

David Byrne, Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth all attended the Rhode Island School of design in the mid-seventies. Byrne, Scottish by birth, but brought up in Canada and then Baltimore, had begun his musical career at school with a band who suffered under the name of Revelation.

Byrne's next venture was altogether more serious: with accordian player Marc Kehoe, he former Bizadi, who played gigs in art schools and restaurants in both Baltimore and San Francisco. Byrne met drummer Chris Frantz at Rhode Island, and together they put together a band called the Artistics. The band concentrated on cover versions, but Byrne also contributed a handful of originals -among them 'Psycho Killer', 'I'm Not In Love' and 'Warning Sign', all of which were later adopted by Talking Heads. Among the group's keenest fans was Tina Weymouth, who would eventually marry Chris Frantz. After the Artistics broke up in mid-1974, Byrne, Frantz and Weymouth considered putting a band together themselves. Weymouth put her musical education to good use by learning the bass, and the three ex-students moved to New York's Lower East Side, where they followed the route of countless other art graduates by living in a loft apartment and considering where their art would lead them.

The trio began serious rehearsals in the early months of 1975, still mixing Byrne's originals with bubblegum and Sixties punk cover versions. By May that year, they had found a name - Talking Heads - which was individual without carrying too many preconceptions about the kind of music they would be playing.

The following month, they made their live debut, supporting the Ramones at CBGB's. New York was in the midst of its most exciting musical explosion for a decade. Artists like Patti Smith, Tom Verlaine and Richard Hell's Television and the Ramones were spearheading the city's first original contribution to the U.S. rock mainstream since the demise of the Brill Building, and the rarified art school atmosphere that surrounded many of these acts was an ideal breeding-ground for Talking Heads.

Early in 1976, the trio made their first demos, recording 'Psycho Killer', 'First Week, Last Week/Carefree' and 'Artists Only' for Beserkeley Records. The results, completed with a live version of '1,2,3 red light', surfaced as a bootleg EP in the early eighties, and revealed the group to have a simple, eclectic charm that was vanishing by the time they made their first record. Later demo sessions followed in the summer of 1976, and in November, the group signed with Sire - home of such individuals as the Ramones and the Flamin' Groovies.

The Early Years

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