

# RUMOURS

## CHRISTCHURCH

Whilst the rest of the world is now in the grips of **Bat** (man!) fever, our own **Bat** heroes have been conspicuously absent from the live scene. The band are awaiting the release of their new album before heading back to the world's stages. In the meantime Paul has been learning the art of film-making, Malcolm has been studying at Otago University, Kay has been training daughter Rose and Robert has been **Clean**-ing overseas.

Phantom Billstickers have once again been battling the system at the hallowed halls of the City Council where the powers that be have promised at least one poster bollard in a central position sometime in the near future (Council Time) with the possibility of more bollards to follow.

The Carlton has reopened its disco doors to (occasional) live bands although only on a Monday or Tuesday ... **JPS Experience** and **Breathing Cage** were first to test the water and managed a healthy crowd even though they played on one of the coldest nights in years ... keep an eye out for **Bailter Space** at the Carlton later this month and **Straitjacket Fits** in September.

Failsafe have been busy recording **Dolphin**, **Catherine Wheel**, **Little Dead Things** and others for cassette releases in the coming month ... Dolphin have had to cancel a North Island tour due

to the departure of drummer Steve. New Dolphin drummer is Shane from the Pleasure Boys ... Steve Birse has a new, as yet unnamed band, which includes guitarists Wayne and Leon from the now defunct Blue Flesh Syndrome, whilst another Blue Flesher Simon McLaren has put together **Loves Ugly Children** which includes ex-Gift people.

Other bits: **Alan Parks** has a new cassette-only release of original material which features members of Red Hot Blues, Helen & The Hound Dogs and others ... Bruce Rae is continuing his battle with CV and the video suppliers and whilst they have reached a stalemate Bruce is now returning to his crusade to have NZ metal on commercial radio ... **The Axel Grinders** are continuing to gain a large following and have a new vocalist, Rita, who replaces Celia Starr.

And in the "what ever happened to" department: after various line-up problems it appears the members of **3 Guesses** have headed in different directions ... and it appears the same fate has befallen **Wax Tadpole** ... **Smacc Riflemen** look set to reappear under a new name ... and **Murder Inc** who are now based in Sydney have just signed a worldwide record deal with Polygram (which involves lotsa money!). **J. Greenfield**

## AUCKLAND

Good news on the charts for **The Warratahs** whose second LP *Too Hot To*

*Sleep* went in at No.20 ... also gunning for number one are rappers **Double J & Twice The T** with 'She's A Mod / Mod Rap', a hip-hop version of the Ray Columbus & The Invaders song featuring Ray himself ... **Johnny Specific** single 'I Don't Know Why' is also released at the end of the month.

TVNZ have chosen **Sistermatic's** forthcoming 'Million Dollar' single as backing for nightclub scenes in the third series of *Gloss*. Does this mean we get to see Simon Praast doing the Bobby Brown dance routines? ... The same City Council that allowed the Melba and His Majesty's to be knocked down and the Aotea Centre to be built has declared war (again) on the city's bill-stickers. Posters are being removed and the advertisers billed — even if the advertisers happen to own the wall which the posters are on ... The recent Numark DJ Competition was swamped with entries from both Auckland and Wellington, and will probably become a regular event (see Live review this issue) ... also crowded was the weird Gothym City do at the Galatos Si Theatre.

## DUNEDIN

Disturbing (with a capital Death Knell) news for local music with the closure of the European Hotel's Burgandy Bar as the only pub taking original bands. The recent increased profile of the Nerve Centre could alleviate some of the problems, that is if people leave their prejudices as well as their glass at the door.

Before the Euro's closure, **Snapper**, fresh from a phone interview with *Sounds*, played their first pub gig of the year. Aggressively hypnotic as ever, they were however almost upstaged by their support acts — a stunning solo set from **Alastair Galbraith** and the debut of wonderfully brilliant new band **Cyclops** ... a week previously **The Soulminders** somewhat surprisingly (but not undeservedly) had drawn 600 people to the Euro ... moving to the top of the class of '89 are **Death Ray Cafe** and the **Torquemandas** who have a track each on a forthcoming Pagan compilation.

Tipping down memory lane at the Empire: with Nick Wilkinson back in town with **Clap-O-Meter**, the **Alpaca Brothers** reformed for a one-off gig. Also bringing back memories the previous day were recent trans-Tasman travellers **The Verlaines** returning to where it all began to play unadvertised to 30 people at the Empire's Queen's Birthday band festival ... recent visitors to Dunedin include **Drone**, **The War**, **The Clear**, **JPSE** and **Cassandra's Ears**. Next on the list are **Bailter Space** who will play a Radio One Alternative night at Sammy's on July 20 with **Stephen**.

And **Perfect Garden's** future looks more assured with the blossoming of another darling bud in the form of a new drummer — fringe and pointy leather boots optional necessities. **Craig Robertson**

## WELLINGTON

**John Dix** is currently up-dating his *Stranded In Paradise* radio series and is planning a compilation album to complement his book ... Noise And Effect **DJ Rocket V** won the local hearts of the DJ mixing champs and the group are planning to record ... **Puffy In Her Hands** have been recording at Marmalade ... the **6 Volts** tour south this month before heading off to the UK and the Edinburgh Festival. The cassette version of their LP 'The Hills Are Alive' is due this month ... three local bands now confirmed for Pagan's *Positive Vibrations* compilation are **Jonahs**, **Wild Poppies** and **Magic Roundabout**, who are remaking their instrumental track 'The Dawn' at Writhe. **MRA** are also demoting a wealth of new material on 4-track in their newly acquired practice rooms. Inner city redevelopment is forcing bands out into the suburbs to search for suitable band rooms.

**The Stereotypes** have changed their name to the **Spirals** and have completed recording their debut album at *Word Of Mouth* studio and the single 'I Send My Love (To The Old Country)' is due for release late this month ... **Fane Flaws** has been working on a soundtrack for the new Peter Jackson puppet thriller 'Meet The Feebles' ... **Rick Bryant** and **Bill Lake** have been recording an album of stockpiled original country blues material at the *Sound Expression* studio. Expect a largely acoustic set.

Although their album *Amalgam* won't be in the shops until later in the year, the **Skeptics** will be previewing the new material on a planned national tour ... the new **Flesh D-Vice** EP 'All My Sins' is due in August ... New Plymouth's **Casualty** are to split with two members off across the Tasman ... Rita has replaced Celia on vocals for **Merlene And The Mangos** and new band **September** are worth checking out ... Nighclub Spats has closed by owner Ray Johns has his new venue *Arena* in Wakefield St opening soon. Big money has been spent so expect a pretty swank affair. Another new the Carpark is being set up in the old woodshed premises on Plimmer Steps.

Paisley Park is the venue for the Flying Fish Video Awards on the weekend of July 15 and 16 with four hours of NZ music vids ... look out for posters advertising a Housequake at the James later this month ... the debut of the new **No 9** at the Clarendon was well received even though drummer Dean was strapped after being beat up a couple of days prior ... and are the rumours of the release of the long lost **Not Really Anything** album true? And which North Island town is so hip that they have a Morrissey St and just down the road an Elvis museum — Howera of course.

**John Pilley**

# dance FLOOR

There are record labels and there are record labels. A label is only as good as the people running it and this is especially true of dance. Some labels, whether they intend it or not, have a certain image, and the appearance of a certain disc on a certain record label can often justify purchase without a listen. For example Fourth & Broadway, Island's dance offshoot was totally reliable for several years in the mid-80s until a change of personnel meant a whole batch of dodgy acts and singles about 1987-8. The label has just about recovered its quality level now, with the Delicious crew, Womack and Womack and Will Downing.

Fourth & Broadway is a good example of a major label trying to disguise itself, for marketing and credibility purposes, as an indie, a common enough ploy in the UK in the 80s. **FFRR**, for example, is an offshoot of London, itself a division of the Dutch/German combine Polygram. The label has a deserved reputation for quality that eludes its parent. **FFRR** has records like **FRANKIE KNUCKLES'** anthemic 'Tears', a deep house gem featuring Japan's Satoshi Tomiie on keyboards and a vocal from some bloke named Robert Owens, or **SIMON HARRIS'** 'Pleasure Control', now available as a killer remix that really accentuates the vocal. Urban is another Polygram offspring, this time via Polydor, and also has a good rep, although a few turkeys appear from time to time. **CLEVELAND WATKISS'** 'Spend Some Time', a def jazz/hip-hop/reggae fusion remixed by Coldcut, is not one of them. The label also has a commendable policy of re-issuing classic R&B, and has released an excellent series of jazz compilations, the latest of which, *The Original Illicit Grooves* is essential stuff from the 60s, 70s and 80s. On the Polydor label itself the new **STYLE COUNCIL** continues their habit of a dispensible top side coupled with a great flip. This time the A is a pointless '89 remix of 'Long Hot Summer' whereas the B is a groovy little bit of house 'Everybody's On The Run' featuring London gospel singer Brian Powell on vocals with a Freddy Bastone mix.

Breakout is A&M's dance label and usually pretty reliable. 'It's Your Time' is a jazzy house groove by **ARTHUR BAKER** featuring vocals from **SHIRLEY LEWIS**, whoever she is. Now Arthur has been responsible for some rubbish over the years, but the guy has also produced about 10 or 15 of the greatest singles ever made and while this one isn't in that league, it's pretty damn good and is, as the cover says, 'The Brooklyn Funk Essentials.'

Onto the majors themselves, most of which have no image at all, and are usually part of a larger organisation. **MCA** is number one dance label in the States, with acts like **GUY**, **BOBBY BROWN**, **MAC BAND**, **NEW EDITION**, **JODY WATLEY** and **ERIC B & RAKIM**. The last two have combined on Jody's new single, 'Friends', destined to be a US No.1 and easily the best thing she's ever done, thanks to the hip-hopper's input. Check out the dub mix on side two, less Jody and more Rakim. The new **GUY** single 'Spend The Night' is in its 12" mix, the best thing they've done since 'Groove Me'. Guy's Gene Griffin produced the new **JAMES INGRAM**

single, 'It's Real, taken from the excellent new Warner Bros album of the same name, and his bandmate **TEDDY RILEY** transformed it for the 12-inch. Buy it. On the Warner Bros-distributed Geffen, the new 7A3 disc is a heavily remixed 'Like Dis' with input from **JOE BUTCHER** and turntable king **CASHMONEY**. Incidentally, Warners in NZ have picked up **Ruthless Records** which means we'll soon see local release of **EAZY-E's** LA classic rap album *Eazy Does It*.

Motown is now owned by **MCA** and Diana Ross, and is the label for the new **PUBLIC ENEMY** single, the typically chanting, although very accessible, JB-based 'Fight The Power, from the soundtrack of the new Spike Lee film *Do The Right Thing*. **LL COOL J** is still contracted to Def Jam, and his new one 'I'm That Kind Of Guy' is typically boasting, but a more downbeat return to form, although it's no 'Rock The Bells'. Def Jam is part of the Japanese owned CBS company. Their Epic subsidiary has released the **Mark Moore** mixed 'Deep In Vogue' by **MALCOLM MCLAREN**. I really like this one. It has the 'Break For Love' bassline and a sound not unlike his first solo album, with help from **BOOTSIE COLLINS**. Also on the label, **TONY TERRY's** 'Forget The Girl', also from a movie, is a pretty forgivable bit of house, while the new **LUTHER VANDROSS** single 'Come Back', a Keith Cohen remix, is predictable and sounds very Scritti, thanks to that band's **David Gamson** co-writing. Buy the album instead.

As usual, the real innovation comes from the indies. On **Kool Kat**, **LNR's** 'Work It To The Bone' has already become a dance classic and much-used catch phrase. If you don't know it by know you're going to the wrong clubs. **CAPELLA**, an Italian duo on Music Man, have nicked the bassline and catch phrase for the much fuller Euro-sounding 'Helom Halib', a major improvement on last year's 'Bauhaus'. New York's finest label must be **Sleeping Bag**, with solid style like **Todd Terry**, **T LA ROCK**, **EPMD** and **CASHMONEY & MARVELLOUS**. It also boasts **JOYCE SIMMS** whose new single 'Looking For A Love' was initially a bit of a disappointment but this very commercial, salsa-ish record really grows. **BCM** (it stands for Brian Carter Music) have **DONNA ALLEN's** 'Joy And Pain', licensed from the American Oceanic label, for Europe. Already covered once this year by **Rob Base** and **EZ Rock**, this time the **Maze** standard is given a more soulful feel and is a definite contender for single of the month. But that goes to **PRECIOUS**, an act I know absolutely nothing about except that 'In Motion (Definition Of A Track)' on New Jersey's Big Beat label is a monster garage rap. Sparse, rhythmic and subtle, it is around, in Auckland at least, on import. Don't put a label on it, acquire it.

On local release and worthy of attention: **THE NEVILLE BROTHERS'** 'Sister Rosa' — New Orleans meets New York on one of 1987's finest; **DE LA SOUL's** *Three Feet High And Rising*, deservedly the biggest selling hip-hop album of the year; **NENEH CHERY's** *Raw Like Sushi*, instant and enduring London beats, it looks like being the success it deserves; **SOUL II SOUL, Club Classics Vol 7**, an appropriately titled collection; **RAZE's** 'Break For Love', hard to find but around club anthems; and **THE BEATMASTERS'** 'Who's In The House', London hip-house, unfortunately not in picture sleeve locally. **SIMON GRIGG**

# HOODOO SURUS

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