

Student radio is the only decent commercial radio in the country. We all know that.

But something else about student radio is that (apart from Wellington's Access Radio) it's the only kind of radio that is within the reach of people, that touches and is touched by its listeners. Specialist shows develop hard-core coteries of listeners who phone in and talk to the hosts — or accost them in the streets! You listen to it for gig information or to hear new records. You probably have something in common with most of the announcers.

Last year, following and building on the lead of Wellington's Radio Active, Auckland's Campus Radio BFM began publishing its own monthly magazine, which by its third issue had become *The Book Of BIFIM*. BIFIM rapidly became part of Auckland music, carrying interviews and reviews of live gigs (and, sometimes, theatre) and records — its localised distribution even made it possible to sometimes print two reviews of the one gig! And of course it served as the handbook to all the station offered, what and when. A lack of funds meant it had to finish early last year, but it's back with a new

format this year and is available from most of the same inner-city outlets as *Rip It Up*.

The mag's creator and editor is and was Debbi Gibbs, BFM's Promotions Director and most fervent fan. It was Debbi who organised the station's next contribution to Auckland Music — a compilation album of the best of it. *Outnumbered By Sheep* features 13 widely varied bands and artists, most of whom recorded tracks specifically for it.

It's a valuable record, because it reflects a 1985 Auckland music scene that was a healthy one, but not perhaps in the high-profile way

it has bubbled up in the past. Some of the best music I've ever heard was in Auckland last year (this year seems to be even better so far) and most of the people who made it are captured surprisingly well in their contributions here. The recordings are direct and spirited and they sound like they were made by real people — that alone sets them apart from anything you'll hear on any other kind of radio.

Hopefully *Outnumbered By Sheep* is just the first of its kind. It's a great start. RB

## Harper Bizarre

### Roy Harper: Poet, Guitarist, Eccentric

There was a small but loyal band of Roy Harper enthusiasts in this country 10 years ago. EMI had released two albums, the 1973 *Lifemask* and the 1974 *Valentine* — for the rest we had to rely on hard-to-get imports. February 1986 found him at Christchurch where it was, in his own words, "pissing with rain", waiting for the opening concert of his New Zealand tour.



It's ironic that Bob Dylan should just have done a whirlwind tour of the main centres (Harper, by contrast, is even playing Takaka's Globe in the month he will be here). The English singer has always been dogged by the label of one who followed in the footsteps of Robert Zimmerman:

"I fought against it all my life. It's been one of the most unfortunate things that ever happened to me. Dylan's stream-of-consciousness was never my cup of tea. On the other hand I have always had a soft spot for Phil Ochs and I always thought he was a lot better than Dylan at stressing a specific."

Like Ochs, Harper likes to write lengthy songs, from the 18-minute 'McGoohan's Blues' on his 1969 *Folkjokeopus* album to 'Me and My Woman', which occupies almost a complete side of the 1971 *Stormcock* which EMI have re-released.

"The long songs are an extension of what I always wanted to do in life which was to be a poet. I could not see any other mode of existence. I couldn't see myself as a builder or a doctor, a bus driver or a road sweeper. One of the big influences in my life was English classes at school. We came across poems like 'Childe Harold' by Byron and I thought, 'I can do better than that' and then 'Endymion' by Keats which made me think, 'That's wonderful... I wonder whether I can ever do anything like that.'"

Harper's latest album, the 1985 *Jugula* gives us a glimpse of the

singer as poet in the second track, 'Bad Speech', which is presented as an atmospheric recitation. Although Harper and Jimmy Page had over a dozen songs available to complete the album, nothing quite fitted the bill:

"That particular slot on the record was peculiar in that we needed something to match the ferocity of the opening song '1984ish' with the slightly more optimistic 'Hope' which followed it. We could have left the gap and had only three songs on that side of the record but I didn't think that was good value for money. I went through my poems and discovered that this was the perfect thing. It would have just ended up thrown away."

*Jugula* is an invigorating album, the songs showing a degree of concentration that few contemporary writers could equal. 'Hangman' features some stunning guitar from Jimmy Page and more than a few nods to Harper's folk-roots; '1984ish' is a riposte to Orwell's vision of the future (with 1984 now behind us Harper comments wryly that "the trailer was better than the movie"). The final track, 'Advertisement (Another Intentional Irrelevant Suicide)' is a boisterous piece of toilet humour reminding one that Harper once threatened to pee over an audience in LA:

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## AK '85: Counting the Sheep

### A Bit of B-Ephemera

#### THE EXPENDABLES

The Expendables' 'Liberal Cad' was recorded in March 1984 at Progressive, by the band's third lineup (they originally began in Christchurch in 1982 as They Were Expendable). Central member Jay Clarkson is soon to emerge with another version of the band but they're looking for a replacement for guitarist Anthony Nevison, who has gone to the USA. Headless Chicken Chris Matthews will continue to drum and the band intends to play lots. Jay has also been working on her own solo album (with invited guests) for some time and there's only one more song to mix before that's completed. Previous group efforts have been the EPs *Big Strain* and *In Between Gears* and the lovely single 'The Flower/Man With No Desire'.

#### BIRD NEST ROYS

'Who Is the Silliest Rossi?' comes from Bird Nest Roys' second stint of recording at Progressive and it's indicative of the change in tack, being rather warmer and noisier than their EP. As has been previously detailed, the band hails from wild West Auckland and had been playing together for about two years before gaining prominence early last year. The band is continuing to record songs with a view to putting together an album later on in the year. Tops in an early listen to LP



tracks is a wild 'Joringel'!

#### KIM BLACKBURN

Kim Blackburn is a poet and a singer, and does both in her live performances. 'Oceania' was a one-off done at Progressive, but she has been recording more material deep down in the echo chambers underneath the university's School Of Architecture, with a view to completing an album by the end of the year. As well as a cassette with Sandra Bell on Industrial Tapes, she has produced several small books of poetry for herself. She's working on another book, *In Frenzy*, and will perform at the Flying Kiwi Festival in Wellington.

#### HEADLESS CHICKENS

Chickens Chris Matthews and Johnny Pierce were in Children's Hour together, and then reunited late in the piece in This Kind Of Punishment. With Michael Lawry, the Headless Chickens came together as TKP was winding up (debuting at the Nitpickers' Picnic) and have been writing, practising and recording since then. 'Trigger' is a very early piece, from March last year. The band uses tapes as well as conventional instruments on stage. Their earth-shaking Saturday night set at the Rising Sun will be the last live gig for a while, but they've finished an EP and perhaps a follow-up 12".

PHANTOM 5

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