



Crawbilly Creeps are represented on 'Weird Culture'. They are (L-R) Bill Van Wattering, Tim Hunt, Z Snook.

Campus Compilation Weird and Wired

Although fewer new acts seem to have released EPs and albums this year, overall, more lesser-known bands have probably had the opportunity to get at least some material out. What has kept the output up has been several compilations.

Campus Radio's *Outnumbered by Sheep* earlier in the year featured songs by

both well-known and new acts, and last month received the thumbs up from that tired oracle, the *NME*. From Meltdown Records over the next few weeks comes a sampler of Palmerston North's finest, while this month sees the release of a compilation put together by national lent radio of bands from all the country.

'MULLINS' FROM PAGE 3

Also, the subtlety of Last Man Down's music provides a problem — where to play live? "Our music doesn't work properly in rock venues, with no hype or lights and a small PA. I think I was happiest when we started out at the Performance Cafe, where people go along to listen to the words, the music's not deafening and you can get really close to the audience." Last Man Down do the occasional pub gig, or concerts in intimate venues like the Performance or Java Jive cafes, the Pumphouse or art galleries. They're playing Auck-

land's Cotton Club on September 21, and tours are planned.

"I have a firm idea of where I'm going," says Mullins. "I started very late in music — at 15, and I didn't perform in public until I was 25. And with my academic and literary studies [Mullins has a doctorate in French literature] there's a lot to call on. Maybe I'll go down as an eccentric."

Not eccentric, but a New Zealand character — gifted and determined, against the odds, to be heard.

Chris Bourke

The project evolved out of the regular meetings the student station managers have, with Jackie Riddell of Wellington's Radio Active being given the job of co-ordinator. "It'll become a regular thing if the sales go okay," she says, "with the record being organised by a different campus each time. We have all the resources, so it'd be silly not to."

In Wellington, Active advertised for a month for bands who wanted to take part. "We asked bands who hadn't been recorded before to send in demo tapes, and we chose our two from those and from seeing them live. It was really hard to choose in Wellington, there were 10 bands that would have been suitable. It would have been very easy to do a compilation of just Wellington bands."

It had been hoped that the Students Arts Council would tour a couple of the bands on the record, with each station putting on a concert with their two bands, but no one was keen to organise it, says Riddell. Each station organised the recording of their contributions to the record, which is out on Jayrem; the striking cover based on Munch's 'The Scream' is by Phil Kelly, a graphic artist with the Wellington city art gallery. CB

Steve Thorpe



There's a Warner Brothers cartoon character called the Tasmanian Devil. He's short, fast-moving and possessed of irrepressible energy. Steve Thorpe had the Tasmanian Devil tattooed on his left arm. But the tattooed figure bore a permanent scowl. And that certainly wasn't Steve Thorpe.

Steve died in his car on Monday, August 26, aged 25. He was best

known as the drummer from the Mockers, but he'd been a figure around Auckland well before that.

He came to this country from England with his parents in 1973 and he never lost his Cockney chirp. Settled on the North Shore, he began playing drums with Small Torque, one of the initial wave of post-punk North Shore bands.

But it was with later Propellerites the Dabs that a lot of people remember him. The Dabs with the most broken-down van, the Dabs who'd live on a few dollars a week come bad months, who'd pile down to Brewery Lane for sausages and chips for Sunday lunch and spend the afternoon in the bar, who squatted for a while on the top floor of Brooklyn Flats, who even released an EP, *Love the Army* ... eventually the privations became a bit much and Steve and bass-player Geoff Hayden made the shift to become the rhythm section of a rebuilt Mockers in late 1983. But the Dabs stayed with Steve and to many he remained Steve Dab, or just "Dab".

The new Mockers lineup gradually brought national recognition and a higher standard of living. The band toured extensively and Steve became something of an identity with fans. Letters from Timaru, Taupo and Tokoroa would arrive at *Shake!* magazine singing the praises of his friendly, unsnobby approach.

The Mockers achieved about as

much fame as it's possible to in New Zealand, without breaking out. They have now recorded two studio albums and one live (achieving the curious distinction of having two in the national LP charts at once), plus a compilation album just released.

But audiences still fluctuate and between each tour Steve would be faced with dealing with the wildly sympathetic Social Welfare people or finding a job. He even once turned his hand to work as a chef at Auckland's yuppie-middle class cafe Cheers.

Some people got the wrong idea about Steve. Touring New Zealand with a rock band tends to produce different social standards in even the most right-on young musicians, and Steve never lost his wink-nudge bottom-pinching English manner. There were also some pretty crazy things went on of a Saturday night in Auckland or a Wednesday in Wanganui. Most of those who knew him could tell you a story or two. But there was never a hint of malice in his pint-sized frame, nor of aggression. There was, however, a lot of good cheer.

Steve Thorpe died having seen a lot more life than most young men. It seems some of us are reaching the age when our culture stops being a Peter Pan one and fate or nature starts to claim those around us. It seems it's been happening a bit too often.

Russell Brown

SONGS ABOUT CONCRETE TENTS

Concrete Tent is a bizarre mixture of film, dance, music and theatre which presents its own view of Auckland city. Behind the production, to be presented at the Little Maidment Theatre this month, is the dance troupe Te Kanikani o te Rangatahi, with music by the Abel Tasman's Graeme Humphreys.

In his music for *Concrete Tent* Humphreys attempts to seek out the music present in noise — cake mixers, washing machines and electric motors echo rhythms heard in the urban environment: "I want to present to the audience a Chopin waltz and

the noise from a shortwave radio apart and together to make it appear that no matter what type of music or what type of noise you make, that there is music within each of them," he says. "All noise is music, all music is noise."

The visuals to accompany the music, dance and theatre of *Concrete Tent* are designed by Brian Wills. By using mediums such as film to compare and contrast the messages of the dancing, Wills says he hopes to "weave a magical environment for the audience to be soaked in. Masks, machines, slides, costumes,

lighting and film all pull this atmosphere together."

Since their formation two years ago, the performances of Te Kanikani o te Rangatahi have attracted attention and favourable reviews. Choreographer of *Concrete Tent* Rozanne Worthington describes their new work as "a concept based on how material objects give the impression of strength and stability but in fact are very fragile" — hence the title.

Concrete Tent is at the Little Maidment from September 25 to 28.

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