



DD Smash drummer Peter Warren popped down the front to have a chat with some of the audience during a break when power failed a few bars into the band's first song at about 7.30. It was then that police made the decision to move in a team in riot gear. The concert came to an early end about 40 minutes later.

## From Calm to Confrontation

The 89 Triple M free concert in Aotea Square on December 7 seemed a wonderful idea. It began warmly and cheerfully with a sunny set from Herbs — and ended in the worst rioting Queen St has seen since 1932. Everyone has a theory on what happened and why. Here's the words and pictures.



It's over — Triple M director Barry Everard signals to the stage after being asked to stop the concert by police. Also pictured are programme director Keith Williams (far left) and breakfast DJ Fred Botica (far right).

## Famous Last Words The Cassette Version

Dave Dobbyn will regret one sentence he uttered at Aotea Square for the rest of his life. "I wish those riot squad guys would stop wanking and put their little batons away," he said at the start of one of the new DD Smash songs. A tape made with a hand-held recorder registers noise from the crowd at the statement. "Where are they?" a bystander can be heard saying. "We can take care of ourselves, it's alright," Dobbyn says later in the song; and then later, realising that the crowd's attention is beginning to shift away from the stage: "C'mon, you gotta do something here. Oh, forget about that, let's just get into the music." Crowd noise then makes a definite shift from jeering back

to cheering and clapping for the band. "One more sentimental song and then we'll rock out," Dobbyn says before the band goes into 'Stay'. The words take on a rather grim irony a few minutes later. "Sorry, this is just too uncontrollable ... sorry, we've got to stop," says Dobbyn after the song. Triple M's Fred Botica is up at the mike almost immediately: "We've been asked by the police to stop the concert." Noise begins among the crowd again: "What'll happen to all this energy?" a crowd member says. "They're getting the long batons out — shit." The sounds of jeering become louder, breaking glass can be heard. Each major impact

is followed by a loud cheer. "It's their bloody fault!" comes an exasperated young woman's voice. Other voices as the crowd moves are more puzzled than worried. A drunken-sounding voice wanders in and out of range: "... arseholes, bastards ...". One woman screams, then shortly after comes the voice of what sounds like a young Maori kid: "Hey ... we might get on TV!" The manager of DD Smash, Roger King, confirmed later that the band had not planned to stop early and had only done so at the request of the police. "But there were mistakes made in all directions," he said. "And there's certainly nothing good you can say about the behaviour of the people." He also confirmed that police had spoken to Dobbyn regarding his statements on stage but said that their questions had related as much to asking about the actions of the police as to Dobbyn's comments.

## 'There's A Riot Goin' On' A View From the Crowd

The trouble in Aotea Square is generally agreed to have begun when a couple of spectators on top of the covered way of the Wellesley St Post Office began urinating off the edge and dropping bottles during an enforced break caused by a power failure during DD Smash's first song. There were some bottles thrown at police who arrested the youths but the majority of the crowd was unaware of any trouble. Shortly after the arrests had been made, police in riot gear marched up Queen St to the other corner of Aotea Square and stood in formation across the main exit. Chris Caddick, who was standing at the back of the square, near where the police lined up, said "99 per cent of the crowd" was unaware of any trouble and attention was focused on the stage. There had been some noise

and disturbance when Dave Dobbyn had mentioned the riot police behind the crowd: "But it wasn't until the music stopped that I turned around and saw the police in riot gear just behind us. Everyone's attention turned away from the stage and that's when the trouble really started." I had been walking towards the information centre corner during the last song and when the music stopped just before 8pm there was bewilderment for a while, a crowd ran back, apparently in the face of a police charge, then rallied and, with numbers swelled by people simply leaving, missiles began to fly in earnest and windows were broken. "This is the real thing, isn't it?" said a friend I bumped into. "An actual riot." *CONTINUED ON PAGE 4*

The late-model Renault overturned in Queen St about half an hour after the riot began. Note large number of bystanders.

