

WE'RE here because this is where I got stuck and the rest of the group are French," shrugs American Theo Hakola, vocalist and guitarist with **PASSION FODDER**, a band with a healthy reputation inside and outside of France. In Britain, their position was strengthened with the critically acclaimed "Fat Tuesday" LP released by Beggar's Banquet last year, and a support tour with Gene Loves Jezebel. They are about to embark upon a 40-date tour of the US, supporting Pete Murphy. Their third LP will be available in the UK in the summer, preceded by an as yet untitled single.

"I don't care which one is chosen," says Theo. "Our interest is to push an album, the whole of the music. The new LP is the most coherent so far. We're getting closer to perfecting our songs, songs which have a strong heart and soul and also a good groove, even in the slower ones. We're striving to make music which will be relevant 10 years from now. My biggest problem with British music is the lack of timelessness; it's mostly simply the result of the ravages of fashion and that takes its toll in America too — California, for example, is rampant with anglophilia.

"France is probably worse than either of those countries. So much of the music here is targeted at the charts and FM radio. Passion Fodder's way doesn't often get us on the radio."

Their way is the effectively economical enunciation of fibrous lyrics, the fusion of two guitars, a cluster of cluttered notes and sharp, slow slides and the omnipresence of Benedicte Villian's scratching violin. It's a style which has frequently given rise to comparisons with Tom Verlaine and Television.

"I think what we do is quite American although some of the components suggest otherwise. The beauty of the violin is something I've always loved and our approach to it is the same as our approach to the guitars; natural, with no added bullshit. It would be impossible to play the various parts on a synthesizer.

"Basically we are against technology f**king up music by taking the heart out of songs. It's a great shame when someone like Leonard Cohen starts messing around with technology. He doesn't understand it, he needs a band like The Bad Seeds to get the most from his music. And Dylan doesn't know how to produce

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himself any more, so he has to bring in Dave Stewart, whose productions remove every trace of soul. Passion Fodder are going to be Dylan's backing band, he's desperate for us. At least that will be more interesting than touring with Pete Murphy, and I won't even tell you about Gene Loves Jezebel." — P

