



Infectious Grooves, Auckland Town Hall.

Photos by E.J Mathers

JOE COCKER

Aotea Centre, Auckland, October 20.

For almost three decades, Joe Cocker has had great experiences — separately or all at once — of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. As a result he looks much older than his 51 years, and to those more conversant with his history than myself, that once enthralling voice must sound ravaged beyond repair — but there's no doubt he's still singing with some semblance of its awesome power intact.

Such is his standing, he'd won the crowd over the moment he stepped on stage; but far from parading a tired, sanitised version of his former self, Cocker stood in the spotlight, and sung with the energy and abandon of one still hopelessly in love with the game. The big band numbers drew the most response and applause from the audience, particularly 'Feelin' Alright', 'When The Night Comes', 'With a Little Help From My Friends' and 'You Can Leave Your Hat On', but it was painfully obvious that only Cocker's pianist, bass player, and long-time drummer Jack Bruno really had a feel for what was going on. They were burdened with a guitarist and saxophone/keyboard player prone to indulgent, exaggerated, Nigel Tufnel-style solos, and though both looked hilarious, they often seemed to battle with Cocker for the lion's share of attention.

It was during 'Up Where We Belong', 'You Are So Beautiful' and, the show's best moment, a cover of John Hiatt's 'Have A Little Faith', that it was most obvious Cocker's voice could no longer scale the emotional heights, but these were the tunes during which he looked the most lost. With eyes clamped shut, he appeared to speak the lyrics with the fingers of his right hand, and move unconsciously in the same epileptic way as witnessed at *Woodstock* and on *Ed Sullivan* all those years ago.

When Cocker played Western Springs in the early 70s, he failed to do an encore when, drugged to the eyeballs, he took a wrong turn backstage, then fell asleep beside the creek. Tonight he's back on stage within seconds, laying out a ballad and a wonderful rhythm-driven knees-up, and showing clearly, despite all that 'survivor' crap, that he hasn't forgotten real rock 'n' roll isn't served 'on the rocks'.

JOHN RUSSELL

MOVE THE CROWD

Powerstation, Auckland, October 22.

With *Cheap Sex*, *Retro-A-Go-Go* and Kurtz Lounge's *Beach Party*, *Move the Crowd* had a lot of competition. Still, the promise of hearing the finalists of the 1995 DJ Mix Championship (winner DJ Raw from Wellington) and a selection of local hip-hop managed to draw enough enthusiasts to fill about half of the Powerstation. Videos, DJs cutting up tracks, and breakdancing competitions, interspersed with live acts emceed by True Schooler Slave, made for a chilled out night, particularly for those of us that had caught the *On U Sound* gig a couple of nights before.

3 The Hard Way played a short, tight set of mainly new tracks, with style and enthusiasm. Their set was disappointingly short, but managed to get a few brave souls onto the huge empty dance floor. Unfortunately, as soon as they got any sort of vibe happening, their set was over.

The Powerstation just doesn't seem to be the best venue for Joint Force. Catching these guys on a good night is something not to be missed, but when faced with an expanse of empty dancefloor and a huge stage, they fail to come together with the atmosphere and intensity of their sets at smaller venues. Slave, OJ, and DLT were plagued by the odd technical difficulty, but put out a dope mix of bFM favourite 'Nightmare Man'.

Upper Hutt Posse came on fresh and fired, with D Word and Wiya kicking wicked, intelligent rhymes with a strong New Zealand flavour. Their energy, power and sheer charisma made them the band that blew all others off the stage.

Respect to Nick D'Angelo for putting together a night that presented a good selection of New Zealand hip-hop, but a shame about the venue. The Powerstation just swallows people up, making any semblance of atmosphere evaporate. A much better time was had by those that caught the *True School Hip Hop Show* live to air at Kurtz a couple of weeks ago.

ROSEMARIE PAUL

PASSENGERS: ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS 1

Passengers are:
BRIAN ENO
BONO
ADAM CLAYTON
THE EDGE
LARRY MULLEN JNR.

and featuring extra passengers
LUCIANO PAVAROTTI, HOWIE B, HOLI

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