

THE BATS, BAILTER SPACE, BREATHING CAGE
Christchurch Horticultural Hall, September 15.

The Bats, Bailter Space, Breathing Cage and no bar. "Disorientation" was, conceptually speaking at least, destined to ask relatively sober questions of the Christchurch movie scene.

No bar. No bar. Just two words, but like "one way", the consequences could be serious if it happened to be the wrong one. The venue was dry. The organisers (UFM) were taking a brave risk. Would anybody turn up? The attempt to bring Christchurch's "biggest" bands to more people at this largish venue (with catering by the Atomic Cafe) was virtuous, but how would the crowd react to the absence of such a major supporting act? Effervescence without the kick, or surgery without the anaesthetic? It would be down to the bands — would they be up to it?

At 8:45, Jay Clarkson's Breathing Cage began expanding. The first (and last) orange juice downed, and at two dollars a sugarised shot there was nothing particularly "atomic" about this cafe. Look to the guitars of Jay Clarkson and Greg Malcolm-Boelee for radiation.

Breathing Cage have had a lot of media exposure lately, largely due to \$40,000 and the Rheineck Rock Award. The consensus of the smallest early crowd seemed to be that they deserved it. That Jay Clarkson's "iron lung" has a strong message there is little doubt. They ingeniously broke the ice of what could have been a very frozen pool.

Breathing Cage mix "straight" and "blended" guitar to produce a subtle and singular sound, brought to a head in what seemed a relatively short time by the interesting 'Chemistry'.

Radio UFM attempted to fill the interlude between bands with a disco. They had the music but not the watts. The DJ, who had the misfortune to be in a miniature box high above both the stage and the dancefloor, seemed

more like the phantom of the opera than the king of the dancefloor in this hangar-like hall. Knocking the plan, not the man.

Breathing Cage were followed by Bailter Space. Alister (who put the G-Force in NZ guitar) Parker's Bailter Space are one of the best things to have happened to NZ music for quite a while. Reassembled in Gordons-guise, this band is not however the Gordons regenerated. People already familiar with their *Nelsh Bailter Space* EP and the more recent heavy-weight *Tanker* LP should know that Kilgour or not, this is a band of "new men" who look to the "A-head" and not to the back.

Their definitive style of dynamic, deceptively subtle, industrial duty white-noise pushes new frontiers in sound and sensitivity. Like any good band they strike chords of empathy and isolate particular feelings that take you along with them, saying things about these times that need saying. With 'Invisible Life' the growing crowd quickly oriented to the dance floor. The point was made: some fuels come from within. That was followed by largely new material off the forthcoming, as yet untitled album, which by now should be in the pipeline. Colossal drums, guitar, Halvorsen vocals and sampled soundscapes (on 'Pizarro') brought back the conversation stopping buzz of the Nelsh Bailter Space days.

Bailter Space do not so much fill a venue with sound so much as attempt to redefine the walls. This gig was no exception. The sampled sound and searching vocals added a further dimension to something already dynamic. If 'Earthfed', 'Pizarro', 'Visamiser' and 'Lanehead' are anything to go by, they should be showered in 'Titan' kisses.

The Bats played sometime after 11. The thing about the Bats is that they spend too little time in the dark. A bit like the Go-Betweens with no "Go", they've been around so long that it's easy to forget just how tight they've become — it's hard to concentrate long enough to tell. The *Songs For The*

Fireside EP nearly summed it up. This band is accepted and good, full of goodwill and enthusiasm. An uncynical band that brings people together and makes them dance, but seemingly just for the sake of it. Perhaps this is reason enough (it certainly seemed in the spirit of this gig), but celebration is always better with more of a point.

If it's tempting to say that the Bats are sharpening themselves out of a point, it should be remembered that they recently flew to the giddy heights of 'North By North' and 'Made Up In Blue' it would be good to see more of 'The Other Side Of You'. Hang me upside down.

Altogether, 'Disorientation' was a success. The venue was good. The numbers, peaking at 450 plus, were better than hoped for. The drinks were terrible.

LUKE STRONGMAN

NO KARDOMAH CAFE, Sydney

First is a pounding that hits dead centre in the balled junction of spinal column and pituitary gland; the succession of hammered blows that is Kevin McMahon's bass and a machine-drum pulse blurring together. Then guitar, scything through it all like the roar of some drunken colossus, wailing, slurred, thick with distortion. (Michael Sheridan is looking well pleased, his sneer slipping into a grin and back again. Picks off another crush chord without overmuch effort.) Last of all, a snatch of sampled life from Marie Hoy, the Horowitz of the instrument. This one is a looped scream, feeding back upon itself, the words barely distinguishable: "OUT of the way get

OUT of the way get OUT—". An oblique reference, or plain good advice? Whatever, it can mean only one thing: after too, too long, No have returned to Sydney.

Ollie Olsen sings passionately, his voice hoarse and urgent, his gestures and lyrics together signalling an edge few of us will ever reach, let alone cross. The lightshow is simply immense, strobing and stuttering without pause, casting downturned faces deep in welled shadow, finding the raised edge of a muscle and outlining it as precisely as a scalpel. I think the word I'm fumbling for here is "catharsis".

And those newer songs debuted on their last sojourn, indicating a shift slightly further in the direction of House music — slightly funkier rhythm patterns, a greater groove — now seem completely assimilated: 'Hyper-Reality' is a sideways glance into another, higher level of perception and 'Systems of Events' shudders and moves like a freight train through a desert, pausing just long enough for Olsen to whisper something and all four members to lean into their mikes and shout the slogan of this frantic night: "TOTAL DESTRUCTION!" Whence it all begins again — the chaos and its attendant glory.

And the (big) kids love it. The front rows, I will later discover, are almost entirely comprised of Melburnians, imported specifically for the night's excesses. One after another they climb onto the stage to stand poised on its brink, swaying for a moment as the crowd urges them on. Then they do it: jump, launching themselves outwards. Landing heavily, getting up, doing it again. When, in 'Loss', Olsen articulates

their dilemma, ("Sometimes I feel like I wanna get drunk and fuck up my life") the house erupts. Sweat pours, folks fly further and land harder than one ever thought possible.

Equal parts hardcore thrash and hip-hop shakedown, this is the sound of the end of the decade; the soundtrack for these plague years, the recession years, these frantic, troubled wonderful times in which we move.

Put simply: No are nothing less than the most relevant, exciting and unflinchingly contemporary band in this hemisphere, if not the world entire. Their albums to date are available on Au-Go-Go Records: listen, and be awed. SHANE DANIELSON



The Joker hits town Nov 15.

BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO Powerstation Sept 25

It's a strange thing, purism. Anyone expecting Zydeco in its swampy, two-stepping roots style would have been bitterly disappointed. The rest of us weren't going to let purism get in the way of a good time, so when Buckwheat rocked, so did the Powerstation.

Basically, the IIs Sont Partis Band were a tight blues / soul showband spiced up by Buckwheat's Accordion and Patrick Landry's wild rub-board. (The man could dance too — W.Axl Rose eat your heart out.) They gave us sharp versions of some New Orleans classics, notably 'Let The Good Times Roll' and 'Walking To New Orleans'. They were fluid, bluesy and rambling with some nice solos. You just had to enjoy them. Unfortunately, the more recent material seemed a little over-rehearsed, especially in the encores, although it did at times give the band a chance to show off their skill.

But there's no show without punch, and Buckwheat was in fine form. He laid down them accordion solos with real flair and vocally he gave us a taste of real blues, raw and exuberant. To top it all off, Buckwheat had managed to get James Brown's hairdo out of prison especially for the tour. He'd also borrowed the Godfather's style of totally unintelligible stage banter, which isn't such a bad thing if you're going to introduce the entire touring party one by one. Still, it's all part of the show and this show was good enough to make you ignore the gibberish, the purists or whatever, and just party. KIRK GEE

CDs

As consumer demand was considerable, Warner Bros USA have increased its run of the Prince "Batman in-a-can" CD from 10,000 to 50,000 units.

Chrysalis will release a 14 song greatest hits CD by ska act **Selector**, titled *Selected Selector Selections* and the label will release **Billy Idol** EP *Don't Stop* on CD with a 13 minute interview.

Other reissues; The **Rolling Stones** *Singles Collection* (up to 1971) is a three CD box set, three hours of A & B sides. Many rare B-sides make their first appearance on CD. The Specialty label will issue a **Little Richard** three CD set of his classic tracks and interesting alternate takes.

New titles in the CBS budget CD range are **Duke Ellington** *The Legendary*, **Johnny Cash** *At San Quentin* and best of collections from Chicago, Santana, Barbra Streisand, Leonard Cohen and Frank Sinatra. These "Select" titles have an NZ recommended retail price of \$14.95.

New WEA mid-price CDs include **Grateful Dead** *Live Dead*, **Sheila E** *The Glamorous Life* and Chess blues albums by **Koko Taylor** and **Muddy Waters** *Big Bill Broonzy*, *Folk Singer*. Island will release a two CD set, *Ze Compilation* highlighting the best of that New York label with tracks by **Was Not** and **Nona Hendryx**.

The UK label Strange Fruit will issue a three CD set *Jimi Hendrix Live and Unreleased*, sourced from the six hour USA syndicated radio show. Inspired by the *Lost Lennon Tapes* radio series, the project was produced by former Knack drummer Bruce Gary.

Meanwhile in the USA, CD versions of **Jimi Hendrix** albums *Are You Experienced* and *Axis Bold As Love* have been upgraded using newly remastered tapes. The old CDs had "10 to 12 more decibels of hiss." Next to be remastered will be *Electric Ladyland* which will appear on a single CD.

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