Mt Smart Stadium, March 1

What a pleasant bunch of blokes Dire Straits are. Nicely turned out, big grins, waving cheerily to the crowd, mugging and looning around the stage making meaningful eye-contact stares to each other for the benefit of the video monitors, they sure worked hard to make you feel part of the show. No wonder they're your granny's favourite pop group. Even when affable Mark Knop-

fler did his schoolteacher tellingoff to some bozo bottle-thrower it was scarcely the vitriolic lambasting some stars are capable of, in fact, most of the audience applauded as though he'd just sung 'Romeo and Juliet'.

Their audience loves them and the band knows it. And what's wrong with that? Knopfler and his journeymen musicians are capable of the entire range of rock music styles — ballads, rockabil-ly, calypso, hard rock, you name it, these guys'll be happy to knock it out for you. That outlook is basically the cornerstone upon which Dire Straits' current mega-success has been built.

In all fairness, their performance is enjoyable enough, aided by the (now usual) big videoscreens, pretty light show and firworks, all very easy on the eye. One annoyance was the inclusion of so many near-solo performances by Mr Knopfler and his guitar. I swear the bloke next to me went to sleep during the soporific Everly Brothers' cover. Particularly sad was the treatment afforded the once very-fine 'Sultans of

Swing, which was a shambolic, rambling jam and overwhelming ly long — a problem seemingly affecting nearly all of the earlier

material they played. Satellite Spies took the brave step of starting their live careers in front of 40,000 people who were all present to see another, more famous band. Comments from their frontman to the effect of "We've only been practicing for a week or so" hardly endeared one to their cause, yet their tight playing (a drum machine I betl), lack of nerves and a radio hit got them through, despite some unimpressive songs and arrangements.

Brendon Fitzgerald

## Tombolas, Al Hunter Band Gluepot, February 6

Tombolas ... at the Gluepot ... thanks to NZ Students Arts Coun-cil and the Railways ... hey, soulful, Hawaiian shirt

I came to see this Wellington band on the strength of their gutsy 'Glad to Gladiate' video on RWP at the end of '85. Endured the Al Hunter Band, 'My Tears Have Washed I Love You from the Black board of My Heart. I only think C&W is funny for the first two

Entranced by the Tombolas' character and humour. These guys are stylish, full of quirky changes, piss-taking disco, beguil-ing for Bunny Wailer's 'Dancing Shoes' and specialising in socially realistic lyrics:

"Tony's got new shoes

Choice'

"I was on the warpath eh And my mates knew about it" (Playground jeering chorus from the Tombolas' bag of mixed

With ex-Hulamen, there's a sub-

set here, a stage full of Hulapersons, it looks like a party: 'Working for a Living: 'Beer and Skittles'. Barking up the Wrong Tree, something of a reunion, mutual pleasure transmitted. Three great vocalists onstage at once

The man in the suit with the hat and the broken leg, John McDougal, vocals and guitar; Stephen Jessup, guitar; guest vocalists Peter Marshall and Gerry Moran; Andrew Clouston, sax; Tim Robinson and Andrew Cross, drums; Danny Makamaka, percussion; Paul McAlister, bass; and John Niland with Brenton Dempsey on

The Tombolas are good news from the capital. Jewel Sanyo

The Prodigees, Mea Culpa, Spatback

Gladstone, Jan 21

Two dollars! I said and the door

person started his defence. But he had me all wrong — I didn't know you could still see three bands for

For an early week gig there was a reasonable crowd and that it contained a few Prodigees fans was evident. This band has been going for four years and it shows good original songs arranged well and played with much compe-tence by all band members. The singer is extremely appealing and the drummer excellent.

Mea Culpa is a three-piece somewhat reminiscent - while minus the ominous grip -Youth For Christ. Not only because some songs utilise two basses, or that front person Floyd on occasion forsook his guitar to join the drummer with percussion, but also in the urgency of the band's output. I noticed the audience looked and felt happy while these CONTINUED ON PAGE 26





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