

# Live

**PETER GABRIEL**  
Mt Smart Supertop  
March 4

"It's taken us a while to get here," announced Peter Gabriel. But as eclectic as Gabriel's musical influences are, the audience was obviously well acquainted with material spanning a large portion of his post-Genesis recording career.

After a warmly received Mutton Birds set, Gabriel led the crowd through a two hour plus musical and emotional journey over the last 15 years, in a high-tech stage show scaled down from its European size. It was worth the wait, as Gabriel delivered all the hits from 'Salisbury Hill' through 'Shock the Monkey', 'Sledgehammer' and 'Steam'. While these songs provided high points, the crowd were no less enamoured with the more delicate numbers such as 'Don't Give Up' and the shadowy 'Hold the Line'.

But apart from gestures parodying rock egos in 'Steam', this most unstarish of stars reciprocated the adulation of his fans with stage moves more reminiscent of playgrounds and country fairs. The 'Who's Who' line-up, including old stalwarts like Tony Levin as well as stunning newcomers such as vocalist Paula Cole, were as much a part of the game as the surprisingly well mixed sound. Only the absence of long time Gabriel collaborator Shankar's violin provided any cause for disappointment.

In the end the simple statement of 'Biko', poignantly placed in the context of the 81 tour, seemed the only possible way to end the journey.

**NICKY JONES**

**STRAWBERRY FIELDS**  
Raglan March 5

The festival lifestyle is a weird one, it brings out the very best but also the very worst in your fellow weekend music fans. Contrary to the promise of "good vibes", arriving late on Saturday evening first impressions aren't promising. After negotiating a steep one-way road that just happens to be a main crowd thoroughfare (abusive drunks and car kickers only!) we half-jokingly consider a quick U-turn. In amongst the crowd dodging heavies is top priority, they stumble backward into your path then decide that you're the aggressor. Coupled with regular scuffles in the queue for beer and isolated fracas in front of the stage you wonder if it's really worth it.

Stage One is being prepared for Steady Eddy, so Murray and I frolic to the second stage and dine on barbequed sausages whilst watching Flat Hamster Man. A friend of mine has this habit of summing up a band in four words or less. FHM filled the full quota, according to him they are "Slap-bass-funk-bullshit." Not entirely off the mark but still unfair as they have a fair amount more going on. The rhythm section is far too heavy to dismiss this band as that most despicable of beasts - white boys playing Pepper funk. The vocalist projects as a Mike Patton/Rollins crossbreed and has a voice that matches accordingly. The factor that lets them down is they have just one song and insist on performing only slight variations of the same to pass the time.

Back in the fray Midge Marsden is blessed with

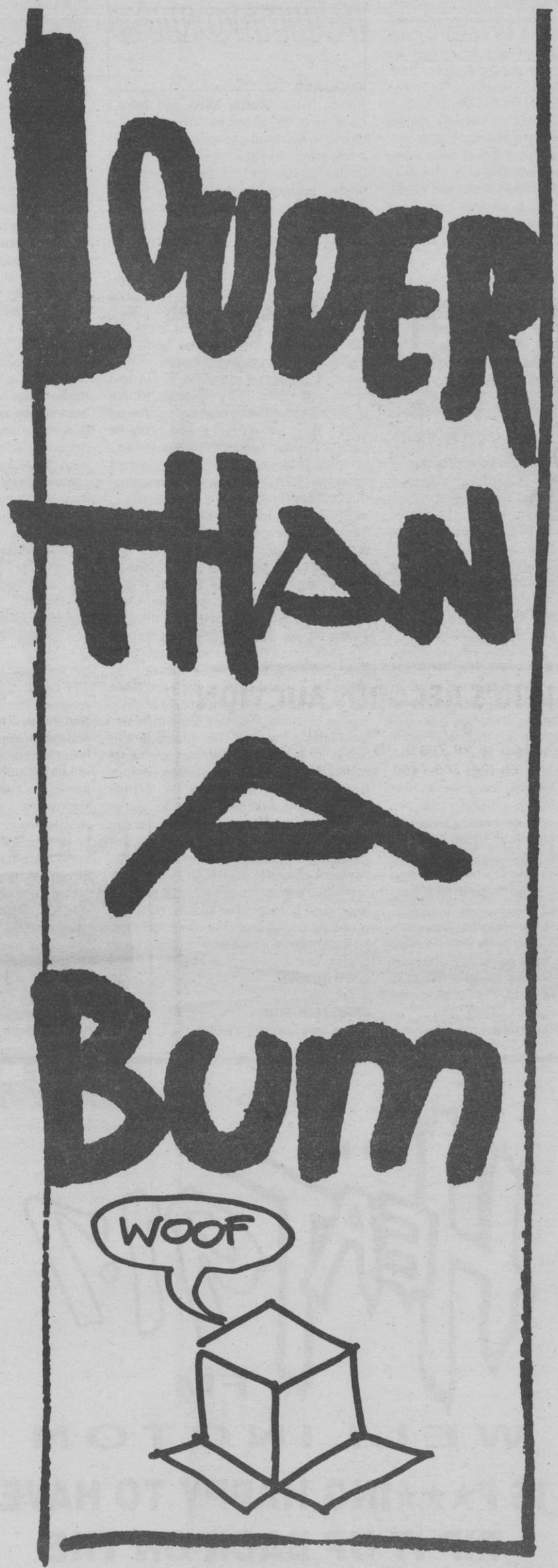
an audience that enjoys the simple things in life, 12-bar strung-out and stretched blues. In fact, blues-by-numbers. You know how it starts, where it's headed and how it will end. A guest appearance by Texan Ronnie Taylor sparks more interest as he holds possession of the strangest voice I've ever heard, like he has a harmonica for a voicebox. I guess if you play the blues for any great length of time recognising variations would come as second nature. To the uninitiated such as myself it all sounds like 'Travellin' On.'

The reason it's so hard to take seriously any band that opts to reform is because they inevitably play a young man's songs with little or no empathy for the emotions being experienced when they were written. Although I'm not entirely convinced, perhaps Hello Sailor, or more correctly Graham Brazier is the exception to this rule. As at Mountain Rock, Brazier performs this evening with conviction and genuine enthusiasm, very far from being the proverbial 'tired old man.' It's a shame then the rest of the band weren't up to the task. Cues are missed and time isn't kept, often you'd swear each member was playing a different tune. 'Blue Lady' lacked any punch, and only an extended 'Gutterblack' was potent enough to raise a fist. Consequently one of the major, if rather odd, highlights was Le Brazz congratulating Three the Hard Way on their recent success and then deciding to rap the chorus of 'Hip-Hop Holiday.' Yeah, tongues in cheeks . . . Hello Sailor in the house, y'all.

Australia's Clowns Of Decadence are up next, as you can imagine they're appropriately attired, yet dressed for success that never comes. Here is a band who deserve the worst four word summation. Thirteen clowns spend the next 40 minutes wasting their energy and my time. Imagine half-speed Head Like A Hole wannabes playing Blind Melon songs, yeah that bad. The obligatory circus showmanship was much less than impressive, so they can shoot flames and drop swords down their throats . . . big deal. Nothing could disguise or compensate for a lack of songs and imagination. By now they'll be back home. In the prose of Mr Petty . . . Don't Come Around Here No More.

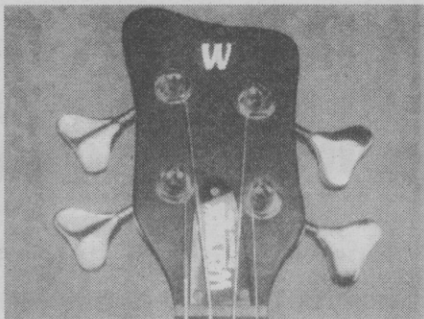
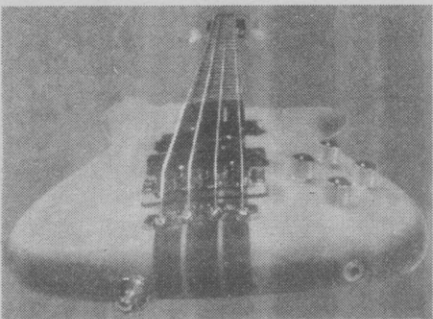
From this point on the remainder of the evening was interrupted by major sound glitches, suffering first were the 3Ds. They arrive amid a cloud of dry ice then depart just as quickly, David Mitchell's guitar amp not being up to the occasion. Once under way though they quickly impress, mixing furious ragged pop numbers with the more dreamlike such as 'Meluzina Man.' It's hard to tell what impression is forming in the crowd as there are constant requests for AC/DC, though most of the pit congregation recognise 'Hey Seuss' and 'Outer Space.' Naturally wild at heart, Dave Mitchell hurls his guitar to the stage during the conclusion of the last song procuring a tremendous squeal of feedback . . . and they're off!

The manager of the main stage was none other than Wayne Elliot, lead singer of Knightshade. With the best of intentions but deciding on an unfortunate choice of words he strode to the microphone and informed the crowd that everything they'd heard up until then was "fucked" and the Dead Flowers would rock them. Whether or not that could be considered a jinx is debatable but it was a depressing sight to see the Dead Flowers set marred by a constant stream of sound problems. Sympathy for the bass player. David James' rig died midway through the first song, as a description 'untimely' is not even close. An eternity-long ten minute break was spent attempting frantic repairs. A loss of momentum such as this would have killed a lesser band but lead singer Bryan Bell has the common sense and more impor-



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