

Ashley Parker, Scorpio songwriter



By Anne Sacks
SINGER - songwriter Ashley Parker, left, is an individualist, idealist and Scorpio.

On the bill of the Spike Milligan show which opens at the Three Arts on Wednesday, he has been appearing at the Speakeasy in Mouille Point.

Astrology is an important part of his life. It has provided source material and happy times with Taurus women.

In fact, he has done work on a project writing songs about people from each of the 12 signs of the zodiac. The first completed one was Taurus Motion Picture Song — naturally.

'I sing to women,' he admitted to me when I met him in Johannesburg.

'It is an unfortunate condition of our society that men are not allowed to show emotion.

'But I have discovered that men will show emotion when their partners do. They feel safer channelling their emotions through women.

'It's good to feel people wrapped in emotion. Singing in the places I do, I am in close contact with the audience and can see who is being moved. It is a great reward.'

Ashley's sound is a soft sound in the Dylan-Donovan mould blen-

ded with 'classical' pop tunes that never lose appeal. But his repertoire of late includes a chunk of original material.

He started his musical career with a band as a sideline to his BSc studies and work with computers.

Nine years ago he bought a 12-string guitar and left the band: 'Self-expression gets lost in a band. Now, besides doing my own songs, I can also change my repertoire every night.'

Ashley says he writes songs from a title and the lyrics follow almost unconsciously.

That means the relevance or meaning of the lines take time, sometimes years, to blend with a conscious experience.

'It is important to form an understanding relative to yourself. It is not essential to know the

literal meaning of the words but to know what you think the song is saying.

'The exchange of interpretation is what appreciation is about.'

After spending four months abroad where he appeared in a travel film, Ashley returned to find a singing job in a Sandton restaurant.

There he teamed up with Nick Alexander and they developed a happy working relationship. Nick wrote lyrics and Ashley wrote the music.

Their combination of talents created Close Up which made the Radio 5 charts.

Now Ashley, bolstered by positive feedback, has been writing his own songs, but he believes in learning from others and adapting the information to create a totally original sound.