

Summer, the Rolling Stones, Bryan Ferry, the Beatles, etc. and, most notoriously, Michael Jackson.

**Plans:** They will eventually go vinyl but they're understandably reluctant to step away from the independence afforded by home recording and cassette release. The next project is a double album called *A Scar Is Born*. This, other tapes, posters and T-shirts are available from PO Box 2764, Christchurch.

**Recordings:** They record everything.

**Concept (1)?** Steve: "I guess ... the whole comes out as more than the parts."

**Concept (2)?** Steve: "If there's a concept it's independence within a whole."

**Concept (3)?** Steve: "Bob and Stu and Steve."

**Concept (4)?** Steve: "It's to get across that hurdle of ... prejudice. People are pre-judging things. If we change all the time people can't pre-judge us. And that's the best way to avoid becoming part of the rock 'n' roll machine you were talking about."

**Russell Brown**

# Live

## Wilko Johnson & the Blues All Stars

*Gluepot, November 1*

So wild-eyed Wilko was back, on his own this time. I think most of the people present would gladly have paid their money to see Wilko play but, whether you wanted them or not, you got the All Stars. I understand to miss most of the All Stars' set; I understand it was business as usual.

Anyway, bad news first: the Gluepot Syndrome was particularly in evidence this night and I can't believe anyone could countenance standing behind the partition if they actually wanted to hear the band — from the bar the music was so much bassy nonsense. Still, you pays yer money ...

Wilko played with Dennis Ryan and Neil Edwards, the All Stars rhythm section. The pair did well enough, even though after only three practises it could only be blues-by-numbers rather than pub style R&B.

Everyone wants to see Wilko charge around the stage, see those eyes bulge — and he didn't disappoint. But when by default he had to be the sole object of attention there was an element of sideshow about it all — see *Wilko do his tricks!* Given that he's not a great singer, it was too much to expect a single guitarist to hold it all up on his own.

But now the good news! Wilko Johnson reminded us that he is a Bloody Great Rhythm 'n' Boogie Guitarist. He cracked out rapidfire chords like a man with bionic wrists. Electric! And sweat! "He's okay within what he does," sniffed a blues buff. "But he doesn't do much lead work, does he?"

Me, I think he's smart. He knows it's gonna be best if he does what comes easiest. He owns the Wilko Johnson style of guitar playing and he always will.

And when everyone came back on stage for the inevitable final jam, it was Wilko that brought it above the ordinary, stabbing in a little wakeup every time he opened up. Yes, he's an original indeed.

**Russell Brown**

## Car Crash Set

*Windsor, October 24*

Life's hard. Just when you get all

the machines under control, you find that things are getting laboured and just when you loosen up and start having a good time, your credibility slips through your fingers. Car Crash Set pick the best of both; the band have the time of their lives and Nigel Russell complains. Everyone dances and everyone's miserable. Maybe things aren't that complicated after all.

Okay, so much for cynicism. Car Crash Set have penned and performed three of the best ever: 'Those Days', 'Work' and 'Breakdown', the latter mixed live to a size way beyond vinyl. Given the remainder, the new album will be a box of goodies and rewards appropriate to the huge effort they put in to what they do.

And what they do, namely grind through a sweating live set of chic industrial dance, they do very well, far surpassing their efforts in the studio. The only question is why Nigel Russell, with such a good band behind him, is still singing lyrics from old New Order songs.

Maybe he just can't resist the ...

**Chad Taylor**

## Soul On Ice

*Zanzibar, Oct 4.*

"Polished" is not a term that usually augers well for a "soul"

band. Polished means getting everything just right, even to the point of filing down the rough edges, losing the feel, the emotional contact, the "soulfulness" that the best music of the form has. Soul On Ice are polished, very polished, but they still have the feel.

Opening with dancers who got the crowd clapping and cheering, Soul On Ice came on to play an almost entirely original set, stopping to cover only two songs, the Jacksons' 'Walk Right Back' and 'Take Your Time (Do It Right)' by the SOS Band.

A great funky bass player and an amazingly successful single trumpet player expanded the range of the songs with the help of two very professional backup vocalists. The lead vocalist has a fine voice but needs to break out of a somewhat limited delivery that sometimes bordered on monotony. Still, she did deliver one of the few successful exhortations to dance that I've ever seen.

Just ask anyone who was there that night. This band is bloody good and they put on a damn fine show.

**Barry Morris**

## Ra and the Pyramids

*Cricketers, October 5*

Ra and the Pyramids pay homage to the soul greats. And they're faithful. This isn't the full-tilt treatment of the Jive Bombers, it's a more subtle sound and style. Ra is every bit the showman and he's got a resonant voice that carries well the works of Al Green, Smokey Robinson or Sam and Dave. The Pyramids feature a fine horn section and contain voices male and female which harmonise with Ra.

Search these guys out. They're a little known (as yet) soul treat.

**David Taylor**

## Human Lawnmowers, Ward 13, Worst Kind Of Art Snob

*Left Bank Theatre, Hamilton, Nov 10.*

Ward 13 made a promising debut in the stark confines of Hamilton's Left Bank Theatre. On the whole their musicianship was of good standard and the only irritating aspect was the vocalist's lapses into a low, monotonal drone. He also demonstrated his promising reading ability by singing the lyrics of nearly half the songs off sheets of paper. Their 11 song set had some less pleasant or inspiring moments, but there were high spots, in particular their closing number 'Winter', which ended Ward 13's performance on a strong note.

Between the two bands, poetry was provided by the Worst Kind of Art Snob, who, in a dazzling impersonation of a blind cripple in an old white wheelchair, reeled off a few lines backed by double bass and a slide show of the great cities of Europe.

Last on, the Human Lawnmowers received a tremendous reaction from the small crowd as they raced through a tight but enjoyable set, full of variety and spirit. Highlights were 'Fading Light', the slow-building 'Ghost Song' and the finale, an excellent version of 'White Light, White Heat'. Behind them flashed slides of everyone's favourite politicians, Ronnie and Rob, and assorted items including Marilyn Monroe, massacred Jews and Springbok tour riots. But as lead singer Joe Flynn said, all they had to do was play, because in the words of Ward 13's 'Winter': "Oh Hamilton, you really are so boring."

**Paul McKessar**

## Tan Zen Jungle

*Zanzibar (ChCh), Nov 2*

For once our timing was perfect. The band hadn't even started when we got there. The lightweight funk that was the Trifids might have been expected to resurface but to bassist Mark Howe's credit this was to be an exercise in moving from the widely accepted, relatively orthodox beginnings of his first band to the slightly un-orthodox and considerably more evasive rhythms shown here.

Perhaps the other pleasing factor was the huge scope with which they have given themselves to work. That is to say the debut of Tan Zen Jungle was far from perfect, but there is so much they can do by way of improvements and additions that a near-completed project will only want to be on the awkward side of perfection for everybody's comfort and approval.

You have all seen/heard bands that are held together by their rhythm section — well that's never been truer than with this band. That is, of course, the whole idea, but Howe's wonderful bass playing

is, maybe, without equal — and when combined with Craig Guerny's drumming it is really how a bass and drums should sound.

William Stewart contributes some ideal guitar playing but it is really only offered as garnishing. The vocals and trumpet of Simon Claridge are an uneasy combination, with lyrics almost non-existent. He is probably saying as much when he plays that trumpet. His frustrated little dance once again proves that Tony Drumm has a LOT to answer for but hell, if that's all I've got to complain about ... and it's pronounced "Tarn".

**Alister Cain**



## The Rutles (Roadshow)

It's good to see stuff on video that was made for TV. It works right out to the edges — I mean you know that if someone disappears off screen that it's not because she's strayed into the Cinemascope-only area but she's supposed to not be visible. Good innit? Yeah. And Idle, Eric Idle, I mean, he used to be one of them Pythons then didn't he? Course he did. And this is sorta like the Beatles story but it's all a leg-pull with all the wrong names and stuff, but like George's in it but he's playing an interviewer. Other famous odds and sods like Paul Simon and Mick Jagger get to do their own lines so it's no expense spared and they've got that geezer Innes from the Bonzos to do the songs and he doesn't half take the piss with a fair amount of accuracy. All in all, a couple of bloody good laughs and I'd go so far as to say that here lies a labour of love. And love is all you need, am I right? I am! CK

## Rude Boy (Video Classics)

Ray Gange directs and stars (as himself), while the Clash (as themselves) play the bit parts. Gange is a disillusioned London youth who hangs around the Clash and manages to get a job lugging on a tour. The frantic live excerpts stand out markedly against the rather laboured dialogues — the opportunity to see the Clash play material from their first three albums is the film's chief value. But Gange's ambitious attempt to contrast what he perceives as true (nihilistic) punk politics against the more traditional radical stance of the Clash isn't a total failure and the mixture of scripted and real events (as when Ray comes on stage at the Hyde Park RAR gig) is fascinating. A better director might have been able to tighten this into a very good film. RB

## Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (Palace)

A gem. When Robert Altman's good he's unbeatable and this is great. It started life as a stage play (produced, I think, by Altman), an origin which is apparent throughout the movie in its one set splendour. Don't be put off — theatricality in a film can be a good thing and in this case it works to create a feature-length world that glows and shimmers with a gloriously intangible incandescence. Phew. Cher, Sandy Dennis and Karen Black head an almost exclusively female ensemble that doesn't put a foot wrong. Altman seems to work most comfortably with women (*A Wedding, Nashville, Images* and, most notably, *Three Women*, all feature female roles immaculately played). And the performances in *CBTTFADJDJD* are as good as any he has extracted in the past. Altman takes huge risks, which is how it should be, but there is no risk involved in shelling out a few bucks for this unique item. CK

## 'TAPES' FROM PAGE 40

### No Idea, Wotsoever (Twisted Tapes)

(\$7, PO Box 1297, Christchurch)

Somehow this tape has managed to avoid being reviewed, but it's far too good to be missed. What you get is 11 songs, fast and catchy and topped off with intelligent, convincing lyrics. Well worthwhile, and with the demise of Southern Front and laziness of Flesh D-Vice No Idea look set to lead the field but watch out, Five Year Mission, Compos Mentis and Armatrak are hot on their heels.

NC

