

# Rebel Rebel

## TOY LOVE FROM BEGINNING TO END

By John Dix

The Windsor Castle, Auckland. A Saturday afternoon in 1979. Six hundred people are crammed into a room licensed for 300. The dance floor is packed, but there's little movement. Toy Love are playing a slow song, 'Green Walls', Doors-influenced, moody, atmospheric. You can feel the anticipation in the room.

On stage, bassist Paul Kean thunders out a repetitive heartbeat; there are scattered drum fills from Mike Dooley and jagged guitar lines from Alec Bathgate. The song may be slow but it isn't quiet; filler from organist Jane Walker battles to be heard. You can hear Chris Knox, though. He's screaming, "Really don't believe I'm gonna die ..."

There's nothing remotely punk looking about Toy Love. No spiked hair, no PVC or leather, no safety pins or razor blades, no attention to image. All five members wearing op shop throwouts. Knox is decked out in an ill-fitting suit of sorts, one knee is torn. He's dressed like a bum and looks like a madman, staring wildly at some unfortunate on the dance floor. It's all part of the "act," but there's something clearly strange, genuinely weird, behind those glaring eyes.

Dressed like a bum and looking like a madman, Knox stares wildly at some unfortunate on the dance floor. It's all part of the "act", but there's something genuinely weird behind those glaring eyes.

"Really don't believe I'm gonna die / But if you see me looking ill just bury me and read my will GOODBYEEEEEE!"

Knox's "Goodbyeeee" echoes through the PA, the only sound for a full five seconds before Bathgate attacks his Ibanez, tearing out power

*Stranded In Paradise*, the long-awaited history of New Zealand rock'n'roll by John Dix, is at last close to publication. The Toy Love story is the second of two extracts from the book to appear in *Rip It Up*.

chords. The rest of the band joins in and 'Green Walls' segues into an unlikely cover: the bubblegum classic 'Yummy Yummy Yummy,' performed at 300 mph. The eardrums pound with the sheer power of it all. When Toy Love hit top gear, the energy is relentless.

Pogoing punks, rock writers and serious music fans — Toy Love attracted a variety of punters. Given their meteoric rise from cult band to national stars, the group's status soon

attracted the trendies, standing at the back, tapping their feet in urbane restraint. The band even dedicated a song to them:

"His teeth as he smiles are white and glistening  
He don't know the name of the song he's whistling  
He says what he likes 'cos nobody's listening  
He's a mod and he's a rebel  
Lives so high 'cos he knows he'll never find his level ..."

Toy Love's first single, 'Rebel,' was a charming slice of '60s pop. It should have been a huge hit. The band would have enjoyed that. Or would they? This afternoon at the Windsor



Knox on Mainstreet stage with bottle and Paul Kean.



Chris Knox and Jane Walker, Island of Real Cafe.



Audience and Knox on stage, Windsor Castle.

PHOTOS BY MURRAY CAMMICK

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