e in the information age, the repackaging of artist's back catalogue is pretty much gatory. Most careers can be boiled down a CD or two, but the various eras of Ed pper's musical journey have demanded ttle more than that.

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Ed-wise over the last few months, e's already been a four-disc set celeing the first incarnation of The Saints, ne few Australian bands who can

genuinely be called seminal. Then there's Cruel But Fair, another box of three covering Kuepper's early-'80s work with the jazz-rocknoise collision that was The Laughing Clowns.

And now This Is The Magic Mile, another three-part collection that attempts to condense his flood of solo work from around 1990 onward. For those of you keeping count, that's

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no less than 10 silver spinning things, not much of which isn't essential Australian music in a number of forms.

Oh, there's also a DVD of his not-often-seen videos as well: The Man, The Music, The Magic. "I didn't have much to do with compiling that, I just provided the title," Mr Kuepper says down the line.

Such flippancy is a bit of a front. Kuepper is a man who thinks about music, not just his own, and what it means. He considers that 1990's purple patch with a mix of affection and practicality.

"Oh, it was an incredibly prolific time for me," he admits. "I know there was almost this feeling of 'It's time for this month's Ed Kuepper album' from some people - but I never saw it like that. The music was developing so quickly, and I had a record company that was enthusiastic about releasing everything I could give them - to have all those conditions at once was extraordinary.

"But I don't think I've ever seen my whole cataloque listed - I'm not sure what I'd make of it if I saw it all written down item by item. I may surprise myself with my work ethic," he smiles.

Kuepper remains a productive artist. Music for film being a part of his work over the last couple of years. But some small venue residencies working through some of that back catalogue with former Clowns' drummer Jeffrey Wegener has him considering song based music again. "There's certain musical ideas coming - but almost so many I haven't even worked out the way we want to take it. I'll wait until it focuses better before I tell you what it could be.

"If you've been doing this for a time, I do have a real fear of ending up as some sort of musi-cal parody of myself. I've seen other musicians - some I know very well, and have worked very closely with - become that," he adds with a little conspiratorial chuckle. "So yes, I do take my work seriously – if anything I'll second guess myself a little too much."

Part of that reflects back on Magic Mile. While its near-on 50 tracks cover everything from his guitar-and-cardboard-box percussion acoustic duo work, to his repossession of his Saints-era electric energy with the not-socunningly-titled Aints, there's no way even its three sprawling discs can cover quite every-thing he has achieved. While most of the classics are present - the surprisingly touching romance of Everything I've Got Belongs To You, the churning Honey Steel's Gold, and even his perhaps unexpected cover of Highway To Hell - this churlish interviewer goes looking for his own favourite, and finds Black Ticket Day not present.

Edmund is apologetic: "Isn't it? I'm sure it was on at least one tracklisting I did. And yes, you're right, if asked to put it together again tomorrow, it would probably be a totally different selection of songs. I have been called a contrary bastard - there might be something to that," Indeed, But there are worse things to be.

WHO: Ed Kuepper

WHAT: The box set This Is The Magic Mile and the DVD The Man, The Music, The Magic (both Hot)

WHERE The Basement, Friday January 20 & WHEN: with Jeffrey Wegener and former Sunnyboys bassist Peter Oxley.



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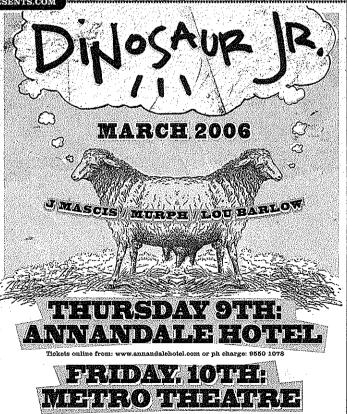
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