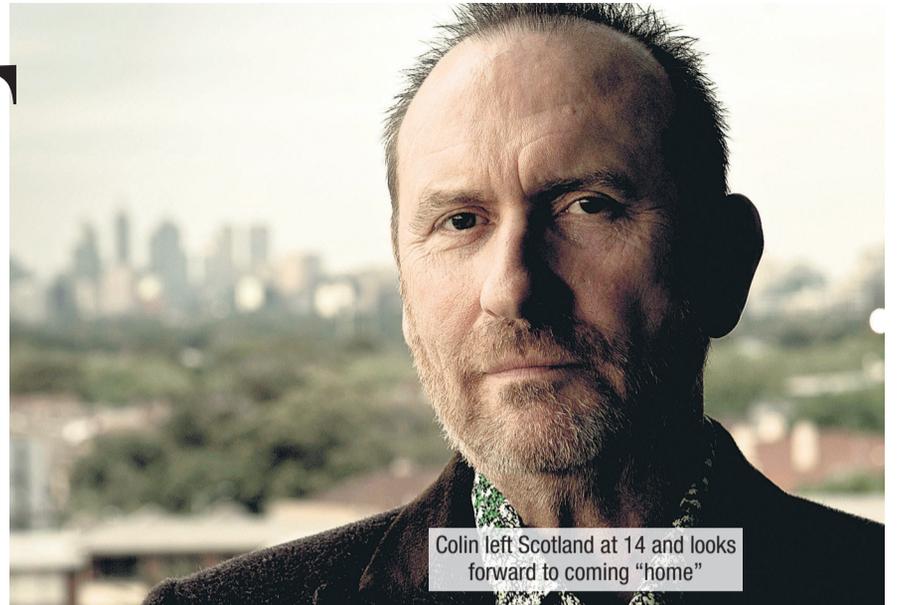


MAN AT WORK



Colin left Scotland at 14 and looks forward to coming "home"

David Hennessy talks to Colin Hay, formerly of Men At Work, about his upcoming UK tour and how he feels his father hasn't left him

Many would remember him as the lead singer of Men At Work, the platinum selling Australian band that topped worldwide charts in the 80s with anthems like *Down Under*, *Overkill*, and *Who Can It Be Now?* The album, *Business as Usual* saw them win a Grammy Award. The band was defunct by 1986 which is when Colin started working solo. Since then, Colin has produced eleven solo albums and considers his latest, 2011's *Gathering Mercury* to be his best so far. Colin will be touring the UK from April 30 and he told *The Irish World* he was looking forward to it: "Absolutely, the last time I was there was in 2009, I think. It's always good to go back home. It's all going to be good. The tour's going well over here (America) at the moment. I was just in Australia for five weeks and that was good so I'm having a good time at the moment."

Born in Scotland, Hay moved to Australia at the age of 14 and this was where he launched his career with his Men at Work band mates. Now based in LA, the loss of his father brought an "unavoidable emotional contingent" to the writing of his most recent record. Did he feel his father's presence during the recording process? "I did, I did very much. You can never really tell, I can't tell whether it's something you conjure up in your brain or whether that presence is a real thing. It

feels real. I was working on this record. It didn't really matter whether I was trying to write songs about that particular situation or not but it was ever present because it was such a big thing to happen in your life.

"I had never really known any personal tragedy like that before so you're in the studio and you're working away and his presence in his absence. I did feel there was another dimension to the atmosphere when I was down

there and it was also in a way a selfish thing for me because it was a way I could bring him back to life because I thought about, not so much the fact that he was gone but, his life and those decisions that he made that affected us all like the biggest one: Deciding to go to Australia which was a huge thing to do at the time but it was a brilliant thing to do. It had huge consequences. He worked really hard, he really just wanted to create something for the family that was an exciting life and that's what he did."

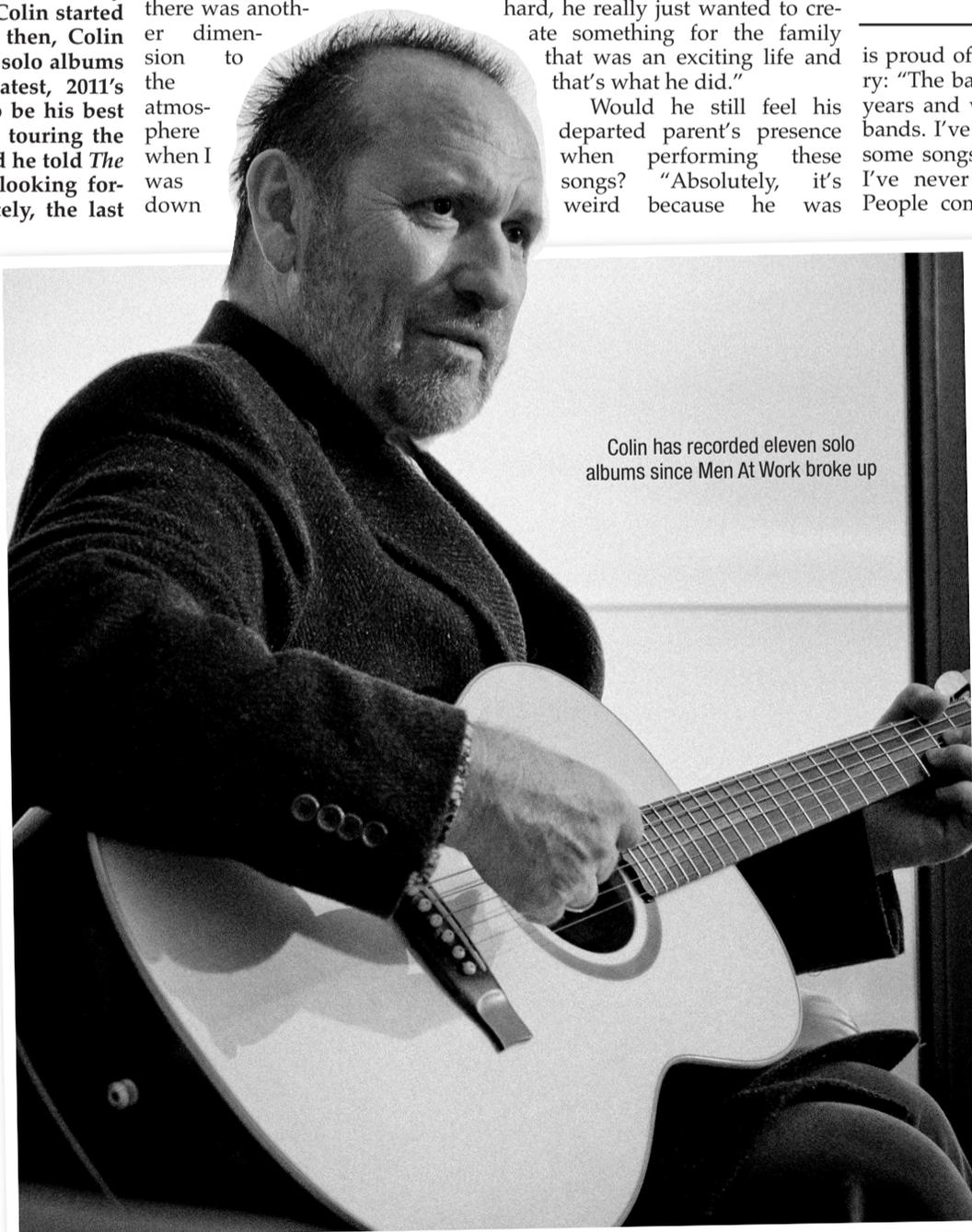
Would he still feel his departed parent's presence when performing these songs? "Absolutely, it's weird because he was

onstage but he gave it up when he was young and since he's gone, I feel like he travels with me and he's onstage with me. Again, whether that's something that you conjure up in your brain, I don't really know but it feels real to me."

Men At Work still have very loyal fans with their songs still getting played on the radio and Colin

years. I can't remember the last time somebody yelled out for *Down Under*. It's years since somebody's done that and it's not that they don't want to hear the song but it's just that they know other songs that they want to hear and that's good for me. If you were just playing those tunes and they were the only tunes that people recog-

It was a way I could bring him (my father) back to life. I feel he travels with me



Colin has recorded eleven solo albums since Men At Work broke up

is proud of his place in pop history: "The band lasted, I think, four years and went the way of many bands. I've never stopped playing some songs whenever I play live. I've never had any complaints: People come along and see you because they want to hear a song, whatever songs, songs from back then and songs they heard last week. It all works."

Performers often get bored of playing their biggest hits. Over thirty years on, is Colin still happy to play *Down Under*? "Of course, I've never stopped playing that song. There was a period in the late eighties where I stopped playing them when the band broke up but I've never really stopped playing those songs. I think the songs are strong and I'm very proud to have written them and been in that band.

"I think it might be a problem if they were the only songs that people really (wanted). People who write in the media always just zero in on that, they think: 'That's a point of reference'. What you have to remember is ever since that time I have been touring for twenty odd

nised, I think it would be a bit glum. That's not the case so I'm glad about that."

Colin has won a Grammy and played to an estimated audience of two billion viewers when Men At Work reformed for the closing ceremony of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. His music has been revived and brought to a whole new audience by guest appearances on hit medical comedy, *Scrubs*. What is he most proud of? "I think the thing I am most proud of is being able to do shows and people turn up. Last night I played in Portland, Oregon. It's a 600 capacity room, it's not an arena but 600 people got off the couch and came to see me. I think that's what I'm most proud of."

Gathering Mercury, Colin's eleventh solo album was released in 2011. Is he already working on number twelve? "I'm working on it but I'm kind of tricking myself. I'm pretending that I'm not so that I don't put any pressure on my subconscious. I'm just going: 'No, I'm just cruising around. I'll just play a wee bit of guitar, it doesn't mean anything'. I'm trying to trick myself but the short answer is yes."

Colin Hay plays Adrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow on April 30, O2 Academy, Birmingham on May 2, The Caves, Edinburgh on May 3, O2 ABC, Glasgow on May 4, Manchester Ritz on May 5, O2 Academy, Leicester on May 8, O2 Academy, Oxford on May 9, O2 Academy, Bournemouth on May 10, Shepherd's Bush Empire, London on May 11 and Arlington Arts Centre Newbury on May 12. For more information, go to: www.colinhay.com/.