

Moore on *Pop* 2

HIS VOICE SOUNDS as if it's nurtured on a daily diet of gravel and ground glass and he moves about the stage like an animal that has just been released from callous captivity.

Jon English is always convincing. He always injects his performances with a sense of drama and energy that never seems to lapse. He's back on the road again to promote his new single, *Straight From The Heart*, and an album due out next month called *Inroads*.

Jon has been very lucky. His band of rock appeals to a surprising cross-section of people. But he doesn't appear to tailor or compromise to suit an audience. There are those who remember him from *Jesus Christ Superstar*; others he won over in the club circuit, and more from his television performance in *Against The Wind*. Then there are those who like his songs.

The Jon English rock show, as previewed at Gas Lane in Sydney, is a tight well-constructed one with mood lighting, light-hearted anecdotes and a string of well-respected hits such as *Turn The Page*, *Handbags And Gladrags*, *Hollywood Seven*, *Six Ribbons*, a punchy version to the old *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place* and a couple of new songs such as *You Might Need Somebody* and *The Shining*. His band contains some "tired, old faces" and some "bright, new faces" such as guitarist *John Dallimore*.

Jon hasn't made it to the *Air Supply*, *Little River Band*, *AC/DC* status on the international market, but he's trying! He has had a number one in Norway with both *Six Ribbons* and *Get Your Love Right*. So off he went to make personal appearances there.

"Ah, yes, Jon England," they greeted him in Oslo. "We saw you in *Gone With The Wind* . . . what part of Austria are you from?"

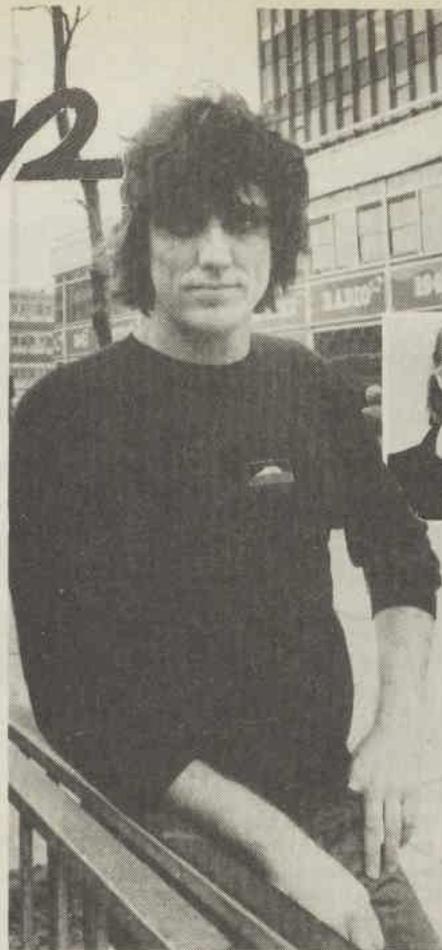
Jon regards *Against The Wind* as THE break, although he'd rather be known for his singing than for his acting.

"I act because I enjoy it," he says. "It broadens your experience and gives you better stage presence. But in Australia I'm higher up on the singing ladder than I am in terms of acting. Singing is what I do best."

Jon's visits overseas, to either promote, perform or record, have been convenient ways of avoiding over-exposure in his own country, a problem that haunts many top bands.

"Familiarity can breed contempt," he

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LEFT: Jon English — new inroads. ABOVE: They're wild about Kim's Kids. Promising Tom Petty (inset).

says, "or people can take you for granted, which is the worst thing that can happen." So he has been fairly quiet for the last six months, making the most of his eight or nine hectares at Windsor, north-west of Sydney, writing songs and attending to his various horses, goats and chickens.

★ ★ ★

WHEN KIM WILDE recorded *Kids In America*, her regard was for the tune rather than the lyrics. She was not, she says, trying to make any kind of social comment.

But when it comes to the kids in England particularly those in Liverpool and Brixton — the hot-bed of riots and trouble recently — the blonde singer has some serious thoughts.

"It was something that had been snowballing for some time," said Kim, during her promotional visit to Australia. "The kids had nothing better to do; many were being made redundant and the frustration just escalated.

"There has been a lot of antagonism between the police and the black communities and I guess things just got out of hand.

"In some ways, it made people realize what a sorry situation it is for young people. Before, there were figures saying unemployment had gone up, but it was the riots that made people actually stop

to think. However, I don't think the situation is uncontrollable."

Kim doesn't know much about the kids in America. She hasn't been there yet, although her "discoverer" *Mickie Most* is "sussing out" the possibility of a trip there next year.

But Kim Wilde has had her plate full enough anyway, travelling the globe on the success of the single and the follow-up, *Chequered Love*. When we spoke she was waiting for her third single to be released in London, *Water On Glass*, to enter the charts.

She is the daughter of *Marty Wilde*, rock'n'roll star of the late '50s, who writes songs for her with Kim's producer, brother *Ricky*. If there was any pressure on Kim to come up with more hits after her chart debut, there's none now.

"It worried me initially," Kim said. "But Dad and Ricky work very well under pressure. And when *Chequered Love* went into the English charts . . . well, I'm not worried now."

Although Kim was thrilled with the success of *Kids In America*, she says there has been no "massive knees-up" to celebrate yet. "We just had the odd bottle of champagne in the fridge to have for breakfast with the bacon and eggs," she said.

★ ★ ★

RECORD PICK: *Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers — Hard Promises*. (Backstreet Records). This album is a rejuvenating jangle of music and ideas, structured simply for best effect.

Petty's lyrics carry a subtle punch. *The Waiting* is perhaps the outstanding track, but most are pretty persistent, including *A Thing About You* and *The Criminal Kind*. *Stevie Nicks*, from *Fleetwood Mac*, does a whimsical duet with Petty on *Insider* but it's a song that never quite gets off the ground.

Tom Petty perpetrates a free-range style of rock — unpretentious, but insistent and sincere.

— SUSAN MOORE