

# A&M

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## THE POLICE

If The Police had wanted to make a safe honest living for themselves, then they wouldn't have formed The Police.

Stewart Copeland, drummer par excellence and a native of the Americas, could easily have found himself a nice easy gig after the demise of Curved Air in the mid-Seventies. Stewart had joined the group straight from college at a time when they'd got past the stage of having to sleep in the back of their van after a gig. Curved Air weren't clocking up platinum albums, but they were doing okay.

Likewise Police guitarist Andy Summers. His past includes working alongside the lunacy of Kevin Coyne and the, uh, cultivated charm of the talents of another eccentric English rocker, Kevin Ayers. Been to music college, too, so it wasn't as if he'd have any trouble getting lucrative work of one kind or another. Andy also had a little thing going with a German classical musician, but more about that later....

And then there's Mister Bass himself, Sting. That's right, Sting, as in bees and wasps, and anything else that makes you smart. Sting (A.K.A. Gordon Summers, Pop Hacks) has the kind of looks frequently referred to as "dishy" or "heart-throb". Whatever it is, Sting's got it. With a vengeance. He also possesses a voice, the likes of which most singers only dream about. If Sting simply wanted to get himself some brass, he wouldn't be trudging around the country piddling about in clubs hardly big enough to bend down and tie your shoe-laces in.

Mind you, Sting does have, as it were, other irons in the fire. Like a part in the Sex Pistols' already notorious movie, The Great Rock and Roll Swindle, (he rapes Paul Cook), the Pistols' drummer (lucky lad), and a role in the Who's Quadrophenia film. Set in the mod-ridden Britain of 1966, or thereabouts, Sting plays Ace in the film - a kingpin mod much admired by the movie's central character, Jimmy.

And if that's not enough to keep the wolf from the door, Sting also does the odd bit of work for TV commercials. He even had to rape the luscious Joanna Lumley in an ad he filmed for Dutch TV.

So you can see that The Police aren't The Police just to keep their bank managers happy.

Some facts: The Police were formed in January, 1977. Stewart had spied Sting playing bass for a Newcastle jazz combo. At this time Sting was working as a school teacher on Tyneside teaching kids football and music.

(MORE)

BIOGRAPHY

Stewart invited Sting to come to London and form The Police. He concurred, and the line-up was completed by guitarist Henri Padovani. Not wanting to wait around for record industry courtship, Stewart formed his own independent label, Illegal Records who shortly after released the first Police single, "Fall Out".

After breaking themselves in on a circuit then teaming with punky new wavers, The Police got themselves a reputation as a new wave outfit. True, they played fast and had released a single on an independent label, but to say they were new wave was akin to saying Muhammad Ali is a boxer.

"I couldn't believe it," says Stewart, "suddenly my kind of music had come into fashion - loud, heavy rock 'n' roll. None of us really identified with the previous culture all that much. I was always down on vegetarians. But our hearts weren't into being a punk band."

They did have sympathy for the "movement", as Sting points out: "I really enjoyed having kids screaming abuse at the people I'd been working with. Those people's attitudes in the studio drove me crazy." Eough said.

The Police rode the wave, and it's an indication of how they were regarded that The Police were invited to play the Mont de Marson "punk" festival in September last year. The festival marked the debut of the group as a four-piece. Andy Summers had joined on guitar.

On their return to England, the four of them attempted to record with former Velvet Underground luminary John Cale, a musician much admired by punk musicians. The sessions didn't work out and Henri Padovani quit the band.

In their capacity as individual musicians, The Police journeyed to Germany where they worked with Eberhard Schoener, a classical musician who'd go into synthesizers, at a laserium in Munich. Andy had known Schoener for some time (at the end of the year they'll link up with Schoener again, and Schoener is trying to talk Sting into singing an opera he's composed).

Six months ago A&M released "Roxanne", a great single hideously ignored by our radio stations. Highlighting the group's penchant for reggae, "Roxanne" would have brightened up the dullest chart.

Like it's successor, "Can't Stand Losing You", "Roxanne" showed a white rock band using reggae devices to enormous advantage. Says Sting: "I think the rhythmic frontiers of pop music are now being created in Jamaica, and I'm obsessed with those particular rhythms."

With their crisp playing and raw production, The Police have managed to combine reggae, rock and pop to telling effect, and that's only half the story as the November release of their first album, "Outlandos S' Amour" illustrates. "You can't expect us to play old Led Zeppelin riffs now," adds Andy. Too right. Let The Police arrest you.