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## Tom Tom Club goes on the road with integrity

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In the wake of the current Tom Tom Club tour, it appears that leaders Tina Weymouth and Chris

their latest LP *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*, the Tom Toms opted for a U.S. tour of small venues. "It always seemed very appro-

priate for something completely unproven, to start in a club," said Weymouth last week. "Also, we can ask for much lower ticket

prices, which gives the people an opportunity to see us without spending an arm and a leg."

But club dates are nothing new to these members of the Talking Heads (David Byrne's primary vehicle) who kicked off their own career in 1976 playing Manhattan, N.Y.'s famous nightclub CBGBs.

"The Talking Heads grew big, but we grew out of the clubs and we always loved the clubs. We loved that intimate atmosphere," Weymouth said.

Weymouth and Frantz also relish the dialog between music fan and artist.

"It's been a way to really get to meet people and find out what's going on at the street level," she said. "In big places you tend to be protected by overzealous security and you don't really get to meet anybody who has anything really to say."

"This way is much more exciting and the feedback is incredible."

In speaking with fans during the tour, Weymouth has learned that many are fed up with classic rock radio, big shows and drum machines. On the other hand, "There are a lot of college kids

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### Rock

Frantz have named their band aptly.

The group is strictly playing clubs on this, their first North American tour through 20 cities, and renaming each one for the tenure of their stay, the longest of which will be two weeks worth of dates in Los Angeles.

The band - a Talking Heads offshoot begun in 1980 by the Heads' rhythm section and marriage partners Frantz and Weymouth - are playing tonight through Sunday and June 13-18 (with the possibility of additional shows June 20-24) at Los Angeles' Variety Arts Center, 940 South Figueroa Blvd., (213) 623-9100, which has been for the time being, renamed - you guessed it - the Tom Tom Club.

Despite Weymouth and Frantz's previous success with two Tom Tom Club studio albums (yielding early '80s dance club hits "Wordy Rappinghood," "Genius of Love" and "The Man with the 4-Way Hips"), they considered *live* Tom Tom Club to be "unproven." With the release of



CHRIS FRANTZ and Tina Weymouth, respectively the drummer and bassist of the Talking Heads, are completing their first tour of the United States with their other band The Tom Tom Club. The group plays tonight through Sunday and June 13-18 at the Variety Arts Center in Los Angeles.

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## Integrity

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who have bought the entire Yuppie standard hook, line and sinker, and are only concerned about how much money they can make."

But the members of the Tom Tom Club and Talking Heads don't take kindly to that point of view. Weymouth has trouble even understanding it.

"The kids these days wear the labels on the outside of their clothes, so they don't give a damn that their heroes are selling Pepsi-Cola, which is real different from when I was growing up when people like Bob Dylan had a conscience."

However, at the same time "there are a lot of people who are putting together various benefits for AIDS, for feeding the starving, for human rights," she said. "There are two things going on. And it'll always be like that. There's always going to be people who are merchants and people

who are artists who are concerned human beings."

The members of the Tom Tom Club and the Talking Heads unquestionably fall into the latter category.

"The point with us is never about the money," she said. "It was always about the integrity about what we were doing."

In fact, the Talking Heads turned down a seven figure advertising offer from an insurance company who wanted to use "Once in a Lifetime" in a TV commercial.

In their efforts to make the Tom Tom Club road worthy for this first tour, the emphasis on the artistic made Frantz and Weymouth's quest for musicians much more difficult.

Before this tour, Frantz and Weymouth fit the Tom Tom Club into a busy schedule that included recording and touring with the Talking Heads, producing Ziggy Marley's debut album and

raising a family (the couple has two sons). "Chris and I were always a rhythm section in search of a band," said Weymouth. "It's very hard to find really good people who are not mercenary, who are artists, who are not merchandisers."

Who they found were keyboardist Gary Pozner and guitarist Mark Roule, who are featured on most of the tracks of *Boom Boom Chi Boom Boom*.

On one special cut of the album, "Femme Fatale," the Tom Tom Club quartet is also joined by the other two Talking Heads - David Byrne and Jerry Harrison - as well as one of their mentors, Lou Reed, who wrote the song for the Velvet Under-

ground, the seminal '60s band who preceded the Heads on the New York music scene.

Weymouth said, "It's a tribute to the scene. A tribute to Andy Warhol. It's a tribute to Lou Reed. It's a tribute to Nico." (The late Nico was a vocalist with the Underground.)

While the Tom Tom Club provides an outlet for Frantz and Weymouth to do lighter, tropical-sounding music that doesn't fit within the framework of the Talking Heads, Weymouth denied that the band was a reaction *against* the Heads: "We love both bands," she said. "We're part of both. It was just something else that we were doing to explore other kinds of music."

"With the Tom Tom Club, we saw an opportunity to reinvent ourselves in a completely new format."

However, Weymouth and Frantz aren't yet ready to *un*invent themselves as Talking Heads: The band has just signed a five-album contract which they will begin to fulfill in 1990.

That's because 1989 finds all four Talking Heads working on other projects: Weymouth and Frantz recording and touring with the Tom Tom Club, Jerry Harrison putting together his second solo album and David Byrne making a Latin album featuring Latin musicians.

And they're all raising families. In the next few months, both Byrne's and Harrison's wives will be having children.

"It's very important to us to be normal people," said Weymouth. "It's very important that we don't get absorbed by the large, business machinery."

"This is the way we keep ourselves fresh and renewed."

Additional West Coast dates include San Diego (June 26-28), Tijuana, Mexico (June 29-30), Santa Barbara (July 2), Santa Clara (July 3) and San Francisco (July 5-7).

### Tom Tom Club

This band formed in 1981 by Talking Heads rhythm section Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz performs upbeat, danceable rock with an emphasis on innovative rhythms.

WHERE: Variety Arts Center, 940 S. Figueroa Blvd., Los Angeles.

WHEN: Tonight through Sunday and June 13-18 (with the possibility of additional shows June 20-24).

TICKETS: \$10.50 plus surcharge, available at Ticketmaster locations, including Music Plus in Lancaster.

INFORMATION: (213) 851-9072.