

## Tekst 7

### ARTS & STYLE

## Boys and girls wear their political hearts on their sleeves

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POP

Last week Busted, a toothsome British boy band with a potent hold over the hearts and hormones of the nation's teenage girls, outed themselves in an interview as supporters of the Conservative party. Band member Matt Jay homed in on taxation as the reason, explaining succinctly: "Yeah, actually, you know what, I am not going to be ripped off any more. From the 26 position I am in now, I am a f\*\*\*ing Tory boy too."

Young Matt's forthright endorsement is good news for the Conservatives, who are in dire need of rejuvenation – the average age of its membership is almost 60. But it's not such good news for Busted's handlers, who have to digest the consequences of their boyish charges hitching themselves to 27 so uncool that few pop careers survive contact with it. In 1979, for instance, Gary Numan's reputation as an enigmatic synth-pop pioneer evaporated after he backed Margaret Thatcher. Rick Wakeman's presence at last week's Tory party conference would have proved fatal to his 28 had the former keyboard player with prog-rock bores Yes actually possessed any.

Pop's values are overwhelmingly liberal, as shown by the bands now performing in the Vote for Change tour in the US and the jeers that greeted Bryan Ferry when he spoke in support of his fox-hunting son at a recent awards ceremony.

But there are 29 for Busted's lurch to the right. The Spice Girls claimed the conservative PM Margaret Thatcher as a "girl power" role model and backed her successor John Major. George W. Bush danced with Ricky "Living la Vida Loca" Martin at his presidential inauguration and was serenaded by MTV starlet Jessica Simpson, who crooned "George Bush, I think I'm in love with you" at him.

In 2000 an Abba-soundalike pop group called Steps were forced to deny being racist after a newspaper published an interview in which one of their members complained about asylum-seekers in the UK. Another spoke approvingly of capital punishment. Dannii Minogue, Kylie's less talented younger sister, also made some 30 remarks about immigration in an interview, which she later claimed were taken out of context.

What these acts have in common is a background in 31 pop. This is popular music at its most commodified, with performers rolling off an assembly line singing songs precisely calibrated to appeal to an audience of kids. Amid fierce competition, bands like Busted have to put the hours in to stand out from their peers and keep their fickle fans from deserting them.

Mel B., speaking after the Spice Girls were nominated for the new UK Music Hall of Fame, described their life as one of constant work and travel: "The record company and our management weren't silly. Things like the Spice Girls didn't have 32 and they milked it for everything they could."

Boy bands and girl groups are subjected to the pressures of the market in a way that liberal rock stars like R.E.M. and Bruce Springsteen aren't. So it's 33 that Busted should call for lower taxation and announce their allegiance to the Conservatives. Whether their fans will

34 when they're old enough to vote is a moot point, however – by then they'll probably all be listening to Radiohead and protesting against globalisation.

*Financial Times*

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*Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.*

1p **26**

- A ambiguous
- B delicate
- C financial

1p **27**

- A a medium
- B an age group
- C a political brand
- D a type of music

1p **28**

- A credibility
- B musical ability
- C political prestige

1p **29**

- A alternatives
- B good reasons
- C no excuses
- D precedents

1p **30**

- A controversial
- B innocent
- C intelligent
- D politically correct

1p **31**

- A electronic
- B genuine
- C manufactured
- D standard

1p **33**

- A ironic
- B naive
- C not fair
- D not surprising

1p **32**

- A a lack of publicity
- B a lot of musical training
- C a very long shelf life
- D a wide audience

1p **34**

- A appreciate this
- B do the same
- C have any political interest
- D still listen to their music