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No1

■ IN THE STUDIO
WITH DURAN DURAN

■ IN JAPAN WITH
A-HA

GARY KEMP:

**"We're back and
this time
we've
got to prove
we're the best"**

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"I'M A BORN"



Pics: Martin Haggerty.

-AGAIN SPANDAU.

Paul Simper catches up with a Kemp and his comeback.



Gary Kemp *almost* looks nervous.

"It's 18 months since I last did an interview," he says, as we settle down in the studio in the South Of France, where Spandau are putting the final touches to their long-long awaited fifth album, 'Through The Barricades'.

From the pop public's point-of-view it's been almost a lifetime since Spandau released 'Round And Round' – their last single – over Xmas '84. Since then we've been Sputnikted, A-Ha-d – even Foxed, for our sins – and still no sign of those Spands.

Just a lot of court cases (their dispute with their record company Chrysalis which they've now left in favour of the All-mighty, All-powerful CBS), a whistle-stop Live Aid, an early Greatest Hits, another babba for Tony (little Toni) and the news that Mart and Shirl are plying the troth – sometime.

But finally, *finally* they're back with a new single, 'Fight For Ourselves' and an album soon after.

So is it like starting over for Gary? One question and those 18 months of rust disappear like *that!* . . .

"Yeah, it is like starting over though, believe it or not, it had nothing to do with the Chrysalis dispute. After releasing four albums – plus the Greatest Hits – and doing a really good World Tour we felt it was time to give ourselves *and* the people who buy records a rest.

"Since we started in the Blitz-days we'd been caught up in a snowball that lasted five years. After that long you forget why you're making decisions, why you're making records even.

"It was good to step back and try and be objective about us and the music business. Not be on the front covers, have a chance to see what everyone else looks like.

"I enjoyed not having the pressure of trying to write an album in two weeks. That to me is forced commercialism. It should always be natural for a writer to write but in this business it's *never* natural. That's probably why people burn out so quickly."

What did you notice being on the outside?

"I was surprised how much I wanted to be back in the thick of it again. You always think you can do it better. I don't think the charts have been very interesting for a year and a half now. I hoped that the Sigue Sigue Sputnik thing was going to be successful because I loved the Frankie period –

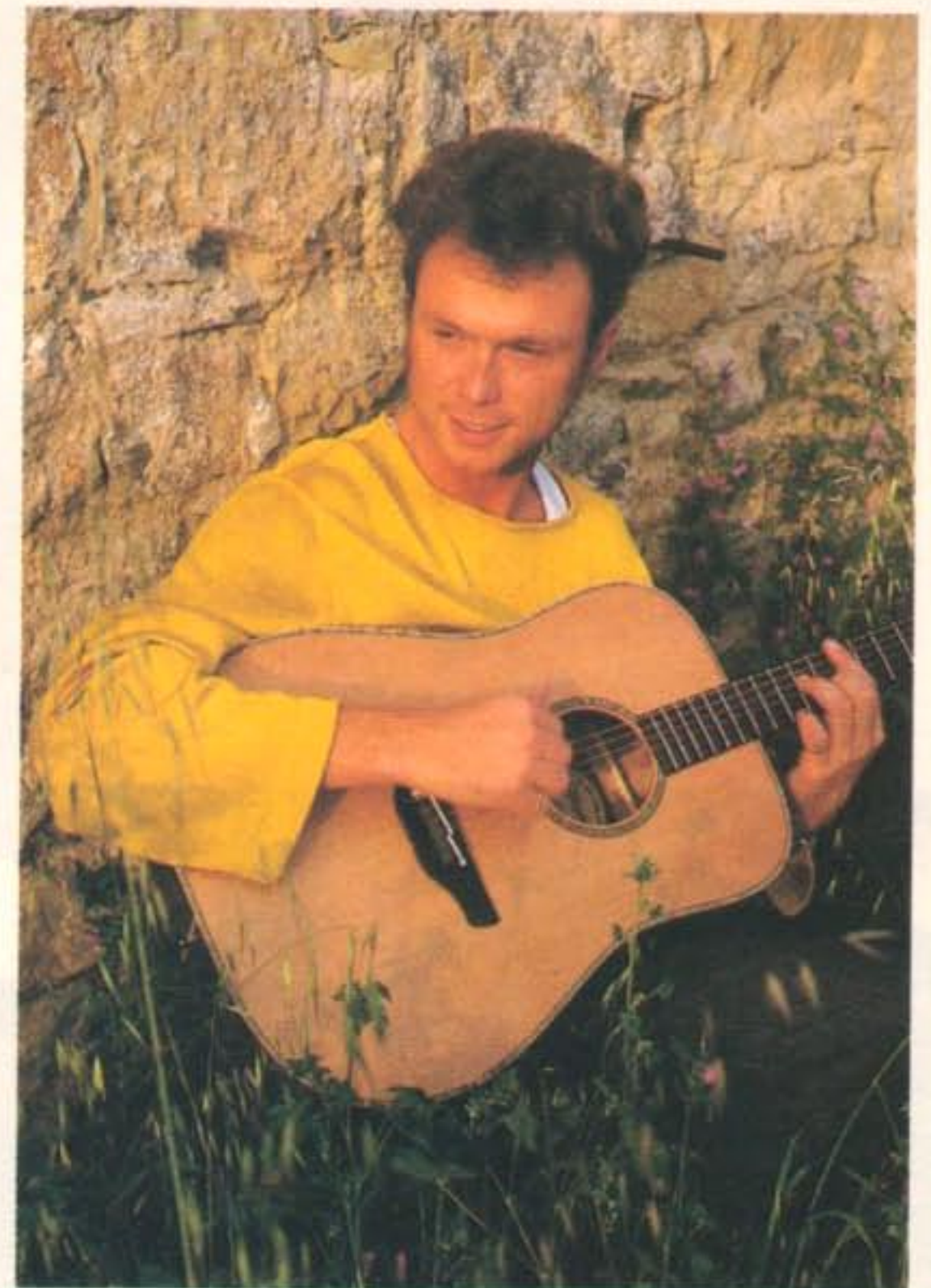
despite our spot of verbal violence with them in the papers. That was their initiation!

"Frankie was exciting but there hasn't been that with Sigue Sigue Sputnik. People don't want to feel they're been taken for mugs. They want the band to have as much conviction in themselves as *they* have in the band."

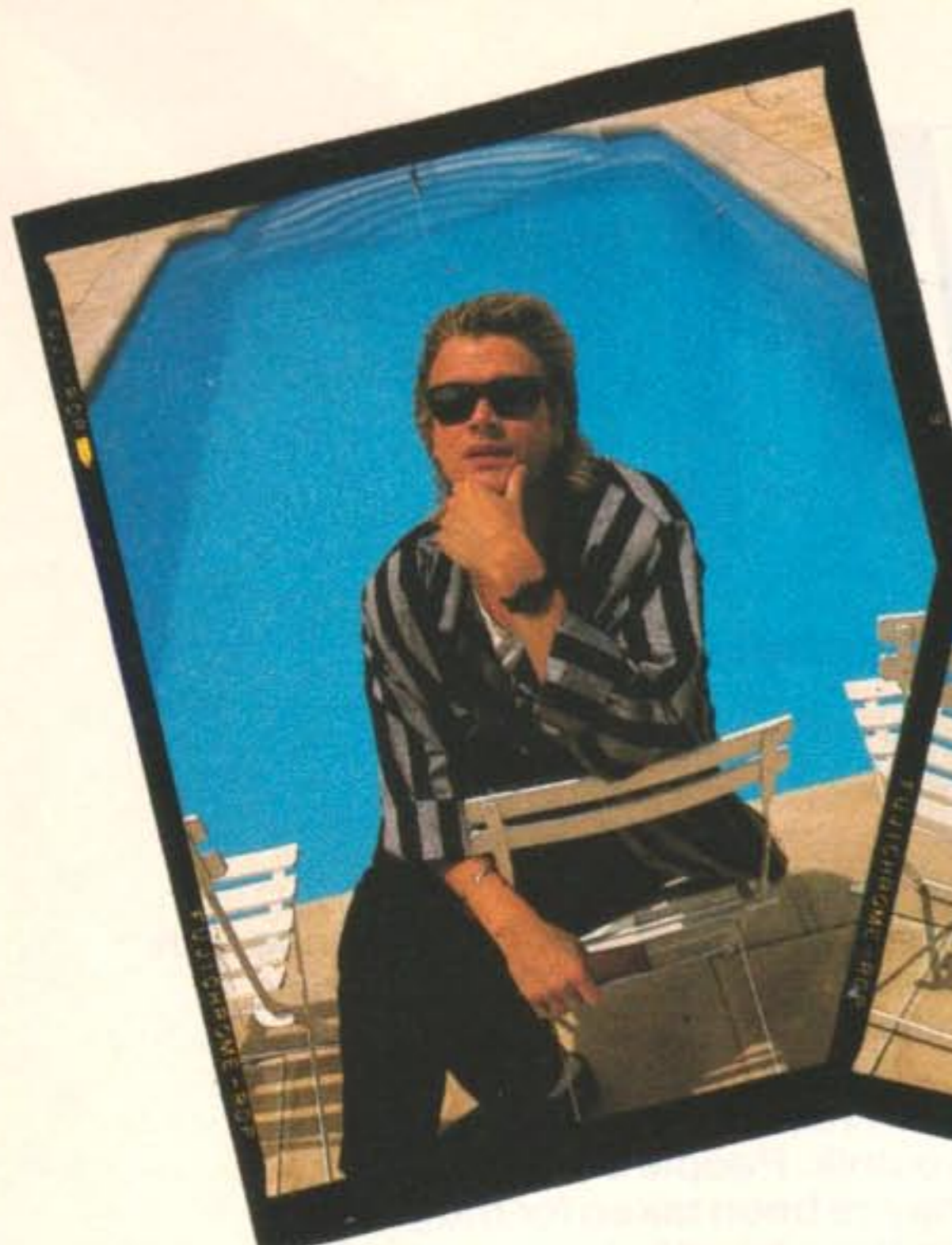
Has Spandau Mk II got a new attitude then?

"Definitely. The born-again Spandaus – a new record label, new sound, new enthusiasm. I've got all the enthusiasm now that I had when we did our first album 'Journeys To Glory'. We've got to prove that we're the best band. And there's not many left. Duran don't seem to want to be a band . . ."

C O N T I N U E D O V E R



"I've got all the enthusiasm now that I had when we did our first album. This time we've got to prove we're the best."



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Has there ever been any danger of a Spandau split?

"Never! There's so much spirit amongst us lot. You know I thought if we took that time off because the band isn't holding us together we might drift into our own little areas with families and friends but it hasn't happened.

"We've lived with each other through this year and a half out of our own choice. I shared a house with John in Ireland and the band saw each other

"I think everyone should do the most they can do to change the situation in South Africa. CBS are now not allowed to sell our records there. Hopefully other bands will do the same."

every day. I don't know whether it's because my brother Martin's in the band and how close we are, but it's very brotherly between us all.

"I think we see ourselves as limbs that need the whole. We're not interested in solo careers right now."

Have you wanted to do solo work?

"I think eventually we all will. But right now there's so much for all of us to do as Spandau Ballet. It sounds really boring but I can't wait to get back onstage. That worries me at times. It's such a drag playing live."

Have you made more time for your personal life?

"I suppose so . . . but I'm the kind of person who's always thinking about things within the band. With the exception of Tony none of us has much of a private life outside the band.

"The best time we had was together in Dublin. No one's starstruck there. They really accepted us. You can just walk into any pub and someone'll chat to you."

Did you ever despair that you'd never make another record when the court case was going on?

"No, not really. We completely trusted

Steve (Dagger, their manager) and our lawyers so I got on with writing the album.

"One change we were particularly pleased to make was that CBS can not now sell our records in South Africa. I think we're the first CBS band to do this. And it wasn't easy.

"When we joined Chrysalis that was something that never occurred to me. You're so naive you can't imagine they're going to sell your records anywhere except England and maybe America. You can't imagine someone in Hong Kong owning your record. Then one day I was introduced to our South African record company . . .

"I think everyone should do the *most* they can do to change this. There's white kids out there living a cushy life in the suburbs who don't know what's going on in the townships. I don't think they even know how anti-apartheid the rest of the world is.

"Is *No. 1* sold in South Africa?"

Afraid so . . .

"Yeah, well I don't know how much they'll censor it but if a kid who used to buy all our records suddenly reads or hears that he can't buy them anymore then he's going to ask 'why'?

"If kids there feel as seriously about bands as they do here then hopefully this move will make a difference. And they *are* the next generation.

"One of the new songs I've written, 'When The Monolith Cracks', is about South Africa. I performed that at the Anti-Apartheid gig at Clapham and hopefully it'll be the B-side on the next single."

Is 'Through The Barricades' – the song you performed solo for Red Wedge – about Ireland?

"Not specifically, though that's how it started. Really it's a classic Romeo and Juliet – two people on different sides of the border coming together with all the problems that includes.

"'We Are Virgin', which we performed at Live Aid, is about Tony's kids. I saw him with his children in Ireland which must be the most frightening situation for them ever. And it's frightening watching them: they're like little sponges that soak up and imitate everything they see. You think:



my God, how much should you protect a child that's sitting in front of the TV watching everything from *News At Ten* to *The A-Team*? There's so much harmful junk . . . So 'We Are Virgin' is an anthem for them."

Do you still want to be screamed at and stuck on people's bedroom walls?

"I won't argue with that! But that's up to them – whether they still find us attractive!

"I think what was exciting from our first time round – which I'm sure is still about – is how involved people were with the groups they followed. As I said in an interview to you nearly two years ago, it's a celebration of themselves – their being there. It's not pure idol worship. It's more a release of energy."

"It worries me sometimes how much I want to play live again. Apart from Tony none of us has much of a personal life."

Do you feel older now?

"Not really. I think the business keeps you young. I mean it *wrecks* you physically . . . (pauses thoughtfully) . . . but that's probably our fault with all the drinking.

"No. I don't feel older – just excited. I can't wait to do our first *TOTP*."

What new things are there for Spandau to achieve?

"First to get back to the top of course. But we want to do more visual things – make a film.

"I'd like Spandau to do something spontaneous. Like The Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night*."

Was 'Fight For Ourselves' your first choice for a comeback single?

"It was as soon as we played it. I think 'Fight For Ourselves' has the best feeling we've had to a song since 'Chant No. 1'. But that's not to say we're spent after that. There's a lot of other strong singles to come!"

Are the people screaming on the record Spandau fans?

"Oh yes. We didn't nick it from Duran Duran Live or anything like that! It's an audience we played to in Rotterdam."

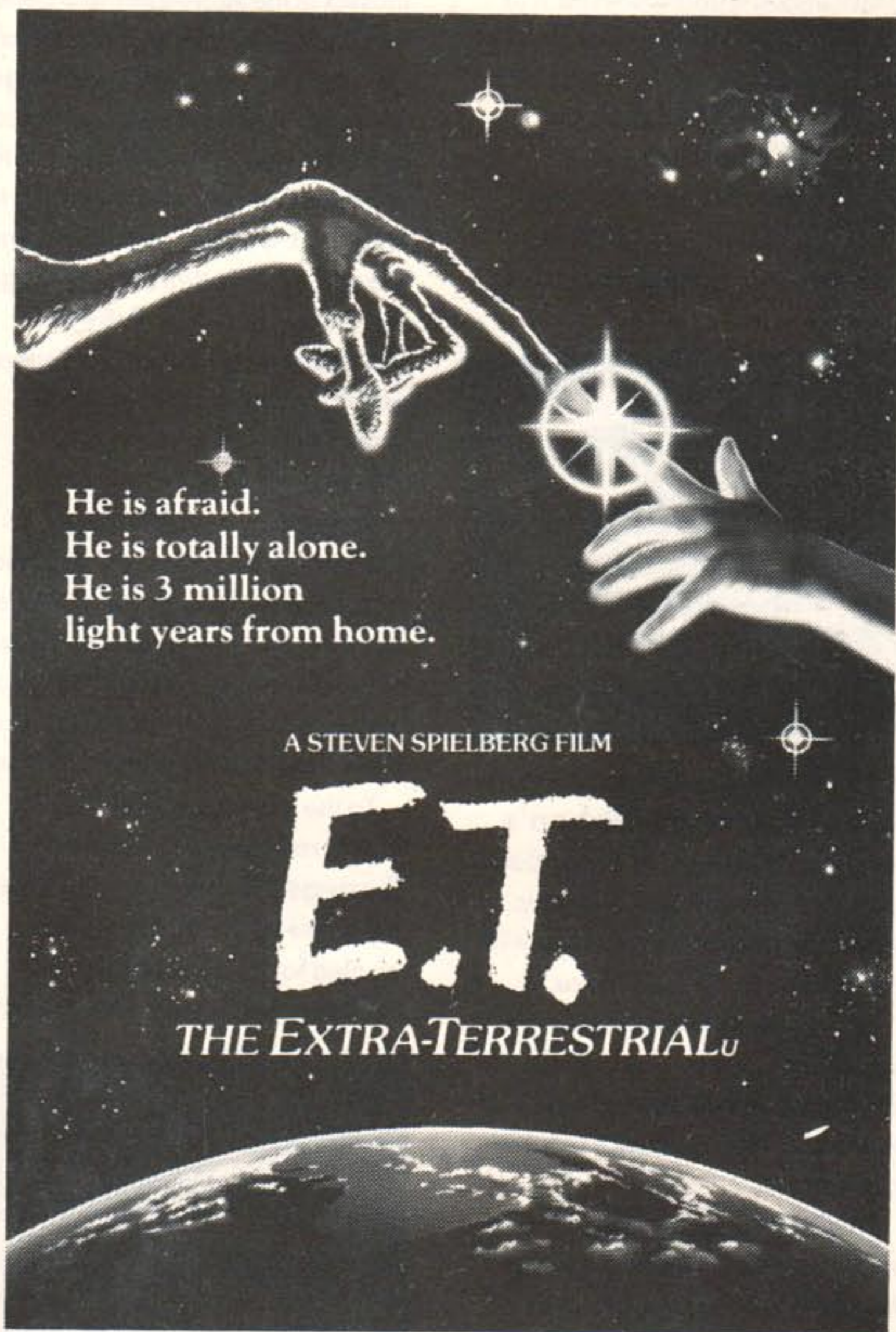
Will the new stage show be very different?

"Well as usual there'll be a lot of room for us to run around in. Our set designer came out with a model of the stage set last week which was great. It had little metal figures on it and they really looked like us."

Are you frightened of playing live again?

"Oh God, yeah. We won't be playing Britain first – that'd be much too scary. We'll play at home at the end of the year – so hang on!"

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