



## Paul Ellis.

Height ...

MC/Entertainer Biography  
**JOHNSON&LAIRD**

It's no surprise that music industry man Paul Ellis has to use a storage unit for his music collection. He's been collecting the stuff since his days as a greenhorn music reviewer for the Auckland Star newspaper. And the reason he doesn't just download it all on to ipod? He's a traditionalist. The machine has killed music with its endless shuffling and listing features, he laments.

"Nobody listens to whole albums anymore."

They listen to him though, booing or cheering as he picks winners on TV talent shows New Zealand Idol, and New Zealand's Got Talent. He's the tough judge, the one who asks, "Who told you that you could sing/dance/juggle?" However, he's more than earned his right to critique, having worked his way up through the ranks of music giant Sony. Starting as a promo junior in New Zealand, Ellis worked his way up the company signing the likes of Bic Runga, Strawpeople and Dave Dobbyn. He was transferred to Sony HQ in New York in 1996 and worked alongside multi Platinum and Grammy Award winning acts such as Cyndi Lauper and Sarah McLachlan as well as a host of significant songwriters to become Vice President for the company's Music Publishing A&R division in New York

It was at Sony he developed his shoot-from-the-lip style, fast gaining a reputation for telling it like it was or had to be and was often the guy asked to deliver the more 'difficult' messages to clients.

However, he didn't always have such high-flying clients. As a boy in small town Blenheim his first jobs were stacking shelves in his local supermarket, and herding animals as a stock and station agent. At 19 he crossed the ditch for a stint in Australia, selling discount restaurant vouchers door-to-door in Sydney, sometimes earning up to \$500 a week.

Back in New Zealand, he took up journalism and after a short spell on local paper the Marlborough Express, he upped sticks to Auckland to review music for daily newspaper the Auckland Star. The new job was a baptism of fire since Paul couldn't actually type; until then his flatmates had typed out his longhand copy for him. He learned fast, and was soon churning out interviews with the likes of Bono, Annie Lennox, Chrissie Hynde and David Bowie.

After 15-odd years with Sony, he reckons he's found his mojo again, this time in TV. He also runs his own marketing company, organising and consulting on publicity.

As a boy, Paul loved lying on Timaru's over-bridges to watch the steam trains chuff underneath. Now in Auckland, he's dropped the train-spotting habit, and gets his kicks from sailing instead. Growing up on the Marlborough Sounds meant he could handle a tiller well before he could drive a car, and while he no longer owns a yacht he heads out for a harbour cruise when he can. He's an avid rugby and rugby league fan (of the armchair variety), and also likes to have a healthy stack of biographies on his bedside table.

continued...

So how has he adjusted from the heady rush of New York City to the more relaxed lifestyle of downtown Auckland? The change of pace is healthy, he reckons, and besides, he says, "I'm not as mad as I used to be."