

my breath as he pulled out a slide guitar and murmured, mostly to himself, "Here comes the show stopper," before sliding into the barbwire riffed *Sun Goin' Down* off 1993's *Splendor Solis*. So it comes as sad news that this won't ever be the case again, although the fact he's back into the "big

"I have so much new material and I'm really excited again about exploring all the avenues of heavy rock music, especially with all the world music influences," he enthuses, though tiredly. "I mean, I love playing the old Tea Party stuff, but there will come a time, especially when this new record

[and that] excites me again."

This is excellent news, indeed, particularly as the nucleus of this new, as-yet-untitled record seems to be rooted in blues and rock, all tied together with Martin's well known Eastern

piece band again – we're auditioning bassists, keyboardists. So it's going to be a power trio again, you know?"

Jeff Martin plays the Corner Hotel on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th February.

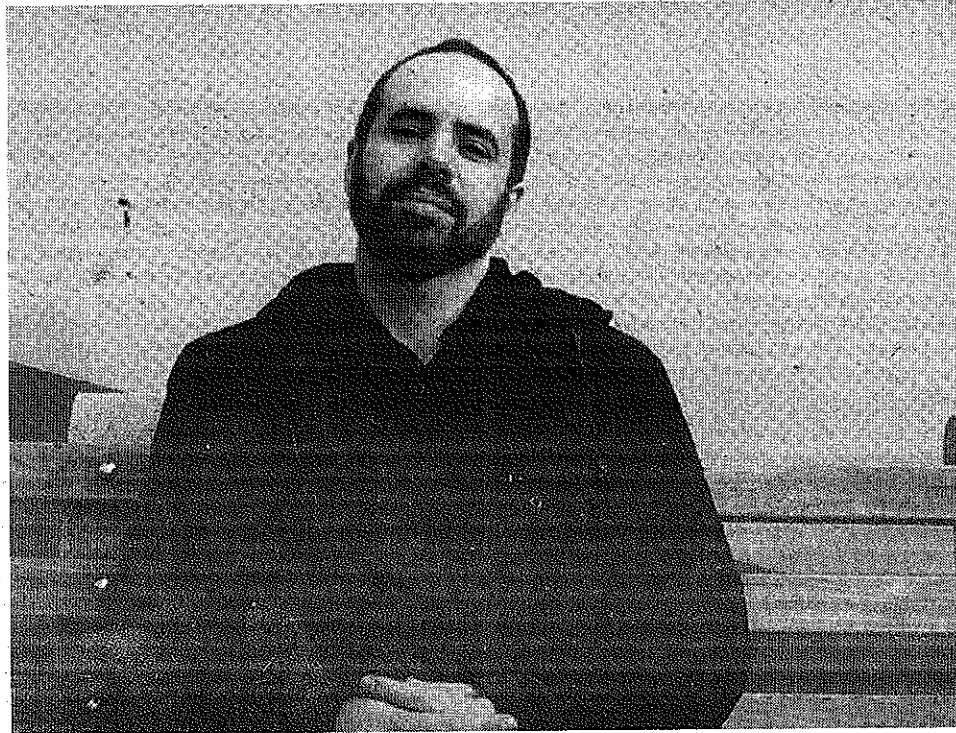
SEEKING HEAT

Want to drum for **ADAM FRANKLIN**, the former frontman of UK shoegaze heroes Swervedriver?
NIC TOUPEE discovers you might have a chance when he hits our shores.

Toshack Highway? Adam Franklin? Do these Brit musical monikers mean anything to you? Maybe the mention of legendary shoegazer-associated wall-of-noiseniks Swervedriver might give you a clue. Adam Franklin is the former lead singer/songwriter of Swervedriver, who were at the height of their fame in the mid-'90s and then broke up, or went on an indefinite hiatus, as they said. Following the 'Driver pulling to the curb, Franklin kept on with the songwriting, launching his new project Toshack Highway. By his own admission, it wasn't a catchy name, made out of a hybrid of two 1970s Liverpool Football Club players' names: John Toshack and Steve Heighway. He kept the Toshack Highway band together for six years before, in 2007, dissolving the group after label advice that the name was doing him no favours, and began to record under his own name. To complicate matters, he has also decided to reform Swervedriver in 2008.

He's making his way down to Australia for the first time in over ten years under the Adam Franklin moniker – or more correctly, his real name – to play some shows and take Australian audiences through the last few years of his writing. "I think there are a few releases that never really got released in Australia so I don't think many people would have heard of Toshack Highway in Australia. That name has now been put to rest and my new album is out just under my own name – partially because it's a different-sounding thing, and partially because there has always been confusion about the name Toshack Highway, really. People never remember the name and always have problems pronouncing it. My label kept trying to convince me that I might stick with Adam Franklin and that it would be easier to have that name, so eventually I decided that Adam Franklin it is."

Despite the number of new guises he has taken, the music he has written has more of a continuity, Franklin explains: "There is a continuation from Swervedriver to Toshack to Adam Franklin. It feels a bit weird having this project as my own name because it's not me on my own, it's with a band, and that band's called Adam Franklin! But what's in a name, really? It's a convenience thing. The only problem now is that people think my shows are going to be a solo show and it's with a band – although this Australian thing is me solo. There's no way of affording to fly other musicians out."



Of course, what all Swervedriver fans want to know is whether they'll hear some old favourites, or will Adam be saving those for the impending reunion? "I guess it will be a couple of reworked Swervedriver songs, if I'm doing a solo gig. I think any good song should be playable by one person and hopefully they're good songs! I'll also be playing songs off the new Adam Franklin album, Toshack Highway tracks, and I'll be playing everything solo on electric guitar. It was too expensive to get musicians out from London, and I only know one drummer in Australia – a girl from Adelaide." (Anyone feel like joining Franklin on stage? Hit him up on MySpace! Just don't say we told you to!)

While Franklin is aware that his audience will most likely be heavily laden with Swervedriver fans, he points out that he has always had more than one project running at any given time. He certainly doesn't feel like he was ever just a member of Swervedriver, despite it being his most famous project. "I can't escape the fact that that's what I'm known for: Adam Franklin from the band Swervedriver," he says a little resignedly. "There are people that live in one part of the past and don't want to investigate what you do now. For me, though, it's good to have a few projects on the go. I feel like I'm in four bands at the moment, as there are bits and pieces I do in other bands, too, as well as Adam Franklin and the

Swervedriver stuff coming back into play. For me, and for a lot of other musicians, it is about being in a few bands, Magnetic Morning with Sianspheric, two different versions of my band, the Sophia Project."

Despite laying the Toshack project to bed to record this album, it seems the call of Liverpool FC is too strong: he's considering bringing it back again after this album has been out for a while. "The first Toshack album was keyboardy and instrumental. Lee who plays guitar with me on *Altered Melodies* is saying I should do another album: although it would confuse people, I think, having four separate projects, I have a backlog of ideas in differing styles so there's something that would never have fitted into Swervedriver that goes into Toshack and likewise some of that sound wouldn't make it onto an Adam Franklin album."

In the end, Franklin is a prolific musician, and we are beginning to see that from his perspective Swervedriver is just one outlet, not a phenomenon, or his 'glory days'. "I've been a musician most of the time, really," he observes. "Most people I know are in three or four bands or people are working in recording studios and on the general fringes of the music industry. I think parameters have changed and a musician has to make it wherever he or she can – people don't buy records any more so we have to find other outlets. Years ago it was frowned upon if you let people use music in an ad or movie but now it's par for the course. I don't have music in ads but have had it used in video games and it pays surprisingly well," Franklin confesses jocularly.

He is looking forward to the Australian visit, despite our 'unique' customs officers: "I haven't been in ten years – Swervedriver always had a really good time out in Australia, it's a shame it's so far away. We like the Aussie sensibility – I think. The first time we went to Australia it struck me as being a cross between the USA and UK and people from the States say similar things, that Australia is a big mix up of cultures. The first time we came through I got to immigration and the guy from immigration said, 'So you guys got any drugs on you?'. I said that I didn't have and he looked at us and replied, 'It won't be long until you do!'."

Boots Of Melody is out now on Chatterbox. Adam Franklin plays the East Brunswick Club this Sunday.