

## EELS

### No plan is no problem for E and his band of indie rockers

HEADING INTO THE STUDIO WITHOUT A SINGLE SONG written could easily lead to chaos, but on the latest Eels album, *Wonderful, Glorious*, the casual approach was key to bringing the band together.

"Normally I have a concept or musical idea of what I want a record to sound like, but I went in with none of that," says frontman Mark Everett (better known as "E"). Instead, E took an "anything goes" approach to the album—which he produced—and opened himself to ideas from the band that he might not have always been receptive to. "Part of how I produce is to make sure everybody in



Jan Ralston

the room knows they can suggest anything at any time and I'll listen to it, and often try it," he says. "In the past, if someone suggested an idea that sounded like a bad idea to me, I wouldn't even try it. A lot of times I was proven wrong. That was a good lesson for me."

The team approach allows *Wonderful, Glorious* to simultaneously be more varied and more cohesive than Eels' last few albums. "I think everything but the kitchen sink is on there. It's sort of all over the place," says E. "It is more of a band-oriented record than the last couple were."

Everett formed Eels in 1995, and it's widely known as his project with a rotating cast for a backing band. The current lineup of the Chet, Knuckles, Kool G Murder and P-Boo are familiar to fans, however, as they have now been through two world tours with Eels. "I don't feel the need to mix it up, because we're pretty busy mixing it up with each other," says E. "I think a lot of bands that are

married to the same members are kind of making the same record over and over, because they're limited by their collective imagination. The Beatles are always the rare exception to that rule, because they were just the right combination of four guys with really huge imaginations. In this case I feel like I found that situation for myself."

If *Wonderful, Glorious* sounds more cohesive in its arrangements, E's struggles with the project are apparent in his lyrics. "I wasn't aware what the conflict was that I was writing about at the time, but I look back now and see there are a lot of songs about fighting your way out of a corner," he says. "It was simply because we went into the making of this album with no plan, and that was a little scary for me. I think that was coming out unconsciously in the lyrics, that I was a little worried about, 'Have I pinned myself into a corner here, and how do I get out of it?' I feel like I did."

—AF

