

# Search and Nest Roy!

A Weekend Away With Bird Nest Roys

Now is this a typical scenario or what? The footpath is strewn with bags, bedding and musical paraphernalia and the poor working stiff has to pick their way gingerly around the pieces as they go wherever they're going at 9am on Friday. Camp mother/soundman Terry King stands by the side door of the van coolly running an eye over the personal debris before him and wondering how he's going to fit it in the vehicle.

Even more of a scenario is the fact that (count 'em) nine young people have to fit into the van along with all these amps, drums, guitars, mikestands and all ...

This is the six-piece Bird Nest Roys; Big Ross, Little Ross, Deberly Roy, Warro Wakefield. Peter Moerenhout and the famous Dom Fatty. The names might sound fairly unlikely, but both the band and the individuals exist. Honest. Just check the papers. With them are "TK", myself and Peel. And we're going to New Plymouth — join a band and see the world!

As a van packer, Terry proves to make a good sound engineer and his lounge has to be substantially remodelled before it's even fit for human habitation.

"Don't lean on my drums," cautions Peter.

Naturally, something has been forgotten, so we have to go and get Warro's tambourine. As a result the first place we stumble into allstrungoutfromtheroad is the corner dairy, an interminable 10 minutes into the journey. It's Auckland's admirable Ardmore

(ace assonance, eh?) dairy, an establishment which sees hungry bohemian types often, by virtue of its being open around the clock.

Finally, we're on the motorway, and after sinking into the only fit state for travelling, it's music time. R.E.M.'s *Fables Of the Reconstruction* bawls tinnily from the cassette player that Peel had found in a clump of grass one night in the city. Tremendous travelling music.

Backs begin to ache, legs to cramp up and bums to go numb. The half dozen occupants of the back compartment attempt to forget themselves, whilst the lucky trio in front get to look at Auckland's morning motorway traffic.

Whilst there's little of any moment happening, it's appropriate to background these minstrels. Bird Nest Roys have been together for more than two years,

playing small gigs and parties around Auckland and operating as much as a social club as a band. They were about to call it a day earlier this year when the Tall Dwarfs asked them to play support one night at the Windsor. A big Windsor crowd took to the Roys like flies to a blanket and they were glorious unknowns no longer. Since then they've been to Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, Timaru, and now, the big one ... New Plymouth.

They're touring on their own for the first time, but expectations are they'll do rather well. Hur, hur, hur ...

The trip lopes by and everyone tries to go to sleep but no one's really comfortable enough to get unconscious and everyone has to settle for restlessness instead. The true nature of the Roy beast begins to emerge — the sense of community that's one of the best

things about them on stage has its roots in deeply-felt, ritualised intimate behaviour; i.e. they pummel shit out of each other.

The situation develops into a classic dog-eat-dog. No food is safe unless held firmly in a clenched fist and cushions are the best of booty. Peel and I gaze as close to wide-eyed as we can manage at these people.

Like eager archaeologists we trace the development of aside into in-joke on a lineage that leads eventually to most of Bird Nest Roys' songs. Expect songs with the following words in the title: 'Loving', 'Beast', 'I got non', 'Presh' ... Royspeak is easy once you get used to it. Its theory works on the premises that (a) the shortest route to meaning is not always the best (hence a piece of chicken becomes "murdered squawking beast"), and (b) the balance to the first rule; that

the language is best simplified down into a handful of utility phrases that can mean anything at any time. In extreme cases, such as "This is giving me presh," the phrase can have totally opposite meanings. Presh can be good, presh can be bad; whichever it is must be deduced by an appraisal of the circumstances and of the individual using the phrase and a degree of naked intuition.

Eventually we arrive in New Plymouth and head straight for Ima Hitt Records, erstwhile home of Taranaki Institution Brian Wafer. Brian isn't there, so we proceed to the Ngamutu Tavern, where Peter discovers he has left all his cymbals back in Auckland. And there are no lights because no one told us we were bringing some down to the pub from Auckland. And a bass bin has to be found for Deberly.

So it's back into town and unflappable Brian (who knows 85 percent of the people in New Plymouth to talk to) is there and has some cymbals jacked up in 10 minutes. The support band's drummer will have a bass bin, he says, and the lights ... time to buy candles ...

The candles look great. Shame there's no one here to see them. Auckland's newest sensation has yet to register an impact in this city and a total of 35 people pay at the door, joining those who didn't pay (not many — Peel is womanning the door). But the band has a jolly enough time and those present register their appreciation. More people will come next night when they hear the band's good, say the locals. Hur, hur, hur ...

We end up at the *maison de la Des, Di and Bruce*, who are only supposed to be putting up two or three people for the night, but within an hour or two at least four Roys are lying face down on the carpet and there seems little option but to bed down en masse. Some of us brought sleeping bags; we were warm and snug ...

The next morning dawns early for this loungeful of people, and Big Ross earns a high level of "Non" from Dom when he playfully

wakes him up by pouring stale beer on his face. Rock 'n' roll!

Di soon guides us to the local women's bowling club, where the ladies are having a garage sale. Things are unexceptional until an event which ranks roughly alongside blue moons, fire in the skies and godly visitations — the acquisition of an original British pressing of 'Surfin' Bird' by the Trashmen for the absurd sum of five cents! This may mean something to some of you — it turned Brian a delightful shade of green. Other scores include 'My Boy Lollipop' and the Swinging Blue Jeans' 'Hippy Hippy Shake'. Thank the Lord for ladies' bowls ...

It's still absurdly early by the time we complete our pilgrimage to Stratford, the town where Little Ross grew up: ("It hasn't changed!") The band spends money it doesn't really have on cooked breakfasts at the local greasy spoon, where they let us watch Saturday morning TV.

Tell my parlour story about how the guy who played Jed Clampett was a socialist and Granny was a rabid right-winger and member of the John Birch Society and they passionately hated each other right through all the series of *The Beverly Hillbillies*. True!

Next stop is Mt Taranaki ("It's not Mt Egmont!") for a walk to the top and a frolic in the snow. This bunch of ragged op-shop stylists looks oddly out of place alongside all the people in bright, holeless ski clobber ...

A hairy drive back to the Ngamutu where there's an afternoon special featuring four local bands. Pick of the bunch is Ecnalg (Glance Backwards), a one, two and three piece (at various times) who fairly obviously like the first two Velvet Underground LPs. They are also the night-time support band, but this is their best set, with the guitar drone actually clicking into place as it should. The expert musos with me express admiration but emphasise the need for the purchase of a guitar tuner.

Across the pub, NP boot boys



The view from the side of the stage but round towards the front a bit ... Warro, Warro's shadow, Little Ross and Big Ross. The shadow sings the high bits.



"Actually, we all dress like this in Auckland." Queen City swingers Little Ross and Deberly Roy do a twirl for the locals.



Dave Goblin in the first phase of his breathtaking two-part "regurgitation rock" act. All dials on the stage are set at 10.

PHOTOS BY MARTIN

# Musical Sounds

LIMITED

After 35 years **MUSICAL SOUNDS** still offers the best selection of stock and the most comprehensive after sales service of any music shop in New Zealand.

Specialists in professional guitars and basses with over 200 guitars currently in stock.

FOR ALL YOUR MUSICAL REQUIREMENTS...

SEE US FIRST!

**MUSICAL SOUNDS LTD**

219-221 Great South Rd, Greenlane, Auckland. Phone: 541-426 or 501-963.

## A stunning achievement!

Announcing the arrival of the fantastic **ENERGY 22** pro-monitor loudspeaker from Canada.

### ENERGY 22



Extensive research into tweeter design, cross-over phasing and elimination of unwanted resonances has brought to the marketplace a loudspeaker with unbeatable performance in its price-range.

only **\$1699** per pair including stands

**\$5000 Sound** for less than **\$2000**

ENERGY 22

Also available: New **ENERGY ESM-2** at an amazing **\$1100** including stands

Experience the **ENERGY** system monitor today at:



eastern  
stereo-video

cnr Moore & Vincent St,  
Howick, Auckland.  
Ph: 535-4159