

Ben: Yeah, but at the same time you have these jams like the first two tracks on the last record that set the tone for everything.

Tim: Yeah, but the last record was really personal. I keep saying that. People are always saying that I was on a huge Bob Dylan trip. Fair play, okay, but if that was a Dylan record, it was definitely done really well.

Ben: Really personal records always strike me...

Tim: I didn't want it to sell any records. The one before [*Tellin' Stories*] sold loads. I wanted this to be something really personal, a discovery record, something that people would discover and it would mean something really big to them. It didn't have any singles on it. We tried to release two or three singles and they weren't hits, you know. The first one was "Forever," seven minutes long. It doesn't matter about time length or when the melody comes in, if it's words and music and the Charlatans at that point in time and I like that point in time. I think it's one of my personal favorite achievements, but I never want to go there again.

Ben: The key is not to.

Tim: The key is not to. We did "How High." I never want to go there again. If we wrote any more words in one song than that one, then, like I said before, it would be words and no music.

Ben: I think the key for a great group is to keep pushing boundaries. The Rolling Stones followed *Satanic Majesties* with *Beggars Banquet*.

Tim: We're like that in that fashion and maybe *Between 10th and 11th* was our *Satanic Majesties Request*. *Up To Our Hips*, I'm scared of that record at times. I just don't know it. It's like a friend I really don't want to see again.

Ben: There's stuff I really like on that one though like "I Never Want An Easy Life If Me And He Were Ever To Get There." I absolutely love that one.

Tim: The first song on that LP, "Come In Number 21," I didn't have a clue what I was doing and it was Rob's song. He being the fucking bastard that he was, he wouldn't give me any indication [hums the Hammond line]. I was going, "I don't know what to do?" I think having that as a moment, I decided that I would start the songs. I think the first three LPs, it was mine and Rob's group,

and then after that it was my group on the fourth one. If I knew what to do... I'm a good communicator, I can tell people what to do. Everyone else in the group was brilliant musicians, but they couldn't tell the singer what to do. My defining moment was *The Charlatans* and *Tellin' Stories*. I love the cover to *Melting Pot*, which were sort of the greatest moments of The Charlatans distorted. I love the cover on that. *Us And Us Only*, I've got to thank Tony Rogers, who had just started in the group, a lot, a new member and a bunch of jaded fuckers as well. You've got to fight that al-



ways, being jaded. You've got to fight that forever.

Ben: I think that's true with whatever you do. You have your moments where you feel really inspired, but other times it takes real effort. One thing I never really talk to people about in interviews, because usually when it's set up by a label I'm given a relatively short period of time, is the artist's early background, like what initially made you fall in love with music. In your case, was it punk rock?

Tim: Yeah, kind of. I bought records really young. The first record I got was by The Vibrators, and I bought that when I was seven or eight. It was on

an English television program called *Top Of The Pops*. After that, I laid low for a while, and then it was The Boomtown Rats. My main love... after punk rock, there was a second wave of turbocharged rock and speed metal like Discharge, GBH, Crass. I joined that gang. Also, Iron Maiden and Motorhead. I was definitely speedy when I was 13. There was a gap until I was 16 when I got into New Order. In 1983, I bought my first New Order record, which was "Blue Monday." It just taught me that not everything has to be fast to create an impact, not everything has to be melodic to create an impact, not everything has to be perfectly tracked to create an impact. That's what I loved about it. I was a New Order fan pretty much from then on. Sex Pistols, Stranglers, speed metal, New Order, and I forget falling in love with anyone else after New Order. I played *Power, Corruption, And Lies* for seriously six months. That was the only record on my turntable. That was a fucking love affair, that.

Ben: I know the first records I bought better than the more recent ones. I really loved Echo and the Bunnymen.

Tim: Some people have said to me, you are the Echo and the Bunnymen of this generation. I don't like Echo and the Bunnymen enough to feel that's a compliment. I liked "Back Of Love," obviously, "Rescue," and *Ocean Rain*, but I just didn't like them enough to be able to put myself in that. We're a dysfunctional group and I love the way we operate. We're a very unique band. No one knows what we do. I don't know what we do!

Ben: That's the longevity factor.

Tim: Longevity worries me because I've only liked groups that had a short life.

Ben: I love the Rolling Stones from the beginning through the mid-'70s. That's a pretty good run.

Tim: We've got to sell more records to even try to compare ourselves with the Rolling Stones. If I made it like Keith, or Bill [laughs], I'd be a happy man. I can't stop.

Ben: I think it's dangerous to think like that.

Tim: They're the only group that you can compare longevity with, or R.E.M.