



L I V E

LIVE FROM PAGE 20
and Dobbyn start trading licks, it's a joyous experience. The songs are far from orthodox, having twisted, unusual tunes that keep you on your toes, wrapped up in a wicked sense of humour. Don't say too much, you're beginning to bore us. Alright. See D.D. Smash. Duncan Campbell

Private Eyes, Flamewave, Riot III, Chaos, Mangaweka Viaduct

Victoria University, Sept 25

I managed to miss Private Eyes, whom I invariably enjoy, and half of Flamewave. They aim to blend reggae rhythms with smoother jazz feels. Despite good playing, especially from bassist Phil Bowering, it doesn't quite gel.

Riot III could have called themselves Life Still Exists in the Fridge, except that it worked. They played two pieces, one built around the police 'Move! Move! Move!' and the other on the anti-racist 'Amandla Leweto'. With a lead vocalist in full battle-dress, complete with riot baton, it was great — the sort of topical/disposable instant statement pioneered by Lennon/Ono.

Stars of the show were near-legendary Porirua reggae outfit Chaos. After a nervous start, they got better and better, playing with a cohesion, feel and economy rarely seen. A bit conservative in their selection of material, but with concentration on writing, and willingness to travel a bit, these guys could get very big very fast.

Last on were Mangaweka Viaduct. Guitar-based blooze 'n' boogie bands effect me like a gin and mogadon cocktail, but M.V. went down a storm. On their own terms, they are uncommonly good. They play well, show a reasonable amount of variation in their material, and have a strong vocalist. They may be the successors to Street Talk that the whole country is probably looking for. Les Crew

Tom Waits Auckland Town Hall, Sept 26.

Sometimes, there is nothing to do but tango. This I know. So does Tom Waits. Hello from all of us here in seat P26, on a night of late arrivals. And they're still streaming in 10 minutes after the start of the show, flushed with hurried scotch and dries, vodka and tonics, or whatever. And the guy in front of me needs a hair-

cut, he acts like a visual contraceptive. And Tom Waits just sits there above it all, letting the audience play straight man to his one-liners, while they kid themselves that they're providing the punch lines. And he's teaching the piano how to play and the microphone how to sing. And beautiful Teddy Edwards, who's older than anyone here tonight, is blowing cool lines like Lester did before the army and the alcohol got to him. And young Greg Cohen is making the string bass do a sideways shuffle so tight you can't see the joints. And now Tom is singing 'Jersey Girl' and even the spotlights are shedding tears it's so lovely. And now he's on to one of those jive talks, outraging the mike with oral intricacies. And now he's strutting his stuff, the one-man street theatre who can walk a mile while standing still. And now he's back at the keyboard, playing those casual arpeggios that allow him to have a drink at the top end. And it's an invitation to the blues, with egg and sausage and a side order of toast. And it's two encores and the toilets are heaving with bursting bladders and it's time to go. And the moon's holding water and the underground carpark plays a motor horn symphony. With a chorus of see-you-laters and the tail lights bidding goodnight to the motorway. And the typewriter has been drinking. Not me. Duncan Campbell

The Clean, Verlaines Gladstone, Oct 2.

The sound of young Dunedin? The Clean, fast-rising new favourites, and the Verlaines, first faltering steps into the outside world.

The Verlaines bill themselves as a Dylan/Velvets hybrid, but showed little to support the contention. The Dylan connection stands at best in vocal delivery but unfortunately doesn't extend to lyrics. Too many songs without shape, too many that slow down for a couple of beats and attack again. Too many chunky chords, not enough variation. For the time being, the Verlaines lack spark and need a few more ideas. But 'Playing To An Empty Hall' and 'Verlaine' are enough to hold out some promise for their return in November.

If the Verlaines had their problems, they were amplified by sharing the bill with the Clean.

The Clean are pop stars par excellence, the missing link between early XTC and Swell Maps. Possessed of a shambolic majesty and superb understanding of their genre, they hurtled through twenty-five dancing gems. 'Tally Ho' is by no means their best shot, but was, with the epic and soon-to-be-recorded 'Point That Thing', the highlight of the evening. Criticisms? Only in their pacing, but was it too much too soon, or just too much ...?

Michael Higgins

Rank And File

Station Hotel, Sept 8.

Rank and File are a young R&B based unit familiar to many Auckland pub goers. In recent months they've taken to headlining and touring the North Island pub circuit.

Like the best in their field, though their influences show they are developing their own songs and sound. Their well chosen covers range from a Billie Holiday tune (with trumpet), Chuck Berry's '30 Days', Isleys 'Twist And Shout', Doors 'Love Her Madly' to the Undertones 'Girls Don't Like It'.

Like a sixties beat group, R&B covers are a starting point. Standout originals are 'Border Clashes' (fine guitar), 'Mannequin' (recently demoed) and 'Once a Fascist'.

Fronting is vocalist Steven James who also plays excellent trumpet (excels on 'Ain't Nobodies Business'). The two guitarists are Jero Max and Robert Chase. Rhythm section is Huw Patterson on seat and Tim Werry on bass.

Though the Rank And File line-up is refreshingly different from the pub mainstream and the too fashion conscious under currents, they are neither as prolific in songwriting or as forceful in delivery as many of their recorded contemporaries. But as they gain in confidence in their own material, audience confidence and recording opportunities will follow. Murray Cammick

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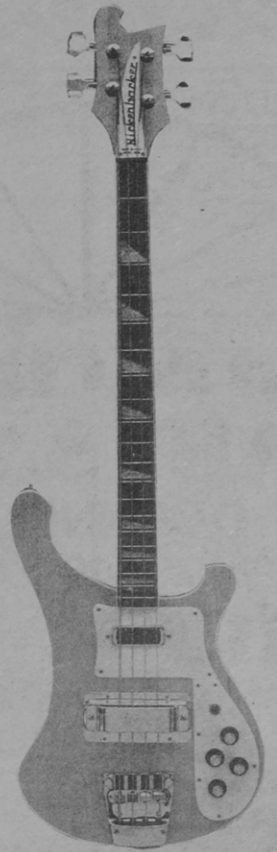
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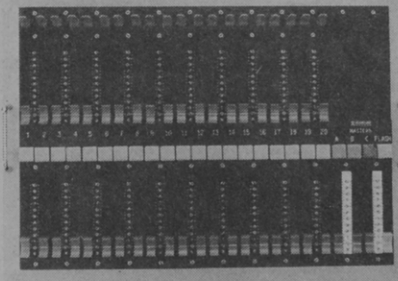
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