



SWEETWATERS
LOW BY BLOW REPORT
NO. 8 ON SYDNEY RADIO CH
ING THE BEAT HIT IN AUSTR
STOP PRESS: SWINGERS 'CO



Neil Finn, Split Enz.



mes, Cold Chisel.

After a lengthy wait in the traffic, we parked the van and rushed to the main stage. Flying Doctors had already finished, and the Newmatics were several songs into their set. A hard core of Aucklanders frantically danced up front, while others looked on in bewilderment at what was obviously their first glimpse of this up and coming band.

Vocalist Mark Clare was in great form, and the applause soon began to flow. The all-original repertoire suited the atmosphere perfectly, with 'Judas' and 'Five Miseries' being highlights. It's a pity the Newmatics had such a bad time slot, as many missed a chance to catch one of the most exciting bands at the festival.

Mark Phillips

Flyte X-7, despite the new spelling, sounded pretty much the same. Clarkson obviously hand-picked the new members to achieve his kind of sound, which is still highly derivative, but clean and tight. The new songs and the old tended to blend into one another, and there was little indication of any new direction. Best responses were gained from the oldies, 'I Lose Control' and 'Walking In The Dark', which suggest they may have been the band's finest hour. Maybe something new will emerge in the months to come. Give it time.

Ariel now appear closer than ever to the dreaded heavy metal. Their guitarist, with metal-length hair, adopts the postures and grimaces of the early 70's axe heroes, while churning out one riff after the other. They played 'Won't Get Fooled Again', which just about says it all. Let's hope they don't start a revival.

Wellingtonians seem to go mad every time Aucklanders write off the Steroids. But the fact remains that Wellington has produced better bands. The Steroids were boring when they opened for the Boomtown Rats in Auckland, and they haven't improved. It's no longer 1977, and the sooner they learn this, the better.

Duncan Campbell

By the time the Knobz hit the stage, the audience had swelled to around 20,000. For the band, it was the perfect chance to reach the people who so far had heard only the single. As it was, the set proved uneventful. Armed with new keyboardist, old Flight X7 man, Mark Stanton, they whirled through a very forgettable collection that included two X7 songs. The blatant Mi-Sex influence won the masses over, though, and by the time they lunged into 'Culture', the crowd couldn't resist the urge to sing along. It was the next day that really showed the band's drawing power. An afternoon spot on the Aerial Railway stage drew more than 10,000.

The Mockers were at something of a disadvantage with the absence of their regular bassist/keyboardist/songwriter, Gary Curtis, who apparently refuses to tour any further north than Lower Hutt. Still, with the aid of stand-in bassist, Don Mackay, they turned in a set of enjoyable originals and covers that saw vocalist, Andrew Fagen, make good use of the available stage space. Standing out was the excellent 'Murder In Manners Street', while sadly missing was 'These Were The Good Old Days'.

It's about time their bass player woke up his ideas, or he could become a weight around their ankles.

Mark Phillips

Saturday morning at eleven Sweetwaters officially opened. Penknife Glides had the dubious honour of being first on. Suffering at the hands of a mixer who appeared to be practising for later in the day, they played their originals to an apathetic morning crowd. Small, intense places rather than wide open spaces are PKG's forte, and this wasn't one of their better performances.

Otis Mace (real name Richard Lello) is something of an oddity. This little man, armed with his electric guitar, managed something many of the bands couldn't. Within the space of a few songs, he had the audience won over. His clever, witty musical poetry, in the vein of Patrick Fitzgerald, had the mob hanging on his very word. And when he did the one about wiping your bum with a fluffy kitten ... well, you had to laugh.

If Push hadn't turned up, they could have quite easily been replaced with a juke box. As it was, they burdened us with their particular brand of top forty thrash. The uninspired amongst the crowd thought they were groovy.

A veteran of Sphinx and Skylord, Joz Hodzelman comes dangerously close to BOF territory. Armed with guitar and bass drum, he played his music to an incredibly kind audience. I went and got a hot dog.

It's hard to work out if Garage Crawlers are serious. Sure there are some nice little songs, but the majority of their set is full of trite attempts to be witty. 'Normal Dunediner' is vicious, while the single, 'Only You Tonight' does have its moments. More live work might be the answer.

Rhythm Method appear to be a band with extremely assorted influences, giving them a diverse style. Recorded efforts 'Mad' and 'Carousel' are obvious highlights in a consistent set. Their next problem is what to do about an almost total lack of stage presence.

It's hard to imagine that it has only been a year since the Crocodiles made their major debut at last year's Sweetwaters. In that year there have been two albums and a myriad of line-up changes. Jenny Morris looked her usual immaculate self, but the band sounded bored, and the material remarkably bland. If the Crocs are still around to do Sweetwaters '82, I shall be extremely surprised.

Mark Phillips

Seven O'clock and first up was the Daniel Keighley managed three piece, General Public. If enthusiasm and good intentions were everything then they would have made their mark. As it was their lack of cohesion and competence climaxing in a disastrous 'tribute' to John Lennon of 'Strawberry Fields' and 'Back In The USSR' (somebody should tell the people and the radio stations that it's a McCartney song) drew a barrage of (empty) beer cans.

The Techtones put matters right with a superbly cool set of meticulous, fool-proof pop songs. Guitarists Jimmy Juricevich and Steve Roach, play clean, bright and forceful, and songs like 'Make You Mine', 'Love In A Win-

dow' and the harsher tones of 'Same Old Game' yell for an album and a decent producer. The Techtones are here to stay.

Pop Mechanix next. The following day Neil Finn expressed his admiration for the band. He wasn't alone as the Christchurch band drew one of the best responses for any up-and-comers at the festival, but my reservations doubled. They're a well-rehearsed, fidgety unit with visual focal point, Andrew Snoid, on vocals. Their songs leave nothing to chance. They're constructed like neat pre-fabricated houses, sound but unimaginative poor decor. Live, things are equally as methodical and their now renowned recorded repertoire blew a storm. Too well-oiled, too pat.

Nightfall, fireworks and Split Enz. A heroes' welcome for a band synonymous with NZ festivals. It was one of their best performances benefitting from the flawless sound set-up and the ecstatic audience mood. 'Poor Boy', the second song, was transcendental, perfectly floating and ethereal. A personal festival highlight. Mosty of True Colours was laid bare and numerous dips into the past ('Frenzy', 'Charlie' and 'I See Red') were presented, but it was the recent, Neil's unrivalled 'One Step Ahead', and the future, 'A Hard Act To Follow' and 'Ghost Girl' from the forthcoming album, that delivered the real interest. Mirror-ball lighting and encores added to a complete and deserved triumph.

Getting tired. It was after midnight and many left before Jo Jo Zep. A pity because their set was damn near inspirational. Joe Camilleri showed what being a frontman was all about. Athletic and hyper-active, he took the band through a high energy selection from 'Screaming Targets' and 'Hats Off'. A number of new songs, especially 'Touching On The Danger Zone', showed the band moving away from past reggae dependence. I felt revived. Zep were that good.

The night ended with the Tigers. With the Wellington band was the legendary but difficult-to-handle Wayne Mason on keyboards. He couldn't save them. The Tigers know their do-re-mis but they want to deliver goodtimes with high credibility. In this country the two are almost mutually exclusive. Nick Theobald writes good airwave rock'n'roll but vocalist Barry Saunders tries too hard. Tiredness and the Tigers struggled, tiredness won.

George Kay

It's late morning and the sun's well up. It's very hot and the Screaming Meemees seem more than appropriate. Vocalist Tony Drum is ugly enough to be a star, he's white with a big nose and an arrogance to match the band's spikiness. They're rough but smooth enough to be recorded and good enough to be listened to. People listened and brought the band back for an encore. Evolving punks.

Ladies Meryl Yvonne and Jess Hawk David and backing band alternated between laid back West Coast movement and easy blues. Polished, sunny and totally self-contained, their music would have made sense at Nambassa.

Swingers' influenced Blam Blam Blam, aka

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THE ROXY COLLECTION



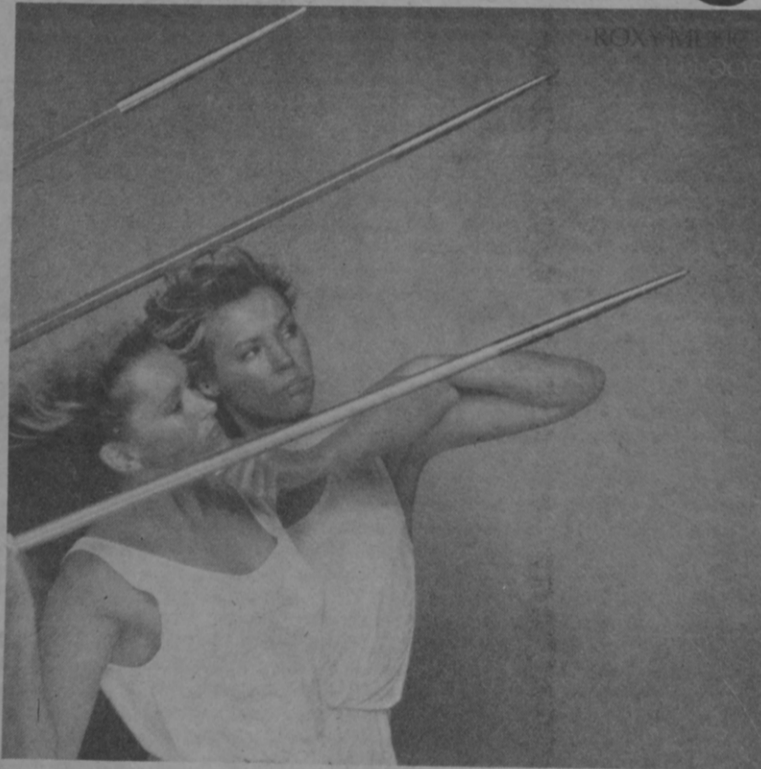
Manifesto



Greatest Hits



For Your Pleasure



Bryan Ferry



In Your Mind

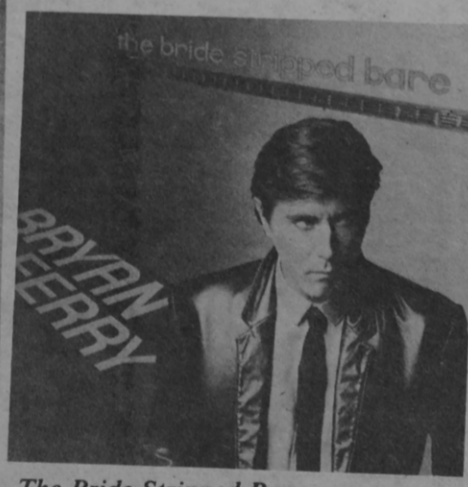
Watch for new pic sleeve single: "Jealous Guy" — a tribute.



Siren

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