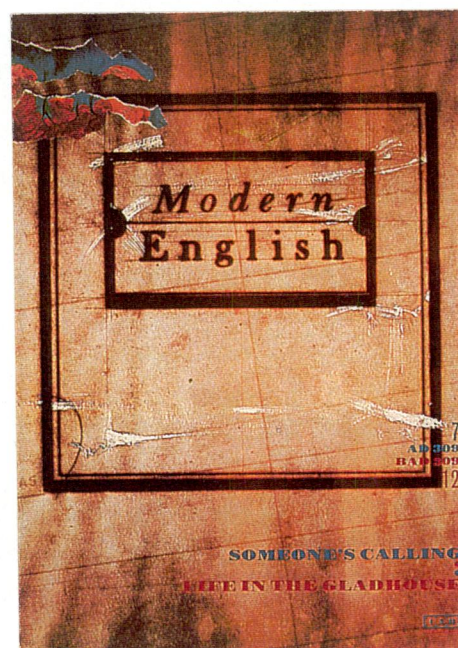


Fig.11 Modern English
Someone's Calling (A3 poster.
1983)



The corporate identity of 4AD

O' Reighan 1994

It's impossible to know how great a part Oliver's idiosyncratic design sense has played in the success of 4AD. Certainly, it's hard to imagine the music without the accompanying imagery. As Watts-Russell said in *This Rimmy River*—"Vaughan has educated me in the possibilities of design. For the first two or three years, it was mainly the bands doing the sleeves themselves, but as Vaughan and I got to know each other better, he began talking of trying to develop more of a corporate identity. I was a nervous about that at first. Factory had it,(and previously Blue Note) and though I enjoyed it, I also found it rather cold. I was worried about anything that might take way from the individuality of artists."

O' Reighan 1994

Oliver's main concern has been to satisfy the musicians with a service that is true to their music while still conceding to inevitable industry standards such as format. Rudy Vanderlans commented in *This Rimmy River* that "4 AD is well known for creating a new nomenclature within music, this record label has also built one of the strongest visual identities."

O' Reighan 1994

According to Russell Mills, when he was asked to write about 4AD's contribution to graphic design in *This Rimmy River*, he wrote: "I can't think of many record labels that have done more good for graphic design than 4AD. When ever you're able to make a non-design audience aware and in awe of graphic design without using manipulative, cliched and / or commercial trickery you deserve much praise. Employing hosts of distinctive artists and photographers he has defined a bizarre corporate identity for the label and has also given many bands a visual frontline that has puzzled, seduced, delighted, annoyed, stunned and both shaped an audience and an aesthetic within and beyond the music world."

The posters of 4AD.

The poster has a special place in the activities of all independent record labels because a lot of 'independent music' doesn't get radio airplay. Therefore, street graphics or posters in record shops present the first line of communication to the consumer. The aim is to get the poster stuck up in the music shops as a free advertisement. However, a beautiful design could work against them because the shop assistants simply take them home and put them on their bedroom walls.

In the context of 4AD, Oliver says that the poster design is usually a development of the record sleeve. When Oliver started designing for 4AD vinyl was the canvas. But then it shrunk down to the CD, so the poster became a welcoming medium for developing ideas. The poster has to work at a distance but also up close at about arm's length, so it has to be treated differently from the record sleeve. Over the past 12 years Oliver has designed more than 70 posters for 4AD. They have been so popular that 4AD has now taken to issuing them in A2 format limited edition sets of 12 (Fig no. 9. 10. 11.).

Music influencing
the graphics
for the cover

A record cover should offer a visual parallel of the music, and not be the response of an otherwise uninvolved designer hearing it for the first time. Garrett, Saville and Oliver in-house graphic designers associated with independent labels have no artist intentions beyond paying homage to the music and making a good record sleeve. The importance of the record sleeve as a visual medium is that it is a safe place for experiments. Bands are not afraid to be packaged in something that looks like it might belong in an art gallery. Fans are happy to admire, discuss and wear these images on T-shirts.

Smith, April 1993

Ivo has allowed Oliver to work without interference. Both of them know that the most successful covers, the ones which have given the label its idiosyncratic flavour and helped to win it a world wide following, are almost invariably those in which Oliver is allowed his own highly personal expression. Obvious solutions such as using a photo of the band on the front cover are out of the question. Watts-Russell said in an interview in *Raygun* that Oliver's "work could never have made the same impact had the musicians on 4AD been more keen to promote themselves as personalities, but they weren't just leaving him free to interpret the sounds as he heard them. Oliver's designs work on the simple principle that what you see does affect the way you hear the music".

O' Reighan 1994

Oliver's designs are not intended as a definition of the music, but rather, an indication of its atmosphere, a reflection of its mood and the character of its creators. Intentionally ambiguous, these designs should allow the listener to interpret their own personal meaning. The practical experience in providing this service is often hazardous and not without rejection, as the final approval remains with the band. As Oliver remarked in *This Rimmy River*, "For those who believe that a sleeve commission is an opportunity for the designer's imagination to run wild, I'd recommend spending four weeks working with musicians who are in the final stages of mixing an album which has taken a year to write and record." Having said that, 4AD is generally blessed with musicians who favour a more artistic approach to their sleeve than the traditional grinning face pack.

O' Reighan 1994

Working in-house allows Oliver to hear demonstration tapes and work in progress long before he actually has to put pen to paper. As a result this period allows Oliver to gain an understanding of the bands and their motivation before deciding on a direction and commissioning any photographer. The sleeve itself, when successful, is a reflection of the music. It is creating a third identity that is greater than its individual parts. As Oliver himself has said "It's too easy to owe intriguing image with harmonious type to produce a visually satisfying design, but if there's no connection with the music so what." Oliver's covers are commercial art printed by mass reproduction and distributed to different cultures around the world. This is their real purpose as opposed to collecting dust on a gallery wall. Their full strength is best achieved in conjunction with an appreciation of the music. You also have to be aware that the design's popularity is partially due to the popularity of the music.

4AD bands have always been free to choose other designers and many have done so. The reason is that Watts-Russell still holds the independent idea that the bands must be happy with their sleeve. Oliver is a sympathetic character who focuses on the satisfaction and fulfilment of the band, making that an essential part in the process of design. I personally agree that the sleeve design affects the way you hear the music. You see the record before you hear it. When people are listening to the record, they're not only hearing the music but you're also bringing together all the preconceptions you have about the band too. Therefore the music, the sleeve design, the bands dress, all add up to mean something. So collaboration between Oliver and bands becomes of extreme importance so they together can portray the image they perceive of themselves.

O' Reighan 1994

For the album *POD* by The Breeders (Fig no.12) Oliver told the band it would be stupid for them to be on the cover. The Pixies were never on any of their album covers. The Breeders didn't even want to be on the sleeves but Oliver still hemmed and and hawed saying, "If you want to be on the cover so every one can recognise you, go ahead and do it." The Breeders never even wanted to be on the cover of any 4AD album. But when they looked at the design for *POD* they found a picture of Oliver. He's naked except for an eel belt around his waist. The eels are thrown forward in some-erect fashion and he's in the middle of a tribal dance. After the shooting with photographer Kevin Westenberg in Oliver's flat, his flat needed to be redecorated because with the eels' heads flying around there was blood and guts everywhere. It could be argued that Oliver is self-promoting himself but that's not so, because you are not aware of the identity of the person due to the photographic distortions used.

O' Reighan 1994

Oliver has designed seven album covers for Frank Black's The Pixies. When asked about his participation in the design process, Black replied, "The first five I involved myself in very little- a phone call or two, preferring the pleasant surprise or I should say, preferring the pleasant shock. Anyhow I was never disappointed. However in recent years I have become more involved and as a result I have in all probability become more of a nuisance to Mr Oliver but I am still always happy with the results".

O' Reighan 1994

For their album covers *Last Splash* (Fig no.13) and *Cannonball* (Fig no.14), The Breeders wanted a meaty love heart pierced by a metal bolt with kitsch overtones. So Oliver employed photographer Jason Love. He had previously taken photographs of heart shaped livers and showed them to Oliver. Oliver approved but wanted to see more variations on the theme. So Love went off and did some more. The liver ended up being jelly through a process of experimentation. Oliver enjoyed the transformation and said, "I tell you to go off and do one thing and you come back with something else. It's lovely". Looking at the design, the music has been portrayed perfectly, reflecting the raw humour and passionate style.

O' Reighan 1994

Kim Deal from The Breeders knew what she wanted Oliver to do. Oliver said "Kim I tried it today, and it looks super. I pushed one testicle through a piece of cardboard to ensure its loneliness. It's not heavy or anything it would be nice and shiny and clean". And for the *Last Splash* album Oliver suggested this spurt of a kind of opaque fluid "very reminiscent of an ejaculation."

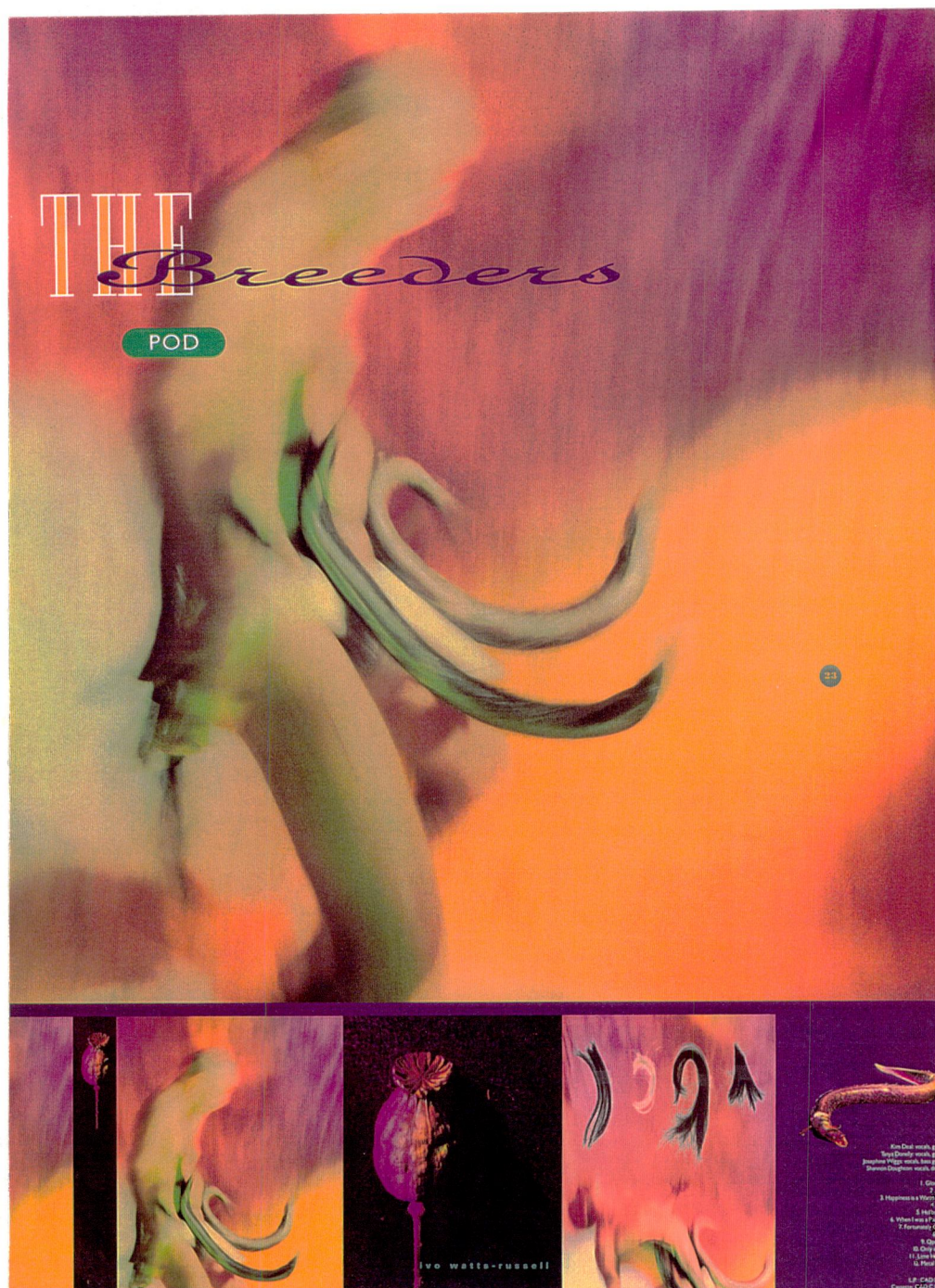


Fig.12 The Breeders *POD*

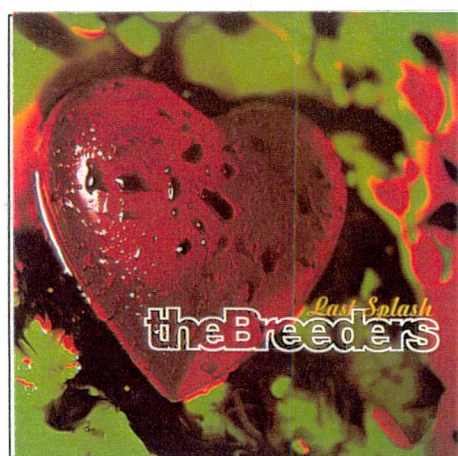


Fig.13 The Breeders *Last Splash*

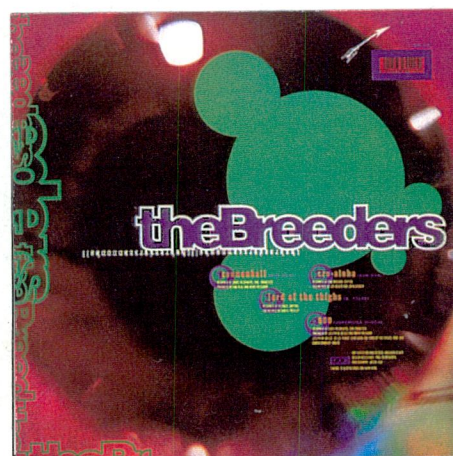


Fig.14 The Breeders *Cannonball*



Oliver's Style

Oliver's work practice owes much more to the tradition of the dedicated artist than the commercial designer. For him graphic design and typography always stress the painterly, intuitive and abstract over the practical and the technical. His images have created an intensive, internal and often claustrophobic world. I believe that Oliver's designs owe more to the discipline of painting than to the rigorous conventions of graphic design. Without dispensing entirely with structure and form, they introduce a freedom and seductive beauty usually missing from information-led typographical works. His use of layers, of muted imagery, found graphic devices, vivid colours and accidental photographic distortions, woven through a mixture of romantic letterforms and detailed typographic constructs, gives his work an emotional value that has become almost synonymous with a particular kind of post-industrial music.

Layers

Mills, 1993

The layered vision is a distinction of Oliver's work. Layers have been categorised as part of the post-modern movement by Katherine Mc Coy in *Eye* magazine. Looking at Oliver's work, there is a sense of three-dimensionality of images within image, of type sinking into the imagery. Oliver has said that this sense of things hidden or submerged arose from a love of textures. This also allows the viewers to discover things for themselves. What Oliver wants is for the person listening to the music to make up their own stories about the music. Oliver likes to leave things murky, ambiguous, and open ended. But in the work of Oliver's imitators the information can get drowned out by the chaos of competing elements on the page. The Mac has made this way of working available to a lot more people now. If I had one criticism of the layered look, it would be that meaning can go out the window. In a lot of layered work, meaning becomes mush but this is not so with Oliver.

Influences

Oliver's graphic work at its best surpasses the achievements of even the most stunning exemplars of Surrealistic graphic art of the early twentieth century such as Heartfield, Hoch and Mausemmer. But there is a cutting edge to his work in which the most contemporary of surrealities are incorporated in their beguiling beauty. Referring to Oliver, the term 'The Wandsworth Surrealist' was coined by Rick Poyner. Oliver's surreal methods are chance, word association and serendipity. His favourite symbols are teeth, knives and eggs. Vaughan Oliver at the best of times, would give a psychoanalyst a field day. Oliver has always remained convinced that his main influence is music. Art historian Dawn Ades has said of Surrealism that 'it was coined out of a desire for positive action to start to build again from the ruins of Dada'. So too did Oliver's design-orientated expression emerge from the graphic tradition of Punk.

A series of collaborations with photographer Simon Larbalestier for The Pixies (Fig no.15,16) has resulted in sepia toned images as disturbingly direct as the group's bizarre lyrics and violent guitar-based music: the freakish hairy back of a bald headed man, stuffed monkeys and screaming babies. These images came from Oliver discussing the music with the lead singer, Frank Black. The lyrics use similar themes to film maker David Lynch in that they deal with the surreal in everyday life.



Fig.15 Pixies *C'mon Pilgrim* (1987)



Fig.16 Pixies *Gigantic / River Euphrates* (1988)



There is a general suspicion that post-modernism is a conspiracy set loose by pretentious academics and ambitious designers inclined to overestimate the meaning of their work. The work of Vaughan Oliver has greatly broadened the design community's acceptance of the layered vision of post-modernism. His designs concentrate on visual techniques and individual solutions rather than on cultural contexts. Most of this post-modern design uses a visual vocabulary pioneered by the 1920s avant-garde, yet without the found object collages of Dada, the typographic house of Futurism or the socially engaged design of Constructivism.

Imagery

O' Reighan 1994

O' Reighan 1994

There is no one quite like Oliver; he will not be constrained by a sensible idea. At the same time he has a respect for the image. "Whereas most graphic designers would start with a particular graphic concept and bring in elements to fit the concept, Vaughan often seems to take the image and grow the design around it. Not that there is no concept at all. It's usually something very broad, more of a notion or an atmosphere than a particular idea.": Jim Friedman *photographer*. David Carson spoke about how much Oliver's work had a tremendous influence on an entire generation of American photographers, image makers and designers. Carson went on to say that-"His awareness is highly evident in his intuitive personal interpretations of music."

O' Reighan 1994

Before Oliver decides on a specific direction or commissions any photographer, he tries to come to an understanding of the bands motivation. The choice of photographer is determined by the nature of the music and whether he can match the aural aesthetic with that of a sympathetic photographer. This has worked very well with *The Pixies* and Simon Larbalestier or *The Breeders* and Jason Love. In these cases the process is collaborative and the photographers are allowed to explore their own personal directions within a loose brief. "By allowing the photographer room for his interpretation we have found the results more satisfying than when we have pinned him down with a specific detail. This confidence in our photographers is a crucial piece of the creative jigsaw and I cannot stress enough their collaborative importance in any V23 design": Vaughan Oliver

Vaughan has also uses his own techniques for generating imagery, often producing effects of great richness using means of surprising simplicity. Central to much of his work is the PMT (photo mechanical transfer) camera, ordinarily used for producing black and white positive images. The huge numbers Oliver used on the Colourbox (Fig no.18) inner sleeve were text size Bodoni, enlarged on the camera and shot through line screens so that they began to disintegrate.

Another technique he uses involves interfering with the developing process. By separating the positive and negative photographic paper too soon, Oliver creates blotched, fogged and distorted images with traces of unpredictable chemical colouring. *The Clan of Xymox* (Fig no.17) self-titled album cover is perhaps the most striking example of these chancy procedures. Irregular fragments of paper bearing individual letters were stuck down on a sheet of tracing paper to form the song titles. He placed this sheet under the camera, photographed it with the PMT camera and blurred it during the development. The final image is a densely textured and, in places, an almost unreadable collage, with a print of dolls by Terry Dowling placed on top to represent the band. Oliver keeps the unexpected



Fig.17 Clan of Xymox *Clan of Xymox* (1985)



Fig.18 Colourbox *Colourbox* (1985)



Typography

Burgoyne Dec 95

Burgoyne Dec 95

O' Reighan 1994

O' Reighan 1994

textures that come out of these experiments in the darkroom for possible use at a later date. What's so exciting about Oliver's work is that it never descends into laboured, literal transformations of lyric into imagery. He always manages to shy away from the merely illustrative and to come up with an image complementary to the music. The images can be beautiful, but closer inspection reveals a depth of emotion and an element of a disturbing concept. An example of this, is evident in the poster Oliver designed for His Name is Alive for their '*Livonia*' LP (Fig no.19). At close inspection you become aware that the subject matter is a photograph of a woman squatting, giving birth to a cat. Another example which I mentioned previously is the testicle pushed through cardboard on The Breeder's *Cannonball* LP, and on their album *POD*, where Oliver does a tribal dance with eels.

Vaughan believes that his style evolved from not having typographic training. He studied graphics at college but always went for the illustration projects. As he said himself- "I wanted to work in a commercial world but in a way that allowed personal expression, so illustration seemed the most natural route." This, he says, leads him to an unconventional attitude towards using type. "I had a visual image orientated background so I treated type in a illustrative fashion. Because I was working on a record sleeves where information wasn't the prime purpose I was able to play with legibility".

It wasn't until he became acquainted with the Dadaist, Constructivist, Bauhaus and other pioneers of twentieth century typography that Oliver began to blend typefaces with freedom. He piled up capitals and italics, serif and sans-serif, brush scripts and box rules into panels of type.

A similar combination of elements is used with great delicacy on This Mortal Coil's *It'll End in Tears* (Fig no.20,21) album of 1984, where the type becomes a vehicle of feeling quite as powerful as the imagery, in this case an otherworldly photograph of a beautiful women by Grierson. Boxes, rules of different weights, panels of type, wide letter spacing and bold condensed letterforms, particularly Bodoni, continue to be hallmarks of Oliver's work. He uses typefaces that more orthodox designers would reject as vulgar and clumsy, such as 'Aristen', 'Amati', 'Bernhard', 'Coronet', 'Empire of Iris' and 'Graphic'. "His continued use of non-new, non-hip typefaces helps to lend his work a timelessness found in few of his contemporaries"-: David Carson

Like the grand old Victorian mansion in horror films, these typefaces are haunted by ghosts and they have different voices some elegant and frail, some brazen and others pompous and ridiculous. Even so all of them can be heard and they tell their story along with Oliver's imagery. As part of Oliver's illustrative approach to type he has also devised his own letterforms. The Cocteau Twins logo underwent a series of hand-drawn variations until it reached a point of development on *Echoed in a Shallow Bay* (Fig no.23) and *Tiny Dynamine* (Fig no.22) where it perfectly matched to the swirling imagery.

Collaborations with Chris Bigg on V23 projects has introduced a further calligraphic dimension to Oliver's design. As Biggs remarks in this Rimmy River- "It was a fortunate coincidence for me that we met as Vaughan had a vision to see a potential in my early scratchings and he was enthusiastic about my experiments with calligraphy. He provided an outlet for something I was passionate about, encouraging me to see typography as an image that can be torn apart and manipulated and made to work in any number of situations."

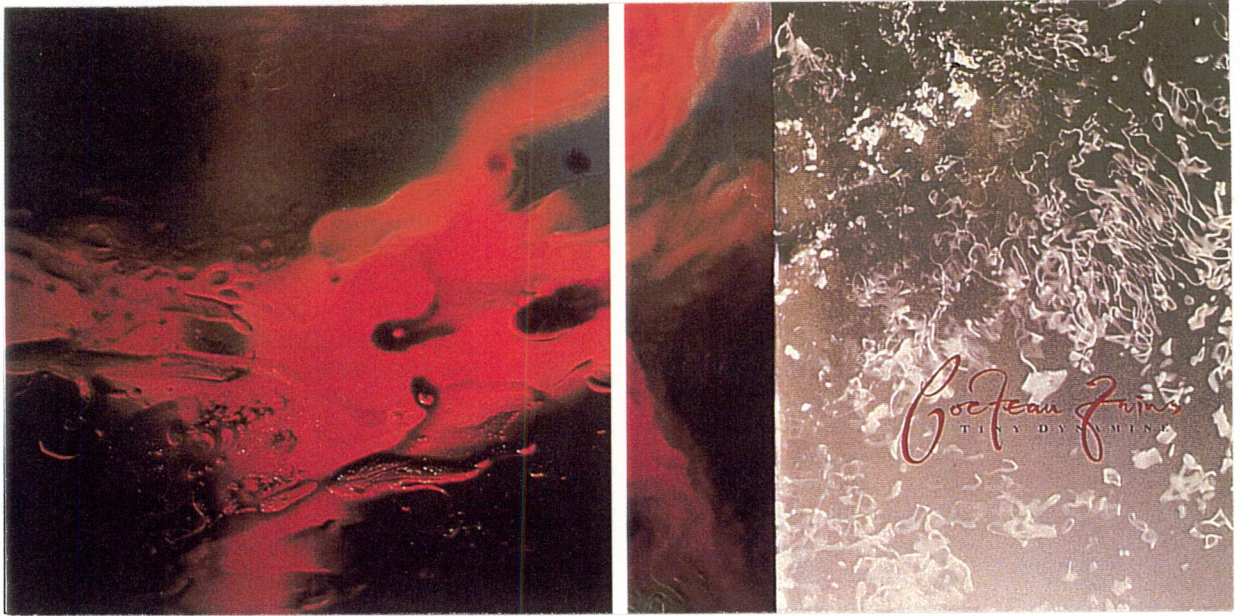


Fig.22 Cocteau Twins *Tiny Dynamine* (EP 1985)

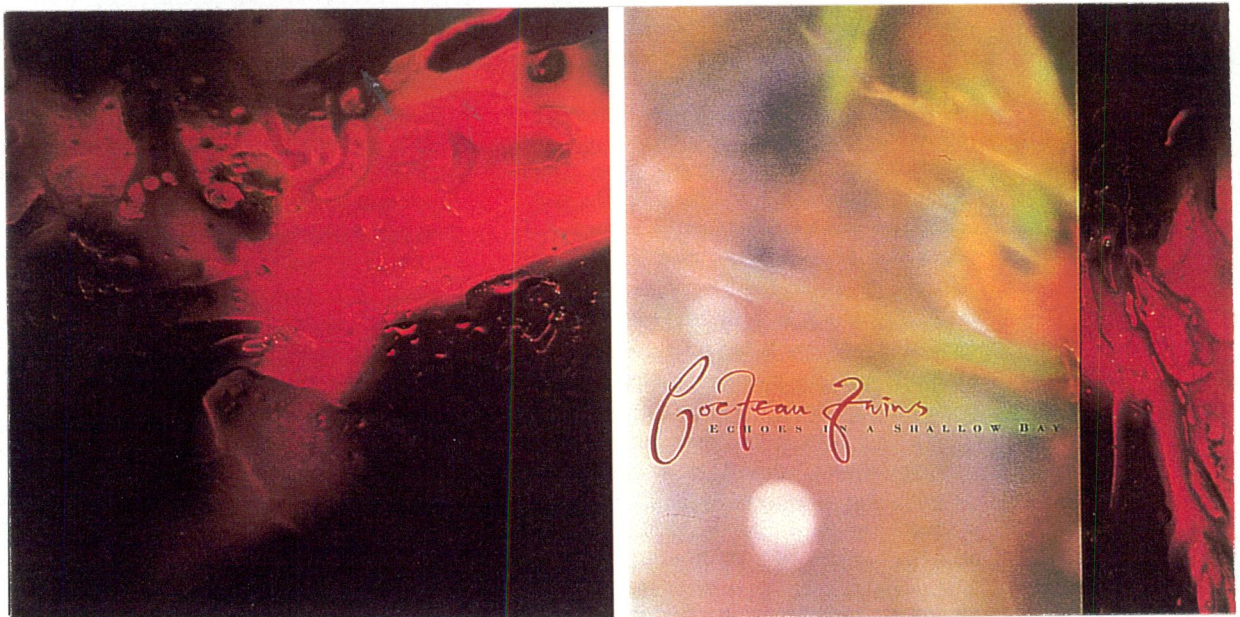


Fig.23 Cocteau Twins *Echoes in a Shallow Bay* (EP 1985)



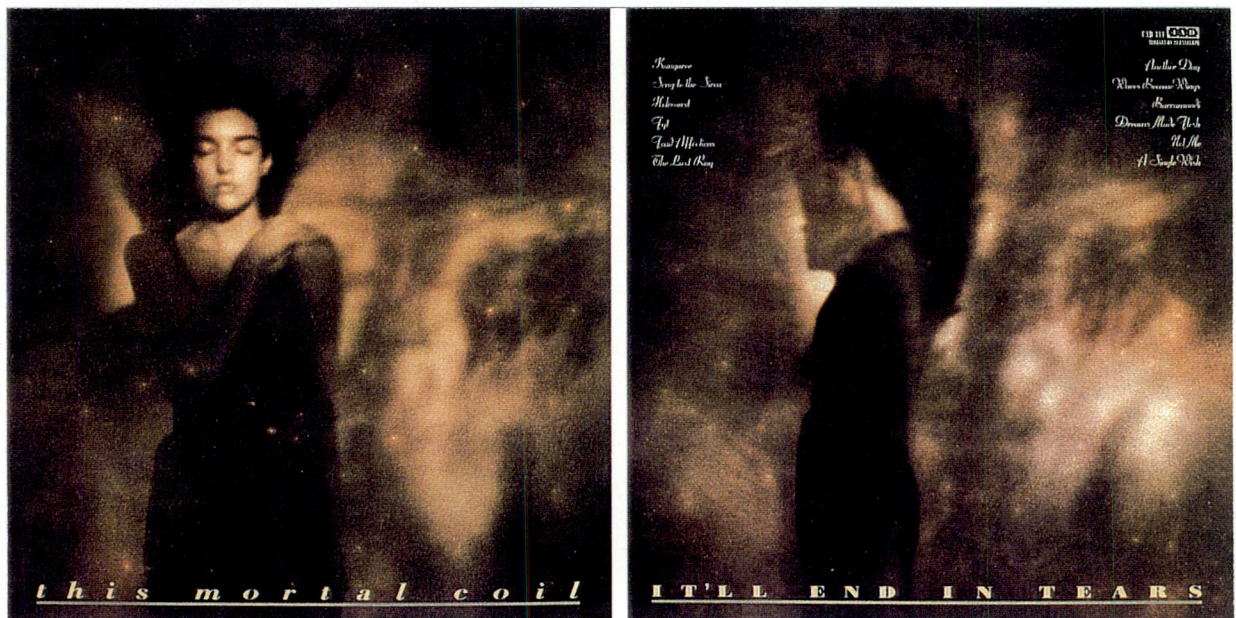


Fig.20 This Mortal Coil *It'll End in Tears* (LP 1984)

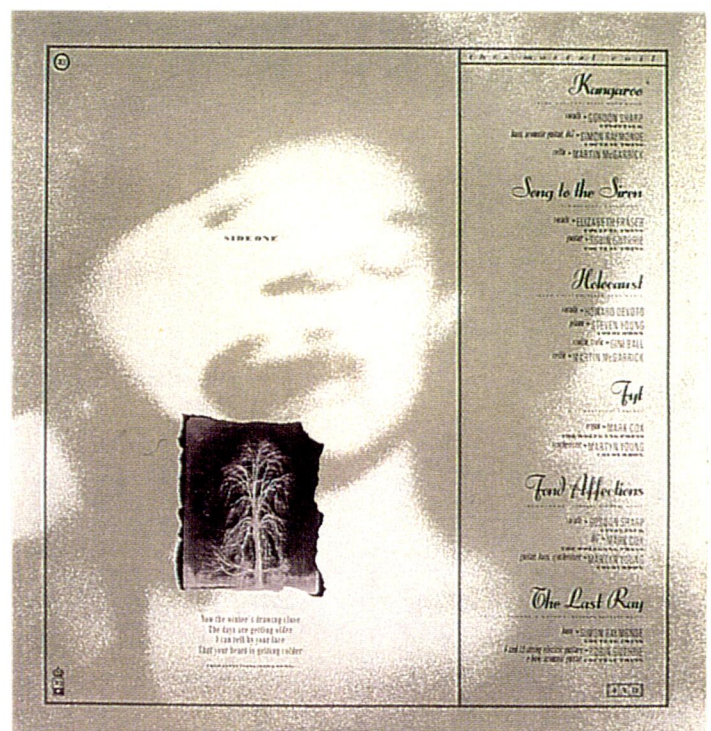


Fig.21 This Mortal Coil *It'll End in Tears* (LP inner 1984)



Chapter 5. Comparisons between Garrett,
Saville and Oliver

Chapter 5. Comparisons between Garrett,
Saville and Oliver

Comparison between
the identities of
independent
record labels.

Long before Vaughan Oliver created a corporate identity for 4AD, and Peter Saville designed Factory's identity. Malcolm Garrett had fallen in with Buzzcocks manager Richard Boom who provided a project which fulfilled the designer's obsession with art movements like Dada, Pop Art and Constructivism. Garrett pioneered an approach in which each and every manifestation of a recording artist- a record sleeve, a T-shirt, a Badge- would be clearly identifiable as part of an overall design scheme. In his work for Duran Duran, Garrett produced the Duran Duran corporation identity. Indeed, Kasper De Graff (Garrett's partner) and Malcolm Garrett have built their design and merchandising business around them. They were the second to create a corporate identity after Blue Note, to get the relative emphases of words and pictures right.

Garrett, whose clever graphics distinguished the sleeve of all The Buzzcocks records, was brought in to do the same for Duran Duran. Garrett's job was to make it all look as if it was coming from them. A chronological look through all the album and single sleeves shows how precisely he has translated the textures and fascinations of the music into shapes and symbols, then perpetuated them through time. Record sleeves, books, shirts, badges, brochures and even a board game for the group are all stamped with the logo of their company, ASSORTED IMAGES, and then the carrier bag to take them all home.

The Duran Duran sound is clean, metallic, and immaculately finished. So are Garrett's visuals. The sleeve for the first three singles and the debut album all abide by the same layout principles, linear precision and virginal backgrounds. For the album *Rio*, flavour of the month American artist Patrick Nagel was commissioned to do a painting. Garrett placed the smiling, Asiatic features of the subject woman against a claret backing. Diagonal lines and tailback lettering give an impression of speed.

Garrett has always made it an Assorted Images principle that a designer's expression should be attuned to the interpretation of the client's own identity. The effect Saville achieved with Factory's identity was that each Factory product from its conception through to its final packaging and marketing, is treated as a product in its own right. In terms of packaging, each product is embellished with its own apparent individual identity as an artifact and yet it simultaneously contradicts this appearance by the unmistakable marks of its own mass production, which might be simply its identifying catalogue number. (ie Fact-1, Fact-2, etc.)

Saville used an approach that he was to become famous for- intriguing image, minimal information and a general aura of mystery. For example taken together with the music's awesome emotions and the extreme reactions it generated, Joy Division's records took rock music into a new dimension. The headstone-like rusted metal sheet with the engraved title of *Love Will Tear Us Apart* 1980, and the funereal image used on *Closer* (Fig no.24) were the controversial first Joy Division single and LP covers after Ian Curtis's suicide. However, both were designed before the tragedy.

Largely Saville's achievement, Factory sleeve designs gave Manchester's Post Punk sounds a visual identity. He gave Factory bands, most notably Joy Division and New Order, a mystique which complemented perfectly the independent company's unique approach to music business practice. The absence of information on sleeves, designed as if for classical recordings, and expensive fine quality sleeves all helped to spawn the Factory myth.

·CLOSER·

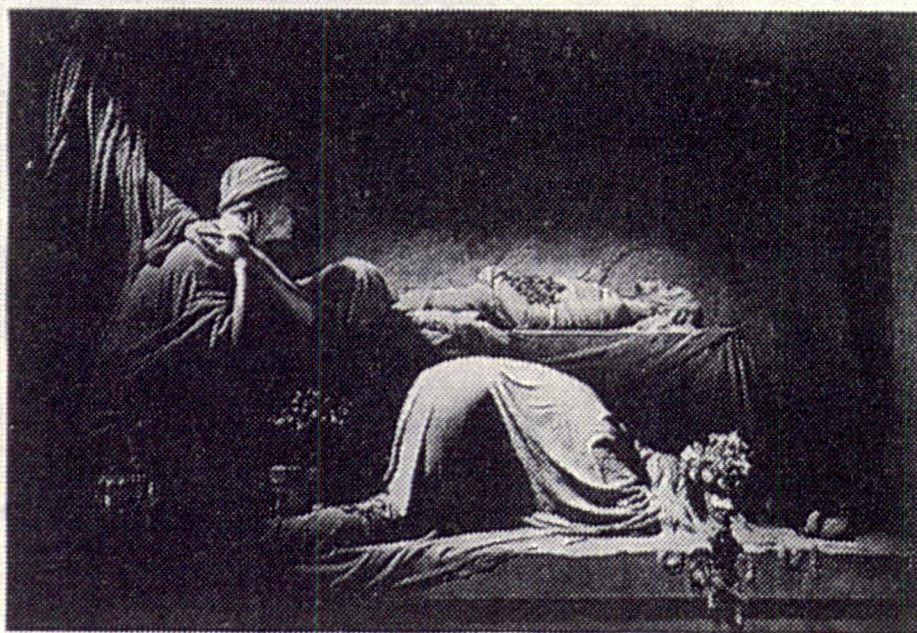


Fig.24 Joy Division *Closer*



Comparison between
Garrett's, Saville's
and Oliver's
style's, influences
and use of type

Garrett. 1993

Malcom Garrett helped introduce graphic design to Punk but what he initially tried to start was a new Dada movement which was later identified by Saville and Oliver. "I loved Dada because the only rule was there was no rules": Malcolm Garrett. Then Garrett found that what he was trying to create was actually happening on the streets; it was Punk Rock. All of his work is based around the typographic side of punk bands. If you look at his designs for The Buzzcocks (Fig no. 33,34) and you compare them with people's view of punk- 'blackmail' lettering, do it yourself lettering, very rough and ready- his Buzzcocks designs were not like that. They were very clean and very hard edged. It looked different but it was the same ethic while being in control.

Garrett. 1993

When Garrett was asked what were his influences he, said "I call the work I do Futurism because I think we're in the New Futurism age. You know all the Futurists just immersed themselves in the technology of the day....." Other influences on Garrett were Constructivism in Russia, the Bauhaus in Germany and Pop Art. Garrett's work lacks the obvious personal style of Saville or Oliver. But style is a word so over used in the context of graphic design, so negative in its implications and so imprecise, that it might be better to compare their work in terms of its general approach. Garrett is still experimenting with graphic design and that could be an explanation for why he hasn't found his own personal style.

Beard and Mc Clellan

Like Garrett, Saville has references in his work to Futurism, Surrealism, Bauhaus, Conceptual Art, and Gallery advertising. As Saville said himself in *iD* magazine "If you don't understand 20th century art then you don't actually understand design." Malcolm Garrett had a copy of Herbert Spencer's '*Pioneers of Modern Typography*,' and lent it to Saville. The one chapter that Saville didn't reinterpret in his own work was the cool, disciplined *New Typography* of Tschichold. Saville learnt from Tschichold that typography could be simple without you knowing that a graphic designer has arranged it. This is evident in Saville's early work, where his minimalist *Joy Division* sleeves placed the emphasis on type.

Saville resurrected the '20s typeface Albertus by Berthold Wolpe for the two versions of New Order's *Movement* LP (Fig no.25) and *Procession* single (both 1981). Saville has also adopted the Bauhaus trait of gridding and restricting himself to sans-serif fonts at an early stage of his career until New Order's *Low Life* (Fig no.27), where he used a sans-serif. '*Low Life*' came packaged in a grease paper sheath which listed the band, album and song names. For once, the record even featured photographers of New Order on the cover. Trevor Key took the four portraits, all distorted in the developing lab for artistic effect to help preserve their distance. Saville layered the bands name 'New Order' so that you read it from right to left using the font Neuzet.

As New Order increasingly worked with new technology, Saville dressed the musically influenced *Blue Monday* single (1983) (Fig no.28) as a floppy disc. As with his combination of colour coded alphabet and Henri Fantin-Latour's 'Roses' painting on *Power Corruption and Lies* LP (1983) (Fig no.29), the lack of information on the cover formed the basis for the growing mystique of New Order releases.

In a recent sleeve for New Order's single *Regret* (Fig no.31), Saville reclaims for print the style of Marlboro Man advertising imagery first appropriated by artist Richard Prince. This gives us, in effect, a simulation of a photograph of a photograph of something that was not real in the first place. Saville completes the circle of repetitions and underscores a note of plangency by using a movie- style title piece emblazoned across the two cigarette-smoking cowboys, reminding us of the celluloid origins of such mythic imagery. The most successful examples of such borrowings don't merely quote or rehash the source, they add something new in the process.



Fig.33 Buzzcocks *Orgasam Addict* (single 1977)



Fig.34 Buzzcocks *Love You More* (1978)

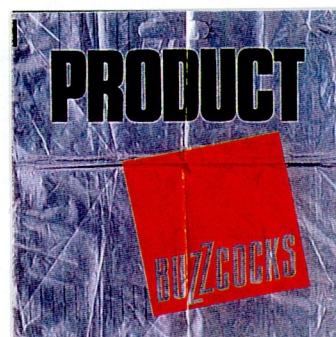


Fig.35 Product Carrier bag for Buzzcocks first LP

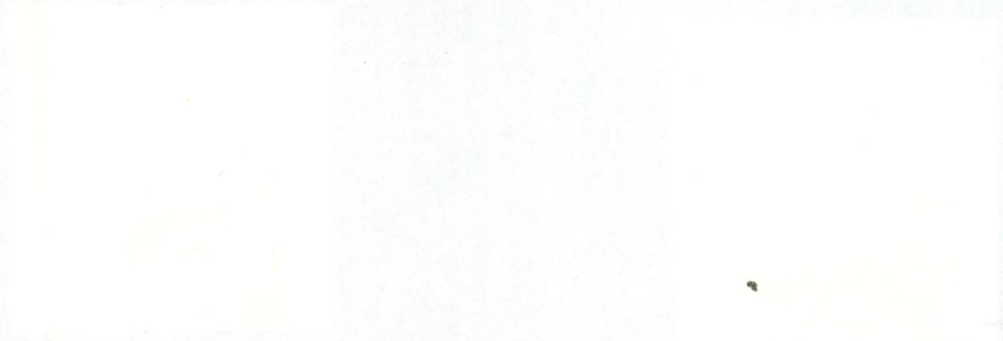
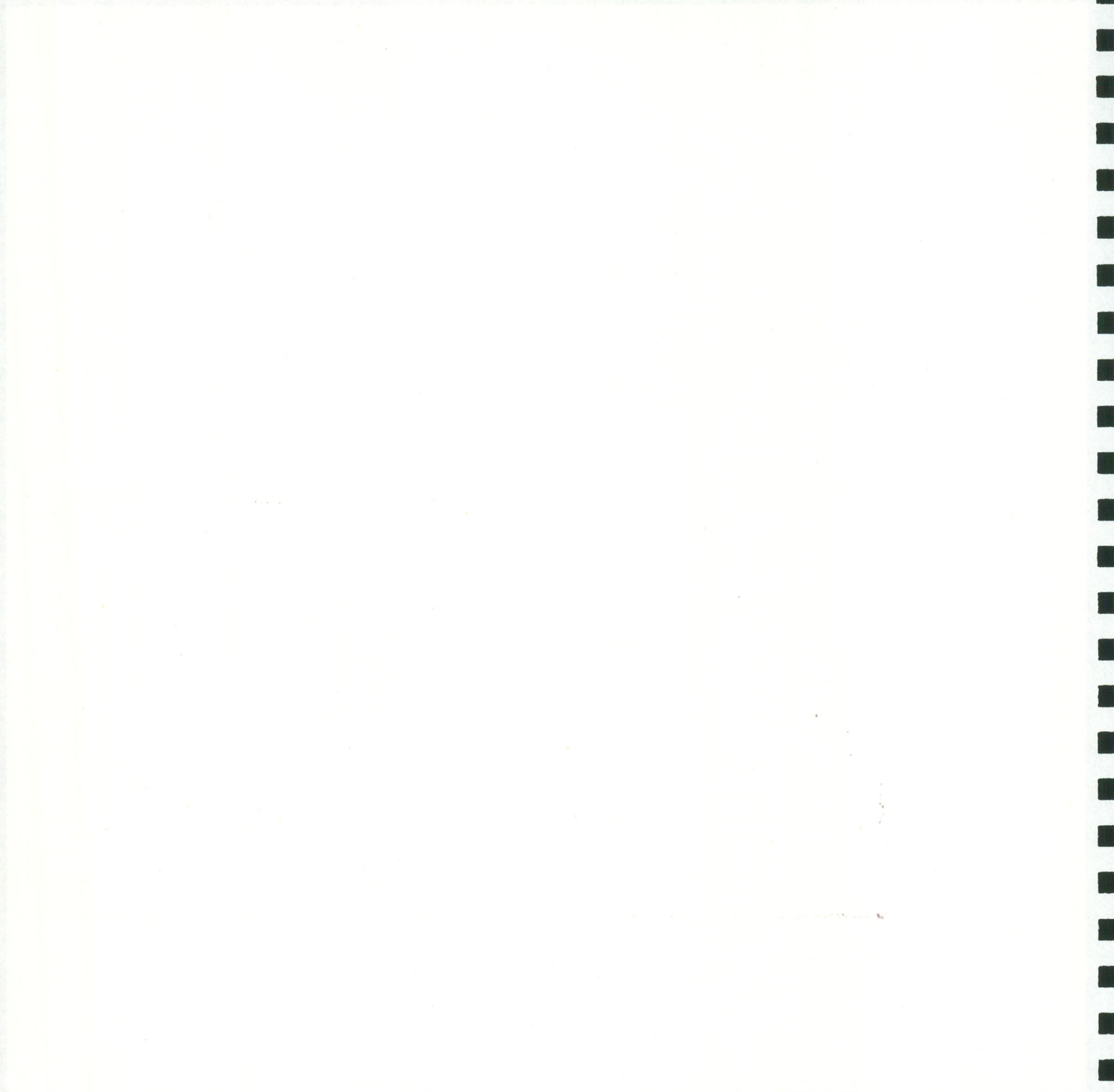




Fig.25 New Order *Movement*



Fig.26 Depero's Futurist 'poster' 1932

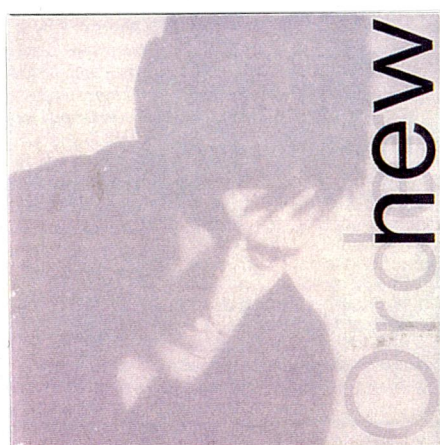


Fig.27 New Order *Low Life*

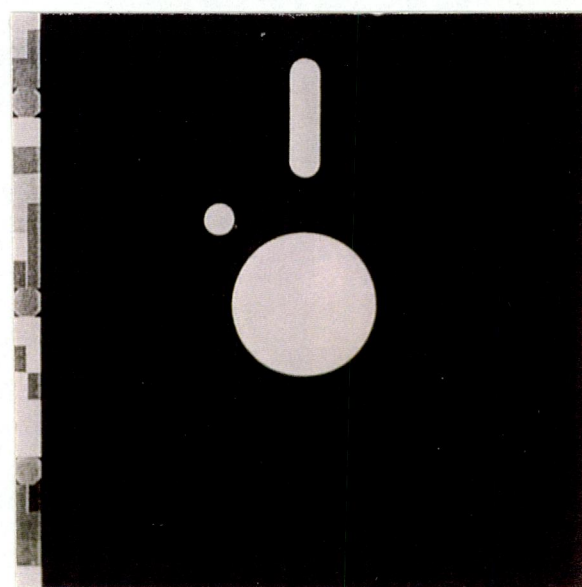


Fig.28 New Order *Blue Monday*



Fig.29 New Order *Power Corruption and Lies*

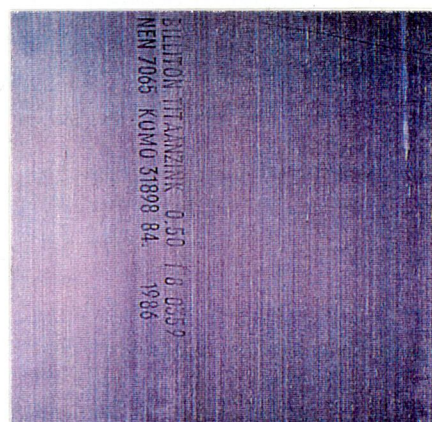


Fig.30 New Order *Brotherhood*

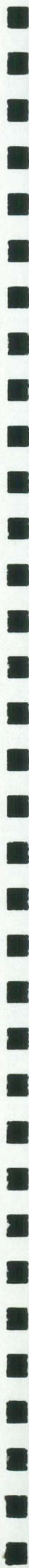




Fig.31 New Order *Regret*

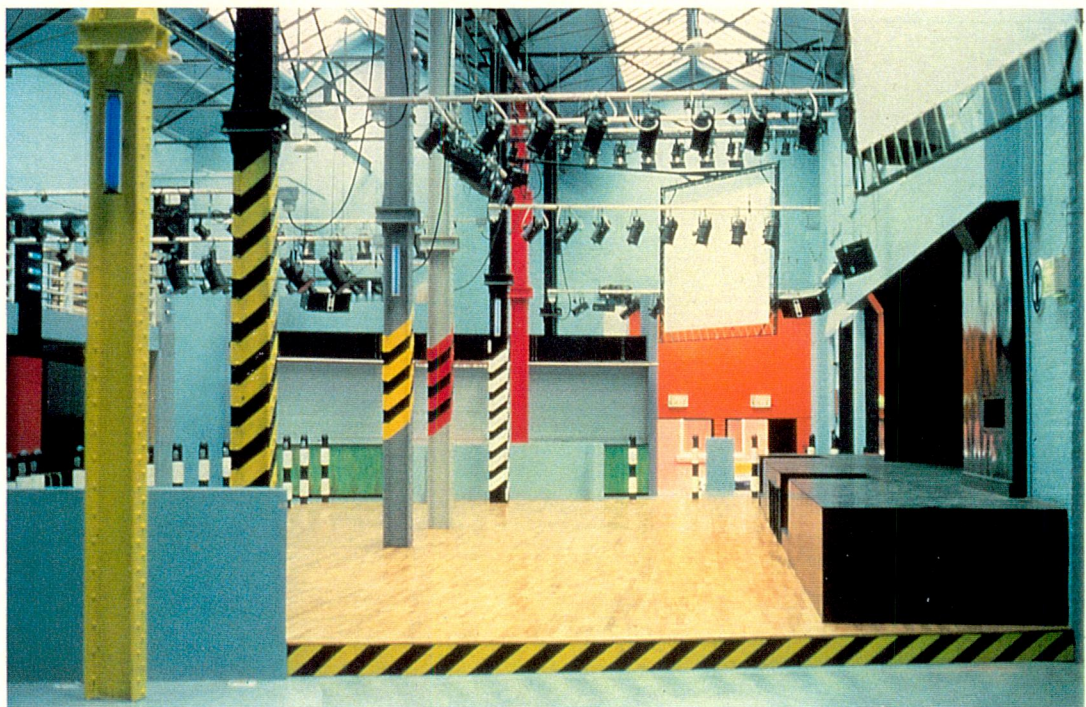


Fig.32 The Hacienda Nightclub



Saville, like Oliver, has used textures in his design for New Order's *Brotherhood* (Fig no.30). Using a kind of metallic looking textural surface he turns the coldness of metal into a pleasing sleeve.

The many Garrett facets are ruled by a self-confessed awkwardness attitude and a tendency to enjoy himself that sets him apart from Saville and Oliver. There is an unabashed personality and humour in Garrett's work- see the cheerful irony in the plastic bag for the first Buzzcocks LP *Product* (Fig no.35) He was first on the block in employing other visual motives. Hazard stripes were seen on Buzzcocks sleeves long before the Hacienda (Fig no.32) had been built. The Hacienda was an empty yacht warehouse on Whitworth Street west Manchester which was turned into a club by its owners Factory Records and New Order, and which was known for its striped decor.

Poynor. 1992

At 40, Garrett has an evangelical passion for pushing back design's final frontiers with new technology, especially interactive systems. His 1992 exhibition *Ulterior Motifs* at London's Design Museum showed off his series of Mac facilitated logotypes or 'trademarks'. He has designed a major book, *Understanding Hypermedia*, on the information technology revolution rapidly making print yesterday's medium. It's like designing the last book ever, and he loves irony: "Print is still valid, but I am more inspired by what is five minutes old, than what is 500 years old". Interactive Television is crying out for graphic design skills, he argues. With his ventures into screen-based multi-based design with Macintosh, Garrett has already staked his claim to be the first graphic designer in Cyberspace.

Few people, now would dispute that Peter Saville has had a pervasive influence on British graphic design over the last fifteen years. From the quiet perfection of the typography and simple, clean layouts of his early work for Joy Division, to his use of translucent papers and the sans-serif type of New Order's *Low Life*, to his championing of Aicher's typeface Rotis long before its current ubiquity, his work has consistently anticipated and helped precipitate major trends in British graphics. His instinct for what looks right at any given time seems to have been mirrored by an instinct for which areas of graphic design are most receptive to innovation. What stands out from Saville's work is not so much the individual designs but the ideas behind them, which often seem to have a scope broader than the particular job in question. By the late '80s the majority of designers in Britain were revelling in the retro typefaces and careful use of white space which Saville had been using on record sleeves several years earlier. He then experimented with acid colours, startling sentimental serif typefaces and powerful image making.

Conclusion

Conclusion

During the '80s graphic design at a high level had a very good reputation but the mould breaking work of Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville and Vaughan Oliver emerged as a new trend. But now the new trend has established itself. Generally British graphic design can be narrow minded and self-referential. But in the '80s there was Garrett, Saville and Oliver, where the quality of work is varied. They had fun and broke the rules but they didn't lose sight of content.

In Britain, Modernism was being reclaimed as style; small sizes of helvetica, acres of white space, asymmetrical compositions. It was a rather fresh interpretation of Modernism which was much quieter, more gentlemanly than on the continent. Looking back on the '80s there were two schools of influence. You had the Swiss influence as evident in Brody's use of Helvetica and some of Peter Saville's work and then the Dutch influence which was post-modernist, which is evident in Vaughan Oliver's work.

Vaughan Oliver came close to understanding the ideas of Postmodernism, the ideas of appropriation, the vernacular, pluralism. His work is very conceptual. Oliver is the most interesting British designer to emerge from the '80s. His work stands up very well. But if you look at Garrett's revivalist graphics, to use his own term, they are post-modernist. And Barney Bubbles, was a Postmodernist who understood historical styles and used them.

Oliver's cover images have become an integral part of the 4AD experience, a cult in their own right. Oliver's work within the music industry has perhaps been the main reason why his achievements have been so under-rated. It's this descriptive uncertainty that makes Oliver's work so interesting. His work has a consistency and a coherence that has as much to do with Oliver as with his clients, and the bands. He is motivated by strong personal concerns, obsessions with music. The methods he uses designing the covers are chance, textbook, surrealism and word association which leaves it with a sense of mystery rather than statement.

The current vogue for distressed layered typography owes a considerable debt to Vaughan Oliver. His hand crafted compositions, a mixture of images and type, show scant regard for the structures of grids, columns or any of the rules of the new typography. He has created a baroque counterpoint to the West Coast movement. Oliver's commitment plays an integral role in inspiring clients and design associates alike. He sets himself an almost impossible task with every new project, expecting each new design to reach a standard of perfection and relevance to the project at hand that surpasses, or at least matches, the project before. Oliver has challenged the boundaries of the role of art director and the use of photography.

Oliver's prodigious output has been so consistently linked to a single client, 4AD, and his range and sheer volume of output has allowed a continuity of experimentation and development. The art world has failed to recognise that Oliver forms a crucial link in the understanding of a developing tradition in British design which has its roots in the sensual beauty of the work of traditional illustrators of the past like Aubrey Beardsley. Oliver stands out clearly as a key player and his status is reflected in the numerous international exhibitions offered to him and the pride of place given to his work in the new Twentieth Century Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

It wasn't until Oliver's work was exhibited in Nantes 1990 that he began to get serious critical praise. This exhibition covered his work from 1983 to 1990. To place the work in a gallery environment may seem retrogressive and hypocritical because much of the popularity of his work is due to the popularity of the musicians music. I personally think it's an opportunity for V23 to show that graphic design can be both intuitive and analytical. After all, the record shop is the modern art gallery of any town, city or country today.

LA was the scene for a British design exhibition which showed Oliver's work. It was a unique body of work whose influence on mainstream commercial designers has been profound. This holds a specific relevance in a city like LA that prides itself on creative image making across film, video, music and art. Oliver has created important Californian connections since 1986. He has contact with West Coast designers which has led to collaborative projects with *Emigre* and *Raygun*. In particular, Sept. 1994 saw the launch of a new mail order music magazine titled *huH* (Fig no.36), which he has designed for *Raygun publishing*.

Those who have a soft spot for the 4AD label have never been able to see the work of V23 as a purely packaging. For all the freedom and graphic exuberance of the designs, it is symbiosis between the graphics and the music. If there is anything that should be remembered about Oliver's work, long after the recordings have passed out of circulation and the posters have ceased to advertise current material, it is that he is at present, without doubt, one of the few examples of a design appreciation that challenges all preconceived ideas concerning the role of graphic design in the music industry.

The idea of corporate identity in music is hardly new. However, the most successful example before Factory or 4AD, of music living in harmony with visual style, is the Blue Note jazz label. Blue Note Records were the pioneers of the independent label ethic, who led the way for Factory and 4AD. Francis Wolff's photography and Reid Miles graphic design crystallised indelible, inimitable images of some of jazz's greatest names. Miles individually styled sleeves were as recognisable as the trumpet timbre of Miles Davis. As Blue Note embraced the musical changes of its recording artists, Miles caught the slipstream, creating sleeves that transcended the mugshot and mysticism of other genre's sleeves. Miles made the cover look like it knew what lay ahead for the listener.



Fig.36 Design cover for *huH*

The '80s came only a decade or two after graphic design as we now think of it gained recognition in Britain. As ever, a generation came through which was in some ways radical compared to the previous one. But there was a new corporate client base for the next generation. Garrett, Saville and Oliver were among a group that had raw thoughts in which each and every manifestation of a recording artist is clearly identifiable as part of an overall design scheme. Garrett achieved this with The Buzzcocks from their sleeve designs right down to the badge designs. On the other hand, Saville and Oliver created a mystique for bands which in turn positioned their labels on a visual frontier. By the time the mainstream was in syncs with their way of thinking, their ideas had been absorbed into the culture of the existing design establishment.

Malcolm Garrett, Peter Saville and Vaughan Oliver appropriated the symbols and images of a popular youth culture, such as the Punk movement of the 70's. Arguably it is Garrett's, Saville's and Oliver's ability to predict and pre-empt future trends which has given much of their work its longevity. This ability has been described perfectly by Ian Curtis in *New Dawn Fades*, where his lyrics talk about a change in scene, style and speed while having no regrets. These lyrics sums up the contribution that Garrett, Saville and Oliver made to graphic design in the '80s. The consequence is that often these designs are not appreciated by a wider audience until some years after.

Bibliography

Backlund, Nicholas

Rules Changed
ID March/ April 1990

Burgoyne, Patrick

Lost Rivers
Creative Review Dec. 95

Coad, Dent Emma

The Designers Designers
Direction Oct. 1988

Davis, Jim

G0-Faster Graphics
Eye no.16 vol.4 Spring 1995

Davis, Jim

Interview with Malcolm Garrett- career to date
Direction March 1991

Mc Dermot, Catherine

A Family Of Albums
Designer December 1987

Mc Dermot, Catherine

Street Style, British Design in the '80s
1987 London, Thames and Hudson

Edge, Kevin

Small is Beautiful
Sublime- Cornerhouse Manchester

Edge, Kevin

The Art of Selling Songs
Graphics for the Music Business
1991 London, Futures Publications

Eurgoyne, Patrick

Lost Rivers
Creative Review March 1991

Firth, Simon

Art into Pop
London, New York Methuen 1987

Firth, Simon

Facing the Music
London, New York Pantheon 1988

Flowers, Claude

New Order and Joy Division
Dreams never end
London, Omnibus Press 1995

Garrett, Malcolm

Malcolm Garrett on the Mac
Step by Step graphics Vol.9 Part.3 1993

Garrett, Malcolm	Too Little Too Soon Creative Review March 1990
Graham, Dan	Rock my Religion 1993 U.S.A.
Gutterman, Scott	From City Slick to Country Camp Print U.S. Graphic Design Print XLV:1
Hill, Dave	Designer Boys and Materials Manufacturing the '80s Pop Dream 1986 Poole, Blanford
Huygen, Frederique	British Design, Image and Identity 1989 London, Thames and Hudson
Jennings, Rose	Generous to a Vault Direction October 1988
Jones, Mike	Of Pop, Punk and Penury Design April 1991
Jones, Mike	Going Public - Going Bust Design January 1991
Mc Kay, Ian	Vaughan Oliver in Nantes, France Artline International Art News Vol.5 no.2 Summer 1990
Kitts, Barry and Mc Quiston, Liz	Source Book: A Visual Reference to 20th Century Graph Design 1987 London, Quarto Publications
Lamacraft, Jane	The art of ECM's sleeves Direction June 1991
Lester, Paul	4AD day Melody Maker 17th February 1990
Livingstone, Marco	Books in Freefall Eye no.10 vol.3 1993
Lippa, Domenic	Vaughan Oliver Baseline no.13 November 1990

Marsh, Graham and Callingham, Glyn	East Coasting 1993 London, Collins and Brown
Marsh, Graham and Callingham, Glyn	The cover art of Blue Note records London 1991. Collins and Brown
Mills, Mike	Eye no.8 vol.2 1993
Myerson, Jeremy	Raw Power and Beguiling Subtlety Affiche no.9 april 1994
Mukoda, Ncioki	Art work of Excellent Jazz Labels 1993 London
Mc Cllan and Beard Steve	iD forums / Design Sept 1990 no. 84
Oliver, Vaughan	V23 Exhibition 1st February - 11th March Espace Graslin, Nantes CRDC Nantes
Poynor, Rick	An interview with Peter Saville Eye no.17 vol.5 Summer 1995
Poynor, Rick	An interview with Malcolm Garrett Eye no.12 vol.3 1994
Poynor , Rick	Assorted Signs of the Times Blueprint no.86 April 1992
Poynor, Rick	Typography Now and the Next Wave London 1991. Interno Books

Poynor, Rick	The Wandsworth Surrealist Blueprint no.78 June 1991
Poynor, Rick	The Graphic Edge London 1991. Booth-Clibborn Editions
Poynor, Rick	Brody on Sign Language Blueprint April 1988
O' Reighan, Vulva	This Rimmy River Graphic Works 1988 - 1994 Murray Fledman Gallery / Pacific Design Centre Los Angeles September 13th - November 4th 1994 4AD / V23, Alma Road, London
Rimmer, Dave	Like Punk Never Happened London 1995. Faber and Faber
Scher, Paula and Haun, Sarah	Pentagram in the '90s The next Generation IDEA vol.232 May 1992
Smith, Andrew	4AD interviews Raygun, April 1993
Spencer, Herbert	Pioneers of Modern Type London 1992 Lund Humphries
Thrift, Julia	Saville on the Spot Direction June 1989
Williams, Hugh Aldersey	London Report: Graphic Design ID March / April 1989
Woughuysen, James	Going Down the Third Time Blueprint June 1986
Vanderlands, Rudy	Interview with Vaughan Oliver Emigre no.9 1988 special issue on 4AD