

Kevin Shields

The Buddyhead Interview

by Aaron North

THE FIRST TIME The Icarus Line got to play with Primal Scream was in New York, and I have to admit I was slightly disappointed at the time, because Kevin Shields wasn't performing at the show. The word was that Kevin had to be at his brother's wedding instead. It definitely added to the myth that I, and many other people as well, had built into our heads that Mr. Shields was some kind of mysterious recluse whose appearances could never be bargained on. The story of Kevin's band My Bloody Valentine, and their demise, has up to this point sounded closer to folklore than something that happened less than a decade ago. Like a twisted version of the game "telephone", My Bloody Valentine fans have perpetuated the tallest of tales ranging from master tapes of unreleased albums being set afire, to band reunions in far dark warehouses in Berlin. When The Icarus Line had the opportunity of again opening for Primal Scream, it would be a tour with them across the United Kingdom. When we encountered the band soundchecking on the first day in Glasgow, it occurred to me while I stared at them onstage, that between Kevin's time in My Bloody Valentine, Mani's in The Stone Roses, and even Bobby's stint in The Jesus and Mary Chain, not to mention The Scream themselves, I was witnessing the composers of a good portion of my record collection back home. Nothing was cooler than them embracing us and treating us as contemporaries, instead of the wide-eyed kids 20 years their junior ripping off all their bands we really were. Still, it was Kevin that took me the longest to get around saying "hello" to. His reserved and steady composure was admittedly intimidating. When I finally got the balls to talk to him, we quickly engaged ourselves in an intricate half hour conversation on how fuckin' cool The Stooges were. After sizing each other up on the extent of useless Stooges knowledge each other knew, it was obvious we were allies. From then on our conversations ranged from how to handle broken effects pedals on the road, to how to handle tripping ex-girlfriends. Although he was hesitant at first, by London Travis and I persuaded him to give us some time after a delicious English dinner (ha) for a "no bullshit" interview. We sat in a tiny, freezing room somewhere backstage, and I threw every question I could think of at him. Travis held a camera a foot from his face and managed to ask him a question too. Here it is totally uncut. Enjoy.

Q: So, when you're not out on tour with Primal scream, what does a normal day in the life of Kevin Shields consist of?

Basically, I spend my time in my studio. The studio is in Camden here in London.

Q: What kind of gear do you have in there? What kind of board?

It's called a DDA. It's an old English desk they don't make anymore. It's weird. It's all relays as opposed to EQ's and auxiliaries having their own knobs.

Q: What have you been working on there?

Right now I'm recording this band called The Beatings. They sound kind of Stooges-like . . . with a little bit of that Cramps rock n' roll type thing. I've been doing that on and off for about 6 months. They're actually the guys who built the studio.

Q: How did that work out?

Well, last year I recorded an E.P. for them, and that was part of the deal. I told them I'd give them studio time if they helped build the studio.

Q: Good idea. Have you recorded any of your own music there?

No, not yet. The nearest I've come to putting my own music together lately has just been the stuff from Lost In Translation.

Q: How did you end up doing the soundtrack work on Lost In Translation?

The guy who put the soundtrack together, Brian Reitzell, who's the drummer for Air, and he used to be in Redd Kross, I met him in Japan while I was touring with Primal Scream. We played a festival there together, and he asked me if I ever wanted to do something together, to give him a call. And then when they were doing the film, because they were already using some My Bloody Valentine music, they asked if I'd like to do just a few bits of new music. Initially, they just needed some music for a shot of a pan across the city. Then after I started doing that, they gave me the opportunity to replace some of the music they had in the rough cuts. But it had to be a similar style of what was already there, which was an imitation of My Bloody Valentine. So it was a little weird trying to imitate something that was trying to imitate something I had done before. One of the songs we had to replace just had really horrible lyrics, so we just copied the basic tempo of the song, and re-did it. I won't tell you whose song it was. Haha. So yeah, that felt quite strange.

Q: Cool. So how about we go back to the very beginning . . . Where did you grow up?

I was born in Queens in New York.

Q: Really? So you're actually an American. . . .

Yeah. I actually have dual citizenship. My parents are Irish, and they immigrated to America in the 50's as teenagers. I lived in Queens until I was 3 or 4, and then I lived on Long Island until I was 10.

Q: That's funny. Do you remember what school you went to?

Haha, yeah. Christ the King. A really horrible school run by psychopathic nuns. They made me so sick that I had to be taken to the hospital a few times.

Q: Haha. Why?

I hated school so much, that it made me so sick that I kept throwing up.

Q: But were you a good student?

No . . . no.

Q: So where did you live after you were 10?

We moved back to Ireland. It was 1973, and things just got tough in America, so my parents decided to move back to be close to family. It was too hard for them to raise 5 kids in America at the time.

Q: Oh wow, you have 4 brothers and sisters . . . are you a younger child or older?

I'm the oldest of the 5.

Q: Ahh, ok. So then you moved to Dublin?

Yeah. I lived there from when I was 10 through 20 . . . my formative years.

Q: How old were you when you started playing guitar?

I was 16.

Q: What was it that made you want to play guitar?

This kid that I met at a karate tournament said that he wanted to form a band. . . .

Q: Wait, wait, wait . . . Were you watching the tournament, or participating?

Just watching. Yeah . . . he was only 12, and I was actually 15 at the time, but he was the same height as me, so it didn't seem that strange. That's how I met Colm who ended up being the drummer of My Bloody Valentine.

Q: Oh, cool.

Yeah, it took us a few months to figure out the whole “tuning” thing. I think somebody told us it had something to do with the 5th fret, but it just ended up sounding horribly out of tune with us trying to hold barre chords.

Q: So what did the first band you started with Colm sound like?

It was just punk rock. Somewhere between oi punk and older punk. Our first gig was just doing like, Sex Pistols and Ramones covers. I was really into the Ramones at the time. We were called The Complex. We were only together for about a year . . . played a handful of gigs.

Q: How did you figure out how to play guitar?

I would go to gigs, and it seemed like all the guitar players onstage just seemed to move their hand up and down the neck like this (holds hand in a barre chord position). So I somehow figured out how to do that, and that was the only thing Johnny Ramone did anyway, so that’s all I wanted to do . . . none of those messy, complicated chords.

Q: How do you rate yourself as a guitar player to this day?

Well, if you watch me, I barely even do that (holds hand in a barre chord shape again). I’ve never considered myself much of a guitarist. I always just wanted to be like Johnny Ramone. Just be really good at one thing. I think because I was never dexterous, and because I never really learned how to play a scale, or lead guitar, or anything, but because I still wanted to be expressive, that made me use the tremolo arm, which gave me something to work with for a long time. I really get off on hearing . . . I can’t even really describe it . . . the difference between hitting the same chord one way or another way, and the subtleties within that. So in that respect, more so than flashier guitar players, I can play and it sounds like the amp is turned down real low, and then play and it sounds like it’s on really loud. Control.

Q: Did you ever see the Ramones?

Yeah, I saw them in 1979. I saw the Banshees in ‘79 as well. Not many big bands made it over to Ireland at that time. But the Ramones show was the best show I ever saw. It was incredible. I had no idea what was going on at the time. They came onstage, and it was insanely loud, and before they came on there were all these seats on the floor, and then they came onstage and all the seats disappeared under people. It was so loud, I remember being deaf for two days afterwards. There was nothing like that in my life up to that point.

Q: Did you consider yourself a punk at that age?

Well, yeah, it was about 1980. . . .

Q: Did you have a funny haircut?

It was funny, but it wasn’t supposed to be funny. I cut it without much thought. It was short and spiky in the front and got longer towards the back, going up and up. Like some kind of weird bird Mohawk.

Q: Did your parents think you were a weirdo?

Yes. But not really cos of that. I was a weirdo from birth, so they were always pleased if I was into something somehow tangible. It was like, “Hey, at least he’s into something that other people are too, great!”

Q: So what happened after The Complex?

Well, we started playing with a bass player who was your typical early 80’s, slightly funky . . . Gang Of Four type guy. So then we moved from being a typical punk band to being much more like Joy Division and Siouxsie and the Banshees.

Q: What was the band called at that point?

A Life In The Day. We didn't put out any records or anything, but we had a tape and gigged around. We never got to play to more than a couple hundred people.

Q: So, at what point did My Bloody Valentine start?

We started around 1983 . . . technically. But we were just a loose group of people. Some gigs would have a lot of people involved, some would have just three. So, it existed as a loose kind of thing until 1984 when we decided to move to Europe. So all the people that didn't want to come to Europe, they were out of the band. So that left four of us, and we went to Holland. We just had one gig in Holland that we managed to get from making loads of phone calls from a public phone box.

Q: Where was the gig?

It was in Tilburg. The guy who set it up was friends with Sonic Youth or something, and he was shocked that we had come all the way from Ireland without any sleeping bags or anything. So after that we ended up in Amsterdam and stayed in hostels and stuff until we met some squatter kids and this Hells Angels biker guy who gave us this house we lived in for a couple months. Then we went to Berlin and made our first record there.

Q: The one that sounds like The Birthday Party?

Yeah, the "gothy", Birthday Party and Cramps sounding one.

Q: Did you ever see The Birthday Party?

No. Hardly anybody ever made it over to Ireland. But they were a big influence on us. The "Junkyard" record was a big deal to us.

Q: So after you recorded the album in Berlin, how long did you stay there?

We lived there for about another four months in a commune kind of thing. After that we went back to Holland for another month, and then we moved to London. We tried our best to find a place to live in Europe, but it was really hard to sign on for the Dole there. That's what everybody in a band in this part of the world does, is sign on . . . so that's why we went to London, cos we knew we could get unemployment easily.

Q: So, then you were moving along in London, you recorded a few E.P.'s, and then your singer, Dave Conway, left the group, and Belinda joined the band as well. When did all this happen, and when did you start singing?

Around 1987. We got Belinda in the band, and we got this other guy as well, but he didn't work out. We had a gig in a week, and I figured, instead of taking the time to teach the guy the tunes, I would just do it myself. And that was it. I was sort of forced to sing.

Q: That's when it seems like there was an identity crisis going on with the band.

Yeah. I think the first record was kind of good. But then we made a couple records that weren't very good. One of them was intended to be an E.P., but the label wouldn't put it out unless it was an album, so we compromised on a "mini album", and bashed out all these tunes quickly very "demo"-like. I had just gotten this 12-string guitar, and was a little too enamored with it. I had also just discovered the Byrds. All the songs were too jingly jangly. Not to mention it was the first time I'd ever sung in a studio as well. So I was singing softly and badly just trying to be in tune.

Q: So this indie label you were dealing with at the time, do they still own the rights to that stuff?

No. They paid for the recording, but since they put the mini-album and first album together as a full record in 1989 . . . this was after "Isn't Anything" came out on Creation, the label sort of capitalized on our success. The record was all over Europe, and we didn't know anything about it until some fans came up to us and said, "This new record doesn't sound half as

good as your last one.” They thought it was a new album because it was dated as 1989. So they conned people into thinking it was a new record. So it all got really messy, and what we ended up doing . . . Fatty (Primal Scream’s roadie) and 14 other armed guys arrived with me at the record label’s office where all the records were held. They had about 10,000 of these records. I knocked on the door, went in by myself, and the label guy was sitting behind his desk and he said, “Well you can take what you can.” And I literally went like this, (sticks his hand in the air, and makes the “come on in” motion with his finger) and these 15 crazy looking guys all piled in. The label guy’s face turned white, and he wisely just said, “Take them.” Within 20 minutes we had moved out about 10,000 records into a van, and told the guy, “Just leave us alone, and we won’t be coming back.”

Q: Haha. What the hell did you do with 10,000 records?

We lived off them. When we finished touring in 1992, we were dropped from Creation. Various major labels were trying to sign us afterwards, but we’d gotten it into our heads that we wanted to survive on our own for awhile. By this point we had a bad reputation for taking too long in the studio, so it was our way of saying, “Look, we’re actually quite functional, we don’t need anybody’s help.” So when we finished touring, we had all these boxes of records, and we sold them for 700 pounds a box to various distributors. So we lived off those records for awhile.

Q: So after Creation dropped you guys, were a lot of major labels after you?

Yeah. It was funny. It was right after we got home from a British tour when we were dropped. We got home, and Alan McGee called me at midnight and said, “I think we need to part ways” and all that. I was like, “Cool.” By that point we weren’t getting along at all anyway. We weren’t even talking to each other. So, I went to bed, and nine hours later when I woke up, there were already messages from 11 different major labels who had called.

Q: So if they were all calling your house, you didn’t have a manager or anything?

No. But my sister was our tour manager.

Q: So then you finally signed to Island Records, and then what?

Well, we got some money, so we found a house, built a studio in it, and bought lots of gear. We did the deal in October of 1992, and by April 1993 we had everything set up in the house, and then the mixing desk didn’t work. We had terrible problems with it. It was one of those new desks by some company that had shoved it out onto the market without any thought. All the pots on it were too close to the little electronic mechanism inside that gauged what position it was in, and so the knobs would rip through it until it didn’t work anymore. So after using a knob about 20 times it would go dead. So, it took us about a year to sort all that out. It was really surreal. By that point we had started to go into semi-meltdown. We had come back from tour, done the deal, built the studio, and then the studio didn’t work, so then we ended up fighting the record company over the fact that they never wanted us to build the studio in the first place. They thought it was dangerous. We had been given 250,000 pounds, and by the time we had finished building the studio and everything, we had nothing left, and no studio. So then we were back to selling equipment for money and all that rubbish. . . .

Q: Always a sign that the end is near.

Yeah. So then in early 1994, the label said, “Hey, we’ll bail you out and give you a monthly allowance”, and that went on for a few years. The allowance I was getting was 5,000 pounds a month to live on. When you’re getting that much money a month for so long, it allows you to live in the la-la land that I was in. It was during that phase that the band properly broke up. Colm left, and Debbie left. But me and Belinda kept recording anyway. And then after years of that, the record label finally pulled the plug. We reached the 500,000 pound mark, and they were like, “That’s it.” They said, “Look, we’re not giving you money anymore, but we’ll pay for demos and real results, but we’re not just giving you money anymore.” I mean . . .

they were trying a little bit. But I made it clear to them in the beginning that I didn't work that way. I had stuff put in our contract that disallowed that to happen.

Q: So there was never an official, "Today My Bloody Valentine broke up" type thing?

No. When Colm and Debbie left in 1995, we were still recording on and off until 1997. We didn't really think we were finished, because in the studio, I did most of it myself anyway. On the "Loveless" record, except for 3 tracks, it was just me and Belinda anyway, so it didn't seem that different cos we weren't playing live.

Q: What kind of music were you putting together in the studio at that time?

It was kind of like what we were doing before, but rhythmically a lot more interesting, and sound-wise a bit more expansive. Out of that whole period, there are only about five tracks that I reckon will ever come out.

Q: So they will come out one day?

Yeah . . . just because they're good tunes. What's good about them is always going to be good. They'll never sound "old".

Q: But you recorded way more than those five, right?

Yes. We had a whole album. But a lot of it . . . melodically, I don't remember it. And that's why it will never come out. If I can't remember it now, then it means it can't be that strong.

Q: Where was the last My Bloody Valentine show?

It was in L.A. in the summer of 1992. At that point we were still being self sufficient, but we were still signed to Sire in the U.S., and we did that whole tour without any support from the label at all. We just used some publishing money we had to finance it.

Q: What was the live My Bloody Valentine experience like?

It was loud. Sort of messy. If you ever hear any live tapes, there's huge gaps in between songs, lots of feedback, and a slight air of confusion. It would start up, and be great, and then kind of fall apart, and then start up great again, and then fall apart, over and over. It was a weird set. Because it was so loud, people were pleased with the little breaks. If it was just constant noise, it would have been more oppressive. We were really into the "loud" thing, because if it was anything but really loud, because of the sound we had, people would lose the impression. Most bands you hear live, the drums and bass are really loud, and the vocals are the most prominent thing in the mix. For us, if the guitars weren't the loudest thing, it would just sound wrong.

Q: Well yeah, on "Loveless" there's hardly any drums or bass in the mix at all.

Yeah. But I've heard some live tapes that are really appalling. And I think it's cos it's a mix that was coming out of the PA, and the guitars were so loud on stage, that they only had a little bit of it coming through the PA. That's what's shitty about the live things going around, they miss half of what was going on. We used to play this song called "You Made Me Realize" that had a 30 second middle bit on the record that got extended longer and longer live. At its peak in 1992 it could be as long as 40 minutes of noise. One time at a show in Detroit, we had the crew come out for the noise bit, and turn the sidefills onstage around so they pointed at the audience. On the "Rollercoaster" tour we did a bit of that too.

Q: Oh right, that was the tour you did with The Jesus and Mary Chain, Dinosaur Jr., and even Blur too, right?

Yeah. And on most bigger tours there are two crews. One is your crew, and the other is the PA crew full of people you don't really know. On that tour, the PA crew actually went on strike, because they thought it was appalling that we would point the monitors at our feet towards the audience.

Q: Haha, no escape.

Yes. Nobody could escape it! Because sometimes the people in the very front don't get the full impact of the PA because they're too close. We were like, "No, we can't have that!" And there were all these little girls at the shows, and the PA people thought it was cruel to have all this huge noise in their faces, cos they were squashed up front and couldn't get away from it.

Q: Awesome. What were people's reaction to the noise? Did they get bummed out?

Usually people would experience a type of sensory deprivation, and they would lose the sense of time. It would force them to be in the moment, and since people don't usually get to experience that, there'd be a sense of elation. There would be a feeling of, "Wow, that was really weird, I don't know what happened, but I suddenly heard this symphony. . . ." Because it was such a huge noise with so much texture to it, it allowed people to imagine anything. Like when you hypnotize somebody, and nothing becomes something. That was what the whole purpose became. 1/3 of the audience would always think it was really shit, and try to leave, or get as far away as they could, and the other 2/3 really liked it. One time half the audience tried to leave, and it caused mild panic because they all tried to leave at once and got stuck at the door and got crushed. Then a whole gang of them came back towards the stage and tried to get us because they were so angry that they couldn't get out. Like a village mob or something.

Q: Haha, where was that?

Canada.

Q: Figures.

We had so much trouble with the PA people. The routine at every show after we finished, was we'd hear the PA people doing the tone tests.

Q: Ahhh, the annoying beeping you hear when the pussy PA guy is trying to prove you broke his PA.

Exactly. So the first thing you always heard after we left stage was BEEEEEEEEEEP, beeeeeeeeeeep, DOOOOOOOT, dooooooooot, KRRRRRRRRRRR.

Q: Did the PA people, or soundmen ever try to beat you up?

That was one of the main reasons my sister was on the road with us. Because she was a woman, it really diffused a lot of violence. When it came to the point in the set where we played "You Made Me Realize", she would stand by the sound desk and guard it, and she would get bombarded with threats from the audience, crew, and venue owners. Her being a woman made it difficult for them to get violent.

Q: It seems like the band was always slightly misunderstood, and mislabeled while you were around. While the musical climate changed around you from the late 80's into the early 90's, you held your ground and made unique music despite trends and scene changes. . . .

When we were really active, in the UK it was all about the "House" scene. It was all about Manchester . . . Primal Scream had "Screamadelica", and that pretty much overshadowed us. Then there was the whole "shoegazing" scene that we weren't really into. We had that term tagged to us, and it seemed slightly derogatory. It was partly because a lot of the people in those bands used to go see us when they were younger, then they all formed bands, and they were openly into us. But they all kinda had their own thing going, but what they all had in common was chorus and flanger pedals. That wasn't what we were doing. It was literally that approach to music that made me do what I was doing. I couldn't stand that you could hear the pattern of the effect. So instead of being psychedelic, it was the opposite. It was something that your mind immediately recognizes, and ignores. So it was weird being linked to something that was in many ways the exact opposite of what we were about. After

the band stopped playing live, in '94, '95, '96, it was all about grunge and brit-pop. All the "new" forms of music, like drums and bass, never really got as big as people thought it would. The idea that a new thing would explode, and it would be like the 60's again didn't happen. Instead it was more like the 50's, where an initial explosion happened, and then there were just watered down versions of the original. Now I see so many bands just rehashing what was done better before. It's ok, but not as good as the original. I have tapes of bands I was in, in 1981 that sound like some of these bands. I just want to tell them, "Be careful, I know where this is headed. It ends in gold lamé suits."

Q: How did you end up working with Primal Scream?

By coincidence, around the same time the record company stopped giving me money, Primal Scream asked me to do a remix for them. I had already done a couple before that turned out ok. So I remixed the song "If They Move Kill 'Em" off the "Exterminator" record. The version on the album is kind of a tamed down version, but the one on the original E.P. is really good. It starts off quiet and then gets really loud. It's like a little trip. So because of doing that, suddenly I got tons of offers to do re-mixes for people. Managers were calling me offering me 20 grand to do mixes. I didn't really want to fall into having to do that, but luckily I had enough people asking, that I could pick and choose which projects I worked on. Friends would ask, and I would do one for them . . . or friends of friends. So I didn't start doing it thinking about money, but soon I was making a few thousand pounds for every remix I did, and then I didn't have to worry about money anymore.

Q: But it's not like you set out to make a career out of it.

Yeah, cos remixing is a really bad way to make a living . . . it's just rubbish. I take a different approach to it though than most people. I would never add stuff to the mix, I would just take what was there on the tape and rearrange it. So the record companies were never really into it, but the bands always thought the mixes were cool cos they heard themselves in a different way. It was interesting for them to hear their music turned around.

Q: And then besides that remix, you mixed a couple songs on the "Exterminator" record as well . . . that mix of "Accelerator" is one of the most brutal things I've ever heard.

Yeah, I played guitar on that song too. What happened was, we were supposed to record a jazz session with Pharoah Sanders. But his manager said, "We need 4 grand up front, plus 2 grand for me as well", but the band had only agreed to pay 3 grand. So the session was cancelled, but we used the studio anyway and bashed out this quick punk song. The first mix of it came out really, really lame. I remember putting it down, and the speakers were full blast and just sounded broken. So I decided to make the mix like that.

Q: Do you resent the notion that you're my generation's Brian Wilson? Like, this strange studio hermit who is never satisfied?

No, I mean, obviously people always try to make things more interesting than they actually are.

Q: It's like a game of "telephone", and the last person seems to think they heard you're insane, and you recorded an album, but you didn't think it was up to par, so you burned all the tapes and the studio to the ground.

No, I've never burnt anything.

Q: So what's going on now with these My Bloody Valentine re-issues?

Well, Sony inherited the old records when Creation sold out to them. It took quite a long time to figure all that out, because contractually it was all very gray. So, we sorted the whole thing out, and they'll be putting the records out for 7 years.

Q: What exactly is coming out?

All the stuff that was originally on Creation. We're going to put all the E.P.'s together as one double album. We'll also have the E.P.'s available separately on the internet, so people don't spend 15 pounds or whatever for an out of print E.P.

Q: So none of the earlier stuff that came out on Lazy Records, like "Ecstasy and Wine", or "Sunny Sundae Smile" is being re-released?

Nah. Just the Creation stuff.

Q: So you're planning on remastering all the Creation stuff as well?

Yeah. I have a few ideas. I never liked how mastering engineers would add treble and compression and totally fuck up the sound. It would bring out the cymbals and make the guitars sit way back where they shouldn't be. "Isn't Anything" was originally mastered very quickly. I think it was done in a couple of hours. Way faster than a normal album. For some reason we put a De-Esser on the whole thing. Apparently there was some fundamental spike occurring on the vocals and stuff. So because the whole album went through that circuit, I've often wondered what it would sound like if it hadn't.

Q: It sounds like you were always very hands on in the recording process from the beginning to the very end.

Yes. All the records on Creation, we did all the post-production ourselves. We went to all the factories, and dealt with all the pressing plants ourselves. You never know when some idiot somewhere is just going to feed something through something just to take a shortcut. We went to the big "professional" cassette dubbing plant where all the major record companies made their cassettes, and we found out . . . you bring in your masters on these big digital videotapes called "1630's". We found out, that because they didn't have a 1630 player in the building, they just digitally dubbed it to a DAT player, and then used the analog outputs on the DAT to feed into the machines. So basically they used these shitty little converters, just for handiness sake. That kind of shit goes on a lot, and you just never know.

Q: And will there be variations on the artwork of the re-releases as well?

Yeah. Slightly. All the original artwork got lost somewhere along the way. If you buy one of the cd's today, you're seeing a copy of a copy for the artwork.

Q: So the extra tracks that will be coming out, what era do they come from?

There will be 2 unreleased tracks from the "Isn't Anything" sessions, and 2 unreleased tracks that were recorded pre-"Loveless" that never came out because I didn't like the vocals at the time. I was trying to sing a bit too hard.

Q: So it's always been in the back of your mind to do another My Bloody Valentine record?

Yeah. Belinda has been waiting belligerently for years.

Q: What is she up to these days?

She has a couple of kids. Her boyfriend is a musician, they make some music together. But mainly she's just a housewife.

Q: She still lives in London?

Yeah.

Q: What are the other band members doing?

Colm plays with Hope Sandoval. He did a solo album with her. Debbie is in a band called Snowpony. They're all right.

Q: So when all those rumors of you getting back together started, were the other band members surprised?

Debbie said she'd heard about it, and mentioned she was thinking, "I think they would have let me know if that were true."

Q: So you haven't been rehearsing together or finishing recordings of old songs like some rumors have suggested?

No, no, no.

Q: But My Bloody Valentine reforming isn't totally out of the question, because you still all get along, right?

We never fell out with each other. None of us became enemies. We all turned 30 at really similar times, and we had been together for so long. It was just one of those things where we all felt, "I wonder what my life would be like if I lived it away from these people for awhile." And also . . . I had become really . . . difficult to pin down at the time. I would go weeks and weeks in the studio without feeling like doing anything. The engineers would come by every day, and I would just say, "Not today." I took it as far as you could possibly go . . . just doing what you want . . . I can't say I regret it, but it doesn't really make music happen. That's all that happened. We all became . . . just . . . useless with each other.