

# BATMAN

Batman and Robin go to the pub ...

"Gee Batman, I hope crime in Gotham City picks up now that the notorious egghead Grigg is coming back to town."

"No doubt it will, Boy Wonder — especially with No Tag waiting at the airport."

"Holy Doc Martens, Batman — do you think we'll see a few biff, sock, kapows in Customs?"

"Most probably Robin, but not nearly as many as last month when we were called into catch the Penguin Corless and his sidekick Straw Brazier after they'd done that dine and dash at the Melba."

"Holy entrees, that was fun Batman. Did you see his face when they called Ratman scum and then nearly got asked to leave, and when they tried to make the fast getaway in that red Jaguar and a Morris Minor passed them on the motorway?"

"Ha ha ha Robin. You know Robin, fraud is on the increase and we had better do something about it."

"Holy U2 Batman, does that mean we can go bash up Joker Luck and bring him to justice? And can we also bash up Catwoman Hay for endorsing boring old farts like AC/DC and Creedence Clearwater Revival?"

"That's right Robin, and we'll also go pick on Doug Hood for doing backing vocals on the only New Zealand single in recent times which hasn't been Solid Lead. To the batpoles Robin!"

Dada-dada-dada-dada-dada-dada ... (etc)

"Look in the rear view mirror Batman, it's Clive Wilson, shall we pick him up?"

"No Robin, he smells too much. After that Greenpeace concert all he can afford to eat is baked beans and his farts could probably sink the entire navy let alone the peace squadron."

"Holy methane, Batman — you're right again!"

So let's check out Progressive Studios, that well-known hangout of villains, and see if there's any there to be nabbed. Batman and Robin speed along to the studio and find that as soon as they walk through the door they are imprisoned in what might become their coffin! Looking through the studio windows we see their fate ... A Not Really Anything video clip and Donny and Marie Ulrich! Arrgghh! Guaranteed to bore them to death! Could this be the end for Batman and the Boy Wonder?! Does anyone know where they are?!

"Quick Robin, let's check our utility belts and see of we can do something about it ... shark repellent, no, the batarang, no ... ah, here we are Robin, perhaps we can avoid our doom with this tape!"

"Huh? How dat Batman?"

"Well if we can play this Netherworld Dancing Toys single at them as many times as the radio stations play it we might just have a chance!"

After 50 plays of the tape Batman and Robin emerge from the studio and don't even need to hit their opponents because they're asleep.

"Quick Robin, let's take them to jail and then go and apprehend the staff at Rip It Up for substituting 'Arry's last column with a motorcycle tyre advert!"

'ARRY

## Enjoy What You Do THE BATS

ROBERT SCOTT

KAY WOODWARD

MALCOLM GRANT

PAUL KEAN



**So what's a person-in-a-band do with a spare Saturday morning on tour in Auckland? Sleep, maybe. Or do the rounds of the second-hand record shops ...**

The Bats are in town and guitarist Bob Scott and drummer Malcolm Grant lay down their bagged records and take a seat to rest after a couple of hours traversing Auckland's one-horse-town central business district. They're going to see *Brazil* in the afternoon.

Of course what they're in town for is to play live, which they did. A different Bats sound, this one, a little bigger and harder than before, notably in new songs like 'North By North'. Bob and Malcolm are keen to hear about any perceived changes in the music — they say they haven't got much of a perspective on it themselves. They just write in the way they have for some time, with Bob in Dunedin sending up a cassette with the basis of four or five songs to the rest of the band in Christchurch, them working the songs out and everyone getting together for practice before gigs. They learned two new songs the

day before they headed north.

"It's good doing it that way because the songs are quite unformed when we get them," Malcolm explains. "It's not too much problem learning them quickly, we don't go in for complicated ones."

"Yeah, right," Bob agrees. "We haven't got any complicated songs yet. I might try one next time — lots of changes."

The Bats have just released their second EP, and here is *'Music For the Fireside'*, on Flying Nun; seven songs, recorded in Christchurch and produced by bass player Paul Kean ...

"On the first EP I suppose you could just about call us a backing band," Malcolm comments. "The songs were already well worked out, whereas with this one it's much more that they've formed as we've played."

Bob's also happier with his singing this time round. Do people still go on about his voice?

"Yeah, I think so — I mean, I go on about it. I wish I had a more interesting voice. I can sing in tune now, I've got much better control over my vocal chords."

The EP also features violin, courtesy of the Rip's Alastair Gal-

braith. He's fiddled live both as a duo with Bob and with the Bats. He has violin lines worked out for about 10 Bats songs and even co-wrote 'Neighbours', one of the songs on the EP.

That's not Bob's only musical sideline in Dunedin — there's the Weeds, a mutation of last year's Pink Plastic Gods, featuring Bob, Mike 'Wreck Small Speakers' Morley and Shayne Carter. They've just turned up and played when they've played, no exhaustive practising, but it gives Bob the chance to keep on playing bass. A single has been recorded.

Not content with merely playing music, Bob also masterminds *Every Secret Thing* magazine and Southern tapes. The mag is up to issue 10 and a recent grant of several hundred dollars should see interesting developments over the next few issues. The tapes now number 24, biggest sellers have been the *Songs From the Lowland* and *Big Southern Hits*. Further north, Paul produces pottery, guitarist Kay Woodward expands her mind at university and Malcolm numbers among his activities looking after the World cassette, which may be released on Flying Nun; but

it's Bob with a pie for every finger. Why so active?

"Well, you sort of have to be in Dunedin or you get really bored ... or anywhere really, I suppose."

All this and the Mornington 5th Grade soccer team (Bob is even wearing the socks). The musician-laden side is languishing near the bottom of its table after a stunning early run was halted by absences and injuries to key players like Ver-laine Graeme Downes. Bob managed to crack a rib and was reduced to the status of commentator for a while. But "it's good fun playing — it's pretty different from playing music."

Is there a danger of getting too absorbed in music?

"It depends what you feel like at the time really. I don't feel that way. I just keep doing it as long as I enjoy it."

"It's basically being professional amateurs," Malcolm adds. "If we suddenly went professional it would sort of turn into money, like any band does. Things become very different."

Bob: "It's very easy for us at the moment really. There's no problems we run into at all. As long as we can play where we want to when we want to and make records how we want, that's enough really."

Where they want to play includes some places that aren't pubs and the Bats have played the McDougall Art Gallery and Christchurch's new youth centre recently. Bob enjoys playing alternative venues because there's less pressure to make people dance, more scope for slow songs. On the other hand, Paul would probably still be exhorting the audience to its feet if they played a morgue.

The Bats live don't actually reach out and grab you by the throat/heart as some bands do — there's probably not the desperation for that. But the marriage of loveable, concise, slightly skewed melodies and crackin' riddums will make most people smile and some of them dance in the night.

Enjoy what you do, Bats.  
**Russell Brown**

# SHONALAINING

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