

Strange Advance

interview by Don Teplyske

Drew Arnott, half of Vancouver band Strange Advance, was scheduled to phone at 3:15. The clock ticked down. Finally, 3:15 arrives and the phone rings; either Arnott is simply conscientious or he is desperate for publicity for the band's new album *Two*. Three minutes into our interview, I decide Arnott is simply a nice guy trying to make it in the major leagues of rock 'n' roll.

Strange Advance burst upon the Canadian music scene in the fall of 1982 with its debut album *World's Away*. The album was full of sparkling, hook laden songs and was an FM staple for several months. And then, nothing.

Why the long wait between albums? "The album has been ready since October," explained Arnott, attributing the wait to not wanting to get caught in the Christmas flood of releases.

"The major delay, though, was that we went to Eng'land in January (1984) to record the album and spent the better part of three months there," he continued.

However, the British sessions did not progress as the band, Arnott, and lead singer/guitarist Darryl Kromm, had anticipated.

"We ended up with an album we did not like and it went into the proverbial bin," Arnott concluded.

Misfortune seems to follow Strange Advance. A proposed 1983 European tour with then hot Kajagoogoo fell through. "The exposure would have been nice but (considering Kaja's audience) we would have died the big one," Arnott said. A similar tour of North America with the Moody Blues was also cancelled.

After their three month sojourn in England, Strange Advance returned to Canada, went to Toronto and started the album all over again.

"We did the beds (basic tracks) for the album ourselves with Spider Sinnaeve (the ex-Streethart bassist). Then we looked for the studio musicians who could do the best job," Drew said.

"Studio musicians," Arnott explained "have polished (their talents) to such a degree that you can not fault them."

Arnott explained that he does not mind using people from outside of the band to play on the albums because Strange Advance "transcends the four or five member band mentality. The music is what counts and (we do) whatever it takes to put it across."

With the release of the new album and forthcoming tour, Arnott is confident, but cautious.

"Because of the gap (over two years) between , a lot of people may have forgotten about us. Hopefully "We Run", the first single, will have staying power and be around for awhile. I see the future of Strange Advance as a band with a large base of support," Arnott said. "We're not going for the top of the charts or to sell a million albums." Not that that wouldn't be nice, Drew.

Arnott's attitude to radio success is slightly contradictory. It would be nice, but...

"The groups with lasting power are those who do not do so well on AM," Arnott said. "I was raised on Top 40. In fact, I was in the car the other day and heard a Dave Clark Five song ("Glad All Over") and I decided it deserved another chance. But during the eight to twelve week period when it was a hit, it was the only song I could remember. Top 40 songs are so transient — people relate the song to the band and once the song is gone, so is the band. Eventually, you become only as good as your last chart hit."

Drew Arnott is determined not to become only as good as his last record. Arnott intends for Strange Advance to be around for a long time.

Maybe this will be another time when nice, punctual guys do not finish last.



Drew Arnott and Darryl Krom from Strange Advance talk about their past misfortunes and promote their new album *Two*.

Kim Wilde's album is a superior effort

Kim Wilde
Teases and Dares
MCA

review by Don Teplyske

How do you write an objective review of the latest album by your third favorite female vocalist? Well, quite simply, most people do not. They say, "To hell with journalistic ideals," and proceed to rave for six to eight paragraphs about "this superior effort."

I will not do that. I will not mention that Kim Wilde is my third favorite female vocalist (behind Rachel Sweet and Kirsty MacColl) and I will retain all journalistic objectivity.

Teases and Dares Kim Wilde's fourth album, is more exciting than her last (1983's

flirtation with New York dance music, *Catch as Catch Can*), but does not reach the levels attained with her second album, the nearly perfect *Select*.

Teases and Dares features Kim strutting and pouting as few can. While listening to "Janine" my ears flashback to 1978 and the first time I heard Debbie Harry purr "Denis"; Kim owes more to Debbie than most Wilde fans care to acknowledge.

The first single from the album, "The Second Time" (retitled "Go For It" in Canada and the U.S.), has the most commercial potential. Smooth production by Ricky Wilde allows the song to be danceable without being disposable.

The album's strongest song is "The Touch", the second single in the U.K. Kim shines on

this number, bopping along somewhere between Sheena Easton and Kate Bush.

Kim displays considerable promise as a songwriter with her two compositions contained on the album; "Fit In" and "Shangri-La" are songs of lost or unrequited love that rise above typical pop song fodder. The majority of the album is, as always, written by brother Ricky and father Marty.

The album does have its shortcomings — too much band time between tracks and the songs occasionally go on a little too long. However, these minor flaws can not weaken this superior effort.

In Canada, Kim is still regarded as "that cute blonde who sang "Kids in America". *Teases and Dares* should alter this narrow view. Kim Wilde is dazzling.

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