

**Chris Riou,** who probably has the widest grin in rock, and sings for the band who are now Island Records' fastest ever signing (*it took a week*) knocks all jibes firmly on the skull.

"We had a concept of how we saw the band progressing, building up slowly, and Island saw it exactly the same way. It was what they wanted for us and everyone was into it. Our A&R guy told us that if the boss wasn't interested we shouldn't bother with signing. Surely if a record company goes for something and offers a good deal then why not take it? Island had a lot to go on, a good video, relatively good gigs and the right image to go with the Claytown Troupe breed of music. It was all already there. Now we're on the inside (signed - not in Wormwood Scrubs) we see a lot of bands and it takes months for them to be cultivated, to get them looking good, liking each other and all the rest of it. With us it was already sorted."

"It was really amusing watching all the other companies turn up to see us once the buzz had started," laughs drummer Andy.

"We'd already approached some before for a bit of advice and they all said *Rock's Dead*. Unless you're Guns n'Roses or Jesus Jones you don't fit in!" remembers Chris.

Chris who proves to be the band's mouthpiece in interviews as well as on stage, continues, "There is this pressure on in the media to discover the next new band. No one discovered us before we went smack into the charts without any previous small label releases. We played the right sort of gigs, but record-wise we didn't release anything because there's no point in releasing something which would have cost £1000 and sounded like shit."

"Scenewise there isn't anything for British rock bands like us anymore. We're not goth or heavy metal or rock n'roll, we're a rock band. America has a similar situation, no one knows where to place the Soul Asylums of this world."

"Being uncategorisable can hold bands back which is unfair," chips in Andy, "I get annoyed with live reviews mentioning dry ice and black clothes. You might see one black T shirt on stage and a bit of smoke to make the lights more effective."

"Well," says Chris, "the people who write that stuff don't listen to

# Claytown Troupe

the records, and they don't have to part with money to get into the gig. For them it's all free."

Liz Evans

