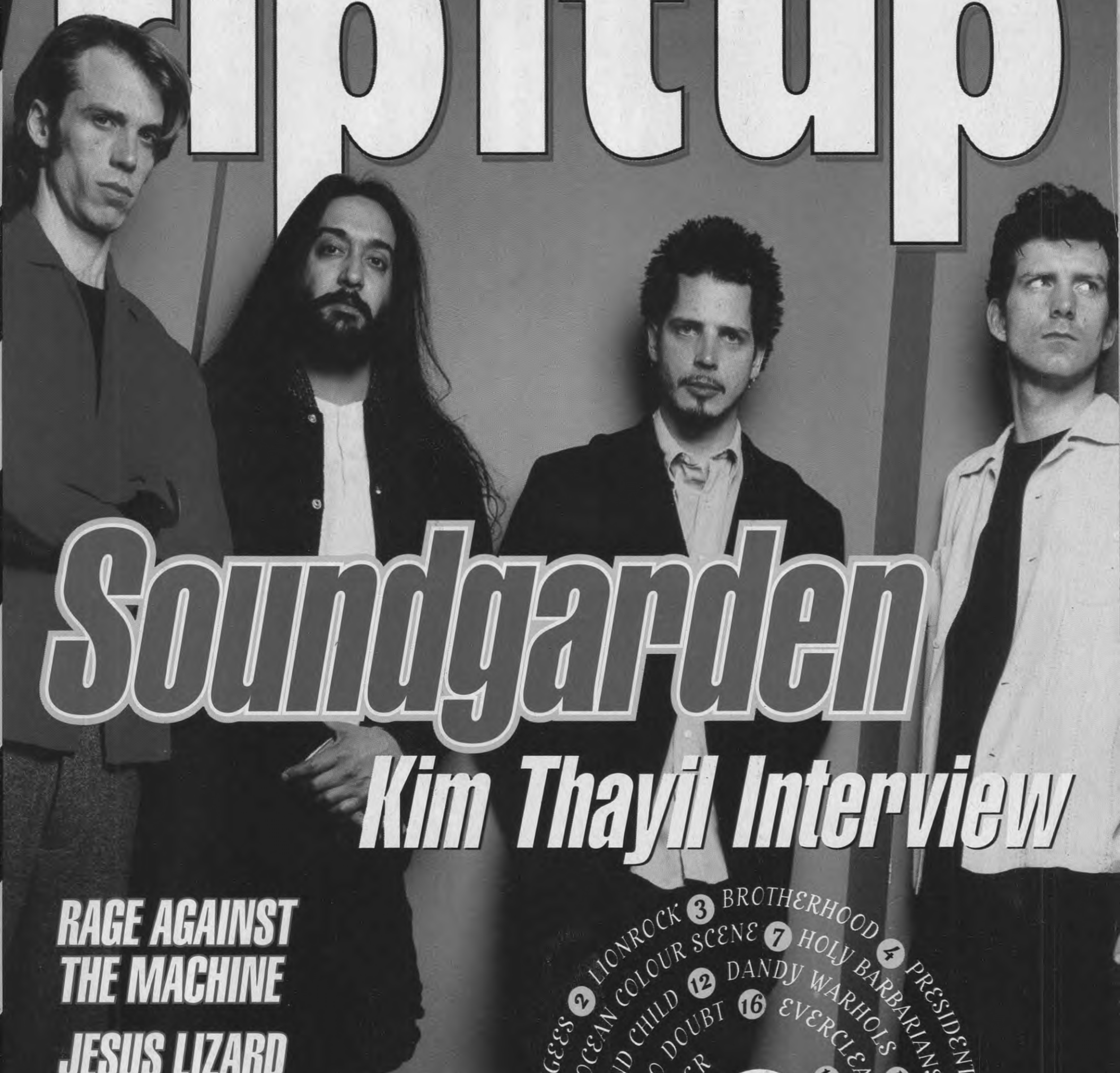


18 TRACK FREE CD



No. 225 MAY 1996 \$2.95

MIP it UP



Soundgarden

Kim Thayil Interview

**RAGE AGAINST
THE MACHINE**

JESUS LIZARD

BEN HARPER

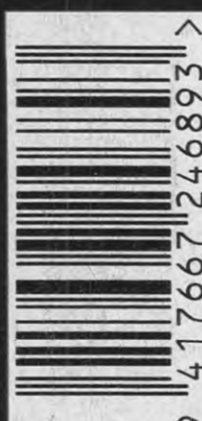
GETTING A DEAL

FLYING NUN 15th

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE

1 FUGEES 2 LIONROCK 3 BROTHERHOOD 4 PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 5 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE 6 OCEAN COLOUR SCENE 7 HOLY BARBARIANS 8 SEVEN MARY THREE
 9 HOG 10 GREG JOHNSON 11 CAST 12 DANDY WARHOLS 13 TRIPPIN' DAISY
 14 GREG PHILLIPS 15 NO DOUBT 16 EVERCLEAR 17 MARTIN PHILLIPS

**FEATURED
ON THE
FREE CD**





TERRAIN

A way of life for feet





The Cranberries visit this month to promote their new album *To The Faithful Departed*. Dolores O'Riordan and band play Christchurch May 20, Wellington May 23 and Auckland May 25.



Wacky newcomers Sparklehorse are the brainchild of Mark Linkous, a man with enough time on his hands to name their debut *Vivadixiesubmarine transmission-plot*. Rumour has it Mark is in hospital after doing the get-so-out-of-it, collapse-weird-style and cut-circulation-to-part-of-your-body trip. A cute start to a career.



Stinky Jim and Joost Langveld are back in the house with the Unitone HiFi album *Rewound & Rerubbed (Incoming / Flying In)*, 12 remixes of tracks from their *Wickedness Increased* album. Remixers include Rockers HiFi and Funki Porcini.



X-Files stars David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson (pictured) are now joined by the *Songs in the Key of X* album inspired by the series. Collaborations for the record are William S. Burroughs and R.E.M., Elvis Costello with Brian Eno, Rob Zombie and Alice Cooper and Foo Fighters cover Gary Numan.



The youthful Irish band Ash, fronted by Tim Wheeler (right) are about to unleash their first album *1977*. Were they alive in 1977? And there's a single 'Goldfinger'.

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SAMBUCA



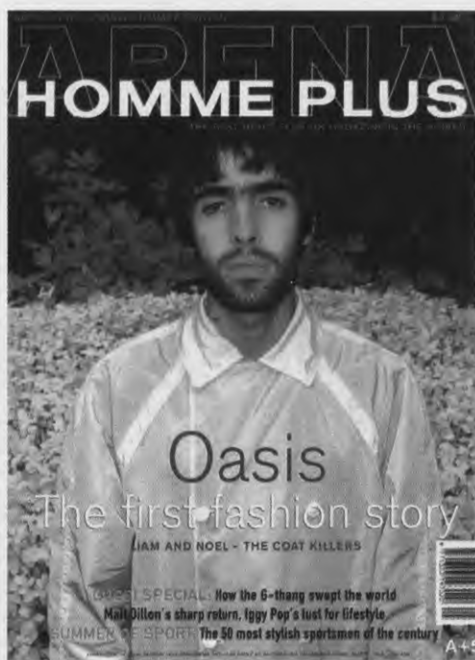
SHOOTER ORIGINALE

SAMBUCA GALLIANO
FABBRICATO IN ITALIA





Poe is not related to, but gained a nickname from her fondness for the writing of Edgar Allen Poe. The singer's debut is *Hello* and the 'Trigger Happy Jack' video delights viewers. There's a Poe interview in the June *RipItUp*.



The uncompromising Liam Gallagher is now doing fashion shoots for UK menswear rag *Arena*. "My style? I don't think I've got one — I just look cool."



Afro-funk Queen Angelique Kidjo is back with a new album *Fifa*. Anglique tells all about her new grooves in an interview in the June *RipItUp*.



Once Christchurch based, Future Stupid's Tony Hallum and Mike Cole have gained Gavin Downie from the Picassos and borrowed Derek Hunt from Semi Lemon Kola. Their debut six song CDEP is out early May on Felix via BMG and they play the Powerstation (all-ages) Saturday May 2 with Nothing At All and Muckhole.



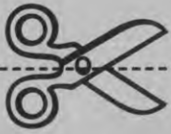
Superette have made another excellent video. The trio with actors star in a rather sticky, over-the-top adventure in a peepshow setting for the 'Touch Me' video. The album *Tiger* arrives in June.



Hello Palmerston North
UHF 56
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DOG TV

Phones: Studio 357 5692 Office 356 5656



Dr AirWave Martens

- 1 FUGEEES *Zealots* COLUMBIA
- 2 LIONROCK *Straight At Yer Head* DECONSTRUCTION/BMG
- 3 BROTHERHOOD *One Shot* VIRGIN
- 4 PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA *Boll Weevil* COLUMBIA
- 5 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE *Bulls On Parade* EPIC
- 6 OCEAN COLOUR SCENE *You've Got It Bad* MCA
- 7 HOLY BARBARIANS *Space Junkie* BEGGARS BANQUET/BMG
- 8 SEVEN MARY THREE *My My* WHITE/FESTIVAL
- 9 HOG *Get A Job* GEFEN/MCA
- 10 CAST *Sandstorm* POLYDOR
- 11 SECOND CHILD *Promise* WILDSIDE/FESTIVAL
- 12 DANDY WARHOLS *TV Theme* EMI
- 13 TRIPPING DAISY *Bang* ISLAND/POLYGRAM
- 14 GREG JOHNSON *Pleasure & Overdose* PAGAN/EMI
- 15 NO DOUBT *Just A Girl* TRAUMA/MCA
- 16 EVERCLEAR *Summerland* EMI
- 17 MARTIN PHILLIPPS *As Far As I Can See* FLYING NUN/FESTIVAL
- 18 LODGER *All Is Forgiven* FELIX/BMG

MASTERED BY EVAN ROBERTS AT PADDED SELL, WELLINGTON.

New Music



1 FUGEEES *Zealots*

'Zealots' is from the album *The Score* by the premier new hip-hop act out of the USA, the Fugees. This hip-hop group have made it into *Newsweek*! They reflect Haitian and African American culture. Wyclef Jean says: "Black people are a diverse group. That's why our sound is different. We're different!"



3 BROTHERHOOD *One Shot*

The Brotherhood — Shylock, Spycy and DJ Mr Dexter — are the leading voices in the British hip-hop community. The *NME* says *Elementalz* may be "the best British hip-hop record of all time." Produced by Hood Lynchpin and the Underdog (knob twiddler for Massive Attack). "A landmark LP." (*NME*)



2 LIONROCK *Straight At Yer Head*



After a long string of killer 12 inch releases, here's the first single off Lionrock's debut album *Instinct for Detection*, featuring MC Buzz B on vocals. The distorted breakbeats of 'Straight At Yer Head' heralds a new sound in British clubland.

4 PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA *Boll Weevil*



After two hit single 'Lump' and 'Peaches' here's 'Boll Weevil' another killer song from the Presidents of the United States of America's self-titled album. This crazed Seattle trio are expected to tour downunder soon.

5 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE *Bulls On Parade*

The big rage out from the Big Day Out, the band that overcame the deluge and created a concert event, have now released their new album *Evil Empire*. 'Bulls on Parade' (watch for the video) is a taste of the funk and the rock of *Evil Empire* that reignites the power of their debut album.



7 HOLY BARBARIANS *Space Junkie*

The Cult's Ian Astbury went back to his hometown, Liverpool to record his new band. The album title *Cream* is named after the club they frequented while recording at Parr St Studios, Liverpool. Astbury found his new guitarist Patrick Suggs in a punk band featuring the guys who run the Fuct! clothing label. The first single is 'Space Junkie'.



6 OCEAN COLOUR SCENE *You've Got It Bad*



'Riverboat Song' (with Paul Weller on keyboards) has introduced to Enzed, Britain's favourite sons for 1996, The Ocean Colour Scene. Noel Gallagher (Oasis) has dropped the band's name in interviews. They recently supported (and backed) Weller on his UK tour. *Q* magazine says of the No.2 chart debut album *Moseley Shoals*: "Remarkably consistent, occasionally inspirational, this is exceptional stuff indeed. (4 stars)"

8 SEVEN MARY THREE *My My*

This three-piece came from nowhere with the hit 'Cumbersome'. On the USA indie Mammoth, this hard-gigging, unpretentious, University band now have a mega-selling album *American Standard* where you will find 'My My' plus their latest single 'Water's Edge'.



9 HOG Get A Job

Hog is no-holds-barred rock 'n' roll steeped in the attitude of the Sex Pistols with the kick of early AC/DC. *Nothing Sacred* is their debut album featuring 13 of Kirk (singer / writer / guitarist) Miller's "trials and tribulations" of a starving artist. "Get A Job" is pure Hog, like a stripped-down Harley Davidson, this Hog is a powerhouse of simplicity."



10 CAST Sandstorm



Formed by John Power, early 1994, the Cast have been tipped as the next UK four-piece to conquer the USA. Even Noel Gallagher has described Cast as a "religious experience." This classic debut album was produced at the (haunted) Manor studio by John Leckie (John Lennon etc).

13 TRIPPING DAISY Bang

i am an Elastic Firecracker is the first album for Island Records by Dallas-based Tripping Daisy. The single 'I Got A Girl' and songs 'Rocket-Pop', 'Piranha' and 'Bang' are turning heads. The album is produced by Ted Nicely (Jawbox, Fuqazi, Quicksand). Frontman Tim DeLaughter says 'Bang' is about "that voice inside you that leads you to temptation."



14 GREG JOHNSON Pleasure & Overdose



'Pleasure And Overdose' is another cool track from Greg Johnson's groovy solo album *Vine Street Stories* (named after Greg's humble abode) that also features the singles 'Come On', 'Don't Wait Another Day' and 'You Stay Out Of Your Life'.

17 MARTIN PHILLIPPS & THE CHILLS As Far As I Can See

'As Far As I Can See' is another gem from the new Martin Phillipps and the Chills Flying Nun album *Sunburnt*. The album was recorded in England with producer Craig Leon (Blondie, Ramones, Richard Hell). *Sunburnt* also features singles 'Come Home' and 'Surrounded'.



18 LODGER All Is Forgiven



'All Is Forgiven' is an acoustic track from the four song EP 'Forever', due for release soon on the Felix label. The title song of the Lodger EP is a collaboration between a Herne Bay Kiss fan and remix man Evan Roberts.

11 SECOND CHILD Promise

'Promise' is another fine song from Second Child. Their new album *Slinky* also features the singles 'Disappear' and 'Crumble', both of which were high-rotate videos on *The Max* channel. Also on *Slinky* is the new single 'Desire You' and the haunting 'Prove You Wrong'.



12 DANDY WARHOLS TV Theme



The Dandy Warhols songs are smart, sharp and dressed to kill, and they come from Portland. 'TV Theme Song' is one such perfect pop song among many. Savour 'Lou Weed', Grunge Betty', 'Coffee and Tea Wrecks' or the not that indulgent 16 minute 'Rave Up'.

15 NO DOUBT Just A Girl

Gwen Stefani is the dauntingly unique vocalist that fronts No Doubt. This band is an antidote to aggro posturing and teen-angst-by-numbers. No Doubt draw from a palette of new wave, guitar-rock, ska, dance, reggae and pop. They've opened for Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ziggy Marley and Fishbone. 'Just A Girl' is Gwen's tongue-in-cheek litany on the perils of being a girl growing up in California.



16 EVERCLEAR Summerland



The popular Everclear singles 'Heroin Girl' and 'Santa Monica' (where frontman Art Alexakis grew up) are both from the album *Sparkle and Fade*. 'Summerland' is a little town off Highway 101, "But the song is more figurative," says Art, "I've passed by the 'Summerland' exit so many times, but never actually been there."

New Music

Dr. AirWair Martens

Dr. AirWair Martens

ripitup 18 Tracks

Dr. AirWair Martens

Bouncing Back



John Squire (right) quits The Stone Roses.



Foo Fighters cover Gary Numan.

• Guitarist **John Squire** has left the **Stone Roses** but the band will continue. The other band members were informed by a phone call from Squire. He has a new band.

• With 'How Bizarre' still at No.1 and selling heaps, **OMC** have been at No.1 in Australia for three weeks and the single has achieved platinum sales in Australia for over 70,000 units sold.

• **Green Day** cancelled 21 UK dates due to exhaustion. Manager **Randy Steffes** denies that the band has split. "Cool rumour," he said. "But there's nothing to it."

• **Jeffrey Lee Pierce** of 80s band **Gun Club** died from a blood clot on the brain when in Utah to visit his father who had had a stroke.

• Former **Oasis** drummer **Tony McCarroll** has a preliminary hearing for his legal action against Oasis in court May 13. He is seeking one-fifth of the band's recording royalties and claims he was sacked from the band.

• **Pearl Jam** are in Chicago completing their fourth album for release later this year. Mid-year Jeff Ament's side project **Three Fish** will be released.

• The indie **Epitaph** label have filed a lawsuit for the court to decide whether **Offspring** owe the label a third album. More than a million dollars in artist royalties are being withheld by Epitaph "as a set off against damages that may be sought" if the band does not deliver the final album in their contract.

• **Dr Dre** has left **Death Row Records**, leaving **Suge Knight** in charge. Dre's new label will be financed and distributed by **Interscope**, Death Row's distributor.

• **Siouxsie & the Banshees** have decided to split after 20 years together. "We're going to go with some dignity," said Siouxsie. With drummer Budgie, Siouxsie is working on a new **Creatures** album. Her favourite albums of 1995 were **Tricky**, **Radiohead** and **Garbage**.

• **Michael Jackson** has signed a joint-venture deal to create "family values" theme parks and entertainment products with Saudi investor **Prince al-Waleed bin Talal**, who like Jackson, is an adventure park buff. The Prince bailed out Euro-Disney in 1994, investing \$345

million. Jackson has met the Prince on one of the singer's frequent visits to the Euro-Disney Park.

• While **Nancy Boys** have covered **Gary Numan's** 'Are Friends Electric?', the **Foo Fighters** have remade Numan's 'Down in the Park' on the **X-Files** compilation.

• The **Clean's** *Boodle Boodle Boodle* EP has gone Gold 15 years after its release. Gold Discs were given to the band, **Chris Knox**, **Doug Hood**, and the **Kilgour** brothers' mum, Mrs Clean.

• **Rick Rubin's** wacky American label have now signed a clinically diagnosed schizophrenic **Wesley Willis**, a Chicago street artist with a debut album *Spooky Disharmonious Conflict Hell-Ride*. Also on American, **Johnny Cash** has recorded Spain's 'Spiritual'.

• **Phil Collins** has left **Genesis** leaving **Tony Banks** and **Mike Rutherford** looking for a new singer.

• The movie soundtrack for *I Shot Andy Warhol* includes **REM** doing the **Troggs'** 'Love Is All Around', **Wilco** with **Buffalo Springfield's** 'Burned', **Ben Lee** with the **Small Faces'** 'Itchykoo Park', **Luna** doing **Donvan's** 'Season of the Witch' and the score is by **John Cale**. And for **Keanu Reeves** movie *Feeling Minnesota* **Bob Dylan** has recorded **Johnny Cash's** 'Ring Of Fire'. The movie title was inspired by the lyric from **Soundgarden's** 'Outshined'.

• The new **Elvis Costello** album *All This Useless Beauty* reunites him with the **Attractions** and includes songwriting collaborations with **Paul McCartney** and **Aimee Mann**. Costello also collaborates with **Brian Eno** for a song on *Songs in the Key of X*, The **X-Files** soundtrack. Costello has also been working with **Burt Bacharach** in New York recently.

• The new **Spike Lee** movie *Girl 6* has many classic tracks by **Prince** ('Erotic City', 'Nasty Girl' etc) and new songs 'She Spoke to Me', 'Don't Talk to Strangers' and 'Girl 6'. A **Warners** release.

• The **Slayer** hardcore covers album *Undisputed Attitude* includes songs by **Minor Threat**, **T.S.O.L.**, **GBH**, **Verbal Abuse** and **Suicidal Tendencies**. Drummer **Jon Dette** has replaced **Paul Bostaph**.

Quote

"If I had a choice, I'd take every music programme director in New Zealand, line them up against a wall, and shoot them. As soon as the blood was washed away, presuming they had any, I'd line up the TV programmers and senior executives, and shoot them as well."

Actor/radio personality/cricket commentator **Ian Watkin** doesn't need to kiss ass to get work.

"If the [acting] career doesn't work out, I'll definitely go to college and try another line of work. If that doesn't pan out, I can always go shoot up and be a rock star."

Here's hoping **Edward Furlong** doesn't give up his day job.

"Honey, there's nothing better than sticking your hand up a kilt and feeling a naked bottom."

Garbage's Shirley Manson gets cheeky about her heritage.

"The more you show your arse off at public functions, the more people like it." The pre-Jacko controversy **Jarvis Cocker** speaks prophetically.

"One ['Something Changed' single cover] features sexually provocative images of a woman, and the other should feature sexually provocative images of a man. Only bisexual people are allowed to buy both. If we get to Number 1 it will prove we have a large bisexual following, which will please me no end."

A market researching **Jarvis Cocker** plans **Pulp's** next publicity coup.

"We did have to sign a contract saying: 'We will no longer write anything like 'Sex With Your Parents'.' That is part of the deal to get into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, I had to guarantee I would not in any way do anything provocative, and that I would turn into a self-satisfied... smug... prat."

Lou Reed and the **Velvets** sell their souls for rock 'n' roll.

"If you're 50 percent of all the music being sold today, you should have 50 percent of the power. But we don't." **Motown's Andre Harrell** measures their **Black Power**.

"I dedicate this to my old mate **Damon**. The next time I see you I'm going to shove it up your arse."

Tricky holds his **NME** Brat Award and gives one good reason why **Damon Albarn** should not have said "no" to their collaboration being released.

"I like soap operas as a concept, because they give people something to gossip about besides their own friends."

Aimee Mann knows what's needed to keep people nice.

"People seem to think alternative bands have crossed over, but in terms of what they're doing, they're actually pretty retarded."

Luke Haines of the **Auteurs** on **Britpop**.

"**Britpop** is dreary, with their four chords and spotty student faces. That's the problem with pop — if you're young and good-looking, no one will take you seriously. Whereas if you're an ugly fuck, it's perfectly acceptable to be a serious musician."

East 17 manager **Tom Watkins** on **Britpop**.

"Take That were just dancers. Girls who go to see **East 17** want to get fucked, girls who go to see **Take That** don't know what fucking is."

East 17 manager **Tom Watkins** on **Take That**.

Album

SLOTH

Features I Like, Water, Third Eye etc

PUMPKINHEAD

POWERSTATION FRIDAY MAY 17

ALL AGES. TICKETS ON SALE AT REAL GROOVY.

Single

nA RK

Plus Remixes of Batman & Mark

CHARTS

Student Radio Network Top 20

25.4.1996

Based on listener voting on Student Radio Stations nationwide

- 1 **Folk Implosion**
Nothing's Gonna Stop (The Flow)
- 2 **Dark Tower** You Beauty
- 3 **Garageland** Fingerpops
- 4 **Prodigy** Firestarter
- 5 **Nil State** Most Importantly The Pacific
- 6 **Supergass** Going Out
- 7 **Smashing Pumpkins** Set The Ray To Jerry
- 8 **Superette** Touch Me
- 9 **Mink** Radio Cruel
- 10 **Gary Clail** Another Hard Man
- 11 **Pumpkinhead** Nark
- 12 **Loves Ugly Children** Suck
- 13 **Bic Runga** Drive
- 14 **Underworld** Juanita
- 15 **Thorazine Shuffle** An Affair
- 16 **Nearly God** Poems
- 17 **Chemical Brothers**
Get Up On It Like This
- 18 **Rocket From The Crypt** On A Rope
- 19 **Tripping Daisy** I Got A Girl
- 20 **Salmonella** Dub
Last Skank Before Closing

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3.30pm to 12.30am Mon to Thurs.

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11am to midnight daily.

Video Hits — TV2

10am to 11am Saturday (new), 10am to 12 noon Sunday (chart)

Mai-Time — TV2

11am to 12 noon Saturday

THE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT AWARDS OF NEW ZEALAND

The award winners at the inaugural Music & Entertainment Awards of New Zealand, held at Auckland's Aotea Centre on Saturday April 13, were:

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Shihad *Killjoy*

SINGLE OF THE YEAR

OMC 'How Bizarre'

TOP GROUP

Shihad / Exponents

TOP MALE VOCALIST

Jon Toogood

TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

Teremoana

TOP INTERNATIONAL RECORDING ARTIST

Shihad

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

Mark Tierney / Paul Casserly / Anthony Ioasa 'Sweet Disorder'

MOST PROMISING GROUP

OMC

MOST PROMISING MALE VOCALIST

Paul Fuemana (OMC)

MOST PROMISING FEMALE VOCALIST

Bic Runga

MANA RED

Southside Of Bombay 'Kia Mau'

MANA MAORI

Southside Of Bombay 'Umbadada'

POLYNESIAN

Southside Of Bombay 'Umbadada'

COUNTRY

Kylie Harris *Let It Be Love*

JAZZ

Nathan Haines *Shift Left*

CLASSICAL

Michael Houston *Beethoven Pianos Sonatas From The Middle Period*

FOLK

Rua *Harbour Lights*

GOSPEL

Brent Chambers *Living Sacrifices*

CHILDRENS

Universal Childrens Audio *Nga Pihhi 1 & 2*

PRODUCER

Eddie Rayner 'World Stand Still' (Rikki Morris)

ENGINEER

Alan Jansson 'How Bizarre' (OMC)

VIDEO

Sigi Spath & Jo Fisher 'You Gotta Know / Intl. version' (Supergroove)

ALBUM COVER

Alec Bathgate *Abbasolutely*

SPECIAL MERIT AWARD

Brendan Smyth (NZ On Air)

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Mark Hadlow

RISING STAR

Kylie Harris

INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Supergroove

THEATRICAL PERFORMER

Tina Cross

THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

Cats

PROMOTER/MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Patrick Connell & Robin Sutherland

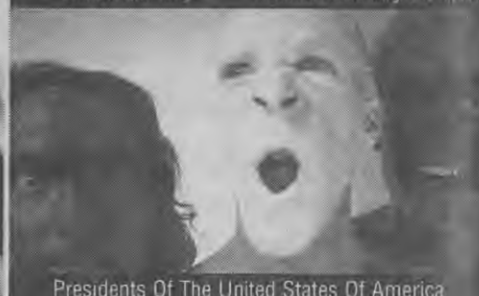
TOURS TOURS TOURS



Smashing Pumpkins finally make it in May.



Shihad tour May. Heather Nova May 21, Kurtz.



Presidents Of The United States Of America are rumoured to tour.

MAREE SHEEHAN

May 2 Tauranga, Sports Stadium
3 Rotorua, Convention Centre
9/10 Hamilton, Wings Air Base (Te Rapa)
16/17 Napier
22/23 Palmerston North, Showgrounds
30/31 Wellington, Town Hall

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

THORAZINE SHUFFLE
May 3 Mt Smart Supertop, Auckland
4 Queens Wharf Events Centre, Wellington

GUINNESS CELEBRATION

OF IRISH MUSIC
May 3 Auckland, Aotea Centre
4 Christchurch, Theatre Royal
5 Wellington, Michael Fowler Centre

ALANIS MORISSETTE

May 7 Auckland,
North Shore Events Centre
8 Wellington, Queens Wharf Events Centre

MUSHROOM BALL 96

May 10/11 New Plymouth, Jacks

HORACE PINKER

May 9 Auckland, Kurtz Lounge
10 Hamilton, St Peters Hall
11 New Plymouth, Jacks (Mushroom Ball)
12 Palmerston North, Wild Horse Saloon
13 Wellington, Antipodes
15 Christchurch, Warners

LOVES UGLY CHILDREN

May 9 Christchurch, His Lordships
10 Wellington, Hole In The Wall
11 Auckland, Kurtz Lounge
16 Hamilton, Wailing Bongo
17 Napier, Shakespeare
18 Palmerston North, Wild Horse Saloon
24 Auckland, Powerstation
(with **Shihad**, All Ages)

SMOKEFREE ROCKQUEST

(Regional Finals)

May 10 Wellington, Victoria University
18 Christchurch, Lincoln University
24 Dunedin, Otago University
31 Hamilton, Founders Theatre
June 14 Napier, Frivolity Theatre
21 Gisborne, War Memorial Theatre
28 Auckland, Powerstation
29 South Auckland, Colliseum
July 19 Tauranga, The Bay Court
26 Northland, Forum North
August 2 Nelson,
School Of Music
(Grand Final)
September 13 Wellington, Town Hall

THEO RAY

May 10 Auckland, Squid
17 Wellington, Bar Bodega
18 Palmerston North, Wild Horse Saloon

SHIHAD, BACONFOOT

May 16 Palmerston North,
Albert Motor Lodge
17 Wellington, James Cabaret (All Ages)
18 Christchurch, Warners
24 Auckland, Powerstation
(with **Loves Ugly Children**, All Ages)
25 Hamilton, Wailing Bongo

PET ROCKS

May 16 Hamilton, Wailing Bongo
(with **Loves Ugly Children**)
17 New Plymouth
18 Wellington, Bar Bodega

THE CRANBERRIES

May 20 Christchurch, Town Hall
23 Wellington,
Queens Wharf Events Centre
25 Auckland, Mt Smart Supertop

HEATHER NOVA

May 21 Auckland, Kurtz Lounge

SMASHING PUMPKINS

May 23 Auckland, Mt Smart Supertop
24 Wellington,
Queens Wharf Events Centre
26/27 Christchurch, Town Hall

JETHRO TULL

May 24 Auckland, Logan Campbell Centre
25 New Plymouth, TSB Stadium
27 Palmerston North, Showgrounds
28 Wellington, Town Hall
30 Christchurch, Town Hall
31 Dunedin, Town Hall

ELVIS TO THE MAX

June 12/13 Christchurch, Town Hall
14 Dunedin, Regent Theatre
15 Invercargill, Civic Theatre
18/19 Auckland, Aotea Centre
20 Wellington, Town Hall
21 Palmerston North, Sports Stadium
22 Wanganui, Opera House
23 Hamilton, Founders Theatre
24 Rotorua, Convention Centre
25 Taupo, Westpoint Complex
27 Tauranga, Baycourt Theatre

BUGLITE

August 1 Auckland, Kurtz Lounge
2 Hamilton, St Peters Hall
3 New Plymouth, Jacks
4 Palmerston North, Wild Horse Saloon
5 Wellington, Hole In The Wall
21 Auckland, Powerstation (All Ages)

BACHMAN TURNER OVERDRIVE

October 26 New Plymouth, TSB Stadium

RUMOURS 1996

Presidents Of The United States Of
America
SuperChunk / Guided By Voices
Dub Syndicate



THE STUNNING NEW SINGLE
'GOLDFINGER'
INSTORE MAY 13



Letters

NIGHTCLUB CLUBBING

Throw me into a cauldron of molten Green Day records if I am wrong, but is it not 1996? Not if you enter the grunge waxworks museum called Bob, it ain't. A non-skateboarding, Nine Inch Nails hating accomplice and I entered the virtually all white, industrial entrails of this alleged indie sack of potatoes dive, and nearly died laughing. Some flaccid DJ was playing 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', and a herd of lumberjacks and Alanis Morissette look-alikes were re-enacting the Nirvana video of many centuries ago.

As I was not flagellating myself in mimicry of what I'd seen on a Max revival show for those who had missed the grunge bus, a long-haired leper straight out of the Last Temptation of Christ shouts to me: "Get into it, man!" He must have thought I was recreating the shoegazing movement. It is loonies like this base football player who has a few "mega" CDs by anteater droppings groups like Rage Against the Machine, the Presidents of the USA and Rancid that make me want to join a Pulp monastery. I hope he and his tribe of pierced tummy button fakes would go and join the Hare Krishnas (apparently their dancing styles are quite similar).

The only moderately reputable place to go is Pod, when they show bands like Unsane. But the rest, you gotta show you're a Caucasian with a pierced brain, Offspring kneepads, and a Farmers account to show you haven't stolen your flannel shirts, before you get past the ugly bouncers. I just wish you could go out to a place that could surprise you with the music they play, a little Knownothings, Cable, Bluetones, Sonic Youth, Teenage Fanclub, etc. wouldn't go a miss. And a complete ban on Ministry refuse would make the world a peaceful and glorious place.

Venus De Mellow Yellow,
Auckland.

TAKING LIBERTIES

Shredding through the latest *RIU*, I noticed the caption: 'Member of the Liberty press group.' I wonder, is the only Liberty you take to promote Wildside bands in your so-called New Zealand music magazine? If it isn't another Wildside band, it's a band from one of your other dinosaur mates' labels, such as Flying Numb or Chronic. There is a lot of other great bands in New Zealand who deserve credit and attention for what they're doing, and who do it independently, without hand-outs from major labels, or free press from magazines with a vested interest in their future. How about you step out of the cave and promote New Zealand music as a whole? Isn't that what *RIU*'s about? And isn't having the owner of Wildside as *RIU*'s editor a conflict of interest. Eh, Ed?

And what's with all the Rumblefish clones, ie. Pumpkinhead and Future Stupid? Get off the weed, cut off the dreads, get with the 90s, and get real!

Crux Kwon Do, Auckland.

PS: It was great to see Nonoxonyl 9 and the Managers in the last issue.

Editor replies: The magazine covers bands with releases on nationally distributed labels, such as Warners, Wildside, Zero, Flying Nun, Chronic, Pagan etc. What logic would there be in writing a magazine about bands not on labels (who would buy it?), or a magazine about tennis players not on tennis courts? The label ownership question is a yawn, as without exception, every person employed in music media or the music industry has 'vested interests' of some sort. The fact my 'vested interests' are well known, hopefully keeps them in check.

MONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING

I am so sick of watching chart shows and finding out rap, hip-hop and R&B are totally wearing over any good music. Record labels like Kill Rock Stars are putting out music with so much feeling and meaning, it makes me wanna die thinking people would rather watch some exposed women dancing to a song which says no less than: 'I wanna have sex with you.'

I am nearly sure teenage suicide is encouraged by this music in the sense that if they are not beautiful like this music, says they have to be, they are nothing. Believe me, I know, because I have been put in the situation of not being a 'babe', but feminist vocalists like Kathleen Hanna have driven me far past this 'love is everything' mode because, as horrible as it sounds, money is everything in modern society.

For all girls who are pinned on that guy who likes a total dumb waif just because she's pretty or has big tits — get some self-esteem and find a guy who's more interested in a chick with a good attitude. Remember, don't overlook music you can relate to just because it's not fashionable at the moment.

Nikki, Papatoetoe.

HIPPY SHITICK

Hey, everybody do your own thing, okay?

Make your own decisions, listen to the music you wanna listen to, even if we think it's crap. Ya gotta listen to your own mind and do what's right for you. Let nobody else touch you.

Be free my flower friends, all you need is love, the door is open.

Anonymous, Wellington.

GERI' BASHING

I was just watching the Saturday morning *Video Hits*, which is supposed to be a show for newly released videos. So, what do I get? 'Help', by the fucken Beatles, re-released because of *Anthology 2*. I mean, it wasn't even a new video! Then, straight after it, Diana Ross singing 'I Will Survive' (not with hair and clothes like that, honey), and prancing around with Ru Paul and other drag queens. Diana fit right in. But the point is, it's an old song, and an even older singer. Also on the show, Oasis (who sound old anyway), with 'Whatever', off fucken *Definitely Maybe*, and Iggy Pop (although at least it was a new song, and I'll also let him off for complimenting Shihad in *RIU*).

Who's programming this show — John Taite? Come on, TVNZ, put new cool videos on, like Pumpkinhead's 'Nark'.

Oh, yeah, that dude from Wellington complaining about the filth on the charts is so right. Also, instead of record labels making money of pop R&B singles to be able to record the more esoteric stuff, why don't they market the stuff like Garageland more, and change the tastes of a nation? If more people bought good music like Garageland, the record companies wouldn't need to release crap Peter Andre. Artists who rely on their ab's to sell records would be out of a job. Trust me, one day, there will be a backlash!

Biliter, Kerikeri.

PS: Scary fact! On page 20 of April *RIU*, Damien Binder looks exactly like Luke Perry. Quick, dude, change your image!

PPS: Just saw Shihad scoop the pool on the *New Zealand Music and Entertainment Awards*. Yes! Yes! Yes! They fucken rock!

LOVE LETTER

Errr... I love very much New Zealand.

I love very much your kiwi music.

I love very much your *RipItUp* magazine. Mondo supremo!

I love very much your kiwi women. Judy Bailey is a fine foxy lady.

I love very much your kiwi cheese. Thank you!

Giuseppe Gorgonzola — illegal immigrant and Winston Peters' Number 1 fan; talking to you from this piss ant hellhole — Howick.

PS: I am hearing all the time about... er... Kurt Cocaine? Wasn't he lead singer with KC and the Sunshine Band?

ANGRY YOUNG MAN

In reply to Dave Campbell of Paraparaumu, who wrote a letter in issue 220, December 1995, I have two simple words: Fuck you! As far as music goes, Kurt can take all the credit for the state it is in now. What are you, blind, or just stupid? Before Nirvana exploded onto the scene there was nothing but *shit* playing on the air, so you can take your opinions and shove them where the sun don't shine.

I spent the whole weekend moping around listening to Nirvana because it has been two years since Kurt pulled the trigger, and your letter really pissed me off! Kurt will live forever, man!

One Pissed Off Dude,
South Auckland.

BEWITCHING BJÖRK

Stop the press! I have a message in a bottle for Björk Gundmundsdóttir — how gently she has gone into that good night. The message reads:

You tickle my tits with your magic tricks,

Sweet sounds and spider web dew,
Candyfloss clouds over desolate shores,

Affectionate thoughts lay beside you.

Samantha Stevens, Torbay.

SNARE SNARED

I am writing to you in the hope you and your readers may be able to help me. At the 1996 *Mountain Rock* festival, one of the bands I'm in, Bogans, was lucky enough to be selected to play on the Thursday afternoon at approximately 3PM. The gig went well and we had a hell of a good time.

Anyway, in the time of packing down and loading up of our equipment, my recently completed snare drum was not to make it back into the van. This was not realised until the unloading of the equipment when we got back home. The thing is, I spent nearly two years rebuilding the drum, which included sanding it back to bare timber by hand, and trying to find all the appropriate parts was a nightmare.

I am running out of ideas, and somebody knows where it is. I have had a curse laid on the drum, so if you start feeling really bad while doing a gig somewhere, you now know why!

Description: 14-inch Carlton snare drum, six-and-a-half inch depth, with eight-lug configuration. Colour: light Canadian walnut stained timber. Inside of shell painted black. Other: blue webbing holding snare gate on one side, roller action type loading system. Top head is Remo double dot (white), standard Remo bottom.

I am offering a reward for the thing with no questions asked, and I know the drum means more to me than you. I'll grab it off stage if I see it!

Chris Harding, c/- STDC,
Private Bag, Hawera;
(06)278-8010.

ALTERNATIVE ABUSE

I live in South Auckland, and I am alternative and extremely proud of the music I listen to and the way I dress. Being a resident of South Auckland, I live amongst many people that are into 'black' music, and I accept I am in the minority. I am not against them listening to their choice of music, but I am against them not being able to accept me and my friends for who we are, and that we are into different music. My friends and I can't even walk the streets without groups of homeys yelling out threats such as: "Hey, freaks, put on some proper clothes or you'll get your heads smacked in."

It is not just in South Auckland we get this crap either. We go into Central Auckland quite a lot, hoping to escape from constantly getting abused. Sadly, most the time we get it there too. I am so sick of it!

I have also been told in the past to listen to 'proper' music. There is no such thing as 'proper' music. Your music taste is determined by who you are and what you enjoy. Not one person has *exactly* the same music tastes, and I think people need to accept that.

What has happened to our teenage society? Can't 'black' people just accept that people *can* be different and not deserve verbal or physical abuse? In Auckland there is such a stereotype on what kind of person you should be. I think that is totally wrong. Be your own person and don't follow the crowd. And to all you 'hip-hoppers', just accept that there *are* alternative people out there, and live with the fact they are *never* going to change.

Melissa, Papatoetoe.

PS: I am not against the colour of these people's skins, but the way they act towards 'different' people. Not all blacks are like this either, just the ones with the attitude I am writing about.

Write to *Letters*, PO Box 5689,
Auckland 1, or fax us on (09) 358 2320

ripitup

ISSUE NO.225 MAY 1996

In Tune International Ltd, Member of the Liberty Press Group, Level 14, Brookfields House, 19 Victoria Street West, Auckland 1, New Zealand.
Postal Address: PO Box 5689, Auckland 1, New Zealand.
Phone (09) 358 3884, 358 1744, 358 3209

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ISSN 0114-0876

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DIRECTED BY STEVE PERRY STYLING BY JIM THOMAS & JOHN THOMAS EDITOR JOEL SILVER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STUART BAIRD

OPENS NATIONWIDE ON MAY 3
AT A THEATRE NEAR YOU

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Inter...

SMASHING PUMPKINS LIVE MAY 11

The May 11 Dublin show of the **Smashing Pumpkins** world tour will be broadcast on the World Wide Web. The event will include a contest where a fan will be flown from anywhere in the world to an upcoming concert by the band and a live chat on the web. The concert and competition can be accessed via:
<http://www.imusic.com>
<http://www.vmg.co.uk>

AUCKLAND CYBER CAFE

New cafe at 48 High Street is the **Virtual Community Cyber Cafe** with Internet, Games (*Marathon II, Doom II, Descent, Rebel Assault II, Full Throttle* etc) and Word Processing / scanning facilities. Dial-up services from home are offered and opening hours are up to 10pm Mon to Thurs, to midnight Fri & Sat and to 8pm Sunday. Enquiries: (09) 379-2779 or:
<http://www.comm-unity.co.nz>

LOLLAPALOOZA

Ticketmaster USA will be selling some tickets for the USA alternative event Lollapalooza via Ticketmaster online:
<http://www.ticketmaster.com>
 Lollapalooza is back on the net at:
<http://www.lollapalooza.com>

PEPSI ENTERTAINMENT SITE

The USA softdrink giant has a cutting-edge, graphic intensive site with a music region entitled *Backstreet*, with a radio station *WPepsi* with music samples (Les Baxter, Chuck D), video samples (Chuck D) and artist audio interviews. The site uses Netscape 2.0 applications including RealAudio, ShockWave and video-streaming software VDOLive.
<http://www.pepsi.com>

COMPUSERVE'S WOW!

New USA online service is Compuserve's *Wow!*, a highly colourful, graphic, simple to

utilise interface aimed at new users of the Internet. *Wow!* is only available on Windows '95 and utilises Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser.

SOUNDGARDEN SITES

With the release of their new album *Down on the Upside*, Soundgarden have tour info, samples of songs and videos on the web:
<http://imusic.com>
<http://rocktropolis.com/soundgarden>
<http://amrecors.com>

X-FILES ON WORLD WIDE WEB

As *X-Files* mania extends to the music world with the release of the *Songs in the Key of X* compilation, there are two sites dealing with the *X-Files*:
<http://www.wbr.com/xfiles>
<http://www.TheX-Files.com/>

MAVERICK ON THE NET

Madonna's record label **Maverick** is on-line with a site designed by **Regina Joseph** who worked on the enhanced CD *Spew+* and the CD-Rom magazine *Blender*.
<http://www.maverickent.com>

WEEN & TRICKY REMIX YOKO ONO

Ween, Tricky, Cibo Matto and **Thurston Moore** have done remixes for **Yoko Ono's** *Rising Mixes*, the enhanced CD release of her recent EMI album.

AUSTRALIAN CYBERZINE

Sydney's *the i* magazine claims to be "Australia's first major music and film cybezine". The contact is **Jayne Margetts** at (02) 358-4008 or email:
imail@thei.aust.com

COCTEAU TWINS LIVE ON INTERNET

For details of a **Cocteau Twins** live internet concert see the band's site at:
<http://www.cocteau Twins/treasure>

Fax *Inter* news to **RiptUp** (09) 358-2320.

FUTURE RECORDINGS

Grant Lee Buffalo, Copperopolis (Slash / Polygram)
Crowded House, Reccuring Dream (EMI) — best of with new songs.
Eggman, First Fruits — Sice, the Boo Radleys singer.
Everything But the Girl, Walking Wounded (Virgin).
Metallica, 6 (Mercury) — June.
Nearly God (Tricky), Nearly God (Island) .
Beck, O-de-lay (Geffen).
George Michael, Older (Virgin).
Tina Turner, In Your Wildest Dreams (Festival).
Bob Mould, Bob Mould (Rykko).
Joe Henry, Trampoline (Mammoth / Festival).
Ash, 1977 (Infectious / Festival).
Linda Perry, In Flight (Interscope / MCA) — ex 4 Non Blondes singer.
Butthole Surfers, Electriclarryland (EMI).
Tom Verlaine, Millars Tale (Virgin).
Sleeper, Sale of the Century (Indolent / BMG).
Stereolab, Emperor Tomato Ketchup (Elektra).
Nancy Boy, Nancy Boy (Sire) — Donovan Leitch (son of Donovan) and Jason Nesmith (son of the Monkees).
Frente, Shape (White / Festival).
Screamin' Cheetah Wheelies, Magnolia (Atlantic).
Pete Townsend, Coolwalkingsmoothalking-straightsmokingfirestoking (Atlantic) — best of solo material including two unreleased tracks.
Hootie & the Blowfish, Fairweather Johnson (Atlantic).
Midge Ure, Breathe (BMG).
Raincoats, Looking in the Shadow (Geffen).
Conscious Daughters, Gamers (Priority / Virgin).
Paul Westerberg, Eventually (Reprise).
The Church, Magician Among the Spirits (Festival).
Porno For Pyros, Good Gods — **Urge** (Warners).
Magnapop, Rubbing Doesn't Help (Cortex / Flying In).
Meat Beat Manifesto, Subliminal Sandwich (Cortex / Flying In).
Strung Out, Suburban Teenage Wasteland Blues (Fat Wreck Chords / Flying In).
Propagandhi, Less Talk More Rock (Fat Wreck Chords / Flying In).
Good Riddance, A Comprehensive Guide to Modern Rock (Fat Wreck Chords / Flying In).
Hoodoo Gurus, Blue Cave (Mushroom).
I Mother Earth, Scenery & Fish (EMI).
Poison, Crack A Smile (EMI).

AOTEAROA

OMC, Time Is Money (Huh! / Polygram) — July.
Annie Crummer, Seventh Wave (Warners) — July.
Garageland, Last Exit to Garageland (Flying Nun) — June.
Second Child, Silinky (Wildside) — June.
Superette, Tiger (Flying Nun).
3Ds, Strange News from the Angels (Flying Nun) .
Solid Gold Hell, The Blood & the Pity (Flying Nun).
Alec Bathgate, Gold Lane (Flying Nun) .
Cul De Sac, China Gate (Flying Nun) .
The Clean, Unknown Country (Flying Nun).
Lava Lava, Bumt (Huh! / Polygram) — features Ben E. Staples & Mike Neilsen.

HEAVY

Pantera, The Great Southern Trendkill (Warners) — includes the curiously titled 'Suicide Note Pt.1'.
Slayer, Undisputed Attitude (American / BMG) — hardcore covers.
Punkture, Punkture (Onefoot / Flying In).

FUNKY

L.V., I Am L.V. (Tommy Boy / Festival) — the soul singer on Coolio's 'Gangsta's Paradise'.
Digital Underground, Future Rhythm (Critique).
Yella, One Mo Nigga to Go (Street Life / All American) — N.W.A.'s Yella pays tribute to Eazy E a year after his death.
Up, Bustle & Out, One Colour Just Reflects Another (Ninja Tune).
Sir Mix-A-Lot, Return of the Bumpasaurus (American).
Ice T, Return of the Real (Virgin).
MC Wren, The Villain in Black — ex NWA.
Skyhelm, AKA The Rugged Child (Noo Trybe / Virgin).
Terry Ellis, Southern Gal (Warners) — ex En Vogue.
Herb Alpert, Second Wind (Almo / Festival).
Heltah Skeltah, Nocturnal (Priority).
George Clinton, The Awesome Power of a Fully Operational Mothership (550 Music / Sony) — reunites Bootsy, Bernie Worrell and Junie Morrison.

ROOTS

Charlie Watts, Long Ago & Far Away (Pointblank / Virgin)
George Benson, That's Right (GRP / MCA)
The Gales Bros, Left Hand Brand (House of Blues / BMG).
Jimmy Rip, Way Past Blue (House of Blues / BMG).
The Blind Boys of Alabama, I Brought Him With Me (House of Blues / BMG).
Cissy Houston, Face to Face (House of Blues / BMG) — Whitney's mother sings gospel.
Dave Matthews Band, Crash (BMG)
Hank Williams Jr, Houston, We Have A Problem (Curb).
Jimmy Cliff, The Best Of (Island) — June.
Willie Nelson, The Spirit (Island) — June.
Neville Brothers, Mitakuvu Oyasin (A&M).
Richard Thompson, you? me? us? (Capitol).

REISSUES

Various, Wanted! The Outlaws (RCA) — 20 track repackage of original 1976 11-song album.
The Drifters, Rockin' & Driftin' (Rhino) — 3-CD boxed set, 80 songs.
Utopia, Obivion, P.O.V. & Some Trivia (Rhino) — 2-CD set.

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Amble On

The changes in the Cowboy Junkies sound on *Lay it Down*, their sixth album, are subtle rather than radical, but the Toronto quartet clearly views its arrival as an important career step. *Lay it Down* is their debut for Geffen Records, the powerhouse American label at the forefront of so much modern rock. The fact they'd consider a major investment in a band now eligible for the veteran tag (over 10 years together), that remains faithful to its idiosyncratic take on roots music, clearly augurs well for the group's next decade. To Junkies guitarist/chief songwriter Michael Timmins, this interest was reassuring.

"In this day and age, everyone is after the new thing. With Geffen, there was a lot of understanding and respect for what we'd done."

The departure from original label RCA/BMG was both inevitable and smooth.

"We had a nice long run with BMG, but both sides were getting too used to each other. We knew what to expect from them, they knew what to expect from us, and it was getting very stale. We asked to go, and Geffen was our number one choice."

Coincidentally, Jim Powers, the label exec' who signed Cowboy Junkies to RCA, had just moved over to Geffen.

"We talked with him and he said he'd be delighted to work with us again," explains Michael. "We didn't even bother to shop around. This was our choice, they wanted us, so, 'let's do it!'. A bidding war is what happens to young bands — we'd gone through that first time around. This time we knew what we wanted."

The honeymoon period for the new partners still flourishes.

"It's exciting to meet new people who have a new perspective on what we do and who we are," says Michael.

Prior to the label change, the band's commercial fortunes had been flagging. Upon the release

of 1993's *Pale Sun*, *Crescent Moon*, singer Margo Timmins confided that no Junkies album had come close to the phenomenal success of their 1988 breakthrough, *The Trinity Sessions* (over a million copies sold worldwide). "Maybe this will sell 200,000, the next 100,000, then we'll disappear!"

Her partly joking pessimism has now been arrested. With *Lay it Down*, the band have produced their most consistently strong album of the decade. Reviews have been largely positive, the first single, 'Common Disaster', has scored solid airplay, and they've just begun an extensive North American tour.

Cowboy Junkies relocated to musical mecca Athens, Georgia, to record *Lay it Down* last summer, with noted producer John Keane (Indigo Girls, REM).

"We knew we wanted to work with someone on a co-production basis," recalls Michael. "We scouted some people we thought might be appropriate. We knew John from his work with songwriters — the sound of the last Vic Chestnut and Grant MacLennan records clinched it for us."

Keane's studio is in his house outside of Athens, and was a congenial environment by all accounts.

"It was very comfortable, no distractions," says

Michael. Despite their proximity to a lively music scene, the band didn't do much night-clubbing.

"We only went out once, to see Vic Chestnut," Margo explains. "I like to focus on the recording, get plenty of sleep, eat well and work."

Such a regimen and recent sessions with a voice coach paid off with a stellar vocal performance on *Lay it Down*.

"Not that you can expect me to sing opera in the future, but I'm just much more comfortable about what I can do with my voice," says Margo. "Before I'd be really anxious about my performance, whether I'd hit certain notes. Now I just find other things to get stressed out about!"

The band enjoyed their Athens sojourn, but Margo jokingly confides: "I couldn't see myself living there. It is too much of a student town — makes me feel old!"

It is, however, precisely this kind of American college town that first embraced the Cowboy Junkies sound, and almost a decade later remains a crucial part of the band's audience. Michael Timmins is very aware of that.

"Even as an independent band, we played quite a bit in college towns like Athens, through Georgia, Virginia and the South. A lot of our influences come indirectly from that area, so it's nice to be accepted there."

The Cowboy Junkies debt to American roots music — country, blues, folk — is overt, but it is their somehow quintessentially Canadian take on the music that has transformed it into something valuable and lasting. The hauntingly melancholy feel of Margo Timmins' voice is the perfect vehicle for brother Michael's restrained, subtly intelligent songwriting.

In turn, Cowboy Junkies have had a definite influence on younger American bands. Mazzy Star is the most obvious and popular example, but the adjective 'Junkies-like' has gained wide currency. With typical modesty, Margo claims: "I can't really comment on other bands people say sound close to us. I can't really hear it."

On the Canadian side, the band can take credit for being one of the first domestic independent acts to make serious waves there and in the US in the mid 80s. They released 1986 debut *Whites Off Earth Now!* on their own label, Latent, back "before it was sensible to do that", as Michael explains with a chuckle.

"Alan [Anton] and I took our lead from the English indie scene of the late 70s, and later worked there as musicians [Hunger Project, Germinal]. That's where our DIY ethic came from. It seemed impossible to Canada then, but the industry is so vital here now. I don't really see any direct connection between us and bands happening now, but I'd be flattered if someone made that connection. I'd like to think our success as an independent band may have encouraged some people at the time to follow on that path."

It's not easy to get the undemonstrative, soft-spoken songwriter to discuss it, but the observation that the Junkies have been consistently undervalued by the Canadian music industry and

media does strike a nerve.

"There's a strange relationship between us and the Canadian music industry, and I'm not quite sure what it is! It may be our own seeming disregard for the industry here, which I don't necessarily agree with. We've just apportioned our time to the market where we sell the most records, the US and Europe. We don't hang out or do a lot of the gladhanding that seems a natural part of the industry. We don't go to the right parties, stroke the right people. We're not like that as people. We're not there for the right photo opportunities! At times it's frustrating, but it's usually a joke."

A few years back there were almost too many photo opportunities for the band's liking. The incredibly photogenic Margo was listed by *People* as one of the world's most beautiful women, and Gap ads and *Interview* fashion spreads followed. She never appeared totally comfortable with that role, and admits now she enjoys living in Toronto, with "that Canadian habit of not bothering 'celebrities'".

Over their career, Cowboy Junkies have got to work with many of their musical heroes. They have toured and recorded with folkie legends John Prine and Townes Van Zandt, and Michael sees that as "the ultimate compliment".

"Last year we were asked by Neil Young to perform 'Helpless' at the Governor General's Awards in Ottawa. These are people I grew up glued listening to on the stereo. To not just meet them, but have them say something decent about what you're doing is the ultimate."

And, of course, Lou Reed is on record calling the Junkies cover of 'Sweet Jane' the best version of one of his songs. It got fresh exposure with its inclusion on the soundtrack of Oliver Stone's recent, typically controversial flick, *Natural Born Killers*. Michael Timmins has mixed views on that movie.

"I liked it as a technical piece of film making — it was amazing looking and sounding — but I'm not a Stone fan. His attempt to make some kind of social commentary was ridiculous."

Given the success they've had covering the material of others, it's something of a surprise *Lay it Down* features only group originals.

"Funnily enough, we worked on more covers for this album than ever before, but none quite fit naturally with what we were doing," explains Michael.

Those worked on included Talking Heads' 'Heaven', Leonard Cohen's 'That's No Way to Say Goodbye', Patti Smith's 'Dancing Barefoot', and Todd Rundgren's 'Hello, It's Me'. They'll likely appear as b-sides.

Michael would love his songs to be covered by others in the future.

"That's one of those peaks I hope will happen, no matter who did it. We've had people at shows come up with tapes of them doing our songs, and that's real cool. If they go along and become better known, maybe they'll keep some of those. It takes a while for songs to seep into the pop fabric."

KERRY DOOLE

MR HOLLAND'S Opus COMPETITION



The critically acclaimed new Richard Dreyfuss movie *Mr. Holland's Opus* has a soundtrack that includes Shawn Stockman of Boyz II Men and classic pop and soul tracks such as Spencer Davis Group 'Keep On Running', John Lennon 'Imagine', Ray Charles 'I Got a Woman' and Stevie Wonder's 'Uptight'. *RipItUp* has 10 t-shirts, 10 movie soundtracks and 10 double Hoyts Theatres passes to win. To be in to win just answer the two questions below:

- Name a movie Richard Dreyfuss has appeared in:
- Name two artists who appear on the *Mr. Holland's Opus* soundtrack:

Name

Address

Post your entry to Mr Holland's Competition, RipItUp, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1 by May 25.

taking care of business

FLYING NUN USA

Flying Nun are to open an office in the USA in June. American **Mike Wolf**, previously employed at the Minneapolis indie **Amphetamine Reptile**, will work from a base in the college town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The first priority of the USA office will be to work releases by **Garageland**, **Loves Ugly Children** and the **Able Tasmans**. "It's going to start by him trying to boost the label's profile and do promotion for the stuff that we'll be releasing," says Nun's **Lesley Paris**.

RAP FUND

Phonographic Performances (NZ) Ltd has set up a **Recording Artists and Producers Fund** to distribute broadcasting royalties direct to recording artists who are played on NZ radios and their record labels. To be eligible musicians must register their recordings with the fund. For registration forms please contact RAP

Fund, Phonographic Performances, PO Box 9241, Wellington. Phone (04) 384-3523 or Fax (04) 384-5060. Forms are due by May 10.

FELIX

The first releases on the new **Felix** label are two CD EPs in May — **Muckhole** *Where's the Corndogs?* and **Future Stupid**, *Future Stupid*. Felix is run by **Murray Cammick** owner of the Wildside label. Felix will be distributed in New Zealand by **BMG**.

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AUSTRALIA'S ENTERTAINMENT WEALTHY LIST

The *Business Review Weekly* magazine listed the 10 highest earning

Australians in entertainment for 1995 (in millions):

- Mel Gibson** \$16 m
- AC/DC** \$12.5 m
- George Miller** \$11 m
- Silverchair** \$6.4 m
- John Laws** \$6.2 m
- Michael Gudinski** \$3.5 m
- B1 & B2** \$3.3 m
- Alan Jones** \$2.5 m
- Tina Arena** \$2.4 m
- Paul Hogan** \$1.9 m

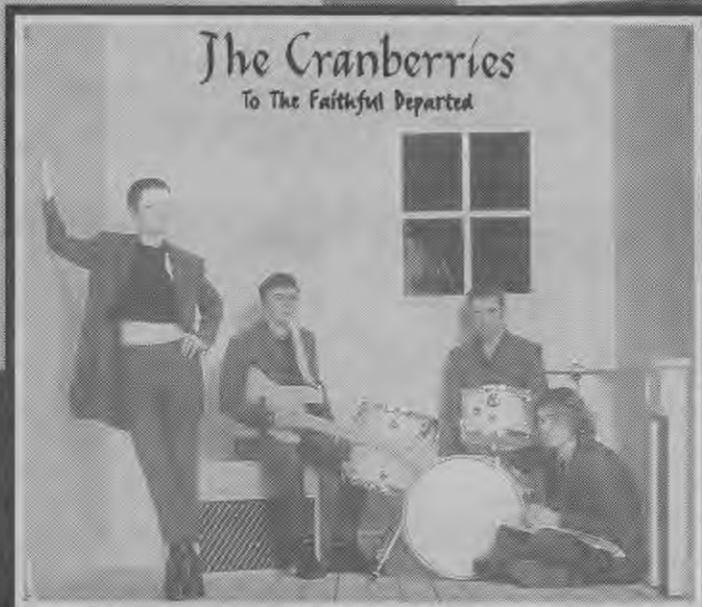
MUSICAL CHAIRS

Manager of Hamilton's **Radio Contact**, **Adam Hyde** has been appointed station manager for **95bFM** at Auckland University ... **Megan Chittick** will leave **BMG** Promotions in mid-June to travel overseas ... **Jubt Avery** has left **Flying In** and returned to **bFM** as a sales rep.

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THE BREEZE



Name-Dropping

Four years ago Birmingham four-piece Ocean Colour Scene were just another faceless indie band, with a debut album they couldn't give away. Times have indeed changed.

"The album's just gone in at Number 2 behind Take That," explains a triumphant Simon Fowler on the success of the band's new album, *Moseley Shoals*. "So that was quite a surprise. Christ almighty, if somebody had told me six months ago our album would go in at Number 2, I would have laughed. And if Take That hadn't split up, we'd have gone in at Number 1. Bizarre."

So, what do you owe this unexpected success to? "People's good taste," the singer laughs throatily. "The singles have been played a bit on TV, and they've done well. When we put out 'The Riverboat Song', we put out what we thought was a particularly uncommercial record. All we wanted to do was surprise people, and bang, it went to Number 15. It was the same with 'You've Got it Bad'. The record company was very nervous about putting it out, but we insisted, as it was different to 'The Riverboat Song', and bang, it went up to Number 7. So, our planned strategy to keep a bit underground all went wrong, and here we are at Number 2."

Moseley Shoals is a good album. It's a robust and melodic trip across timeless influences like Hendrix, Free, the Faces, and through styles ranging from the obvious R&B of 'The Riverboat Song', to the folkier strains of 'Lining Your Pockets' and 'Fleeting Mind'. The Auteurs' Luke Haines believes pop consumerism has been taken over by 14-year-old kids, so, has this age group

been responsible for *Moseley Shoals*' success?

"Yeah, we've done some signing sessions, and I'm amazed at how many kids are into it, so maybe they've been talking about us in their schools. When we started touring three months ago, the average age of the audience would be about 18 to 30. Now the front rows are all teenage kids, so the average age has halved since we've gone on TV. That's a bit weird, as I would say our music isn't in tune with 14-year-old girls."

But for most kids the band's R&B leanings would be something new.

"Maybe, I find it interesting that many people pick up on this R&B thing so much, because I think there's as much folk music on the album, and songs like 'The Circle' and 'The Day We Caught the Train' haven't much of either R&B or folk. The album has a variety of styles."

The same couldn't be said of OCS's bloodless, eponymous first album. Legendary Rolling Stones' producer Jimmy Miller had been hired to produce it. What did he see in their typically anonymous indie sound back then he wanted to deal with?

"I don't know because, in the end, he couldn't really deal with it because he was drinking himself to death slowly. We became very close to Jimmy. His wife died of cancer while he was working with us, and he had to get his son out of prison in the States. Loads of things were happening with

Jimmy that were unbelievable.

"When we started working with Jimmy the sound was an awful lot closer to what we do now than what the first album ended up sounding like. It got mangled in the process of going through a nightmare record company situation, and using different producers, and losing the plot."

The band's rediscovery of the plot owes something to Fowler's raw, natural R&B vocals, with 'The Riverboat Song' being a perfect example of the power of a shredded throat.

"You mean it sounds like I smoke too much," coughs Fowler. "As a singer, most vocalists I speak to are very self-conscious about their own vocals. They're always trying to get them turned down in the mix. So, it's been difficult because I never think I'm as good a singer on record as I am live, and I sometimes don't like the sound of my own voice. But sometimes I surprise myself and think: 'Yeah, that sounds good.'"

Ocean Colour Scene would be the first to admit their current popularity has been achieved with a little help from their friends, namely Paul Weller and Oasis. Guitarist Steve Cradock became a key member of Weller's band, and the other three Scenes were eventually roped in.

"Steve has always been a huge Weller and Jam fan. Paul has been influenced by a style of music similar to us, which is why it has been so easy to find an affinity with him. Intrinsic in Steve's play-

ing, there is Paul's influence, but we've influenced him as well. *Stanley Road* sounds more like the music we make than the first Paul Weller album. Half of our band are playing on the album. It's just Paul is far more famous than we are, so people will think we've ripped him off. But playing with him has helped us as a live band. We did a gig the other day at the Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street, and Paul played keyboards for us. We had a good response."

Still name-dropping, and Noel Gallagher of Oasis has been touting OCS as his favourite band.

"We're good friends with Oasis. We knew them before they became big time, playing in a pub supporting a band from Scotland called Whiteout in front of 200 people. We met them, got on with them, and for them it's got amazing. They're a great bunch of people and they're doing well in the States, and that bodes well for bands like ourselves. We've played in the States before, and we've gone down well, and I know Oasis have been name-checking us all over the shop in the States."

"Noel gave us a signed photo the other day, and wrote on it: 'To the second greatest band in England.'"

No prizes for guessing who's the first.

"It must be Take That, 'cause they're Number 1," laughs Fowler. Nice call.

Ocean Colour Scene have arrived at the gates of rock 'n' roll heaven without much help from the press. *NME* gave *Moseley Shoals* a miserly five out of 10, under the cryptic heading *PW Hell*, whatever that means.

"*Paul Weller Hell*," explains Fowler bitterly. "But I think it's a play on words which means *PWL*, which is Peter Waterman Ltd., the bloke who's behind the Stock, Aitken and Waterman stuff at the end of the 80s."

That's a bit obscure.

"Yeah, and what's it got to do with us? And didn't Ted Kessler [the *NME* reviewer] used to be in the Gestapo? It's a very SS name. It's his opinion, but I value my opinion far higher than his. Apart from which, what does it matter what he says when we've gone in at Number 2? So, fuck him: And when he finds out where we've gone in, then he can explain why Britain's most important music mag has failed to back a band like ourselves, who can only be good for British music."

"They're just into polemics, and these mags just wanna stir up trouble. And when you meet these people, they know jack shit about music. And they're wankers, and we're never going to talk to that paper again. I'll tell you what's interesting about that review, it's the front cover."

The picture of the Stone Roses and news of the split?

"Yeah, and what's the other bands they mention? They mention us, don't they? They do that to sell the magazine, then they stab us in the back. So, fuck them, we're never doing another interview with them or *Melody Maker* again. What you learn is, the music press in Britain is the lowest form of human existence. And most people think that, it's universally despised."

Fowler is an ex-journalist. Fact.

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THE BILGE FESTIVAL



SHRIMP 'N' SURFARI

Lessons are learned every day. 'Guide to Life, Part One' for this morning is that the Bilge Festival are a surfing band. Not in the way Dick Dale imagined, but in a real way — boards, water, wetsuits, that sort of thing.

So, the interviewer meets Bilge Festival guitarist/vocalist/writer at his Brooklyn flat. He stands there looking like the geek from the press office as Mark waxes — both literal and lyrical. The chat is not immediately about the band, but about the virtues of South Island surf and the new Jesus Lizard album. Soon afterwards Peter (again guitarist/vocalist/writer) and Tim (drums) arrive. Surf is still the subject, a surfari is arranged for the next day.

Tea and jaffa cake is produced. We take our places around the table, tape recorder on. Time to start?

The reason for the conversation is *The Shrimp Boats* — the new Bilge Festival album. We've had a taster with last year's *Pave it Over* EP — a release that broke the Bilge drought since *Cape Goat* in 1994.

If *Pave it Over* was a taste of Bilge in their grinding glory (the working title for *The Shrimp Boats* was *Gravel Slide* — a highly apt two-word self description, even if it wasn't used), then the album is a feast of jagged melody over a rhythm that is either rock solid and driving to the point of hypnotic, or else chops and changes, keeping the listener guessing throughout the duration. It may not be surf music, but if 'Misirlou' and 'I Get Around' are the soundtrack to the rolling Malibu waves, then *The Shrimp Boats* is more representative of the crashing confusion of Lyall Bay.

Originally recorded in the middle of last year, *The Shrimp Boats* has taken time going through mixes and artwork decisions, but is now ready for its baptism into the public realm. The band members themselves are getting reacquainted with the album by way of a demo tape and a slightly dodgy tape deck.

"When you go and record an album the expectation is that the whole thing will be one continuous process — from writing the songs, then going to the studio, then the mixing etc. — but it hardly ever works out that way. It's good though, it's good to be able to sit back and see what you've done without being caught up in the whole thing, as you are just after recording," says Mark.

The bands reacquaintance with the album has unearthed a few name changes, but apart from that, the general consensus is that all are happy with the newborn.

The album opens with 'A Framer' — fast and sharp, the lyrics are hissed out in bursts, punctuated with a demonically mocking voice spitting out 'ha, ha, ha's! The song works so well it must be either a total mesh of band minds in a single blur of collective inspiration, or a collective operation, executed and planned with pinpoint precision.

"Some of the songs are written following the vocal delivery, such as 'A Framer'. For that particular song it was basically a coming together of what felt right at the time," says Tim. "A few of the songs were pieced together in the practice room. Others, Peter or Mark brought in, and we played them as they were."

The Shrimp Boats is filled with song beginnings that could be the introduction to three minutes of straight ahead rock 'n' roll, or else become something more twisted, with the divisions between verse and chorus, bridge and conclusion, being less defined, less able to be grasped.

Tim says: "If we're playing something and it's going well, we try to go with it, not stand back and watch too closely. If we do that something can get lost. But we know each other well enough, and have played with each other long enough to know when to trust what we're doing and basically go on instinct."

The lyrical delivery on the album ranges from being out in front, over everything, making the words recognisable, understandable, comfortable to the listener, to being thrown into the background, to growl and wail, causing disquiet, as the message seems buried. The listener strains to understand what's going on, attempting to find something understandable, something to hum along to. We all fear what we do not know.

But words, even the most obscured, are of importance to Bilge Festival. The waiting public will be offered a full lyric sheet to compliment *The Shrimp Boats*. More than the partial quotes given with *Cape Goat*, the full poetic vision of this album will both enlighten and surprise.

"Deciding to put vocals out front or leave them back depends on the song rather than what the lyrics say. With some songs they have to be back because of the overall texture we want the song to have. But I agree that it is hard to pick up some of what is being said in some tracks. There is a lot of humour in the lyrics, and there's some twisted stuff as well," says Mark.

One of the lyrical surprises of *The Shrimp Boats* is Peter's frantic lines of ranting German at the end of 'Bedspread'. The effect is one of

evil lunacy, but like many of their successful effects, it was just a studio whim which worked.

Peter explains: "It was one of those situations where the song needed a touch of something different. The German was used as a guide vocal track in the studio, and we decided to use it for the final mix. In the end it's impossible to decipher what the words are, or even if they are in German — but it sounds good."

He adds: "That was just one version of that song, one particular studio take we decided to use. It could have turned out any number of different ways."

For the record, the statement in question translates to: 'My long legs / My fat legs / All mine / My fat legs / Your fat cow / My nurse.' And yes, for the scholars and gentlemen who think of these things, the German is all correct.

"I wouldn't do it if the German wasn't correct," says Peter. Language twisting and other tricks of the Bilge Festival trade are well and good in the studio, to be conjured into the finished product for the public shelf, but what is the studio to the band — an extension of their live shows, or another world to explore?

"They are pretty much separate entities. Some songs can be totally different on stage to how they are recorded. There has to be a live feel to the album, but there should also be more than that. There have to be changes, more than if someone was just recording a live show," says Mark.

"It can be dangerous. Sometimes our favourite songs can turn out flat or sound laboured, the total opposite of the feeling we get from playing it," says Tim.

A song called 'The Foaming' is brought into the discussion. It has all those elements that make a great live track, and has been blended

into a hypnotic and compelling album track — grinding and pulsing, flowing into a wash.

The Bilge Festival are returning to concentrate on music after a lay-off of three months. They are not a band to be found gigging every weekend. This is partly due to the overkill factor — it's easy to take an over exposed band for granted — and because of their hands-on approach to the entire entity.

Mark explains: "We don't have a manager or anything like that. We make our own videos and organise our own tours, so with all that it's important not to get stressed about the whole thing."

"It also seems the more relaxed an attitude you have towards everything, the easier it comes, the more music there is," says Peter.

To the band, *The Shrimp Boats* represents a time and a place. As with their previous recordings, the whole situation — life, the band, the music — is all in a general state of flux.

"The band is, and sounds, how it does on any particular day. It can mean a whole lot of different things to us at different times," says Mark.

"Listening to the early stuff now, I feel quite removed from it. There are still things I like on those recordings, but there were a different set of influences on us then. It could just as easily be the food we were eating at the time, or where we were living," says Tim.

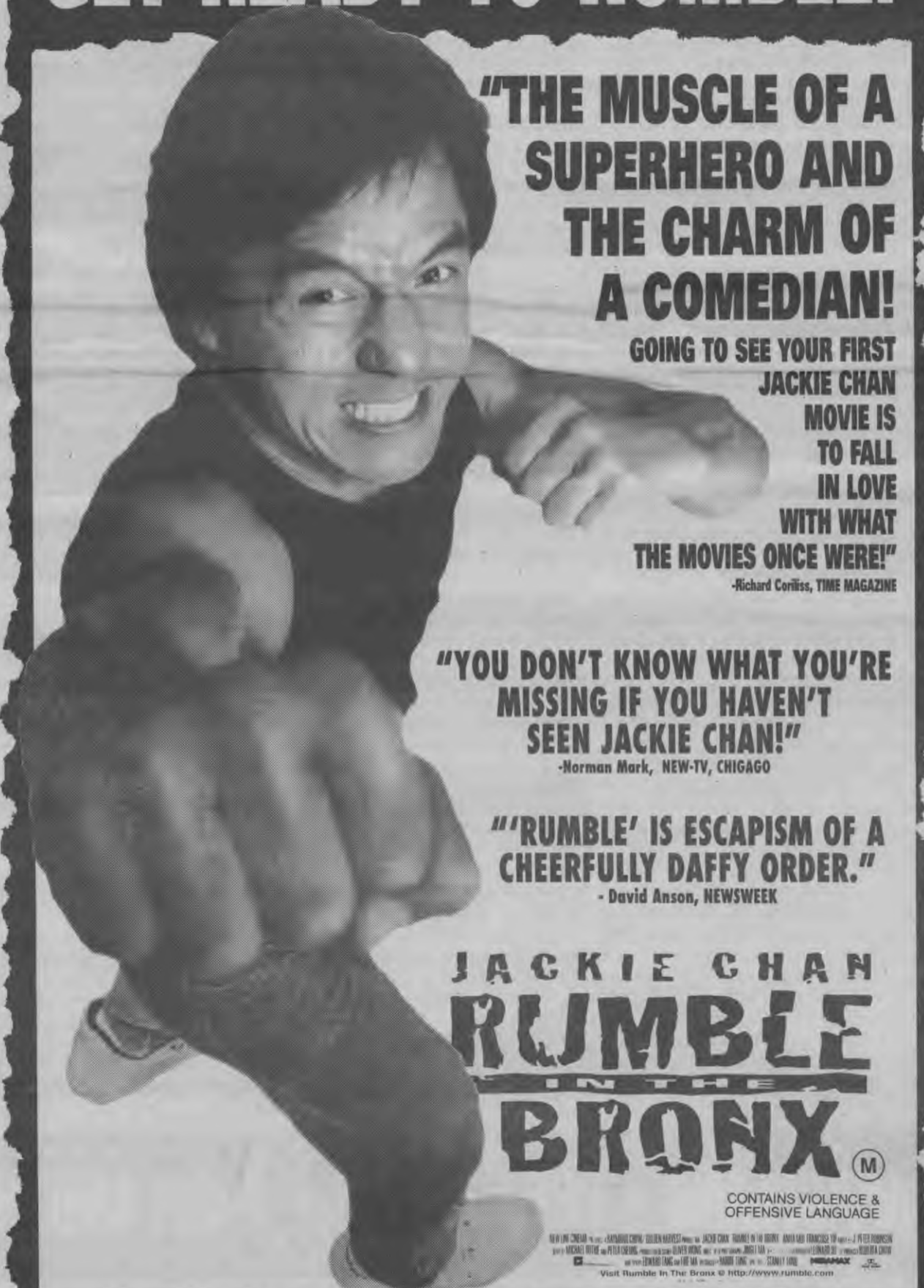
Whether it be making videos, organising tours (watch out for the band come the end of the month), eating, making records or surfing, the members of the Bilge Festival are keeping their options open.

Lastly, *The Shrimp Boats*? Is that not too haiku-esque or Zen-like for an album that has almost everything except serenity?

Mark explains: "It's the songs... yes, a flotilla of songs..."

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NUNFEST ON THE ROAD, BY BOB SCOTT

It's Friday, so it must be Dunedin. Everyone gathers at the university and does the soundcheck thing. King Loser are on first. All goes well until suddenly the lights and power go down, the stage is bathed in darkness. O'Reilly lurches around, cigarette in mouth, Heazelwood is busy with the cymbal, then 'whoosh', a burst of flame lights up the union — good old lighter fluid. The power and lights come back, and the set is finished with the soon-to-be-familiar shadow kung fu dance by Celia.

The crowd of over 850 are getting excited by now, and local favourites the 3Ds don't disappoint by showcasing the yet-to-be-released album. The curly-headed guitarist almost manages to push his amp over right into Mr Phillipps' stack. Whew, rock 'n' roll.

The Clean stroll on next (how can I review myself?) — a patchy mixed set of nearly all old songs, including 'Tally Ho' for the last time (we promise).

A big cheer goes up for Mr P and the Chills. I only saw two songs, and they were both tight and slick. The crowd sure went off.

Upstairs in the band room the Roger's Ruin (Mac's Gold with a David Mitchell label) was going down a treat. Somehow they kicked us all out eventually.

It's Saturday, so it must be the Empire, the much belated reappearance of the afternoon gig. The Puddle are first, with Ms Nun herself, L Paris, on the skins. The hot combo race through a set of gems, including some old unrecorded classics.

Jay Clarkson was on next, and by all accounts delivered a fine set. I was outside on the footpath having a whitebait fritter. It was part of a coal raffle. Two friends of ours from the West Coast came over and raffled off two bags of coal, and the whitebait fritter was part of the ticket. Even better, they cooked them on the barbecue right before your eyes.

Upstairs it was Magick Heads time. Another fine set, but I didn't see it. Sounded good, according to friends, but they always say that. The Renderers finished off the afternoon in great style. Brian didn't even break many strings.

After a brief recovery time everyone assembled at The Provincial — a very difficult place to see a band. Snapper were awesome, with new cook on the block, Roddy on guitar. I had to escape the pub's confines, so only saw the first Verlaines song — sounded fine too. Made it back for the

last of Dimmer, Heazelwood on bass, Robbie Yeats (for the second time that day) and new boy Cameron combining well with Mr C. It helps being at the side of the stage — a storming end to the night. Ah, not quite, there's another gig to go to at the Empire, Crude are in full swig — swing, I mean — as we arrive.

Alas, I hit the wall and roll home. I missed a wonderful Dead C set, and HDU as well. So, that is a world record for Mr Yeats — three gigs with three different bands in one day.

Sunday, a day off? No way. It's the *Radio One Nunfest Record Fair* at the Settlers Museum, many wondrous bargains to be had. Gee, I didn't know the 'Getting Older' seven-inch was worth \$30.

Sunday evening: it's back to the Empire for a party. Entertainment is provided by Graeme Humphreys in his Robert De Niro haircut (with tomato sauce). He plays Flying Nun songs on an Ace Tone organ for an incredible six hours non-stop, fuelled only by sheep dip and cigarettes. He then promptly falls asleep under the organ.

Wow, a whole two days off. The drive to Christchurch is enlivened by frequent stops at op shops. There are too many highlights to include, but the French journalists were most impressed with the *Macrocarpa* hedge cut in the shape of a chicken at Wainakarua.

Wednesday, The Edge, Christchurch — the Terminals are first and play a rollicking set of seldom heard gems. The Tall Dwarfs liven the crowd up a bit with a fine set ending, with a huge version of 'Dog' helped out by the Bats. Alec Bathgate stays onstage for 'Crow Song'. The Bats answer the crowd's calls for an old classic and roll through 'Clawdive'. Loves Ugly Children end the evening in a loud, uncompromising fashion — energy plus.

Thursday morning: everyone makes it to the airport, an unlikely looking mob indeed. We reassemble in the baggage claim,

Wellington Airport.

"Would Mr Heazelwood please report to the information counter." Guffaws echo round the airport. We never did find out what he was wanted for.

Thursday night, James Caberet, Wellington — a big crowd in, Chug open up with their elegant loping riffs. King Loser are next, and looking spiffing in suits — a ripper of a set, complete with Cella's kick boxing intimidating the front row.

Reunion time, it's the Sneakys. Matthew's head doesn't roll around as much as it used to, but otherwise it could be 1987. They get a response for 'Husband House' too.

The Clean play a much better set than in Dunedin (if I say so myself), with David doing some wonderful keyboard pirouettes — ie, dancing on one foot whilst tickling the organ. Some head off to the Bodega, but they have a naff jazz band, so we retire to accom' to unwind.

A slap-up breakfast, throw ourselves into the vans, and a nice flight — almost long enough to have a wee nap, but not quite. Auckland is its usual warm self, and we all peel off to our various haunts.

Friday night is packed at the all ages Powerstation gig. First up, Superette get the youngsters moshing, and even a bit of stage diving — a big impressive sound from this three piece. Loves Ugly Children follow and carry on the volume and energy. The kids are lapping it up. The Roger's Ruin is flowing (upstairs anyway). Garageland are huge in these parts — 'Comeback Special' and 'Fingerpops' set the place ablaze. It's a hard act to follow, and King Loser try hard even destroying an amp in the process. It's tricky playing last sometimes.

Saturday afternoon: I didn't go, but by all accounts it was great. Chris Knox was highly entertaining and even played some songs. Breast

Secreting Cake and the Dribbling Darts followed.

Soon it was evening, and all roads lead to the Powerstation. I missed the Tall Dwarfs (sorry Chris). The Able Tasmanians were great from the side of the stage (I was guitar roadie and even got to change a string). De Niro was in fine form. Dimmer played an up and down set, sometimes connecting — "Gee, these festival crowds are hard work." It's time for those Southern caterwaulers again, the 4Ds. The crowd is lacking in energy, and suddenly it's 2AM.

Sunday arvo: it's the *bFM Nunfest Record Fair*, very brisk trade, they tell me.

Sunday evening: the final gig at last. It's Squid, and even Mr Mushroom is there. Bike glide through their set, melody is in the air. Chug play their best set yet and win lot's of new fans. 'Detuned' is almost monumental. Last but not least are Solid Gold Hell. I haven't seen them for at least a year, but they were just as great. The highlight was probably Garry Sullivan playing the trumpet while drumming — stupendous. Matthew's guitar sound was great, as was Glen Campbell's laconic vocal delivery.

Finally it's all over. But wait, there's more — it's golf. Monday afternoon: the rain clears on a suburban golf course. Four teams struggle around nine holes, Roger nearly decapitates the Mushroom Man. Messrs Houston, Hoffman, Broadley and Co. manage some stylish shots, Scott loses four balls and Stuart Pages gets the lowest score (41 over nine holes). Some teams tackle the thirteenth because it has a water hazard, and most try the eighteenth because it's there.

So, that's it in a nutshell: 150 hangovers, no missed flights or luggage, 15 broken strings, and many fine photos and memories. Here's to the twentieth birthday in 2001 (it's going to be in space, they tell me).

Yours in haste, Bob Scott.



Lesley Paris & Mike Woolf, Flying Nun USA office.



Roger Shepherd & Martin Phillipps.

photos by Natasha Griffiths

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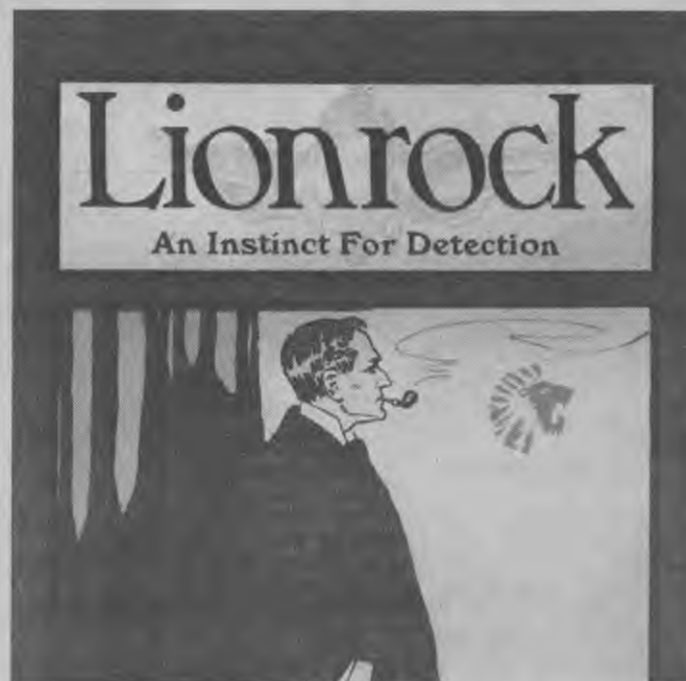
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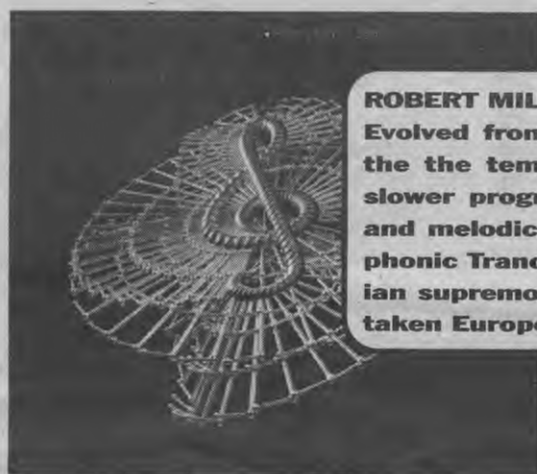
"I guess I just wanted to go home." explains frontman IAN ASTBURY who has recorded the first album with his new band HOLY BARBARIANS in his home town of Liverpool. "People are harping on about the Sixties, about the music, the freedom. We should be revelling in our own time. Let's stop comparing and going back. With the Holy Barbarians we're going forward."

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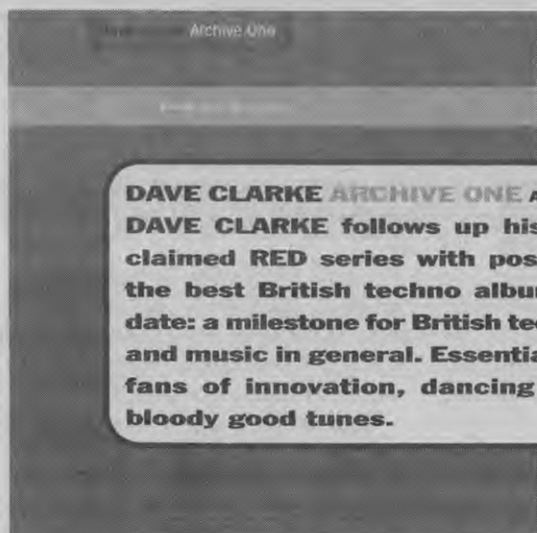
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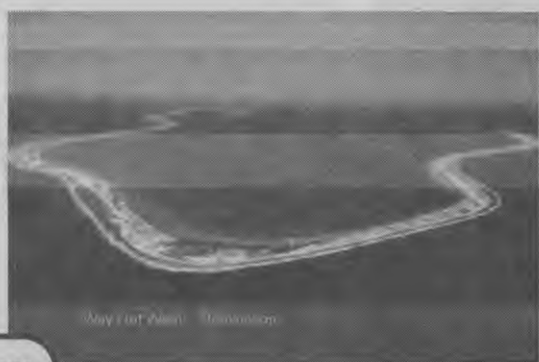
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BEN HARPER



MUSIC FOR THE FOLK

Ben Harper strolls onto the dimly lit stage at Auckland's Powerstation wearing white trainers, navy Adidas track pants, and a black Real Skateboards T-shirt. His wild afro has been shorn to a more manageable length, and he resembles in looks and stature a young Ted Hawkins. Harper takes his seat and straps on a six-string acoustic guitar. He's a hero to most of the gathered 900 before he even sings a note.

Enthusiastic applause fades to an intense silence as Harper and his three-piece band, the Innocent Criminals, groove delicately into 'Oppression', the opening song on his second album *Fight for Your Mind*. Somewhere along the way, 'Oppression' slides into Bob Marley's 'Get Up Stand Up', and later, Marvin Gaye's 'Sexual Healing' gets seductively reggaefied. With a choice

of five guitars, Harper rises and selects his favourite, an antique lap slide Weissenborn, for the poignant 'Don't Take That Attitude to Your Grave', before offering the marijuana ballad 'Burn One Down' to an audience completely hypnotised by this masterful display. After spirited bass and percussion solos, an epic encore of the rootsy 'Gold to Me' and a friendly wave signal the end of

a lightning New Zealand visit that saw Harper in the country for less than 48 hours.

Arriving in Auckland the afternoon of the day before the concert, the Californian-born Harper performed live on Max TV and campus station bFM, and negotiated a series of print interviews in a bar at DeBrett's Hotel, where he and the Innocent Criminals were staying. These media commitments, and the blink-and-you'll-miss-it nature of the stopover, left Harper no time to indulge his other passion.

"Nope, no skateboarding here at all, but that's okay, 'cause it's one thing to skate all day and then go home and watch TV, but it's another thing to skate all day, then go play a gig. Skating takes as much energy as a show, it's like doing two shows in one day."

Growing up in the Pomonas district, just outside of Los Angeles, Harper's love for skating developed in tandem with his interest in music. In addition to there always being an acoustic guitar within reach at home, the voices of Otis Redding, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin and Dolly Parton "shook the walls" at Harper's grandparents' music store where he worked in the evenings while during the day, the sounds of pioneering hip-hop artists Kurtis Blow and Run DMC were a favourite of the troublesome neighbourhood gang he was skating with. Bored at school, Harper gradually spent more time on the streets, soon discovering stealing and mugging were vastly more profitable than a part time job polishing guitars. It was a turbulent lifestyle Harper says he was fortunate to escape from.

"I used to do some real stupid shit in my teens, but I eventually got myself out of that scene by exploring more music, it was like a form of guidance. What was coming around at the time I was really fucking up was a lot of conscious hip hop, and also, I was getting back into folk music and getting back into roots music. I wanted to express musically what I was feeling, so I had some choices to make. It was a lot of work trying to write songs, but I just kept playing and playing and playing, and picking up things and learning, and the music just really grabbed a hold."

Midway through 1993, a month or so prior to Harper's twenty-fourth birthday, a friend with industry connections arranged a meeting with two A&R representatives from Virgin Records for him. At that point Harper had no studio experience, and therefore, no demo tapes styled to impress. He travelled to the label's Beverly Hills headquarters carrying his guitar, then... "played a few tunes and got signed"... and Virgin released *Welcome to the Cruel World* in February the following year. Immediately Harper discovered his righteous lyrics and transcending blend of soul, folk, blues, reggae and pop was causing problems for the inflexible executives at the record company.

"When I first started out, no one at Virgin got it. They were like: 'The kids won't understand this, we want to market it to Bonnie Raitt and Bob Dylan's audience.' Fuck that! I'm speaking to my generation and my generation is speaking to me. You see, a lot of people in the decision making process within the music industry are very non-musical. What I'm doing is not music that has been, it's the music of now — a lot of people didn't get that."

Further confusion reigned when Harper toured outside of California to promote the album. Here was a black man from LA who was choosing to sing and play guitar, rather than rap. Harper says some audiences would get rowdy upon realising he wasn't what they'd expected and paid to see.

"I found that a lot and still do, and it sickens me because it's a prejudice. There is so many different musics coming out of LA besides hip-hop. There's a whole community of traditional African drummers and dancers, there's a whole blues/jazz circuit happening, there's many others. But to answer the question, why don't you rap? Simple, I want to sing."

"I don't have anything against rap music, and I don't believe in the negative term 'gangsta rap', these are just people who are exploiting their circumstances to get ahead. If you've been shouted at all your life, you're going to get on record and shout, so I understand the shouting. That said, where a man has been doesn't have to mean where a man is bound. A negative message is gone, it's gone tomorrow; a positive message can be eternal, and a positive voice can be eternal."

Harper cites Marley and Gaye as obvious examples, but notes the lack of any significantly successful, socially conscious artists in the field of urban music since their deaths in the early 80s.

"There definitely has been a gap in, quote-unquote, major commercial music for a positive voice for humanity. Marvin Gaye and Bob Marley were the last large, heard voices of social change, and not only were they the last voices, they were the last two people who actually lived it. I'm not saying shit wasn't being talked about, because the hip-hop nation was documenting what was happening on the street, but it wasn't being commercially exploited on a massive scale, and so, wasn't being heard widespread."

Ultimately, it's that audience of millions that Harper is seeking to switch on. His wish is his music will do nothing less than affect an entire generation on a global level. And with like-minded songwriters such as Michael Franti of Spearhead, and former Arrested Development main man Speech gaining notoriety, the old road is rapidly changing, insists Harper.

"This is a musical revolution that is going on right now. We're going to start it, and we're going to get music to the people. Music with a world understanding and comprehension, that can move people's minds and hearts. And it's not going to be called anything, it's just music for the people of the time, music for the folk."

Harper is right now taking his quest from coast to coast across North America, before he returns home to Los Angeles, to settle and write a third album full of song titles that speak for themselves, and focus on his great expectations of permanent stardom... or not.

"I aspire to great levels, if you don't aspire to greatness it won't be reached. My ambitions are beyond the Beatles for that matter, but I'm also a realist, and I also keep my feet on the ground. My only true mission is that I want to bring something to the earth with my life, and not take from the earth. I don't want to die having taken more than I've brought, so I'm going to sing."

JOHN RUSSELL

MUCKHOLE



Good things may come to those who wait, but life has been undeniably charming for Auckland hardcore outfit Muckhole since they emerged from the practice room to play their first public show early last year.

Originating on the North Shore, Muckhole chose a route familiar to many young bands breaking their first guitar strings and drumsticks. A history of performing covers at parties developed into informal jam sessions where a handful of originals were knocked out, before Sean (vocals), Aaron (bass), Scott (guitar), and new arrival Jason (drums) got serious, and spent six months rehearsing a set of furiously fast pop songs.

Muckhole made their debut at Bob in January 1995, and within a year their reputation as a consistently ballistic live act had secured them support slots for Pumpkinhead and Head Like a Hole, and a release on the Wildside label, who issued the 'Overdrive' cassette just prior to Christmas. Muckhole's excellent fortune continued into the New Year. After a solid *Big Day Out* appearance, they opened for USA trio Green Day at their one New Zealand concert in February, and this month release the four-song CD EP *Where's the Corndogs?* on Wildside off-shoot Felix. The timing of everything has been perfect, says Sean.

"Everything has happened fast, it's been one thing after another, bang, bang, bang, but we couldn't handle it happening any other way."

"We're all quite impatient people in terms of wanting to get things done. I think it's got a lot to do with believing in yourself as well, like everything's pretty new to us, being in a studio and playing gigs, but because of the responses from what we've recorded and the gigs we've done, it's been quite easy to believe we've got some good stuff going."

Indeed. On record Muckhole offer an irresistibly catchy collection of pop soaked hardcore tunes, and live, their intense pace and energy defies you to keep both feet on the ground. Seans says that's the desired response — they write to make people jump.

"I think the biggest emphasis in Muckhole is on melody, aggressive music with melody, something you can really charge to, that gets you up."

Though *Where's the Corndogs?* is just out in the shops, Muckhole are already looking ahead. There's an album's worth of songs nearing completion, and the band are hoping their luck will continue to spiral out of control.

"We'd definitely like to have a go, whatever 'having a go' means. Everything's happened the way we've wanted up till now, so we're just staying with the flow."

JOHN RUSSELL



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T H E J E S U S L I Z A R D



HEY, MAN, NICE SHOT

For those of you who witnessed the *Big Day Out*, I'm sure the Jesus Lizard need no introduction. They have a way of making their presence known in the live situation, throwing down a brutally tight and assaultive sound, and generally pushing audiences hard. It's the payoff for close to a decade of work as a band, honing their music down to a razor sharp edge, and taking their stage personae to extremes, with little regard for personal safety.

Historically, the band evolved in Texas from Scratch Acid (a fine combo with a hint of the Birthday Party to them — I happily recommend their *Greatest Gift* compilation) and Cargo Cult, then relocated to Chicago in the late 80s, where they found a drummer and wound up on Touch & Go Records. The story from there is pretty simple: a lot of touring, punctuated by the release of five full LPs. Each album has sounded better and more focused than the one before, and by the release of *Liar* in 1993, the Jesus Lizard were a band capable of inflicting some serious damage. Two years later, and the band causes some surprise in the insular indie community by making the move to Capitol Records, which brings us up to the present, with the Jesus Lizard poised to release *Shot*, and bassist David Wm. Sims talking to us from Chicago.

Quite naturally, the shift to the corporate entity is the current 'most asked' question, and it's obviously something Sims takes very seriously.

"We went into it with our eyes open. I think we were very careful about the kind of deal we entered into. We took a long hard look at who we were working with. So far it's been the way it's meant to be. We recorded the album, and the people at the label were very good about making themselves scarce. When we were done we gave them the tapes and said: 'Here's the record,' and that was it. "That was kind of why it took so long for us to sign to a major anyway: we knew the problems people have had and were very careful. Basically, you can't trust those people."

Certainly, it's an admirable attitude for the band, but playing the devil's advocate, you can't help but wonder if the band have just plain jumped ship for the cash. Sims was prepared for that line of attack, but has been let down by those who see themselves as the indie moral setters.

"It's remarkable how little sell-out criticism there has been. I don't know whether it's because people have gotten used to it by now (because there's so many bands like us on major labels now), or if it's a case of people waiting to make their decisions until after they heard the record — which is, frankly, how it should be. I think the music on the record can address the issue far better than I can."

It's the old 'proof is in the pudding' cliché, and it's actually pretty valid here. *Shot* is not only a good Jesus Lizard album, it shows how the band are capable of developing their own distinctive sound. They've become, if anything, even more

tightly focused and malevolent sounding, while vocalist David Yow heads further out into the world of aggressive psychedelia.

"What we set out to do was, on one hand, make a record that was way meaner and louder than any record we'd made, and at the same time, avail ourselves of more production techniques. We could spend more time experimenting with sounds, and with stuff we wouldn't have tried in the past because we were working under stricter time constraints."

Personally, I like the whole idea. If a big label is going to throw some money at creating an 'alternative' presence, I'd rather see a band who's taken the time and effort to build their own identity be able to record the album they've wanted to record, instead of the money land in the hands of some punk-by-numbers opportunists record companies seem so adept at signing. (Whatever happened to all those bands like Paw and Quicksand?) The Jesus Lizard's situation seems to be pretty good at the moment. They're not expecting unrealistic results from the record, but it's definitely one of their stronger albums, and they're in a situation where it may find its way into the consciousness of an audience they would never have reached before.

"It's a weird position we find ourselves in, because the band's been going since 1989, and we haven't really changed anything we were doing. There's no way we would have gotten signed to this deal when started the band, and there's been the strange process of watching the mainstream move closer to us, while we kept doing what we like to do. Some of it became something bigger labels would be more interested in, and more mainstream kids might be interested in. I don't think in 1989 any of us would have dreamed that."

And what are the band's dreams for the future?

"Well, I suppose the easy answer would be, in an ideal world, the record would become hugely successful and we'd never have to worry about money, and would just keep making the records we want to make. Realistically, however, the idea is the record will do relatively well, and we'll continue to do what we've done all along, which is make our records and settle for being less than fabulously wealthy. I'm not complaining though. I've had a good life the last few years, and I still really enjoy everything about being in this band. It really is a satisfying life."

KIRK GEE

MACK

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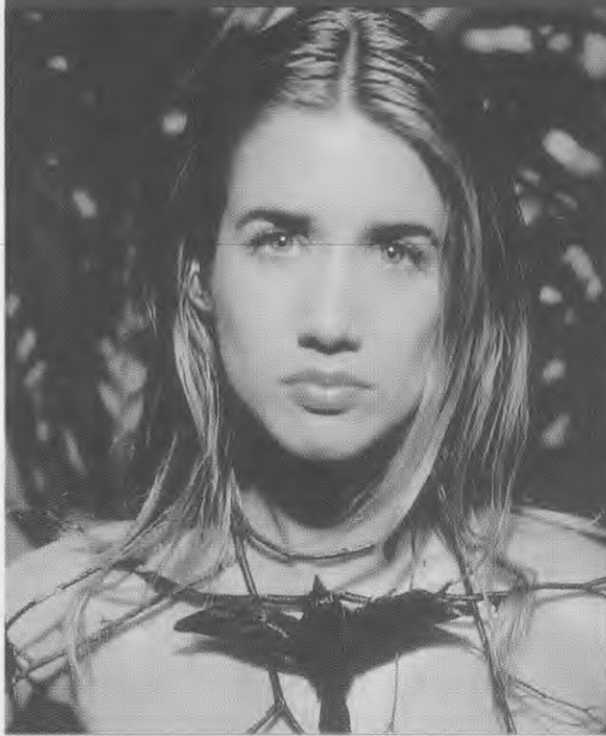
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FESTIVAL RECORDS



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A new audio delight from Wellington's The Bilge Festival with their recent single 'Pave It Over' plus more student radio favourites - the minimalist 'Gut' and from *Raw 1* there's 'She Wrecked My Hand' plus there's the new playlist addition 'Blaise Victim'. And there's more on *The Shrimp Boats* - the soon to become infamous 'A Nude Man' and 'Hair Spray'. IN A STORE NEAR YOU NOW!

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PG CONTAINS COARSE LANGUAGE

OPENS AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE ON 17 MAY 1996

Soundtrack features the Top 10 hit 'Visions of a Sunset' by Shawn Stockman (of Boyz II Men) plus songs from Stevie Wonder, John Lennon, Ray Charles, and others.

Finally, agit-rock fans can relax. After a three-year recording hiatus, Rage Against the Machine finally have a new album, *Evil Empire*, ready for release. The lag between albums can be forgiven to a degree, as the band has been struggling through monumental tours and the resultant tension. Now all is fine, and the newly enthused band are ready for all-comers. In true antagonistic fashion, they are due for an appearance on *Saturday Night Live* along with guest host Steve Forbes. (For those of you not up on current US politics, he's the billionaire son of Malcolm Forbes, who ran a massively expensive — and unsuccessful — campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. His policies seemed based around the one concept of huge tax cuts for the rich, and he was generally viewed as a test case for whether or not American political power could be unashamedly and openly bought.) Rage Against the Machine drummer Brad Wilk finds the whole concept of sharing a stage with Forbes quite amusing. "We thought about playing in suits and ties, then throwing copies of the *Wall Street Journal* at him." Although I doubt they'll push the envelope that far, the glint in Wilk's eye suggests Mr Forbes may have a reason to be less than happy with the show's musical segment. Wilk is currently killing time in LA before flying out to New York for the show, and thus wound up in a corner office in Sony's office complex, dealing with music journalists. That's no fun at the best of times, but Brad is remarkably pleasant, and shows fine taste in tattooists, although that's not getting him off the interrogation hook.

So, how did you like the *Big Day Out*?

"Well, it really should have been called the *Big Day Off*. It was six or seven shows in three weeks. It was good though, we played newer material, but the tour seemed more like a vacation than anything else. Not that I'm complaining, it was pretty well needed for us, because we'd been through a pretty intense, struggling time with this new album."

An album that took a hell of a long time to complete. Exactly what was up with the delays?

"Most people are used to how record companies horn bands out to meet deadlines and make money, and that has nothing to do with music, it's about 'product'. We put out our first record, then went on the road for three years straight, living in a van, then a bus for that time. That tends to wear on you, so right after touring we decided to go to Atlanta and all live in a house together, and try to make this record, and we wound up dealing with a lot of personal problems we had swept under the rug when we were touring. We wrote about 22 songs we canned, because they were connected to a strange time, and we decided to go back to LA, take some time off, and fill the well up so we wanted to do this,

rather than our record company wanting us to do this. So, basically what we did, we took some time, and got to a point where we wanted to see each other and make a record again, and that's why it took so long. We'd be cheating fans if we just went with the record company schedule. It doesn't seem like we should be a band doing that sort of thing."

Even by the Lollapalooza shows of a couple of years ago, it seemed like you were all pretty fed up with the whole touring thing.

"We were by then, but not really compared to later. We'd put a lot into that, and a lot was going on, but even on *Lolla* we weren't totally sick of it, because we kept going for a year after that! We were always getting into trouble though. We got arrested on that tour, Tim and I, in Louisiana, I think it was. What a nightmare."

So, what's the deal with the new album?

"We've definitely grown from the first album, but I think if you listen to any song on the LP you could tell it's a Rage Against the Machine song. There is a total growth though. It's a lot rawer sounding because we recorded the whole record in a room not much bigger than this office. Nothing was separated. I was set up here playing drums, Tom was two feet away from me. Tim was two feet away from me. Everything bled together, but we were just worried about getting good takes of each of us, rather than go in and do drums, then bass, then guitar. We wanted to get the vibe of playing together. That's where we rehearsed the record, so we talked to Brendan [O'Brien, the producer], and he was good with just bringing in a 24-track, setting it up next door, and going for it. It really sounds that way too, really raw. I like it a lot better than the first album."

It seems like a lot of bands are going with that low-key recording approach nowadays.

"Yeah, why go into a studio and spend all this money to try to catch something close to the live sound and energy of a band, when you can spend less money and do it for real? This just wasn't the sort of album that would benefit from the big money and a big studio and all that shit."

How does it feel to be coming back into the fray of being a band with a big new album out?

"I have a lot of anxiety now. I really want to be back out there. I don't mean to be dissing on bands, but a lot of new bands from the

"We'd be cheating fans if we just went with the record company schedule. It doesn't seem like we should be a band doing that sort of thing."

past few years have been really crappy, they just aren't good, except for a few obvious exceptions. I'm glad we waited as long as we did and took our time with the album, because it seems like a really good time for us to be out and touring. I'm excited by it all, I just want to get the hell out of here and get onto the road, as weird as that sounds."

With the political pressure that's coming down on rock acts at the moment, it would seem like a difficult time for a band like yourselves to be releasing an album.

"Sony has never hindered us in any way as far as our creativity, and what we want to do, and what we stand for. They've never told us we couldn't do anything. So, it seems like it's more important than ever for us to be back out there now, because of all this stuff that's going on, there needs to be a band like us out there."

What's the most important thing for the band to try and achieve nowadays?

"I guess the main thing for the band, or at least for me, would be to deliver music that we all felt strongly and passionately about, and that was music with content that meant something. It's important also that a regular kid who comes to see a show, or listens to an album gets that thing inside to click on and make them question their own surroundings and assumptions, and the diecast mould that society puts you in — just to start that process, to get those kids thinking for themselves, rather than being sedated by the media, and television, and all that crap. Even if they don't agree with us, even if it pisses them off, that's fine, but at least they've started thinking."

It seems like a lot of the more left field bands who find themselves in the mainstream start finding their audiences are largely these jarhead thug kids, catching the energy but not the motivation. Do you get that syndrome going on?

"Hell, yeah, I bum on some of our audiences probably as much as they bum out on the things we do a lot of the time. There's a lot of people that completely miss what we're all about. People go to shows to beat the fuck out of each other, and that's not what we're about. It's about a celebration of anger and frustration, it's not about beating up someone who you have something in common with. The mentality of that does bum me out."

You guys certainly have less oblique lyrics than most alternative bands. You're pretty confrontational in that sense.

"In doing that, we're going to piss people off, but we're going to make people think, and that's good. That's what Rage Against the Machine is all about."

KIRK GEE



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Blow Up the Outside World

When a band sell five-million copies of an album, and win a Grammy for it into the bargain, as Soundgarden did with *Superunknown*, it sounds mighty silly to keep calling them 'the next big thing'. So, having blasted all expectations from the ears of those who keep score by such things, how does a band prepare their follow-up assault, in Soundgarden's case, *Down on the Upside*?

"Make stuff to eat, watch TV, light a lotta candles, and play ping-pong," according to Soundgarden's guitar maestro and fallen ping-pong champion Kim Thayil. Oh, and they'd also play a bit of music, right?

"Of course."

On the phone from the Seattle office of Susan Silver Management (yes, she is married to Soundgarden's vocalist Chris Cornell), Kim proves to be as eloquent in conversation as he is on guitar, and nowhere near as scary as his maniacally accomplished fretwork might suggest.

Superunknown seems to have taken that dreaded 'next big thing' mantle from your shoulders...

"Uh-huh."

Did you find it easier to relax musically once it became clear you were surpassing people's expectations of you?

"Yeah, I suppose so, in some ways. Well, we always did what we wanted to do, what entertained us, and we never felt we had to do a certain thing to make the record company happy, or the fans happy — but we always did respect the fans, and wanted to give them what they like about us. At the same time, we want to make sure we're interested and excited about what we're doing."

When *Superunknown* came out, Chris said he thought it would benefit from its timing, in regard to there being few other major albums being released at the time (neglecting to mention its own standout qualities). What do you see the benefits for *Down on the Upside* being?

"I don't think anyone's really doing what we're doing. You wanna get some Soundgarden material, you're gonna get it from us — no one can really imitate it. There are a lot of bands that seem to be influenced by us, but they don't have Chris' vocal range, they don't have our songwriting abilities... so, we don't feel threatened by that really."

Do you think it's fair to say your music goes somewhat towards encouraging people to look to their own realities as opposed to those created around them?

"I would agree with that very much."

Do you think that's something people who maybe aren't hardcore Soundgarden fans recognise?

"I don't know if they recognise that. People are willing to make judgements about everything around them, whether it's a political figure, or an entertainer, or a sports figure... All we've ever wanted to do and encourage was individual thought and responsibility for one's self, to have people feel confident with their own will, and their own strength and ability to get things done."

We never wanted to tell people how to think, or how to vote, or how to listen to things. We've always wanted to encourage people to be their own person.

"Sometimes even our fans miss that. They might still see us as icons or heroes in some way. That's all flattering, but we shrug a lot of that off. We want people to find themselves, and their friends, and their loved ones as their heroes and models in their lives. And if people have crappy friends and a crappy family, well, then at least you can turn to yourself and find strength in yourself. That's what we encourage of people, and that's what we expect of ourselves and people around us."

What would you say the biggest misconception you've come across regarding Soundgarden is?

"I think that we're a metal band. We've met people who are big fans now, and who are friends of ours, who originally thought because we had long hair we were some kind of metal band, and maybe we were sorta lunkheads, party, womaniser types; because that was the popular music at the time, at the end of the 80s, and maybe the beginning of the 90s. I think they would end up just being surprised when they met us, or talked with us, or hung out with us, and they'd go: 'Wow, these guys are anything but self-involved rock stars, and so by that definition,

they don't seem to be very metal at all."

I remember [Soundgarden drummer] Matt Cameron joking about you some years back, saying he thought one day soon you were gonna be like Steve Vai, and sell your services to various bands for lots and lots of dollars. You haven't left your day job yet. Can we take it Matt is no psychic?

"No, he's no psychic," Kim laughs. "I'm certainly not as proficient on my instrument as Steve Vai. That guy does many things on guitar that most people cannot do, and I would never compare myself to him in terms of his technical acquaintance with the instrument."

So, you're not going to be selling yourself willy-nilly anytime soon?

"I don't think people would want me."

A friend of mine made a prediction you would be a very scary person to interview, simply by watching you play guitar on video. What do you make of that?

"Oh, a lot of people have said that. A lot of people have met us, and they end up havin' a good time. 'Gee, I thought you'd be this arrogant, combative, argumentative person, who was perhaps ill-tempered.' Some still make that judgement by the way I look: 'A dark-skinned guy with a beard, and he doesn't look too happy.' They read the interviews and they think: 'Well, gee, he seems to be articulate and sometimes combative, so maybe he's difficult.'

"I'll tell you the truth: half the interviews I do are very pleasant and they're interesting; and there's another half where people come into the situation a bit defensive and willing to be combative, and I'm entirely willing to play that game if they want to. Then they leave with a bad taste in their mouth thinking [Kim feigns a mope]: 'Oh, gee, Kim was just very difficult.' I have no intention of presenting myself that way, unless someone comes with a preconception. We have dealt with people that way in interviews, and unfortunately it doesn't put us in the best light, and it doesn't put the interviewers in the best light."

I think there's a lot scarier people out there, don't you?

"Sure. I can't think of any individual right off the bat, but I would say, in general, the personality type would be one who perhaps has a short fuse and isn't particularly rational. If a person is not particularly intelligent, and has an inability to assess a situation with fair consideration to himself and other people, those people are the ones who are scary, and often dangerous, because you can't reason with them. They got some lunkheaded thing in their mind, and they're going to behave that way. There's not much you can do to deal with them. It's like dealing with a mad dog; I'd prefer either to ignore them or beat the fuck out of them."

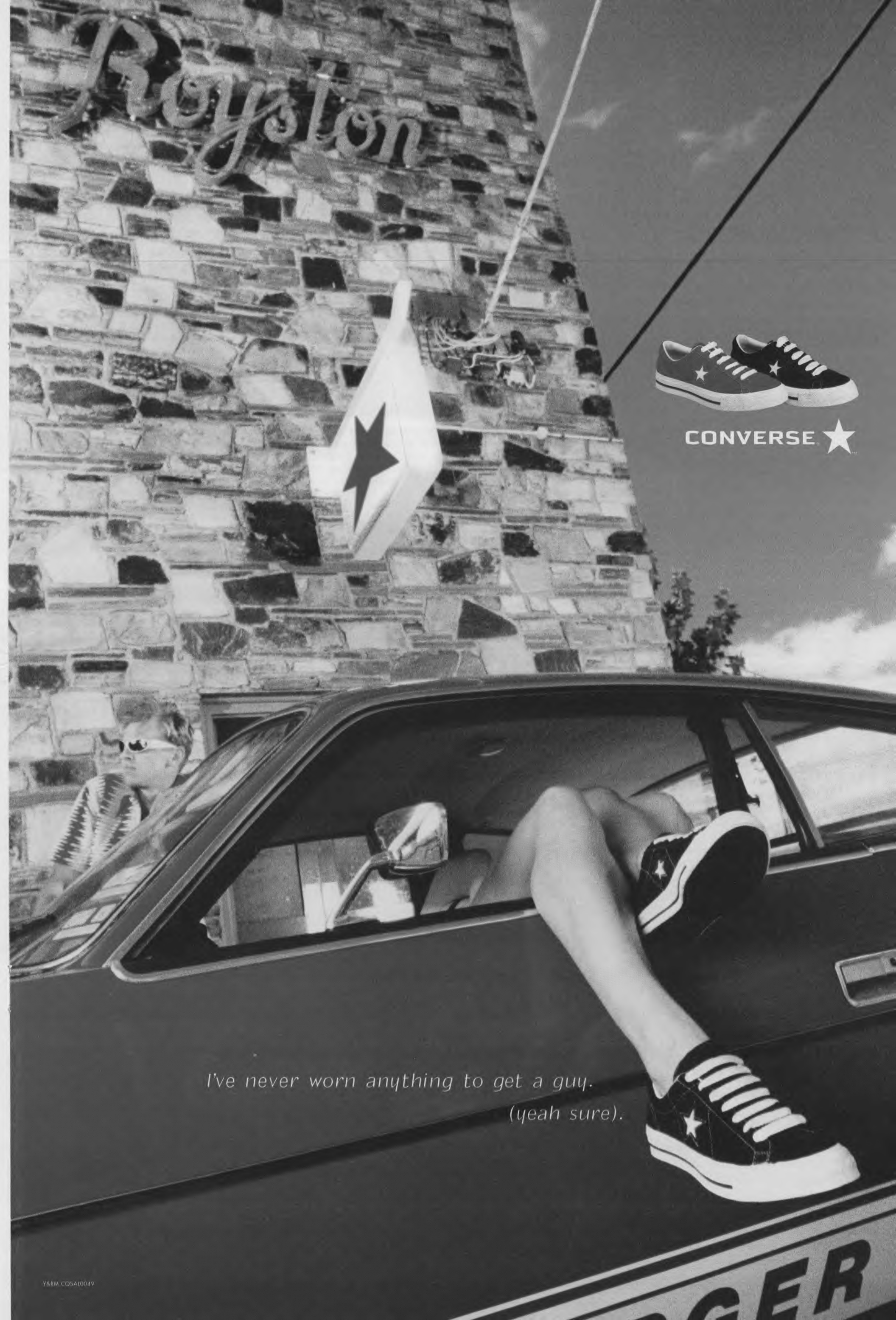
So, as we've established you're not one of those people, could you give me a three-word description that would help people understand who you and the band are?

"Specifically I'd say, intelligent — I think that's something that's shared by all the band members; wilful — people in the band are gonna do what they wanna do, and they're not gonna have people tell them what to do; and pretty level-headed, that no one is that caught up in bullshit, or is likely to be seduced by a bad idea, either intellectually, socially or politically."

"For these reasons, people often see us as intimidating, 'cause we're often unreceptive to people's whimsy or silliness. Because of that people perceive us as being arrogant, or intimidating, or angry. It's like: 'Well,'" Kim chuckles, "If you deal with someone as an intelligent adult, you'll be treated with the respect you've earned by acting that way.' But we get a lot of people who act like complete idiots, and they're not going to be treated as though they were anything other than the foolish person they're being... There you go."

The intelligent individuals collectively known as Soundgarden have self-produced *Down on the Upside*. As Kim says: "We don't have any weird problems where we need guidance to make a record. We're not immature. We're not an irresponsible, fucked-up band." The album was recorded at Stone Gossard's Studio Litho in Seattle, over about four-and-a-half months between June 1995 and March 1996. New Zealand release is set for May 20, and the first single, 'Pretty Noose', will be released on May 3. Although Soundgarden have made no plans to tour to New Zealand at this stage, Kim says it seems likely they will return soon: "Everyone in the band, hands down, thought [Auckland] was one of the most beautiful cities we've ever been to."

BRONWYN TRUDGEON



CONVERSE ★

*I've never worn anything to get a guy.
(yeah sure).*

GER

dance massive

CHELSEA FROM THE ICE BOX'S CHUNKS OF DEEPNESS

The Fuzz 'To Be Real' (Lady Cop)
Fat Cow 'Hot Cake' (Fiasco Productions)
Floorbangers '#3' (White Label)
Mr Funkster 'Housearockin' (Rampant)
Leeman 'Gonna be Alright/Dope Disco' (Promo)

D-RAVE'S LINE IN HARD TRANCE ACTION

K-90 'Phantasm' (Choci's Choons)
Etnica 'Microdrive' (Blue Room)
Carl Cox 'Yumm Yumm' (Edel)
The Prodigy 'Firestarter' (XL Recordings)
LSG 'Fontana (Carl Cox Mix)' (Superstition)

SAM FROM THE CHILL BAR'S PHAT ASS BREAKBEATS

Kruder & Dorfmeister 'Shakatakadoo Dub' (Ninjatune)
DJ Food 'Cosmic Jam' (Ninjatune)
Sin 'Where Shall I Turn' (SSR)
Unitone HI FI 'Wickedness Increased (Funk Porcini Mix)' (Incoming/Flying In)
Propellerhead 'Ron's Theory' (Wall of Sound)

MINDBENDER FROM BRAZIL'S DRUM 'N' BASS MINDFUCKERS

D Carter 'The Chant' (Il Strong Recordings)
The Funky Technicians 'Airtight' (Legend Records)
Dara and the Shooter 'Schizophrenia' (Smile Communications)
Mirage 'Just For You' (Odyssee)
Digital 'Down Under' (Metalheadz)

G-SPOT FROM REDZONE'S FAVOURITE HOUSE STORMERS

Heaven 'Aqua' (White Label)
BT 'Nocturnal Transmission' (Perfecto)
Robert Miles 'Children' (Deconstruction)
Inner City 'Your Love' (R&S)
Alcatraz 'Give Me Luv' (AM:PM)



Boyz 'n the Brotherhood

For years nobody took British hip-hop seriously. Quality-wise, UK product struggled to stand comparison to year after year of Stateside classics. Meanwhile, the UK produced its own media manipulated musical frenzies: acid house, trip-hop, jungle and Britpop all have their fair share of media attention to the neglect of UK hip-hop. This is about to change. With the long awaited, proudly British, Underdog produced *Elementalz*, the Brotherhood have released the first genuinely good British hip-hop long player. The beats are produced by the Underdog, and are phat as, but infused with that unique, moody UK flavour. The Brotherhood are rappers Shyloc and Spice, and DJ Deckster. I spoke with Deckster one Friday evening about hip-hop, jungle and all things British. He was madly enthusiastic and fiercely protectively of his beloved hip-hop.

There are three of you, all different nationalities, how did you all come together to be making hip-hop?

"It's more like we're from different backgrounds

than nationalities. But I've been making rap music since 85, on independent labels with an MC called Kam, Shyloc did his first track in 89, with the Underdog, and Spice was just dancing and robbing and doing graffiti, and we all hooked up about 92. The Brotherhood has been going a lot longer than that, but the line-up as it is now has been going since 92."

Is there such a thing as the hip-hop way of life?

"Depends how you make it, but yeah, there definitely is. The way I look at it is, the more hip-hop music I can make, the more I can support my family. Spice has always lived hip-hop, he's more the street side of it, while me and Shyloc are the business side. There are different ways of life in hip-hop, it's not just robbing an' that."

How would you describe the current state of British hip-hop?

"At the moment we're making a lot of noise, there's a few more bands like us. People in England are coming out with their own lyrics. The

way we speak is British, we're not really riding on the American tip anymore. We're still fans of American music, but things are getting much better over here now. But I would say from a British point of view, we're not very good at recognising talent in our own country. Especially in London, it's meant to be the second hip-hop capital, but there's no way it is really. If you look at France and Germany, their local artists outsell American artists, they support their own, and I think it's only a matter of time before that happens here."

On your album you refer to a lot of British imagery. Was that a conscious decision or did it just come naturally?

"It is a natural thing, but obviously we sat down and thought about what we were talking about. When we speak to each other we're not like: 'Eh yo', wassup man? I'm selling crack and fucking hoes,' we don't do that. We're like: 'Johnny lost a fiver down the dogs last night.' That's how we speak here, so that's how we come across on the album. We've got a worldwide deal to promote British rap, and basically there's no point in promoting English rap by talking about something that's not happening in England."

You can't write about what you don't know...

"Yeah, exactly, but a lot of people do, and they make a lot of money out of it. I think in England we're a bit too honest. You can make a million bucks in the States rapping about things you just made up, but in England you can't do that 'cause everybody knows your business."

Were you all involved in writing and producing the album?

"Oh, yeah, the Underdog and meself come up with the music, and Shyloc and Spice will write some rhymes to match. We all discuss what we want to say... I mean, some days we'd just go to the Underdog's place and do fuck all, we'd just eat pizza, drink beer, smoke a bit of puff and watch old Top of the Pops, and then the next day we'd just be vibing and it would come together. One of the reasons we called the album *Elementalz* was because all our elements, all our backgrounds went into it."

DJ Pump Action, the original Brotherhood DJ, left the group in friendly circumstances to produce drum 'n' bass as DJ Crystal, and now he's using a rapper. What do you think of his sound?

"Personally I like the person Danny Chapman, but I don't like the way people come and go out of hip-hop. I don't like the way when things aren't really going right in the scene they move on to another scene, and then come back to hip-hop when things are moving again. I've never done

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE



Moseley Shoals

As half of the Paul Weller band, recent support dates with Oasis, a #2 UK album chart debut and a fanatically-crafted ear-licking album "Moseley Shoals" OCEAN COLOUR SCENE are about to rocket into the mainstream of the rock 'n' roll game. OSC have been publicly championed by Noel Gallagher (Oasis) as the band to watch in 1996 and their mentor Paul Weller who plays keyboards on the first single "The Riverboat Song" (Top 20 UK). Q magazine says of the album "Moseley Shoals": "Remarkably consistent, occasionally inspirational... this is exceptional stuff indeed" (4 stars).



NO DOUBT

Tragic Kingdom

Gwen Stefani is the dauntingly unique vocalist that fronts NO DOUBT. This band is an antidote to aggro posturing and teen-angst-by-numbers. No Doubt draw from a palette of new wave, guitar-rock, ska, dance, reggae and pop. They've opened for Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ziggy Marley and Fishbone. "Just A Girl" is Gwen's tongue-in-cheek litany on the perils of being a girl growing up in California.

BUSH

Sixteen Stone



2CD
LIMITED
EDITION
COLLECTORS
ITEM



The debut album "Sixteen Stone" from British band BUSH has sold over three million copies in the States and recently reached #4 on the Billboard Charts. Including the singles "Everything Zen", "Come Down" and the new track "Glycerine" the album is now packaged with a Limited Edition

4-track Bonus Disc.

MCA



that and never will. Rap is my life, and I think if you love rap you should stick by it. I, myself, think Crystal's a little bit confused. He's Shyloc's best mate, but I just don't think he knows what he wants to do."

Do you think it's a credible record, jungle breaks with a rapper rapping over the top?

"I just think it's a waste of time. I don't really listen to it because it doesn't say anything to me. To me the rapper's a fraud anyway. I mean, anybody can stick a rapper on a record. Oasis could rap on their records, they're into hip-hop, any fool can rap — well, rap pathetically. But it's just not saying anything about the music. I don't really enjoy people jumping onto hip-hop culture, whatever the angle. Hip-hop as music has not changed — things have come off from it, jungle has come from it, house has come from it, but hip-hop has stayed pure."

So, you wouldn't agree with the theory that jungle and its culture is Britain's version of American hip-hop culture?

"Nah, that's bollocks. Brotherhood is the British version of hip-hop culture. Jungle is jungle, hip-hop comes from graffiti, breaking and rapping; that's not what jungle is about. Jungle's about taking as many drugs as you can, dancing all night, pulling a few birds, and then whatever, you know. There's no culture in jungle apart from getting pissed-up on a Saturday night and going out raving."

Yeah, okay, let's move on. How does the live set-up work?

"Erm, basically, we've got two decks, me going off on the decks and the two boys doing the lyrics. If I feel like dropping in a different tune I'll do that, otherwise I just play our instrumentals. I had some instrumental albums pressed up for me to use."

No DATs, eh? Cool... will the instrumentals be released?

"Well, no, but I'll sort you out with a few copies when I come to New Zealand"

You're coming over?

"Well, I hope so. Why not, eh? If the vibe's good, we'll definitely come over, get some sun, eat some lamb."

Best smoke in the world here, you know...

"Yeah... so ya say, mate, so you say!"

Oh, so you have heard that before?

"Well, yeah, I know this girl at Virgin who's from New Zealand, and that's what she was always saying, but we'll have to come over and see what goes on, you know what I mean!"

ANDY PICKERING

dance massive

shoot the dj

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

— Ferris Bueller
How about that Pauly of OMC, eh? Single of the year at the overpriced music awards. NZ's biggest selling single since yonks ago, and now a Number 1 in Australia. What's going on? Oh, well, nice work, mate. Congratulations to you and Simon, you've done us proud, and don't worry, I won't tell anyone about that boat trip... the mix tape competition is humming along nicely. It's so cool to arrive at work each morning with the unknown pleasures of a new mix tape to listen to. Thankyou and respect to all who've entered so far. Unfortunately, due to a space problem this issue, my editor has demanded my mix tape reviews be held back until next month. So, everyone hang tight for the June issue for full reviews and final results. Such a shame to let that Numark go, hmmm...

AUCKLAND

Okay, sure, we're living in Bitch City. I know, but last month was pretty shocking for general behind the scenes bickering. What with irate, jealous promoters jolting each other in to the liquor authorities, making noise complaints, a certain somebody claiming on BFM that someone else's dance party had been cancelled due to the salient promoters not paying their bills (which is another story altogether). Meanwhile, the record shop owners continue to be major paranoid of each other (the drugs?), and a certain weirdo DJ even offered me "drugs, sex, man, whatever you want". Yeah, okay, he was drunk, but ya gotta laugh, don't ya? ... **ZWired** with **Alex Palerson** and **Technova** at The Club on March was, as you know (cause I saw you there), a sell-out. Good for the promoters, but let's be honest, it was a bit jammed in there which made it that wee bit harder to get a vibe going. **Technova** was a revelation (look for **Technova** remixes of **Salmonella Dub**, released in June). Playing live downstairs, he delivered a sterling set of dubby house and techno beats, with a dash of jungleism. Just as well he turned down that last split from Jim... I guess I saw **Alex** before he played. He was backstage downstairs. flat on his

back in some kind of weird pre-set meditation ritual. (either that or he was still hungover from Wellington). His set of classy, pure techno was kinda average. **Gideon** put him to shame. The Orb live, now, that would be another story... Easter weekend saw the **Nick D'Angelo** multi-venue production roll back into action with its usual efficiency. **Cheap Sex**, **Wet 'N Wild**, and the last ever **Rebe** (don't forget, Nicky D, you promised!) were all packed and jumpin'... **Vision De** was back at **Squid** on April 13. The first floor was an adventure through dub reggae, and the top bar, of course, a night of pumping house with **DJB**, **G-Spot**, **Clarkee** and **Chris W** on turntable patrol... on the same night was **Dark Forces** in The Box, with **Sam**, **Dean** and **Greg** doing the 'dark vibes' thing, and **DJB** and **Chelsea**, as usual, in the **Ice Box** (with new paint job and wicked couches!), dropping house flavour and jungle science... which is exactly what you'll get at the next **Jungle Soundclash** on May 4 at **Papa Jacks**, with **DJB**, **DLT**, **48Sonic**, **Riddle** and **Pots** providing the breaks... the very stylish **Brazil** on K' Road now have a drum 'n' bass night called **One Way** on the first Thursday of every month. The first one featured **Mindbender**, **Conspiracy** and **Siderrick**. Top marks to **Brazil** for putting in the killer soundsystem. May 2 will feature **DJB**, **48 Sonic** and **Conspiracy**... on May 10, **Shadowlands** — a journey through the murky world of hard trance and lush drum 'n' bass, with **D-Rave**, **DJB**, **48 Sonic**, **Gideon** and **Albion** — is at The Foundry... a welcome new addition to the scene is **Strut** at Manifesto every Friday throughout May. **Reece Jensen** and guests play in the underground vault, whipping up a no-compromise blend of bumping garage and classy house, while upstairs **Gary D Lishus** (a cross-dressing DJ) plays an eclectic mix of all that is funky. Be warned though, this is grown up music for grown up people... also on the regular tip, check **Celebre** on Wednesday nights for some more sexy house action (with a dash of smooth drum 'n' bass) with **DJB** and the **BPM** lads... every Saturday night, downstairs at The Club on Queen Street, you'll find **The Electronic Lounge**, with DJs playing quality music in a relaxed envi-

ronment... **De Brett**'s have done renovations and have two new bars. **The Spin Bar**, for hip-hop flavour with **Andy Vann**, and the **Redzone**, where **G-Spot** and guests serve up house beats, with **UK Clubland** every Thursday, featuring strictly ex-pat UK DJs... **DJ Sneak** was to play The Box in May, but he has been postponed as he is apparently in hospital after a drug overdose. **Little Louie** is still lined up for July, and **Lenny D** is confirmed to play The Box, May 31... in July/August **Artspace** is planning a major project called **Electronic Bodyscapes**, featuring various multi-media displays to examine the way digital media is changing our ideas of the physical limits of the body. There will be a dance party on July 27 to profile the convergence of visual arts, performance and moving image in an experimental extension of the dance party environment. Any interested DJs or live dance acts should send a tape (with an emphasis on the experimental, progressive tip) to Lisa C/ the Moving Image Centre, PO Box 106-097, Auckland, or call her on 373-2772.

PALMERSTON NORTH

The recent **Boiler Room** party was the biggest and best yet from the infamous **Madhouse Crew**... **Jochen** is moving to Melbourne, so it's now up to someone else to get into some promotion. Any takers? ... **Nebuliza** buzzed the Globe Theatre on April 27 with the **Eden** crew from **Well** on turntable patrol.

WELLINGTON

I spent a week in **Well** over April, and got to check out the new **Tatou** basement (after all the fucking around, I had to see it myself to believe it), and although still unfinished (the bar will help), it's a wicked space with a killer soundsystem. Check the **Eden** crew with the **Cybertron Lounge** on Thursdays, **Clinton** and **Andee** at **Home** on Fridays, and on Saturdays, **Stevie B**. With a such a full on dance space downstairs, upstairs has mutated into a classy chill space, with free pool and chilled sounds from **Stevie B** and **Liam**... The **Globe** bar on Cuba street is now using **DJs**. **Active's** **Wednesday Night Jam** hosts **Jaz** and **Vishal** play live every Thursday, and The **Globe** hosted **Leylate** in April, with **Liam**, **Loe Tennant**,

Lemon and **Lolli** playing an eclectic mix of house, retro, tripp-hop and techno. Despite a thin turn-out, fun was had by all, and the flyers looked awesome... a couple of dodgy subversive DJ types are plotting a pirate radio station for weekend broadcasts... coming up on May 10 at **ESC** is **Deep**, featuring UK house DJ **Nicky Holloway** and his Aussie mate **Mel Russell**, with support from **Ma**, **Leon** and the **Babes 'n the Hood** posse... at **Taki Rua** some time late in May comes the **DJ Sweet** (**Sure Ting Productions**) organised **From the Deep** a deep house party, with **Andee**, **Lemon**, **Schmo**, **Mu** and **Sweet**... look out for (the apparently big budget) **Pure Essence** in **Shed 21** with **Lenny D**, **Conspiracy** and other local DJs on June 1... the mighty **Roots Foundation** are plotting their next appearance and are set to lay down the crucial dub-wise/jungleist audio medication on June 7. More details next month... the **EXP/Obacure** production **Transit** has been delayed because **Leon** has too much on his plate as it is, but the **Transit CD** is at preproduction stage, with tracks from **LRS** and **Donch** confirmed, and much more to come... lastly, congratulations to **Active** for pulling off the ambitious **Acilona** held at La Luna from **7AM**, April 20, and going on for another action packed 20 hours of DJ fuelled madness, including the **Seven Lucky Winds** of the **White Jade Dragon Garden** with **Lounge** DJs.

CHRISTCHURCH

A quiet month down south, but check out **Spellbound** on May 18, in the **Limes Room** at the **Town Hall**. Full DJ line-up to be confirmed, but **Tobin**, **Lotus** and **Kinesis** will play with a couple of live acts. Look out for posters.

Just to hand... UK drum 'n' bass innovators **Springheel Jack** will perform live shows across the nation in late June. Check out 1995's **There Are Strings** LP (Trade/Festival) for some pre-show sonic research... the mighty **Dub Syndicate** are expected to drop in for nationwide dates sometime in August, to promote the new **Ital Breakfast** LP (**On-U/Flying In**). ... anyone who wants to front their stuff in the column, give us a call and give up the goods. Stay safe, now. **ANDY PICKERING (DJB)**

BUMPS OF THE MONTH

VARIOUS ARTISTS Ninja Cuts: The Joy of Dex (Ninja Tunes/Flying In)

This is a double album split into two parts across two CDs, part one is called **Flexistentialism**, and part two (a bonus CD for non-vinyl junkies only) **Scratchmological Waxploitation**. It's also subtitled **The Joy of Dex** — 24 uncompromising positions to improve your stealth. Let's cut to the chase then, shall we? It's good. Damn good, like a ninja — dangerous to your health. **Flexistentialism** is a tasty collection of counter culture chameleons, sliding across genres with stealth-like audacity. Using the ancient weapon of the Jedi ninjas, the fabled crossfader, the Ninja silently dissolves musical boundaries, revealing a lost universe, where gravity no longer applies, and the primary method of communication is timeless — I call it, funk funk. **Big up**, 2 Player, Ashley Beedle, Wagon Christ, Coldcut, London Funk Allstars, 9 Lazy 9, Kruder & Dorfmeister, DJ Food. May the force be with you. The funk is in good hands. Funk's very much.

VARIOUS ARTISTS LTJ Bukem Presents Logical Progression (Good Looking Records)

Pure drum 'n' bass as you'd expect from the don, **LTJ Bukem**, one of the most respected artists and in-demand DJs in the UK jungle scene right now. **Bukem** runs **Good Looking Records**, one of the pioneer labels of atmospheric drum 'n' bass. Aquatic drum 'n' bass (as opposed to the 'jump up' style of jungle) is characterised by deep strings, trancey breakbeats, and deep, steady basslines. Highlights here include 'Bringing Me Down', by **Aquarius** and **Tayla**, a masterpiece of rolling breaks, synth washes, and a haunting vocal that puts shivers down my spine. 'The One and Only', by **PFM**, is again a heart wrenching, emotional bomb of a tune, fuelled by a vocal that tears at your very soul. Don't underestimate the power of this music to take you away. If you're still unconvinced by the whole jungle thing, buy the double CD, and lock yourself away in a cosy, mood enhancing environment. You'll thank me in the morning.

T-POWER 'Police State' (SOUR)

This is the first in a series of two 12s from **T-Power**, and it's totally the cutting edge of futuresscape drum 'n' bass, or (here's a new one for ya) tech-step. 'Police State' is a 14-minute anthem of a tune. It starts with a nice mellow, uplifting breakbeat, that just hums along, until you hit a three-minute long ambient break, before the beat kicks back in. Then there's a sample from **George Lucas**'s first film, **THX-1138**, which goes something like: 'If you feel you are not properly sedated, call 341-2111 for assistance / Failure to do so will result in prosecution for criminal drug evasion.' Then suddenly the tightest, most bad ass bassline from hell hits, and you're sucked down an endless vortex of the most twisted drum 'n' bass this side of the next **Star Wars** project (here's hoping). Mind blowing.

UNITONE HIFI Rewound and Rerubbed (Incoming)

This is top dub gezer **Slinky Jim**'s outfit, who you will remember were responsible for the excellent **Wickedness Increased** album last year. Anyway, this is a collection of remixes of various tracks off the album. Being the smooth talking, self-promoting, friendly type of guy he is, **Jim** has managed to pull together a top line-up of hydroponically inclined beatheads from around the world to rewind, rerub and reroll the next split, and they somehow got around to some top class remixes as well. **Rockers Hifi**, **New York's Spectre**, trip-hop porno stars **Funk! Porcini**, **Digidub** and lots more chart the unknown territory between organic reggae and the more sinister world of digital electronics. It's a place where phat beats roam free across lush pastures of bass, and with a cup of tea and bit of puff, all seems right in the world.

ANDY PICKERING (DJB)

FUTURE STUPID



FUTURE STUPID

6 TRACK DEBUT CDEP
After moving from Christchurch to Auckland, **FUTURE STUPID** have many popular tracks on student radio — 'Big Dumb Future' (video soon with guest **Slave**), 'Shit Biscuit' (on **Raw 1**) and 'Shovel'. Also on this debut EP are 'Rough As Guts' and 'In The Basement'. When they opened for **PRIMUS**, **Russell Baillie** (*NZ Herald*) wrote: "FUTURE STUPID hugely impressed with their taut, aggressive, riff-based sound with its hip-hop influence..."

WHERE'S THE CORNDOGS?
CDEP
MUCKHOLE kicked **BFM**'s recent **Albert Park** concert into life and they opened for **GREEN DAY** with songs included here — 'Don't Wanna Know You' (watch for the video), 'Overdrive', 'Muckhole Theme Song' and 'Subterfuge'. **John Russell** (*RiptUp*) wrote: "Energised to the point of combustion, and with heavenly melodies coming out their ears..."



MUCKHOLE

FUTURE STUPID, MUCKHOLE & NOTHING AT ALL! Powerstation Saturday May 4 All Ages

NEW MUSIC ON THE NEW LABEL



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mo' better beats

LAD

Ridin' Low (Hollywood Records)
If you like the title track (currently getting heaps of airplay on Mai FM and Max TV) you'll love the album. The Latino old school flava shines out on every track — you kinda imagine LAD just went out and made the sort of record their own hood wanted to hear. It's hard at times, but life is also more than just gang banging, and these guys know how to party. The album just bumps along, it's funky, funky, funky. Singer Darvy Traylor (that old geezer in the vid) really lifts their game, his voice is as smooth as old leather. Ten tracks in all, with a bonus remix of the title track; if you buy this album and aren't satisfied send me your copy and I'll give you a refund — it's that good. Perfect for kickin' back and chillin'.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

In the Neighbourhood (Warner)
On first glance this compilation album seems a little dated, but on closer inspection I think you'll find it contains a treasure trove of kiwi hit singles that you meant to buy but didn't. Excuse me, but where else can you get Dam Nalive, Headless Chickens, 3 the Hard Way, Annie Crummer, Emma Paki, OMC, Sisters Underground... blah... blah... all on one album? Eighteen songs by 18 different artists, all from NZ, all with that funk/rap/R&B/soul flava. Check this out, it's excellent.

J'SON

J'son (Hollywood Records)
Don't be fooled by the short review, this is for a whole album. J'son has a great voice — honestly, this kid can *siiiiinnngg*. Funk/soul/R&B, he can do it all. Trouble is, as soon as his balls drop, he's gonna be down the road robbing the local Drycleaners. You see, J'son is just like Tevin Campbell — ie, a prepubescent black vocalist who makes prepubescent girls squeal, and post-adolescent women think: 'Hmmm, I'd like to pinch those cheeks.' The album is good — very much in the vein of his current radio hit 'Take a Look' — I just worry about the boy's future. Anyone heard from Tevin lately?

EUSEBE

Do Something (EMI)
Hey, nigger, get up off yo' fat lazy butt and do something. Girlfriend, stop bitchin' about how you deserve better and do something about it. After all that gangsta rap we've been getting for the last six years you may have noticed recently, the pendulum is starting to swing back. Very slowly, sure, but it's a start. Eusebe keep the lyrics positive, but they're no fools either. On 'Police', they make it clear they're from the hood; and with 'Do Something' and 'Piece of the Pie', they make it clear you shouldn't let others stop

you getting what you want. And they don't mean using an Uzi to do it! A good beat with good lyrics, I've probably made them sound more preachy than they actually are.

DENI HINES

Imagination (Mushroom)
Very smooth, but not too sweet. Hines sounds mighty fine indeed in this mid-tempo soul groove. There's a very nice brass sound running across this track, and the bass guitar isn't too bad either. Recorded and mixed in London, this should get airplay everywhere.

PET SHOP BOYS

Before (EMI)
This four-track EP includes a remix of 'Into the Night', which is basically just an instrumental, and makes the song sound like a rehash of their earlier hit 'Money'. The PSB roots are firmly grounded in Euro-house, but they shy away from the mindless/simple keyboard hook, and instead choose a much lush, over-the-top orchestral score (but the keyboard hook is still there, underneath!). 'The Truck Driver and His Mate' is a pleasant diversion, with a much harder, 'butcher sound'.

BANANARAMA

Every Shade Of Blue (Festival)
Like the PSB, Bananarama emerged in the mid-80s and had a truckload of mindless pop hits. Mindless, but great! They were lots of fun. We all danced, they were the sound of our mindless 80s generation. Now, 10 years later, the trio is down to a duo... with only one original member. They've kind of lost the plot. A bit like the 80s generation, I suppose. This song works best when the remixers move in, reduce the girls to backing vocalists, and let the dancebeat take over.

D'ANGELO

Lady (EMI)
A lot of people have actually asked me if the two of us are related, and I have to admit: yes, he's my brother (he ain't heavy, I am). But I would never let that influence my review... besides, we were separated at birth and I hardly know him. From his album *Brown Sugar*, this is remixed by DJ Premier and features AZ on guest vocals. This song gives some indication of the depth of talent that D'Angelo possesses, and I get the feeling he could become a long term prospect in the music industry (as opposed to those flash in the pans you never hear from again, after they've had their 'big' year).

MATTY J RUIJS featuring Lolé

I Love Everything About You (EMI)
Following on from his last hit 'Cruisin'', (a cover of the Smokey Robinson classic — who was the moron who said it was by Marvin Gaye?), Ruijs decides to release another cover version, this one originally by Stevie Wonder (no dis here, Ruijs has written plenty of hits himself). He's joined by local vocalist Lolé, who has her own single out at the moment. Together the

two are sublime, as is the production by Mark Tierney. This has hit written all over it, it's great. The only (minor) fault is the arrangement of one vocal line — it reminds me of Neil Sedaka in 'Calendar Girl'!

BEL CANTO

We've Got to Work it Out (Festival)
This is weird shit, the brother's been smoking some strange blunts. Details are scant, but I think it's Italian Euro-house. A great piano riff with a driving beat, and then some wacked-out opera baritone (or is that tenor?) laid over the top. A variety of mixes, ranging from the Sleaze Sister to Gregorio, with a jungle mix from the Booyaka Crew thrown in for good measure. It grows on you (the song) and I quite like it a lot.

EUROGROOVE

Move Your Body (Festival)
Jeez, how many songs have had this title? But, hey, I guess it's not about lyrics really, is it? It's about dancing, and this groove should do the trick. It doesn't hurt when you've got both Todd Terry and the Happy Clappers kickin' in on the remix front either. This is hardcore pop Eurohouse (if you can figure that out!), with just a touch of old school Black Box lingering in the background. A definite hit for most club floors.

NICK D'ANGELO

DANCE REVIEWS

BLUESPEAK

The Drinking Set (Pagan)
Excellent. Another local jazz album and it's a killer. This, the second album from Bluespeak, is a collection of covers of various down tempo odes to the demon drink. Greg Johnson, of course, takes care of the vocal duties in his own drunkenly, blundered, melancholic style. He's a smooth old crooner. The band, meanwhile, are smooth like Baileys and potent like chartreuse. Led by Tom Ludvigson's Hammond organ, each song is a smooth, confident work-out, with no unnecessary frills, just the groove, baby. This is a collection of songs made for dinner parties, cafes, 3AM at Celebre, and anywhere else where you're lucky enough to have good company and the pure luxury that is a bourbon in one hand, a Marlboro in the other. Cheers to the drinking set.

HOWIE B

Music for Babies (Polydor)
This is an unusual, conceptual, bizarre album, from enigmatic trip-hopper (who'd hate to be called that) Howie B. I'm sure you're familiar with some of his work on countless trip-hop (there I go again) compilations, and his own excellent Pussyfoot label. This is, however, an altogether different sound. Howie and his girlfriend had a baby, Chill, recently, and she is the inspiration for the album. It's

usually very ambient and quite dark in places, with titles like 'Shag', 'Cry' and 'How to Suckie'. It's full of strange noises which, with the aid of a darkened room and listening enhancements, could quite possibly invoke the feeling of being back in the womb. Or not. There is also the occasional looped beat (phew!), and some weirdo sleeve notes you have to see for yourself. It's not something you'd play every day (or every week), but it's quite an intense trip if you're up to it.

BEASTIE BOYS

The Sound in From Way Out (Grand Royal)
Ever notice how every B Boy album has three or four tracks that are just straight out space-funk instrumentals, which often wind up being your favourite bits? Now the spoilt, bratty, punk kids turned Generation X trend setters (the music, the clothes, the magazine...) have compiled all those funky instrumental jam sessions in one place. Wise move. The music's cool, and all the classics are here, such as 'Groove Holmes', 'In 3's', 'Lighten Up', 'Shambaia' and heaps more of your favourite stoner funk blues.

SUNSCREAM

Change or Die (Sony)
Sunscreen were quite big back in 1993, their first album, *03*, spawned four Top 20 hits in the UK. After that we heard nothing for awhile, but they've continued to play some dynamic live dates and completed a second album. Make no mistake, this is pop dance music, but hell, it's full on, emotional pop with a heart, and dance music with balls. First track, 'Exodus', starts off very quietly, fooling you into turning up the volume, as it keeps kicking in with more intense rhythms. There's also a lot of good old-fashioned stadium guitars in the mix, which is no doubt part of why they are such crowd pleasers. The singer can sing too. On 'Syclik' they stick to cool, instrumental trance and its pure quality. This album leaves M-People for dead.

TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND

Boss Tabla EP (Nation Records)
I guess we all know the what to expect from the Underground. Mystic, Eastern influenced grooves, featuring tabla, sitars, the chants of the ancient wise ones. To be frank, sometimes it works and sometimes it's a load of old tosh. This is a four track EP, and best track for me is 'Psycho Karaoke' — an up tempo, breakbeat led, world music sort of affair. The other three tracks are down tempo, breakbeat led, world music sort of affairs. If you like that stuff, then you'll like this. Simple really.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Fine Gold — A Compilation from Dorado Records (Dorado)
Dorado are an excellent UK label that release jazzy, soulful hip-hoppy type grooves, and this is their third compilation. While they don't have the visibility of, say, Mo Wax or Ninja Tunes, they are just as worthy of your discretionary dollar. Jhelisa (Rebirth of Cool) contributes two

very nice jazzy tracks, featuring her distinctive vocals. Outside offer 'Remembrance', which is a hip-hop groove based around a truly haunting violin led string section. Best cut for me is latest drum 'n' bass prodigy Kid Loops' remix of Cool Breeze's 'Can't Deal With This'. The Kid fuses electro, soulful vocals and deadly jungle breaks, to come correct with a drum 'n' bass master-plan. Overall, a very laidback compilation — not necessarily essential, but totally satisfying.

BUSTARHYMES

The Coming (Elektra)
Strictly coming with an East Coast agenda, the busted one is high on some confusing shit. Seems my man thinks the end of the world as we know it is nigh. The year 2000 is the year this 'event' is supposed to happen. I can't quite grasp exactly what's going down, but the Busta urges you to: 'Handle your business, keep it movin', stay strong and get money.' It's like he's on some conspiracy theory tip, kinda like the whole Wu-Tang, Free Mason thing. I gotta admit, I'm starting to get worried. Don't worry about the album though — mad, phat East Coast beats from Easy Mo Be, the Vibe Chemist Backspin and DJ Scratch, with guest spots from Q-Tip and the Def Squad's Redman and Keith Murray.

PROPHETS OF THE CITY

Muthaland Funk (Nation Records)
The Prophets are a conscious hip-hop act from South Africa, and this mini EP contains remixes from Fundamental, Live It! and the Sea. 'Muthaland Funk' is an okay song, kinda funky, with some Eastern chants and tabla style percussion, very similar to what Fundamental do actually. Which leads us to the next surprise: the Fundamental remix uses a big grunty guitar sample from 'Don't Look Down In Anger', by Supergroove. With the chant of 'We've got that funk / We've got that Muthaland funk', it's surprisingly similar to Supergroove's sound. So, yeah, good to see some offshore folk being inspired by Aotearoa.

THE INFINITY PROJECT

Stimuli (Perfecto Fluoro)
Perfecto Fluoro is a goa trance spin off from Perfecto. Goa trance ain't really my thing, I'm much more impressed by the 'BT' sound. Anyway, this is goa trance in all it's dribbly, widdly, noodly glory. 'Stimuli' itself doesn't do anything for me, but I like the Man With No Name mix. It does at least have a decent kick drum to hold it down. Maybe I'm just too straight right now...

LIONROCK

An Instinct for Detection (Deconstruction)
Debut album from Justin Robertson, and his Lionrock cohorts MC Buzz B and Roger Lyons. First single is 'Straight aat Yer Head', which is initially a bit of a surprise. Rather than being a full on dance-floor stomper, it's a slow breakbeat groove, featuring MC Buzz B rapping (well, almost rapping) about the state of the world today. Nice. 'Fire Up the Showshaw' and 'Don't Die Foolish' are

adrenalised breakbeat numbers, and at the risk of sounding like a lazy journalist, it's a very similar sound to the Chemical Brothers, if a little more refined. A very well rounded effort, and full of the most obese basslines this side of the...

DUB SYNDICATE

Ital Breakfast (ON-U Sound/Flying In)
Yes, well, speaking of phat motherfucker basslines, it's another album from the mighty Dub Syndicate. There last couple of efforts were, by their own standards, a little patchy, but with *Ital Breakfast!* they return to the arena with a deadly set of organic dub flavors to warm the cockles of your heart. Anyway, as you tend to expect with the Dub Syndicate, there aren't a lot of surprises. It's produced very well, by Adrian Sherwood, Skip McDonald drops by with his guitar, and it's just one big bad, bottom heavy package.

ALEX REECE

Feel the Sunshine (Remixes) (Island Records)
Mr Reece has had a big buzz around him for a while now. He's an exponent of the more mellow, jazz inflicted side of drum 'n' bass. What with his joining Photek and Goldie in signing to a major label, it should be easier for non-vinylheads to get hold of some super lovely drum 'n' bass. This is certainly very accessible gear, but no way has Alex sold out. 'Feel the Sunshine' has a nice vocal, and it's basically a live drum sample, looped and chopped to bits, set to a nice driving bassline, with lots of added sparkly keyboard bits. 'Jazz Master' has some nice sax touches, and is remixed by DJ Krust and Kruder & Dorfmeister. Smooth as you like.

ANDY PICKERING (DJB)

BACKBEAT

I don't know who the person in Paul Kelly's songs is, but he sure spends a lot of time in the sack ('Everybody Wants to Touch Me', 'Just Like Animals', etc). Live at the *Continental* and the *Espanade* (White) sees Kelly on his home turf of Melbourne, where there are four seasons in each day but the clock on the silo always reads 11 degrees. The band is virtually the same as he brought here recently — like a more sophisticated Messengers — driven by the melodic riffs of ex-Was Not Was guitarist Randy Jacobs. Kelly pushes them through a range of dynamics, with songs dating back to *Gossip*: guitar rock ('Pouring Water'), sensitive social comment ('Maralinga') and his trademark narrative ballads ('To Her Door'). Satisfaction is guaranteed, it not surprises.

Taj Mahal can also be relied on to deliver, in his role as the hip lecturer in R&B101. *Phantom Blues* (BMG) is like an improved version of his recent *Dancing the Blues* — a mix of originals and R&B standards — but here

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- *LA Weekly*

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- *NME*

"Captivatingly melancholy."
- *New Zealand Herald*

"It conjures up a meticulously arranged, slow-moving universe."
- *New York Times*

GLOBAL
ROUTES
MUSIC

his enthusiasm is palpable and contagious. Tributes are paid to Doc Pomus, Fats Domino, Freddie King, and Ray Charles, but three of the best are the most recent: a spirited gospel duet with Bonnie Raitt, a swampy Pat McLaughlin tune, and Taj's own lyrical opener. Taj is like a black Ry Cooder (they worked together in the 60s) who turns ethnomusicology into an education in song and dance.

Blues little-leaguer **Jimmy Witherspoon** sits in with white fret-fryer Robben Ford's band for *Live at the Mint* (On the Spot/BMG). The LA blues venue witnesses Witherspoon's voice (like BB King in need of a gargle) on his own songs and well-worn standards such as 'CC Rider', 'Stormy Monday' and 'Ain't Nobody's Business'. Despite Ford's lyrical guitar, the music is held back by its adherence to genre and its lethargic pace (at nine minutes, the opener 'Goin' Down Slow' is *too damn slow*).

They like to sweat in Cuba, to music that has stood still since the revolution in 1959. It is played at frenetic pace, ahead of the beat, the opposite of the behind-the-beat languor of their neighbours in New Orleans. They also play slightly sharp, so on **Jesus Alemany's Cubanismo!** (Hannibal/Rykodisc) his trumpet sounds shrill and the rhythms get relentless. But this primer of Latin music shows salsa isn't just something to have with crackers; the salsa, chacha, rumba, conga and bossa nova influenced '50s R&B and is preserved to this day by cultural blockades. Here, leading expatriate musicians pay homage to the rhythmically complex music of their homeland. If all commie music was this lively, the wall may never have fallen.

Frank Zappa mined endless musical veins; the beautifully packaged *Lost Episodes* (Rykodisc) features the results of his own archaeology dig. From his archives come snippets of high school jazz and orchestral scores, fart jokes, tributes to avant garde composers such as Webern, Varese and Xenakis, snot jokes, doo-wop parodies, TV themes, slacker dialogue and early Captain Beefheart throat clearing. Mostly recorded between 1957 and 1972, it's like scanning the dial inside Zappa's brain: fascinating for devotees, hard going for neophytes.

JAMES BOOKER



albums

CHANTS R&B

Stage Door **Witchdoctors**

(Zero Records)

LA DE DAS LA DE DAS, 1965 TO 1967

(Zero Records)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Wild Things Volume 2

(Zero Records)

When the Chants R&B and the La De Das were the hottest music thing in Christchurch and Auckland respectively, they were taken very seriously indeed. They were fresh and on fire, and to those of their audience similarly infected by the blues/soul bug, they represented a conduit to more of that 'real thing'. These releases are valuable, historical, thought provoking, occasionally overwhelming evidence of the power of New Zealand rock. The full impact of live performance is left to the recollection of those who might have been there, but the recordings here are, at their best, high-water marks for New Zealand popular music. The La De Das became very popular indeed, and few who have heard the Chants' shredding of the John Mayall-Eric Clapton 'I'm Your Witchdoctor' have been left untouched by its sheer assault; few records anywhere have such life-hanging-by-a-thread rush.

Both collections open with early tries that didn't make a dent, but both groups were soon to score: the Chants with a respectful and respectable take on Otis Redding's 'I've Been Loving You Too Long', and the La De Das with the fuzz-riff driven 'How Is The Air Up There?'. Both, of course, are included.

The chants left behind less of a recorded legacy, but 'Stage Door

Witchdoctors' does include a couple of 1966 interview tapes made on the eve of the big move to Melbourne, where singer-guitarist-harpist Mike Rudd still practises music. The one with vocally rounded radio announcer (Radio Hauraki had yet to put to sea; 'disc jockeys' were years away) Murray Forgie is pretty priceless, and it is notable that in mentioning their 'new record', that the Chants acknowledge the sources of John Mayall and Graham Bond. The Jimmy Page practice of songwriting had yet to emerge in its full greedy ugliness. In the area of songwriting, the flip of 'Loving You Too Long', 'I Want Her', by Rudd and drummer-singer Trevor Courtney, while owing something to the 'jazz poetry' riffing of Van Morrison in Them days, rivals 'Witchdoctor' in its deranged edge.

Previously unissued studio cuts show strong performances of songs by Van Morrison, the Pretty Things and a prison farm chorus; although the original field recording may have been filtered through Britishers like the Graham Bond Organisation, who were trying to mould similar material in their quest for that soul core. Aged tapes and dusty acetates make for some disconcerting sound blips here and there, but no undue tolerance is required, and this opens ears (mine included) to another great band burning bright, stranded in paradise (as John Dix so nicely put it). That these lost recordings see the light of day is a blessing. Things verge on the 'no-ll' for 12 tracks of live recordings at Christchurch's Stage Door Club, home to the Chants, in 1966. Direct to one-track domestic tape recorder, states the liner note, so in the circumstances it's a pretty good account

of what sounds like a good night. The mix of covers represents a cross section of the repertoire of those long-hairs actually taking 'rhythm 'n' blues', as this cocktail of blues, soul and tough pop song was known, to the New Zealand audience. Songs come via the Yardbirds, John Mayall, the Pretty Things, Wilson Pickett, James Brown, John Lee Hooker and Larry Williams, all cranked out at an exhilarating pace (Too fast? It was live).

While having no live tracks and no studio left-behinds, the La De Das CD has much of the band's stage repertoire, mostly American soul songs, although some had already been touched by the British experience. The bass accents of 'I Take What I Want' derive from London's Artwoods, rather than Sam and Dave, for instance; and 'I Put a Spell on You' is filtered via Manfred Mann, and is strong aural evidence of the influence on Kevin Borich of Paul Jones, just as Steve Winwood's Ray Charles-isms were bedrock for Phil Key, the La De Das' featured singer, but only one of four capable of taking a lead vocal.

The stage stuff is a mix of Stax material, Small Faces, Otis Redding, Rufus Thomas, Young Rascals, Solomon Burke and so on, but the band was also writing for record. These originals started in the soul bag (the second single, the stop-start 'Don't Stand in My Way', deserved a better hearing than it got), but became increasingly, even feyly, quasi-psychedelic ('Rosale', 'All Purpose Low'). Soon the La De Das would leave for Australia, and a new musical phase.

What stands up best are the hits, the makeover of John Mayall's 'On Top of the World', and, especially, 'How is the Air Up There?' — a New Zealand record to rival the Who's 'My Generation' or the Rolling Stones' '19th Nervous Breakdown'.

Wild Things Volume 2 is subtitled '16 monaural blasts of wild kiwi garage pop, 1966-1968'. Silly spelling ('sine of the tymes', perhaps) aside, this is a bit of a stretch, including as it does such established, even hit-making acts as Ray Columbus, the Chicks, Larry's Rebels, the Gremlins and the Pleazers. However, a case can be made that at this time most any New Zealand act with rock aspirations was likely to end up sounding as if they had recorded in a grease pit. Aurally, this stuff sits well with the American 'Nuggets'/'Pebbles' collections — much fuzzed guitar, an edging towards the wilder end of the spectrum and, most encouragingly, a high proportion of original, if derivative, songs. Perhaps the biggest surprise for me was just how good Jay Epae's 'The Creep' sounded — an insinuating stroll with soul; pretty cool, but mid-66 was getting a bit late for a 'manufactured' dance record.

Congratulations and commendations to Zero Records and John Baker for making this music available again (and, in some cases, for the first time). Bring on the history of the Underdogs, but you're probably working on that right now. Let's hope.

KEN WILLIAMS

IGGY POP

Naughty Little Doggie (Virgin)

The Iggyster lays down the guarantees for this album in the lyrics of the first song, 'I Wanna Live', and what a checklist it is ('I'm better than a Pepsi / I'm cooler than MTV,' and a stack more equally earned and bombastic boasts). He lives up to them ceaselessly, kicking ass in a way that proves his future will be far from 'shuffling'. The Mighty White lays down the licks in a stinkily stellar fashion here, while elsewhere the guitar is handled occasionally by Iggy, and usually by his Fuckups band member Eric Mesmerise. Things soon get swingin' for the album's second and best track, the instantly classic 'Pussy Walk'.

Tempo and sentiment go through varying takes on the 'up' word from here — whether its the nostalgia tripping naivety in 'Innocent World', the angry 'Knucklehead', the longing which springs from the gentle beginnings of 'To Belong', and the chick mirage fantasy of 'Keep on Believing'. Tying up this part of the package are 'Outta My Head' and 'Heart is Saved' — the kind of song that makes you want to head for the nearest beer barn for a celebratory knees up with about 600 of your closest friends.

Just a couple of songs start pretty and stay that way, like the acoustic 'Shoeshine Girl', which is supplemented with the gently juddered keyboards of Mr Wonderful. The wistful and reflective 'Look Away' is the perfect closer to an album by a guy who shouldn't need to prove his place rock 'n' roll, even though he just again.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS

Nerve Ends in Power Lines (Flying Nun)

In 1981 brothers Peter and Graeme Jefferies formed Nocturnal Projections in Stratford, Taranaki. At that time it's doubtful either of them could have dreamt they would transcend their small rural town borders internationally through the music they made together, in the seminal *This Kind of Punishment*, and apart, through the Cake Kitchen, Cyclops and Plagal Grind, etc. What's most surprising (not) is that a label from the other side of the planet, Raffmond (Germany),

would pick up the threads to a generally unknown chapter of NZ music history.

Nocturnal Projections heralded Peter Jefferies' lyrical mastery and their brothers-grim version of optimistic pessimism, as witnessed on the sole love song(?) of this album, 'Difficult Days'. This joins other top-of-the-class tracks including the bleak 'You'll Never Know', and the doubting paranoia of 'Could it be Increased?'

Musically, at worst, some tracks have dated, being heavily influenced as an alternative nation at the time by Joy Division, Wire etc.; while elsewhere Nocturnal Projections take the (first) post-punk sound, and breathe Taranaki frost into what at the time was the freshest carcass available in an otherwise disease ridden world of bovine rock.

Of the previously unreleased songs (one cassette, one single and two EPs was the complete discography), 'People Who Told Me' and 'No Problems Here' are both more indicative of *Beard of Bees* period TKOP, and 'Restoration' is pure completism.

The biggest disappointment, however, is what's missing: the recorded conversation between two very estranged friends in 'Isn't That Strange?', and the total mystery of 'Out of My Hands' (both from the first EP *Another Year*), and two thirds of the final EP, *Understanding Another Year in Darkness*. However, as you'd pay well over \$50 for the first single, I suggest this is a good starting point if you lack the vinyl, 'cause, as the title song says: 'It's a long story — filled with glory.'

MAC HODGE

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE

Moseley Shoals (MCA)

The debate over the virtues of originality versus imitation/retrogression has never been more sharply focused than in the last couple of years with the rise of Britpop, and in particular, Oasis. With Beatles worship emblazoned on their sleeves and saturating their songs; they've knocked down stylistic barriers to notch up universal appeal. So, what price originality?

The Gallagher's favourite band is Ocean Colour Scene, and that's no coincidence. Like Oasis, OCS haven't borrowed from the awful 80s, or punk, they've reached right back to borrow from the best, be it in guitarist Steve Cradock's Hendrix licks on 'You've Got it Bad', or on the full blooded, Redding inspired vocals of Simon Fowler on 'The Riverboat Song'. Elsewhere '40 Past Midnight' recalls the knockabout confederate R&B of the Stones or the Faces, as does the slow Southern drawl of ballads like 'The Downstream' or the smoulder-cum-holler

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Stone Temple Pilots

of 'Get Away'. Techno/ambient/jungle/hip-hop and Tricky aside, it's virtually impossible to discuss rock 'n' roll these days without referring to a lengthening and pervasive past that must influence most contemporary bands to varying degrees. It's sufficient to say Ocean Colour Scene make the most of some of the most durable aspects of rock, to come up with a fine 90s brew that might even taste new to the current generation.

GEORGE KAY

STEVE EARLE
I Feel Alright
(Warners)

It may sound like an overconfident boast, but Earle's rock album 'comeback' is good enough to vilify its title. One of the finest and most underrated American songwriters of recent times (he was massive in Canada, less so in the States, as it turns out), Earle has unfortunately also insisted on enjoying the perennial trappings of the rock and roll star. Hence, his several busts for heroin and time in jail, but despite the staunch, look-you-in-the-eye swagger of the title track, much of this album deals with Earle's troubles with his addiction, the love of the woman who stood by him (Lou-Anne, to whom he dedicates *I Feel Alright*), whilst still stubbornly perfecting his hard living/out-law image (check the self-explanatory 'Hard-Core Troubadour').

At times things do get a little self-indulgent (does the world really need another song CCKMP about heroin?), but 'More Than I Can Do', 'Feel Alright' and 'You're Still Standin' There' (sung with that other great lost talent, Lucinda Williams) are superb. Yet the finest track here is no doubt 'Valentine's Day' — a bad-boy-comes-clean love letter which would be a massive hit if sung by a smoother crooner, as Earle's voice still sounds like gravel rattling round a tin.

Fans should also check out Earle's contribution to the *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack, on which he (by his own reckoning) contributes the best song he's ever penned.

GREG FLEMING

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS
Tiny Music...
(Atlantic)

Stone Temple Pilots' 'difficult third album' (well, isn't every album difficult?) sees them tread futher down the path they began charting with *Purple*, hence coming out an amazingly long distance from their debut, *Core*. From the eerily Doors-like instrumental intro of 'Press Play' (advice for stoners), to the beautiful Beach Boys vibe of 'And So I Know' (alright, I'm through with the comparisons, already), this is the journey of a band who have managed to mature in the face of very misguided media adversity and overkill record company marketing — don't even get me started on the stupid 'grunge' ping-pong ball that bounces between these two factions. Along the way *Tiny Music...* travels through much bittersweetness ('Adhesive Love', 'Lady Picture Show') and frustrated bar banter ('Art School Girl'), some killer pop rock ('Big Bang Baby', 'Trippin' on a Hole in a Paper Heart'), and the kind of perfectly executed epics that know how to take you there, and bring you back again ('Ride the Cliche').

If you handled the radical leap from *Core* to *Purple* happily, you'll find this one sidling up to you with no worries whatsoever. This is a band whose albums only know how to peak. The only disappointment is that *Tiny Music...* is not coming out in our summer, so we could enjoy it in the spirit I am sure it was intended for.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

MIKE JOHNSON
Year Of Mondays
(Tag)

Mike Johnson's second solo LP finds the Dinosaur Jr. bass player and urban golfer extraordinaire stepping out from the formidable shadow cast by Dino frontman, J Mascis. In fact, in a neat touch of role reversal, J assumes side-man duties here, playing drums and occasional bass, while Johnson does the singing and six-strang-thang.

So, what does a Jr. Dinosaur sound like when he's not at his day job? Well, not at all like Dinosaur Jr, that's for damn sure. Johnson's world-weary, melancholy baritone is more reminiscent of Leonard Cohen or Nick Drake than the keening

slacker drawl of J Mascis. Likewise, the sedate musical pace and folk hued instrumentation (with violin and acoustic guitar prominent), has little in common with the shambling freneticism and sheer volume of prime Dinosaur. Indeed, it's not until the closing passage of the album's third track that an electric guitar is used in anger. However *Year of Mondays* is not all moody, minor-key musings. 'Circle', with its nagging guitar riffery, rocks along nicely, while 'Eclipse' is a slow burning epic in the Neil Young mould.

MARTIN BELL

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Songs in the Key of X
(Warner Bros.)

Free actual X-File hidden in the copy-right notes on the back! 'This compact disc does not fully conform with Phillips' 'Red Book' specifications in that the 'pregap' may not play on all CD players.' Where's a technical advisor when you need one? Here I am, actually. By fiddling with your back tracking button right at the beginning of track one, you will break on through to the other side. Take it back to just over the nine-minute mark, and you'll be mightily rewarded with the secret '0' track by Nick Cave and the indescribably awesome Dirty Three, and another, which I'm guessing is the Dirty Three, doing far better things to the *X-Files* theme than the tragic closing PM Dawn remix does.

Seeing this bunch of specially recorded toons is a complement to the coolest TV programme since *Twin Peaks*, it's only fair that it features the coolest remake since Sonic Youth's deconstruction of the Carpenters' 'Superstar', by the coolest band since its frontman's previous band, in Foo Fighters' Gary Numan tribute 'Down in the Park'. Nick turns up again with 'Red Right Hand', in some ways the catalyst for this whole album. Filter turn in the time warp sampling 'Thanks Bro'. The man who could be the subject of an *X-Files* episode on the living dead, William Burroughs, does the vocals for REM's 'Star Me Kitten'. That Frank Black is included should go without saying. So are the Meat Puppets, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Danzig, Soul Coughing, Elvis Costello, Rob Zombie and Alice Cooper, and — aw, shit — Sheryl Crow. Now that really is incredibly strange, Scully.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

FLYING SAUCER ATTACK
Chorus
(Domino)

In the right state of mind (or with the right combination of drugs), you could truly believe Bristol's Flying Saucer Attack are onto something special. Then again, you could think it was all a bunch of self-indulgent old loss. In reality (or, at least, FSA's version of it), both viewpoints are equally valid. That's the problem with creating music from rolling, elliptical beds of fuzzed-out, wah-wahed, reverbed guitar, the occasional mumbled vocal, and even more occasional drumming. When you're operating in that twilight zone between ambient and indie, using noise and incidental melody to create sonic sculpture as art, the conventions of most 'popular' music cease to be a relevant reference point.

And if that sounds like a bunch of pretentious critical twaddle, I can't imagine FSA being so precious about it.

On *Chorus*, a compilation of tracks from a John Peel session, and various other singles and obscurities, they're just doing what comes naturally. For the Saucers, that means creating music from a unique perspective where many of the usual cues we listen for in music have been turned on their heads. Example: on most tracks the rhythm and melody are derived from the seemingly random collision of oscillating feedback and tone. The pulsing, reverbed delay, if not exactly a driving rhythmic force, at least provide some sort of framework from which FSA can cajole and harangue their noise into 'songs'. Think the Jesus and Mary Chain heard through ears wrapped in layers of silk stockings. Think Dimmer at half speed with a pastoral west country accent. Think My Bloody Valentine with the speakers facing the wall and the listener in the room next door. Think 'White Light/White Heat' at the moment all the fuses blow. You're getting close. Now do you understand where the Saucers are coming from? The only question left to answer is whether you want to go along for the ride.

MARTIN BELL

APE MANAGEMENT
Simply the Beast
(Zero)

Christchurch's self-confessed 'exponents of scuzz rock' have strapped on their pseudonyms and sucked down a couple of kegs to record an album of fission powered, swampy blues funk and hard-nosed rawk 'n' roll. All the essentials are delivered here — driving riffs, plenty of humour, buckets of lager lout vocal attitude from front-ape Rock Hardman, and primate-power-pounding from drummer Ken E Bear (who, if I'm not mistaken, used to beat banana skins for legendary Auckland rock monsters Supercar). Personal favourites are 'You Really Lose Me', and the dub version of 'Groovier Than the 59th St Bridge Song' included in the album's six bonus tracks. Just the ticket if you're a Frisbee groupie and only feel subhuman after the eighth can.

DAVID HOLMES

CRACKER
The Golden Age
(Virgin)

Whilst never a huge Cracker fan, I couldn't help but be swayed by lyrics like: 'What the world needs now is another folk singer / Like I need a hole in the head.' Cracker's (really main man David Lowery's) was a tenuous cynicism — one not as powerful as, say, Greg Dulli's from

the great Afghan Whigs, but then there weren't too many records around where a belly-laugh might be an appropriate reaction. Cracker's third album, *Kerosene Hat*, sold a million copies, with the help of the acerbic (and bloody catchy) 'Low', and *The Golden Age* hopes to follow the example with 'I Hate My Generation', which is lazy cynicism in anyone's books. Nevertheless, things improve markedly on the country tinged ballad 'Big Dipper', which is just plain beautiful, as is the title track, which should be released immediately as a single. 'Useless Stuff' is a drunken autobiography that works, and the seven-minute epic 'Dixie Babylon' possesses a filmic sweep, perfectly poised. Highly recommended.

GREG FLEMING

LUSH
Lovelle
(Cortex)

Lush: ethereal vocals, loads of reverb, heavenly guitar, lightweight lyrics. Wrong! Forget the past. With *Lovelle*, Lush are reborn.

It's an album about two passionate and powerful women bashing out great guitar pop. Then it's an album about the same women using their beauty and charm to full effect. Then it's the two of them wallowing in glorious, inevitable pain. Because Lush is the lives of Miki Berenyi and Emma Anderson. And

Lovelle sounds like one (er, a love life, that is).

It opens with the snarling single 'Ladykillers', about sleazoids in Camden, which is a step on from *Split's* 'Hypocrite' — it's even got an 'I Love Rock 'n' Roll' handclap! Then 'Heavenly Nobodies' is like the best moments of *Spooky* rolled into one. There's a duet with Pulp's man of the moment, Jarvis Cocker. 'Tralala' is a sad, sexy little track, singing about wanting 'all the people to know just who I am'. And then 'Last Night' is this evil, gluttonous smoothie, with slow acoustic guitar and violins; Lush at the height of their feminine powers.

There are the typical moments of imperfection, 'Runaway' is dull, '500' is twee, and 'The Childcatcher' is a bit, urgh, folksy. But where they used to be limp and lifeless, now they're al dente and flavour-some. I never thought a Lush album would sound this good in 96.

JOHN TAITE

CHINA DRUM
Goosefair
(Mantra/Beggars Banquet)

Quite fond of the geese are China Drum; a whole gaggle dons the front cover of their new album *Goosefair*, while a couple of pretty funky looking chicks make up the back cover. As for the music, well... it's hard to tell

China Drum are a three-piece from

Northumberland who put a new spin on the easy listening format. It's easy listening in the sense of being forgettable, devoid of any uniqueness or outstanding character. By the end of the 14 songs you're neither excited nor annoyed by the sound of China Drum, purely because you haven't even noticed you've been listening to it.

If, like me, you make yourself listen, you may pick up signs of a serious rock/indie nature. You may be reminded briefly of lesser moments of a Therapy? record. If you're still concentrating you might... nope, sorry, my mind drifted towards the paint drying on the house next door. Nice geese though.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

CAST
All Change
(Polygram)

Well, I've got no idea what Noel Gallagher sees in them. John Power used to be in the Las, only he didn't sing. Cast is John's new band, and he sings in this annoying nasally whine that just gets on my tits. And it's not that the songs are all that bad — for 1974 — but this is the type of banal English guitar pop that gave English guitar pop a bad name.

So, forget Cast, they don't even deserve the rest of this review. Try the Bluetones, they're the real band of the moment. Yeah, I know *Learning to Fly*

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was reviewed last month, but these are great songs we're talking about here, they deserve every mention they get. Love and revenge surrounded by the best melodic songcraft since Oasis (oh, and while we're on Oasis, 'Whatever' has finally been released here — hope we get the video, ha, ha).

The irony is that everybody complains about England's hype machine, but when an album as strong and as brilliant as *Learning to Fly* arrives without the hoopla, it's overlooked. The Bluetones are it. Buy the album, you won't be disappointed.

As for Cast, well, lets hope the Las reform and John Power keeps away from microphones.

JOHN TAITE

HUNK Hunk (Geffen)

Good Lord, we sure do have something quite terrible here. This is the debut album from New York four-piece Hunk, who obviously see the age of 70s prog-rock as in need of a stonking good revival. In the accompanying bio they name-check bands like Led Zep and Queen as having major influence on each of them. Sure enough, the 11 songs on this album all either nod in the direction of these 'classics', or, more often, sound like discarded B-sides of the bands themselves.

The guitar solos and melodramatic emotion of their idols comes through in Hunk's songs, but that isn't really enough. Queen had campiness to burn, and Led Zep... well, Led Zep had Led Zep. Hunk have a collection of cliched rock songs that wouldn't sound out of place in a rock musical piss-take. The knob twiddling, led by Gumball singer Don Fleming, merely exaggerates the ridiculousness of it all.

Barge-pole material.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

ALL YOU CAN EAT Manga/On Duell (One Foot Records)

San Francisco punk band All You Can Eat follow-up their 1995 *kd lang* tour of New Zealand with the somewhat belated release of both their albums on CD. If you saw any of their 94 or 95 shows, you'll have a fair idea of what to expect — up tempo West Coast punk, with huge doses of humour, personal politics and, most importantly, songs about AYCE's favourite topic, food.

The first disc, *Manga* (featuring an ever changing rhythm section), is more like a compilation of singles than a consistent album. Loaded with 20 tracks, it

definitely offers not only value for money, but also manages to show how diverse AYCE's sound can be. From straight-ahead Californian punk, to the wonderfully melodic 'This Die Cast Metal Has Life', they stay catchy without sounding poppy, and manage to tackle current social problems without reducing their argument to an 'Us vs. Them' mentality.

AYCE toured the world, then got down and recorded album two. *On Duell* is a more coherent affair, sounding a lot tighter and more focused. The lyrical content takes on a slightly more serious note, although an abundance of humour still shines through.

I really was amazed at just how much energy AYCE have managed to capture on these two releases, and they've managed to do it without the aid of a producer. Grab yourself a copy, and don't be scared if you're possessed with the desire to climb the walls, stand on your head, or just bust a move with the College Hill Crew. I'm sure AYCE won't mind providing the soundtrack.

BRENDAN ROSS

CLAIRE'S UN NATURAL TWIN Crackpot (Yellow Bike)

A mix of live to air bowel cathartic and fuck-you-we-record-on-four-track material from former angry Lung man Dave White and Frott Head vocalist Claire Pannell. Sounds like they had a real ball making this here rekkid, and there are certainly a few smiles to be had as the listener wanders through their rough hewn aural outhouse. But do I want to hear about young Claire's monthly genital blood experience? Nah. I may insert morphine suppositories in the anus of my neighbour's beagle every four weeks, but it's not the kind of detail I would immortalise on plastic. Sounds like under nourished Fatal Jelly Space. In its defence, *Crackpot* does have some material that stands up to a second listen. 'Learning to Live With Napalm', 'Scrossics', and especially 'Bits of My Speech', all work. It's just a shame about the other stillborn numbers that should never have left the practice womb.

DAVID HOLMES

THE GARDENING ANGELS Inflorance (Hair Shirt Music)

There is a pivotal moment in the song 'False Start' where the narration describes 'catching a raindrop on your tongue'. Now, for those unfortunate enough not to have a millimetre of romanticism within their nature, this may appear a throwaway line. But to these earholes, those few sim-

ple words came like petals on bare skin on an early summer morn'. Sorry to get all Jane Austen on ya, but the Gardening Angels have released an album to melt even the hardest gun fighter. Sweetly compelling and inviting, watch your stereo turn into a fireplace at the touch of 'play'.

Opening with the instrumental 'Silverfish', a tune which showcases surf and pop, ending with a drunk blues fall/finale, it sets off a pattern the rest of the album follows. Although first and foremost a pop album, the grandfather genre is country. There are linges on 'Perennial One' and 'Kimberly', but all the sweet pop, Saturday afternoon sentiments are blown out the window by 'Angel Song' — a crazed romp through bayou and across plain in search of a meaningful good time. 'False Start' and 'Shoes' are not dictionary-definition country tunes, but they convey exactly the same feeling as a great honky-tonk outburst.

Inflorance forces you into a 'thrash to death' mode, but it will stick, and it will grow.

DONALD REID

GOLDEN SMOG Down By the Old Mainstream (Festival)

A 'roots supergroup', if you will, Golden Smog consists of members of Soul Asylum, the Jayhawks, Uncle Tupelo, Run Westy Run and Honeydogs — all members complete with pseudonyms to avoid the wrath of their respective record companies. Sounds like a recipe for disaster, right? Well, *Down By the Old Mainstream* isn't. It's a winsome, light-hearted and sometimes great (check the version of the Faces' 'Glad and Sorry') album, that brings to mind all those record stores stacked full of latty, torn, vinyl copies of *Grievous Angel*, *Harvest* and *Eight Miles High*. And not only lawyers should note that songs like 'Nowhere Bound' (sung by someone sounding very suspiciously like Dave Pirner) and 'V' possess more chart troubling potential than many tracks on the members' last 'real' albums.

GREG FLEMING

SHARON STONED License to Confuse (Enemy Records)

Lovely stuff for Lemonheads fans... but don't be fooled into thinking this is Evan Dando's band, despite the fact his name is ostentatiously listed under 'featuring' on the back cover (along with Lou Barlow and Sylvia Juncosa's), and that it looks suspiciously like his gorgeous mug adorning the actual disc (even though it's

a little hard to make a positive ID when he's got a hole in his motherfucking head). This is not to imply these guests are a poor selection, as they prove worth their weight in Bolivian Marching Powder (check Lou's resignation replete vocals on 'Some' as Exhibit A for the defense), albeit to an entirely different effect.

The core of Sharon Stoned actually consists of old Speednigs Mark Kowarsch and 'Krite' Uhe, and I think you'd have to have a real heart of darkness not to be down with them. I just get that warm fuzzy-cum-give me my duvet and let me suck my thumb feeling the Lemons used to give me off this album. The one exception to this rule is the final listed track (incidentally, there's also a secret one that gives Ev' another go on the mic) to reprise his lovely 'Special Plan', 'Johanna' — which I hope is the deepest sound of a man suffering I'll ever have the heart shredding opportunity to bear witness too, but I need it just the same.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

DEADSTAR Deadstar (White)

If you're one of the lucky few who managed to acquaint themselves with the dangerously divine sounds of the Plums before they disincorporated, you'll be pleased as punch to discover their singer/songwriter, Caroline Kennedy, is back on her trail of temptation terrorism with Deadstar. Hunter and Collector Barry Palmer, and his old Harem Scarem/Crown of Thorns bandmate/current Crowded Houser Peter Jones wrote the core of these tracks, and Caroline put her singularly special stamp to the proceedings with the lyrics and vocals.

The result is as gorgeous as the Plums' *Gun*, if somewhat less dark in the atmospheric department. The music veers between blistering pop and some well judged, less-is-more grinders. The brooding 'Sister' and 'Apologie' are the former case, 'Valentine's Day' is one of the dandiest examples of the three-minute wonder you could ever wish to hear. It bursts from nowhere, laying down great lines like: 'I think you're great 'cause everybody knows you / All the girls in high school want to blow you,' takes in a fleeting new tempo teaser that makes you want to rip your heart out like a starstruck teenybopper, then buggers off at the 2.59 mark, leaving you wondering if it really could've happened. And that's only the finest example of an album which is truly worth crawling across hot coals for. Sure, that'll hurt, but then you'll have the perfect music to lick your wounds by — and it'll feel real good, in a sadistic kinda way.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

SNUFF Demmamussabeonk (Fat Wreck Chords)

And no, repeated listenings of this release from California punk-pop band Snuff hasn't shed any light whatsoever on what that wacky album title means. It might mean: 'A good bunch of punk tunes that are head and shoulders above other Cal-punk outfits.' Or maybe it means: 'We love the Buzzcocks so much we thought we'd release a bunch of fuzzi infected three-minute anthems, just like they were doing 15-odd years ago.' Either definition would fit comfortably. *Demmamussabeonk* is an impressive bag of tricks from a band who manage to rock their asses off, but still maintain some lunefulness throughout.

From the frantic opener, 'Vikings', this album packs in song after song of noisy pop excellence. Many of the tracks will pass as suitable sing-along anthems for the green-hair brigade, and the album could sit on the shelf happily next to Green Day, Rancid et al. But there seems to be a little more substance with Snuff, and hopefully a little more durability. Whether that's the case is yet to be seen, especially since Snuff seem likely candidates for a major label pick-up. Meanwhile, *Demmamussabeonk* will do nicely, ta.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

MEKONS AND KATHY ACKER Pussy, King of the Pirates (Quarterstick)

Not so much a spoken book as the musical interpretation of Ms Acker's latest novel, the heart-warming post-modern tale of a crew of lesbian pirates. The music is provided by the Mekons, and is suitably strange, veering from sea shanty through to a quite scary folk-disco thing, with samples and loops all over everything. In between all this is Kathy Acker reading chunks from the novel which bear some relation to the songs, and give the whole thing a tenuous sort of narrative. It all makes far more sense if you read the book (which is well worth the effort), but it's still a pretty interesting ride as an album, courtesy of the Mekons managing to sound as twisted and atmospheric as Kathy Acker's prose, and there's a great S Clay Wilson cover to top it all off.

KIRK GEE

DANCE HALL CRASHERS Lockjaw (BMG)

No, it's not a compilation of reggae tracks, as the title might suggest. Dance Hall Crashers are a North Californian four-boy, two-girl combo who sound like

they're doing a bunch of Shonen Knife songs — but, like, not at all taking the piss, like. They say they just want to have fun, but this grumpy prick for one isn't finding much to laugh at. Their album cover is full of goofy art and bright colours, and their bio talks about people needing to 'lighten the hell up'. So, how come I'm not smiling? Maybe it's the song topics: 'Queen for a Day' is about creepy record executives, 'We Owe' about financial problems, and 'Enough' looks at tortured relationships. Hardly laugh-a-minute material.

There's no denying the pedigree of DHC. Two members, Tim Armstrong and Matt Freeman, are in Rancid, and when DHC formed way back in 1989, they were both in influential ska/punk act Poison Ivy. Which makes it all the more discouraging to hear this bubblegum pop. The ska riffs are there, but because they're hidden so deep below the saccharine sweet tunes and girly-vocals, courtesy of Elyse Rogers and Karina Denike, there ain't much to chew on. Disappointing.

DOMINIC WAGHORN

BAZOOKA Cigars, Oysters and Booze (SST)

Two albums that give you a pretty good idea of how one of USA punk rock's most legendary labels has made a successful progression into the 90s. First up, Bazooka, an instrumental trio who are what comes of punkers taking on free jazz. *Cigars, Oysters and Booze* is a live album that shows the band in their element, getting a vicious sound, but managing to stay fluid and stylish all the while. They'll happily quote Coltrane one moment, then let ex-Saccharine Trust genius Jack Brewer bust out some very odd improv' vocals the next, which makes for an interesting ride and keeps you guessing. It's just a shame they didn't include their live rendition of Edgar Winter's 'Frankenstein'.

Confront James, however, is a whole different barrel of monkeys. This is the latest project for the very busy Mr Greg Ginn, and it's a doozy. The sound is something like a very heavy Devo/Suicide electronic thing (the drums are electronic, with real percussion layered in over the top), while Ginn goes right ahead and proves why he's one of the few exceptional guitarists to emerge from punk rock. The guy is downright ferocious, tossing out napalm guitar and making vocalist Richard Ray really work for his money. It's dense and unrelenting but, like most of SST's output over the years, well worth the effort.

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BUTTERGLORY
Are You Building a Temple in Heaven? (Merge)

Various hailed as the saviours of underground rock and the new messiahs of whispered cool, Butterglory appear from television stage left — that is to say, you won't find them nestled next to your average punk-by-numbers or funk-by-cucumbers video on Lax TV. Very refreshing and I wonder how long it can last?

To give you a little insight on why Lou Barlow rates them better than Pavement, this album of religious dedication to musical Introversion crosses all the old railway tracks of elitist fringe rock — whether it's the snappy weird pop of 'Sit In The Car', or the genuinely eerie piano chording of 'Boy Burning Down', Butterglory nod gently to their heroes/peers throughout *Are You Building a Temple in Heaven?*

More directly, you could surmise from 'On Button On' that the early Clean influenced their arrangement and (non-)production, and 'Rivers' takes a side swipe at the Velvet's 'Sister Ray'. They do the Chills better than Martin's session musos to date in 'The Halo Over Your Head (Turned Out to be Haunted Instead)', a truly sublime effort. Despite the r'n'r copy book being severely dog-eared these days, a fresher approach would be hard to find. Do us all a favour and buy four copies so we can see their videos wedged into prime time.

MAC HODGE

CIBO MATTO
Viva La Woman (Warners)

Don't ask, who? Just shut up and listen. *Viva La Woman* is the smoothest, slickest trip hop excursion since Tricky's *Maxinquaye*. And it's the coolest hip-hop album since the Beasties' *III Communication*. And it's the most dreamy, freaky, funky, cooley CD of the year so far.

I'll explain. Miko Hatori and Yuka Honda are two hot Japanese tamales who've spent the last decade soaking up New York's eclectic and experimental musical madness. They've got an ear for what's hot; a jet engine here, drunken trumpet solos there, bossa nova, beats that aren't so much laidback as much as they're sprawled all over the couch. And they rap in this Japanese spiced, broken English. Every listen takes you deeper into their world.

The album opens with the appetiser, 'Apple', incorporating the sounds of ancient Japan with 90s New York trash culture; chimes and a traditional vocal wash over this crazy backwards violin sample, gurgling tone and stoned guitar riff. Yes, very *Bladerunner*. 'Beef Jerky' screams out: 'Who cares? / I don't care / A horse's ass is better than yours.' 'Sugar

Water' (the track Mike D is going to remix) has this female lounge warble like something out of the original *Star Trek*; and when the la, la, la chorus hits you and the acoustic guitar loop kicks in, well, it's time to boldly float where no one has gone before.

Punk, salsa, lounge, trip-hop, sci-fi big band. Welcome your ears to another world. Album of the month, without a doubt. Oh, and you pronounce their name 'Chee-bo Motto'; it's Italian for food crazy.

JOHN TAITE

THE FOLK IMPLOSION
Take a Look Inside (Communion)

The seriously prolific Lou Barlow, well into his second half of a century wicket of post-Dinosaur Jr. releases, teams up musically here with partner John Davis, described by his record label as the epitome of 'it takes a tough man to be sensitive'. Of course, aside from musical pedigree, this combo and its deluxe model will be familiar to those who have heard witness to the paedophilic celluloid masterpiece that is *Kids*.

This slab contains 14 toons, eight of which are lifted from their first cassette release through the UK's Chocolate Monk label. For the uninitiated, this is not a 'napalm noise terror death speed hard metal core' extravaganza, but 22 minutes of doodles recorded in John's room on Mondays and Tuesdays between 8.30AM and 4PM, mixed at the infinitely cool Fort Apache.

Briefly then, 'Waltzing With Your Ego' manages to come across as a high on epic (in two minutes and one second, flat!), in an early B-52s, jagged guitar kinda way. There's the usual assortment of Lou Barlow's lyrical muscle, as on the title track where he speculates on judgement day... 'On my knees before the angels cut me open and take a look inside,' sung with an incredibly cheesy, 60s pop melody — clever bastard! The 'Number 1 with a bullet' track has to be the last song, aptly titled 'Start Again', and at this length you can get to hear that particular masterpiece three times during an episode of *The X-files* you boring bugger!

MAC HODGE

LOTION
Nobody's Cool (Corlex)

Lotion are a couple of New Yorkers armed with guitars and brains. Imagine if J Mascis wasn't so slack, and if the passion of Dinosaur Jr.'s guitars spilled over into the lyrics and vocals. Not that they sound like Dinosaur Jr. all that much (apart from the heart pounding pacer, 'Dear Sir'). I'm just talking about the passion and the precision. To these guys, guitars are a moodswinging indicator of

how they get through the madness of reality, and the vocals are fire escapes to their souls.

There are no band names on the album or the bio, so I'll just say that *Mr Lotion's* vocals are a mixture of one part Michael Stipe, one part Evan Dando, and two parts Bob Mould. But then again, 'The Enormous Room' is a nod to the Red House Painters. Er, I guess, I just mean they sound very American — but in a good way. There's a definite sense of Bostonian songcraft to them, even though they're from New York, and they sure know how to get you to listen. They're striving to keep your ears open. Even a weaker track like 'Blind For Now' has five seconds of genius, where this church bell effect comes from out of nowhere and makes you listen some more. It's like they're saying: 'Bear with us for a minute, give it a chance.'

They're fiddling with the formulas and keeping themselves interested. Nobody's cool, but Lotion are close.

JOHN TAITE

THE GLANDS
OF EXTERNAL SECRETION

Northern Exposure
Will Be Right Back (Starlight Furniture Company)

From the bowels of an extraterrestrial space craft, chameleon munching, mad scientist kidnapping, schizophrenic, three-eyed inter-galactic loonies bash out a cacophony of short wave radio transmissions, to amuse each other and the few earthlings capable of understanding what all the noise is about.

Behind all the chaos there are moments of serenity, even beauty (after two minutes 'Space Needle' takes the form of the 3Ds, stops to chat about cement, then returns to the regular 3Ds program again). 'Pat the Bunny' is simultaneously soothing and discomfoting, wherein you can thrill to the sounds of a percussive fur ball coughing cat called Little Kuck (talented little fucker!). My fave, though, is the high speed playback of the severely malfunctioning refrigerator.

To summarise: Piloted by the usually sedate Barbara Manning and Seymour Glass, crewed by the unique Thinking Fellers Union Local 282, as well as Vomit Launch, Wank et al, this ship is powered courtesy of various tape loops and layerings from 1979 to 1994. It contains 50 percent 'Revolution Number 9' bites, and 50 percent visceral 'band' things. Definitely for those of you who want to be physically and mentally challenged; and what the hey, as 'Reality is Contraption' says... 'We're all going to die / It makes you happy, doesn't it?'

MAC HODGE

NZ SINGLES

MARTIN PHILLIPPS & THE CHILLS
Surrounded
CD Single (Flying Nun)

The wide-eyed, optimistic pop of 'Surrounded' is pleasing enough, but a lame choice for a single, lacking the instant hooks of other *Sunburnt* tracks 'New Millennium', and in particular 'Dreams Are Free' — which is a killer tune. The brisk 'Friends Again' sounds though it was written back-to-back with 'Rolling Moon', and is followed by 'Stupid Way To Go' and 'Yabba Dabba Do', two unadventurous, almost indistinguishable pop throwaways, that Martin surely can't dwell too long over.

GARAGELAND
Beelines To Heaven
CD Single (Flying Nun)

At Squid Bar last February, Mr Phillipps leaned over and sang the chorus of 'Different Drum' (a Mike Nesmith song made famous by the Stone Ponys) in my ear when Garageland played 'Beelines To Heaven', and he's correct, they are remarkably similar in vocal melody and chord progressions. 'Beelines...' glides on a sweet 60s-style harmonic melody that's catchiness guarantees them yet another hit at Student Radio, and deserves a wider audience. 'Bus Stops' is cleverly fragile, yet grand at the same time, while the stretched and tortured heart-breaker 'Cut It Out' ("What I am I gonna do with this love for you?") reaches 'phenomenal' territory. A heavily reverberated version of 'Bus Stops' called 'Bus Trips', rounds off a sublime release, that makes me even more fucked off my Garageland t-shirt shrunk in the wash.

LOVES UGLY CHILDREN
Suck
CD Single (Flying Nun)

With the London-recorded 'Suck' four-track single, Loves Ugly Children tear away screaming from their palatable pop past, and have a calculated stab at sounding like bogan pop rockers, especially on 'Rock-Pig' and the

excessively long 'Destroy The City' (propelled by a choice Lemmy-like bass riff). 'Suck' itself, boasts the colourful, screaming guitar dynamics of Simon McClaren, interspersed with roaring gat riffs, and feels more like the 'Personal World'-era LUC that I like, but overall, and with the inclusion of the stop/start speedster 'Heading South', I'd prefer not to go back for seconds.

SUPERETTE
Touch Me
CD Single (Flying Nun)

Always a winner in Superette's sometimes charisma-free live shows, 'Touch Me' chugs by on an infectious Ben Howe bass riff, and marks the singing debut of drummer Greta Anderson, adding her sugary vocals to those belonging to Dave Mulcahy. 'Catacombs' recalls the JPSE's more edgy, uneasy listening outings, and the tension-filled 'Cheezel', could possibly inspire fist-in-the-air-type rock antics. Also here is the demo version of 'Saskatchewan'.

MUCKHOLE
Where's The Corndogs?
CD EP (Felix)
FUTURE STUPID
Future Stupid
CD EP (Felix)

The Muckhole and Future Stupid EPs are the first two releases on the new Auckland indie Felix, an off-shoot of the Wildside label.

Muckhole are heavily influenced by the DC hardcore scene, and show no mercy when unveiling their brand of speedy melodic pop. *Where's the Corndogs?*, features 'Overdrive' and 'Subterfuge', originally released on cassette last December, plus the Husker Du-ish 'Don't Wanna Know You', and the EPs top moment, the 'Muckhole Theme Song', an intensely powerful blast of pop that is everything that's magic about rock 'n' roll. A pure classic.

Future Stupid take a more dense, brutal approach to rock, that at times

('In The Basement', 'Big Dumb Future') is reminiscent of the more lumbering and pointless side of White Zombie. But when singer/guitarist Tony Hallum injects a dose of pummelling melody into the mix, as on 'Shovel', 'Rough Us Guts', and the bFM fave 'Shit Biscuit', they make perfect sense.

THORAZINE SHUFFLE
An Affair
CD Single (Chronic)

If Thorazine Shuffle's debut single was a library book etc... 'An Affair' certainly isn't the first tune to have a series of 'yeah, yeah, yeah's in the chorus. At the core, it's a fine, memorable pop song, though I still view it as tarnished by overplaying in the drumming department, a prerequisite in the early days of Second Child, but a less busy approach would seem more suited to 'An Affair's' simple structure. More impacting is the buzz saw pop of (the miles too long) 'Losing You', where vocals and guitars are left with room to spread out. Closing is the alternatively intricate and thrashy, 'Happy Camper'.

ANNIE CRUMMER
State Of Grace
CD Single (Warners)

The next two months will provide the perfect opportunity for watching a record company hype machine working at full throttle. Annie Crummer and her forthcoming album *Seventh Wave* will be everywhere. 'State Of Grace' is the first offering, a slick, feel-good, but ultimately forgettable, vocal epic. In 'the biz', track two 'Wisehead' is known as an AOR ballad. If the cap fits...

SALON KITTY
Salon Kitty
Cassette EP (Kittylytter)

Pumpkinhead's Jason Peters keeps the tight, primal beats happening on Salon Kitty's debut release, that was recorded and mixed in three hours at Christchurch studio, Tandem. Salon Kitty delve below the belt to dredge up a sleazy blues/rock hybrid that celebrates filthy slabs of guitar and bass, and a vocalist whose every utterance originates in his bowel. And thank god one NZ band has the intestinal fortitude to ask the tough, probing questions; 'Whatever Happened to Rico Tubbs?'. Write to 47 Haslam Crescent, Hoonhay, Christchurch.

JOHN RUSSELL

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MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

<p>PUMPKINHEAD Powerstation May 17</p>	<p>LOVES UGLY CHILDREN play Kurtz May 11.</p>	<p>2 MAY Maree Sheehan Sports Stadium, Whakatane David Gideon Sawmill, Leigh</p>	<p>3 Red Hot Chili Peppers, Thorazine Shuffle Mt Smart Supertop, Auckland Guinness Celebration Of Irish Music Aotea Centre, Auckland O, Saturn 5, Gaunt Pudding Squid, Auckland Screaming Orgasms, Fusion Refugees, Sesqui Kings, Torn Stomach, Palm Nth Maree Sheehan Convention Centre, Rotorua David Gideon Gypsy Fair Wine Bar, Warkworth</p>	<p>4 Red Hot Chili Peppers, Thorazine Shuffle Queens Wharf Events Centre, Wgtn Nothing At All, Muckhole, Future Stupid Powerstation, Auckland (All Ages) Motorsheep Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Guinness Celebration Of Irish Music Theatre Royal, Chch Abdoulaye Epizo Bangoura Manifesto Wine Bar, Auckland The Madding Crowd Hole In The Wall, Wgtn David Gideon Bar & Brasserie, Devonport</p>	<p>5 Guinness Celebration Of Irish Music Michael Fowler Centre, Wgtn Abdoulaye Epizo Bangoura, Spargo Unitech Performing Arts School, Auckland</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>7 Alanis Morissette North Shore Events Centre Auckland</p>	<p>8 Alanis Morissette Queens Wharf Events Centre</p>	<p>9 Loves Ugly Children His Lordships, Chch Horace Pinker Kurtz Lounge, Auckland Maree Sheehan Wings Air Base, Hamilton Decaydance Bar Bodega, Wgtn David Gideon LaVegas, Rotorua</p>	<p>10 Loves Ugly Children Hole In The Wall, Wgtn Horace Pinker St Peters Hall, Hamilton Theo Ray Squid, Auckland Maree Sheehan Wings Air Base, Hamilton Mushroom Ball 96 Jacks, New Plymouth Brand X Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Decaydance Antipodes, Wgtn Smokefree Rockquest Victoria Uni, Wgtn David Gideon LaVegas, Rotorua</p>	<p>11 Loves Ugly Children, Future Stupid Kurtz Lounge, Auckland Tadpole, Corrugate, Stayfree Carefree Squid, Auckland Mushroom Ball 96 Jacks, New Plymouth</p>	<p>12 Horace Pinker Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth David Gideon Daily Planet, Devonport</p>
<p>13 Horace Pinker Antipodes, Wgtn</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Horace Pinker Warners, Chch</p>	<p>16 Shihad, Baconfoot Albert Motor Lodge, Palmerston North Loves Ugly Children, Pet Rocks Wailing Bongo, Hamilton Maree Sheehan Napier David Gideon Timberlands Hotel, Tokoroa</p>	<p>17 Shihad, Baconfoot, Letterbox Lambs James Cabaret, Wgtn (All Ages) Pumpkinhead Powerstation, Auckland (All Ages) Jan Hellreigel Alamo, Auckland Loves Ugly Children Shakespeare, Napier Evilis Squid, Auckland Pet Rocks New Plymouth Hideously Disfigured, State Of Hate, Motorsheep Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Decaydance Pod, Auckland Maree Sheehan Napier Theo Ray Bar Bodega, Wgtn David Gideon LaVegas, Rotorua</p>	<p>18 Shihad, Baconfoot, Gluefist, Swallow Warners, Chch Jan Hellreigel Squid, Auckland Pet Rocks Bar Bodega, Wgtn Theo Ray, Claires Unnatural Twin, Wholesale Drainage Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Smokefree Rockquest Lincoln Uni, Chch David Gideon LaVegas, Rotorua</p>	<p>19 David Gideon Bakksters Bar, Hastings</p>
<p>20 Cranberries Town Hall, Chch</p>	<p>21 Heather Nova Kurtz Lounge, Auckland</p>	<p>22 Maree Sheehan Showgrounds, Palm Nth David Gideon O'Flaherty's, Napier</p>	<p>23 Smashing Pumpkins, Garageland Mt Smart Supertop, Auckland Cranberries Queens Wharf Events Centre, Wgtn Maree Sheehan Showgrounds, Palm Nth Decaydance Exchange, Hamilton David Gideon Cuba Cuba, Wgtn</p>	<p>24 Shihad, Loves Ugly Children, Baconfoot Powerstation, Auckland (All Ages) Smashing Pumpkins, Breathe Queens Wharf Events Centre, Wgtn Stellar, Five Go Mad Squid, Auckland Decaydance Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Jethro Tull Logan Campbell Centre, Auckland Smokefree Rockquest Otago Uni, Dunedin David Gideon Apaches Bar, Nelson</p>	<p>25 Shihad, Baconfoot Wailing Bongo, Hamilton Cranberries Mt Smart Supertop, Auckland Cicada, Coelacanth, Stan & the Love Gang, Love Sector 6, Alalfameo, Moon Syrup, Her Majestys Minstrils Powerstation, Auckland Doris Days Squid, Auckland Naib, Simnock Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Decaydance Bar Bodega, Wgtn Jethro Tull TSB Stadium, New Plymouth David Gideon Hot Mamas, Motueka</p>	<p>26 Smashing Pumpkins, Atomic Blossom Town Hall, Chch</p>
<p>27 Smashing Pumpkins, Atomic Blossom Town Hall, Chch Jethro Tull Showgrounds, Palm Nth David Gideon Chevys Bar, Chch</p>	<p>28 Jethro Tull Town Hall, Wgtn David Gideon Chevys Bar, Chch</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 Jethro Tull Town Hall, Chch Maree Sheehan Town Hall, Wgtn David Gideon Crossroads, Dunedin</p>	<p>31 Balance, Applicators, Here's Proof Jeffrey James Theatre, Auckland Splitter Squid, Auckland Maree Sheehan Town Hall, Wgtn Jethro Tull Town Hall, Dunedin Blackjack Alpha, Kihikihi Fat Mannequin Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Smokefree Rockquest Founders Theatre David Gideon Luggats Creek Bar & Grill, Cromwell</p>	<p>1 JUNE Skapa, Offbeats, Screaming Orgasms, Decaydance Antipodes, Wgtn Inchworm Wild Horse Saloon, Palm Nth Twelve Tribes Of Israel Sound System Squid, Auckland</p>	<p>2</p>

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MAKING MUSIC

HINTS TO (MAYBE) GET A RECORD DEAL

In the corner of Wildside Records label boss Murray Cammick's home office is a cardboard box filled with unsolicited demos, sent by dozens of unsigned bands from all over New Zealand. It's almost guaranteed, the same tapes will be in other cardboard boxes in the offices of numerous other local record companies, both major and independent. The owners of the tapes have at least three things in common: each band no doubt believes the quality of their music makes them the most deserving of a record deal; the chance of their tape ever being listened to is extremely minimal ("It's a waste of time people sending me demos," says Cammick); and each has chosen what is probably the least successful way of gaining the attention of a record label.

Paul Ellis, General Manager of A&R/Publishing at Sony Music (NZ), receives several tapes a week. However, the label adds just one or two local acts a year to their roster, and therefore would never sign an artist solely on the strength of a demo. Ellis advises young bands to play regularly to create some awareness, prior to approaching a label.

"What bands seem to fail to recognise is, this is a business, you can't just knock on a record company door and say: 'Hi, we're Joe 90 and we really want a deal.' You need some sort of profile for any label, major or independent, to take you seriously. When people come to me or send me tapes, they're trying to run without learning to walk, if they haven't already got a live following, or haven't carved some sort of name for themselves."

A record company operating in the commercial marketplace, whether a small independent like Wildside or a corporate giant such as Sony, lives by the bottom line — they must sell records to survive. In order for a label to show interest in signing a local band, the label must believe the act has sales potential, and has, by their own hand, made some progress in estab-

lishing a market for themselves, to which the label can sell records. As Cammick notes: "Once you've got an audience, you've got something that is of value to a record company."

James Southgate, Managing Director of Warner Music (NZ), cites the example set by Supergroove, who were touring nationally well before they sparked any label interest.

"Supergroove recognised a band has to be playing live and building a following, so they went out there and secured an audience. Bands have got to be very active in their careers, that's a big part of it today, and if they can build a following, obviously any label is going to be far more interested if they've got a fan base out there."

Of course Supergroove went on to release the quadruple-platinum selling album *Traction* on BMG Records, and toured extensively in the UK and Europe. More recently, Auckland trio Nothing At All! were snapped up by Festival Records, who released the band's self-titled debut last December. Nothing At All! actively sought an audience for their music when they formed in 1991, by producing independent cassettes, achieving student radio airplay, undertaking several nationwide tours, and playing constantly in the Auckland region. As a result they've been rewarded with a large and loyal group of fans and a record deal.

In New Zealand, the major record companies essentially only exist to distribute and promote albums by overseas acts, they neither require nor depend on local artists to work. Therefore the direct deals offered to Nothing At All! and Auckland solo singer/songwriter Bic Runga, whom Ellis signed to Sony late last year, can only be applauded and encouraged. Realistically though, a rock 'n' roll band like Nothing At All! is always going to be an oddity on the roster of a New Zealand major label, who much prefer to record mainstream artists

and family favourites, whose appeal lies within the massive Top 40 market, where the most potential for profit lies. Southgate, whose Warner label is home to Jan Hellriegel, the Exponents, and Annie Crummer, explains what is basically the situation for all local majors.

"A&R in New Zealand is probably one of the toughest in the world to make work. To record local bands and put their records out here, the basic costs are just as much as in Australia, or in the UK, or America, but all we're getting to is 3.3 million people. With local A&R we're obviously looking for people who have long term career prospects, who can also make it worthwhile for us. The bottom line is it's got to be saleable, this is a business, and we've got to believe that we can create good awareness, good airplay, and good sales."

It's pretty much a given, then, that the majority of young New Zealand bands who will make a name for themselves domestically (and possibly internationally), will do so from the base of an independent label. At various stages over the past four years, groups like Shihad, Head Like A Hole, Loves Ugly Children, Eye TV, Dead Flowers, Pumpkinhead, Garageland and King Loser have increased their profiles in leaps and bounds with the assistance of the Flying Nun, Wildside, and Pagan labels.

Although the three indie promote vastly different styles of music, each shares common themes in what they look for in a potential addition to their rosters.

"Obviously there's the music," says Pagan's Trevor Reekie, "then there's their own sense of determination and motivation, and then it comes down to personality, is this a band that can work with us?"

Those thoughts are almost mirrored by Flying Nun's New Zealand General Manager, Lesley Paris.

"We look for people who are decent human beings, and who have a good attitude to what they are doing, and most importantly, we look for people who know how to write songs."

To that end, Cammick follows a theory belonging to Ahmet Ertegun, co-founder of the legendary Atlantic Records: 'Nobody buys a record because they have been hyped into buying it. People buy a record when they hear something they want to hear again.' Cammick is a big fan of melody, and would rather listen to a band play a pop song than a precise one.

"You've got to be able to say: 'Hey, this is a great song.' You can't sell records by saying: 'Hey, these guys are great players.'"

The Wildside label in particular, has a reputation for signing bands with dynamic and fiercely energetic live shows. If a band can deliver the goods on stage, that's another plus to the label's MD.

"I'd probably have a bias towards bands that perform well live. So, the first thing I'd want to hear about is that this band is out there, performing live and getting a crowd. The bands I've signed from Wellington and Christchurch, I've seen most of those first time in Auckland, and if you want to sell records throughout New

Zealand, you've got to have bands that are prepared to tour. My feeling is, if someone can't get a crowd of 500 somewhere in the country, why would I bother making a record?, because you've got to sell a lot more than 500 to make any impact."

While Paris doesn't insist prospective Nun bands be great travellers, they should at least have acquired a live following in their own backyard.

"It helps if they've got their own little market that we can sell records to. All of the bands we have signed have had an audience, even if it's just in their own city."

Reekie: "The live thing is one of the biggest determining factors a band can have going for them. The bigger the crowd they're pulling, the more interest they're going to glean, from the majors through to the indies."

Another factor that can turn the head of a record company boss is the 'word of mouth' introduction. The liner notes of the Dance Exponents 'best of' album *Once Bitten, Twice Bitten* detail how the band were signed to Mushroom Records in 1981, after Christchurch venue promoter Jim Wilson phoned Mike Chunn, then Managing Director at the label, and told him to fly down from Auckland to check out this hot new band. Little has changed over a decade later. Both Pumpkinhead and Wildside's latest, signing Muckhole, first came to Cammick's attention through recommendations ("You can virtually say if you haven't heard people saying there's a good band out there, probably there isn't one."), and Dunedin band High Dependency Unit signed with Flying Nun last year, after Paris was pestered to see them live.

"This pushy woman called Natasha who works for us repeatedly demanded we see them. We did, and we liked what they do. We have our 'A&R agents' out there at all times at gigs, and we take notice if a lot of people are raving about a band, and we'll go and see them... but it still comes down to the fact we have to like them."

Within the larger market, those bands locally that do find a label who likes them will possess one gift that can't be learned, and that is the ability to write good, well crafted, memorable songs. Ultimately, says Cammick, without able songwriting, a band will rarely get past square one.

"Bands have got to make sure they've got a songwriter in the band, and they can write songs, and that they can get on stage and get a positive response out of their audience. Basically, if you're good as a band, your audience will grow. There are minority or cult forms of music that don't ever have a significant audience, so, you can't always judge your creative worth by the size of your audience; but if you're working in, basically, an area of music that could appeal to the mainstream, and if it doesn't appeal to the people that are coming to see you, you've got a problem."

In closing he adds: "I think there's a truism that if you're any good, [a label] will come looking for you."

That last statement may sound harsh, but it screams the truth, as the music business is not a sentimental one. Indeed, Reekie says bands, on occasion, need to question why they're making music in the first place.

"If getting approached by a label is the thing that's motivating the music, then they shouldn't be bothered with it. It's the music that's got to motivate the band. The most realistic advice you can give to any young band is, believe in yourself and keep doing it, and going at it as hard as you can. It's basically a situation of, don't give up if you really believe in it."

JOHN RUSSELL

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RUMOURS

AUCKLAND

Crowded House will take over York Street Studio in July and August to record their fifth album, the follow up to *Together Alone* ... the Auckland Youth Theatre (behind the Town Hall) is opening its doors to live bands again for the first time since June 1990, when a budding interior decorator at a Warners gig decided a section of the toilet wall would look better in the foyer. **Balance**, **Here's Proof** and **Diswomble** play an all ages show there on May 31 ... the hardest touring band in the land, **Evilis** play at Squid on May 17 ... 95bFM are organising a high schools tour by **Nothing At All!** for the last week of May and the first week of June. If your school might be interested in accommodating the band, phone Simon at bFM on 366-7223 ... Aaron Carson played his last show with the **Dead Flowers** at the Powerstation on April 26. The band are presently searching for a new bassist. Meanwhile, former DF guitarist **Riqi Hadfield** has returned to Auckland and is piecing a new band together ... **Max TV** filmed the recent **Chills/Garageland** double bill at the Longview in Howick, for two forthcoming specials on each band ... **Pumpkinhead** make their first visit to Auckland since the *Big Day Out*, playing an all ages show at the Powerstation on May 17 ... ex-Supergroove members **Tim Stewart** and **Che Ness** have formed new bands and are finalising recording plans ... **Nathan Haines** is releasing a live in the studio album on Huh! ... **Bizarre Beats** have closed up shop at 1 O'Connell Street, and instead are setting up mail order distribution. For lists or info, PO Box 8385 or fax (09)623-3323 ... the next batch of Flying Nun seven-inch singles will be out on June 4. The lucky recipients this time round are King Loser's **Celia Patel** and **Sean O'Reilly**, the 3Ds' **David Mitchell** and **Denise Roughan**, and Dunedin's **Cloudboy** ... newcomers **Tim Teen & the Teentones** have recorded their debut single, 'Let's Rock', for independent cassette release in early June ... the May 10 Auckland show by **Anthrax** and **Cyco Miko** was postponed until May 24, after drummer Charlie Benante's brother was shot dead in New York ... the **Doris Days** have recorded four songs at Ground Zero for a proposed EP release next month ... **Spacesuit** are now looking forward to recording in November ... Christchurch's **Loves Ugly Children** are shifting to Auckland this month, and will immediately begin work on a new album with former SPUD guitarist Matthew Heine. The trio play two shows in Auckland during May, at Kurtz on Saturday 11, and at the Powerstation supporting **Shihad** on Friday 24 ... don't forget the **Hatching Battle of the Bands**, entry is open till May 31. Phone Rayna (358 1846) or Trish (377 5441) for info.

JOHN RUSSELL

PALMERSTON NORTH

The long line of new bands coming (but hopefully to survive) continues with these bizarrely named projects: **Sesqui Kings** (featuring members of Wholesale Drainage), **Earl Grey and the Biskettes**, **Fusion Refugees** (born out of the Johnny Carson "school" of free jazz), and **Mechanic** (an aural landscape and blasting from local artists Jack Black and Dan Campion). **Mechanic** had a tape release party in April (along with other Lizard Mull label mates **Foisemaster**) ... **Bullfrog Rata** have been playing around town with **Midge Marsden** ... the **Wild Horse Saloon** is having too many gigs, and the bands are suffering as a result, due to the audiences spreading themselves too thinly ... the **Susans'** *It's Their View* CD release party was weird, because nobody

DAVID MUIR

actually played, but the wine was bloody good! ... people recording lately include **Harassment**, **Matt Soong**, **Wholesale Drainage**, **EZ8** and **Cytoplasm** ... **Kiwi Rock** are organising a battle of the bands, which is being held at the Albert ... Dave will you a record at **Yellow Bike** record cutting if you beg ... **CUNT** had the best time with **Unsane** on the tour. Speaking of which, **Unsane** have a track on the next **Valve** magazine release, which is a CD — vinyl fanatics, don't cry. **Valve** has gone all cosmopolitan now, with people on it from other places too, including Jello Biafra, along with hordes of other wonderful people like: **Stump Thumper**, **Deluxe Doom Inc.**, **Foisemaster**, **CUNT**, **Body Bomb**, **Rhonda K**, **HDU**, **Baldman**, **Gaylene** and the **Undertakers**, **Sandra Bell**, **Leonard Nimoy** and **Jack Black**. Contributions for future issues and purchase orders (\$15) can be made to PO Box 4391, Palmerston North.

CLAIRE PANNELL

DUNEDIN

Radio One is to hold its own *Onefest*, a weekend of mayhem and joy. It will cover the weekend May 9-12. Line-up includes **Suka**, **HDU**, **Cloudboy**, **Love Consort**, **Johnathan Talbot**, **Slate** (Andrew Dickson), **Crude**, **DJs Nosleep** and **Big Phil**, a film premiere and more ... Genevieve McLean is popping back into town to do some recording with **Mink** and **Love Consort** ... Johnathan Talbot, who frequently appears on Radio One's *Top 11*, is to release a tape of solo recordings in May, and a Geraldine single is also in the pipeline. His group **Eve** is gigging as usual, and are set to release a tape in the near future ... **Axiom**, who describe their music as 'progressive thrash', have released a six-song tape. By far the best metalish (my comment) band in these parts. Available from PO Box 2244, Dunedin. They are also looking for a new bass player ... *The Dunedin Sound Exhibition* is up and running. A series of cool performances is swinging along. Reformations aplenty, **Look Blue Go Purple** will have done their thing for the first time in many years by the time you read this. The triple CD *But I Can Write Songs Okay* has been released on Yellow Eye in conjunction with the exhibition, and contains some very cool and rare pre 80s material, along with the later, more obvious material; 73 tracks and a great booklet written by Roy Colbert — a musical history of Dunedin music ... **Gamaunche**, mid-80s non-flying Nunners who played on the same bill as Alastair Galbraith and Bob Scott, have been moved to do new recordings ... also released is new book, *Kiwi Rock*, which chronicles NZ music in the modern era (post-*Stranded in Paradise*). It comes with an eight-track CD, for the most part previously unreleased songs by the **Chills**, **David Pine**, **Strailjacket Fits**, the **Bats**, the **3Ds**, **JPSE**, **Snapper** and a live version of 'Iggy Told Me', by the **Enemy** ... **Chug** have finished recording a new album ... despite geographical difficulties, the **Verlaines** are recording a new CD ... **Fold** have released their self-funded CD, *Plantlife*, and are gigging all over the place ... **Pimply White Thighs** continue to be the ultimate support band, next in line are the **Able Tasmanians** ... **Polyp** may be reforming. While those outside of Dunedin may not give a shit, this is big news locally. Well, sort of big ... lastly, the annual **Freek Ball** held at Fox River on the West Coast is blasting off at 8PM, June 1 and keeps going till dawn. Playing are **Inunga Funga**, **Horse**, **Snort**, **Soma**, **Lonesome Throats** and **DJ Tin Tin**. Tickets available throughout the South Island. Should be a wild time ... any info, phone 472-7291.

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PAUL KELLY

Powerstation, Auckland,
April 5 and 6.

There's little fancy about Paul Kelly. You know he's got good songs, often a good band, and that, yes, he'll probably sing a song or two about his other abiding passion, cricket. Although these songs encompass falling down drunk, swing through various addictions, adulteries and murders, you trust that Kelly himself shall turn up on time, and (as much as his wily chords allow) sing in tune. Indeed, the last few years have seen him attain a scary degree of professionalism.

This visit Kelly seemed a little more sombre than usual. Dressed in basic black both nights, he kept the between-song patter to a minimum, letting his songs and their characters do the talking. Once or twice he'd climb up on the drum riser, and once memorably, on the second night, shuffled Berry style from his mic stage centre to (kiwi-born, ex-Johnnys) guitarist Spencer Jones stage left, but such movements were the exception rather than the norm. And, like Bruce, he can't dance.

Much of the material this Easter weekend was made up from his two most recent albums (*Wanted Man* and *Deeper Water*) with Kelly choosing to open the first night with a New Orleans style 'Everybody Wants to Touch Me' — a song that lyrically could've been penned by that great grump himself, Dylan. Yet Kelly, true to his working class roots, turned in a show which ran for almost three hours (a little too generous), and showed how far he has progressed, and how much he has

stayed the same.

Highlights included a stomping 'Dumb Things', the wonderful 'Careless', a perfectly judged 'Everything's Turning to White', played solo on an out of tune guitar ("Murder ballads are in fashion, I hear," quipped Kelly), and 'Randwick Bells' — a song saved for an encore, and one whose emotional power seemed to surprise even its author.

In Jones, Kelly's found a perfect accompanist, and his understated and economical playing was a delight throughout. Ironically, it was a version of the band classic 'It Makes No Difference', sung by Jones on Easter Friday, which really brought the house down.

Not a night, then, of revelations, more one of refinement — Kelly seeming content for the moment to remain a craftsman rather than a seer; cricket songs not withstanding.

GREG FLEMING

O, FITCH

Kings Arms Tavern,
Auckland, April 18.

Early morning drinkers and mumbling vagrants who still pine over the obliteration of the Gluepot, in particular the public bar, should check out the Kings Arms for a soothing dose of nostalgia, as all the classic elements are in abundance: carpets, tables, curtains and jugs.

In the lounge bar, numbers are few for O and Fitch this damp Thursday evening. A pal who'd caught both these bands previously warned me to prepare for what Elvis Slag used to describe as, 'tuneless whiners in Doc Martens', though I'd seen O before, and knew they, at least, were a cut above that. The band histories of O's lead guitarist Mac Hodge (Zombie Boy, Sea Monkey) and bass player Darren McShane (Chainsaw Masochist, Figure 60) have, not unexpectedly, been drawn on to create the O sound. The resulting amalgam means, almost in rotation, their squall-ish, free flowing pop can

sound overblown and directionless, or sharp and melodically blessed. Book-ending the set were two examples of the latter — the practised feedback and clanging chords of 'Out of Sight' and 'Black Cars' — plus a rollicking cover of Love's 'My Flash on You', ensuring that, despite a two-song bout of indulgent time wasting midway through, even Elvis would warm to them.

Taking to the carpet (no stage, ya see) first, three-piece Fitch's dreary first song was a total eye roller, dutifully acknowledged with a polite: "That sucked, sorry, guys." Thankfully it was uphill from then on, though crappy sound meant the wash of shrill, cascading guitar was only faintly audible under solid, melodic basslines and taut, methodical drum patterns. Fitch are a schizophrenic bunch, shifting from sloppy jams to tightly coiled sleepers, before pulling off a SPUD-like dirge to close.

This evening, O and Fitch both had moments of being 'tuneless', and indeed 'whiny', but also offered instances of classy guitar noise that demanded they don't get dismissed lightly.

Oh, yeah, the 'jugs' gag is still a good one isn't it?

JOHN RUSSELL

MARTIN PHILLIPPS,
CHRIS MATTHEWS,
CHRIS KNOX,
DANNY MANETTO
Kurtz Lounge, Auckland,
April 21.

It's Sunday night. It's pissing down. On the way to the gig a woman is beaten up on Ponsonby Road. People are looking away and walking past as she's getting her face pummelled. At the lights there's a homeless tramp trying to clean my windscreen with an imaginary squeegee. And at the end of this trip through the heartland of darkness is Kurtz, with 30 or so people huddling away from the wet madness outside.

First up is Danny Manetto,

formerly of Shaft, presently of who knows. Starts out with a Christmas song. Nobody is really listening, nobody really cares. Then there's a song I assume is called 'So Long' — sounds like Lou Reed doing 'Knocking on Heaven's Door', in the background of some Hollywood slacker sell-out movie, where Christian Slater is in a bar trying to break up with his cancer ridden lover. The whole set is full of songs of separation and despair, and by the look of Danny chugging back his quadruple whisky at the end of the set, I'd imagine he's set to write a few more of them.

Chris Knox is up next and the crowd seems to double. The downpour outside might have something to do with it. The sound guy is munching on a Kurtz \$5 roast, and Chris reminds us all he's got a cold. But that doesn't stop him delivering a predictably strong set, with the usual Knox stand-up routine in between songs. The girl behind me whispers: "He's got such a cool voice," but not to me. Damn it.

There are a couple of numbers off the latest album, but the real gems are the new tracks. 'Flaky Pastry' was the bit of magic we were all hoping for on this gloomy rainy night; rhythm killing stomper of a backing track, Gatling gun, semi-demi syllabic lyrics, and chorus of: 'You and I have all we ever wanted.' Heads turned, feet tapped and people cheered. Then there was 'The Art of Skin' and 'Sweaty Thighs of Circumstance' (I might of misheard that one), and he closes on the possible next single, 'The Joy of Sex', with its 'baby, baby' chorus (honest!).

Chris Matthews gives us a rare solo performance, but it's one of the evening's lows — kind of like watching Al Jourgensen doing unplugged, or something. It just didn't feel right. And hearing 'Mr Moon' solo was enough to send me back to the pinball machines. Let's hope the Chickens find a

keyboard player bloody quickly.

When Martin Phillipps got up with a keyboard, it looked like we were going to finish the evening off with a religious experience. Apart from the odd stumble, it was certainly the most captivating performance of the night — but we only got a couple of songs, then it was back to guitar. It's strange, but Martin looks more comfortable up there by himself than with the band. It was like he could just play the songs as he imagined them, without worrying about anyone else fucking them up. Just a man and his guitar. 'Ocean Ocean' sounded great, with the ebbs and flows of the structure sounding more prominent and bare. 'Wet Blanket' was brilliant solo, as was 'The Streets of Forgotten Cool'. I didn't catch the name of the new song, strummed, lyrics about getting back together again and giving it another go (ironically, he tells us he hasn't practised this with the Chills yet).

It was an evening of sketches and rarities, of test drives and favourites. And as I leave Kurtz, it looks like someone has abandoned a smashed up, stolen car outside. Just another Sunday in Auckland.

JOHN TAITE

ENZO

Aotea Centre, April 3.

The idea of an orchestra dishing up hits for the masses in a 'pops' season has always turned my stomach. Like Keri singing pop songs, to me it just ain't the real thing. So, it was with a certain scepticism I ventured into the Aotea Centre to see New Zealand's greatest pop icons collide with our other great musical institution. A glance at the programme relieved me, as I realised this was not going to be some super unplugged greatest hits show. Three songs from *Mental Notes* and no sign of 'I Got You' anywhere. This was Split Enz going back to their cello and and violin roots.

Inside, the air of pomp and festivity reminded me of the grand royal court set the Enz had used the first time I saw them in the Auckland Town Hall. Noel Crombie and Sally Ann Mill's set, together with lights by original lighting designer Raewyn Turner, provided that surrealistic mood which the Enz were always so good at exploiting.

After an instrumental version of 'Six Months in a Leaky Boat' provided the show's 'overture', sailor Tim appeared from within the audience and rollicked playfully onto the stage, to deliver a risky, but largely successful, ballad version of 'I See Red'. Neil followed claiming his 'Message to My Girl' back from Purest Form. An elegant Annie Crummer delivered a soulful, if a little misplaced, rendition of 'I Hope I Never', and Dave Dobbyn sounded like he should have joined the troop a long time ago, with his perfect renditions of 'Poor Boy' and 'My Mistake'. Sam Hunt's hippie man in 'Stranger Than Fiction' and 'Under the Wheel' seemed like a good idea, but could never match Phil Judd's truly disturbing paranoia. One can't help wondering why it is Phil never seems to make it to the reunions. Sadly, Tim's voice was not up to 'Time for a Change', but the song's sheer beauty carried it through anyway.

At the time of *True Colours*, I remember Eddy describing the early Enz music as being a load of pretentious nonsense. Fifteen years later he is clearly more comfortable with the complexity and musicality of the early work. At the same time, he has used the palette of the orchestra to elevate some of Split Enz's later and most simple ballads into the classics they really are. After what must have been months of work, it was finally Eddy's night.

And in case you are still kicking yourself for not going, don't worry, there were TV cameras everywhere.

NICK JONES

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Reel News

Robert Altman's next project will be the film version of the highly acclaimed play *Angels in America*, which will star **Al Pacino**. Altman is also sorting out another batch of **Raymond Carver** stories to make into a *Short Cuts* sequel ... **Tricky** has taken a substantial role in an upcoming **Luc Besson** film ... **Mary Stuart Masterson** makes her directorial debut on a script she wrote called *Grapefruit Moon*. **Francis Ford Coppola** will produce ... **Alicia Silverstone** will produce and star in the comedy *Excess Baggage*, as a girl who arranges her own kidnapping to get some fatherly attention. *Usual Suspect* **Benicio del Toro** joins her line-up ... **Mark Wahlberg** follows up his role in *The Basketball Diaries* with the lead in *Fear*, alongside **Alyssa Milano** ... **Chris O'Donnell** will co-star with **Sandra Bullock** in **Richard Attenborough's** upcoming Hemingway movie, *In Love and War*. He will also star in the film adaptation of John Grisham's *The Chamber*, which **James Foley** directs. Neither of these pieces of news should be confused with the fact Sandra Bullock is also to star in the **Joel Schumacher** directed adaptation of John Grisham's first novel, *A Time to Kill*, alongside **Samuel L. Jackson** ... **Ridley Scott's** next film is *White Squall*, which tells the story of a true-life maritime disaster and stars **Jeff Bridges** ... **Keenan Ivory Wayans** has produced **Paris Barclay's** debut feature, the piss-taking *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood* ... **Linda Fiorentino** and her *Last Seduction* director **John Dahl** are reunited with the tangled sci-fi tale *Unforgettable* ... **Ellen's Ellen DeGeneres** stars alongside **Bill Pullman** in the comedy *Mr Wrong* ... **Guiseppe Tornatore** (*Cinema Paradiso*, *A Pure Formality*) has written and directed *The Star Maker*, in which a snaky faker poses as a talent scout and tricks a bunch of country bumpkins into paying him for sham screen tests ... **Harrison Ford** and **Susan Sarandon** play restaurant owners in *Paying Up*, a comedy set the day before the stock-market crash of 1987. Other upcoming Ford roles (for which he will receive (US)\$20-million each) are alongside **Brad Pitt** in *Devil's Own*, and in the air action drama *Air Force One* ... you know the gossip which made **Melanie Griffiths** and **Antonio Banderas** cover stars of the women's mag set, but did you know the film on which they met, *Two Much*, also starring **Daryl Hannah**, is *Belle Epoque* director **Fernando Trueba's** English language debut? ... **Christian Slater** plays a lawyer who is a real devil's advocate in *Devil's Advocate* ... **Robert Redford's** next directorial project will be *The Horse Whisperer*, based on the **Nicholas Evans** novel which Hollywood Pictures bought the rights to for a record-breaking (US)\$3-million in 1994, despite the fact it was unfinished ... **Leonardo DiCaprio** and **Clare Danes** co-star in *Strictly Ballroom* director **Baz Luhrmann's** take on *Romeo and Juliette* ... even as **Madonna** films **Alan Parker's** *Evita* in Buenos Aires, protests to oust her from the sainted star spot continue. At least the city's mayor is on Maddy's side, and has gone out of his way to welcome her publicly ... **Tim Burton's** next film is the fantastically entitled *Mars Attacks!* ... **Arnold Schwarzenegger** follows the upcoming, big-bangin' action flick *Eraser* with another foray into comedy, as a dad with a mission in *Jingle All the Way* ... **Diabolique** (Jeremiah Chechik's remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Les Diaboliques*) has hit a snag in the shape of Clouzot's widow. She claims to own all the rights to her late husband's work, and now plans to halt the film's release by taking her case to the French Ministry of Culture. Stay tuned to see if this will affect the film's September scheduled opening in New Zealand.

UPCOMING RELEASES

<i>Executive Decision</i>	May 3
<i>Four Rooms</i>	May 17
<i>Rumble in the Bronx</i>	May 17
<i>Mr Holland's Opus</i>	May 24
<i>City Hall</i>	May 24



Rebel without a camera: From *Dusk Till Dawn* director Robert Rodriguez.

Film

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS

Director: George Huang

A passably amusing entry in the Tinseltown bitch-fest genre, *Swimming with Sharks* opens promisingly with a clutch of sycophantic studio wannabes discussing Shelley Winters (who is only recognised when *The Poseidon Adventure* is mentioned). We titter as the ambitious Guy (Frank Whaley) scuttles around being Wimp Friday to tyrannical studio boss Buddy Ackerman (the gloriously slimy Kevin Spacey).

A triangle of sorts is formed by the equally ambitious Dawn (Michelle Forbes, an actor with the snappy style of a young Paula Prentiss). Along the way *Sharks* makes many revelations, both semantic (Guy is keen to make films for the dissed generation — disappointed, dismayed etc.) and kinky (who would have thought an envelope could be such an effective instrument of torture?).

Although *Swimming with Sharks* has a certain freshness, its denouement is a let-down. With better motivation or follow-up, it could have been a coup.

THE GRASS HARP

Director: Charles Mathau

This adaptation of Truman Capote's autobiographical novel has a lot of charm, and one can't help but wonder whether Mathau Junior had privileged access to a magical cast that includes Sissy Spacek, Piper Laurie, Mary Steenburgen, Jack Lemmon and, of course, Mathau's own father.

Growing up in small-town Alabama in the 40s springs to life through the artistry of these players. Lemmon, with slicked down hair, cheap jokes and even cheaper tricks, Mathau senior more relaxed than I have ever seen him, Piper Laurie transcendent as the tragic Dolly, and Mary Steenburgen offering a much needed injection of adrenalin as the sexy, hymn singing Sister Ida. There is some enjoyably broad playing from Nell Carter, as the feisty family cook and Roddy McDowell, as the camp barber to whom everyone is 'honey'.

While Capote's gentle watercolour doesn't touch on the darker side that fellow Southerners Tennessee Williams and Carson McCullers explored, the Piper Laurie character — both in her own right and in the strangely symbiotic relationship with her sister Verena (a rather severe Sissy Spacek) — makes a deeper emotional engagement with the viewer.

In the final count, at 107 minutes, this movie is stretching its modest material a mite and, as Patrick Williams' sub-Bernstein strings soar against rural Southern vistas, some hearts may harden.

OTHELLO

Director: Oliver Parker

Anyone tackling *The Moor of Venice* has an awesome example to follow in Orson Welles' brilliant 1951 filming of the Shakespeare play — a stunningly cinematic realisation, ingenious and outrageous by turns, inspired as much by budget exigencies as Shakespeare's imagery.

Parker's version for the 90s is a fairly conventional affair. The original play has been slashed, so the focus can settle on confrontations between the major characters. You'll not hear Iago's witty speech on the body as a garden, and for much of the film Desdemona's lines lie on the cutting room floor, while Irene Jacob gazes longingly, dances alluringly and writhes in *Othello's*

adulterous fantasies.

Laurence Fishburne is a smooth Moor. Not quite RADA, of course, but then didn't Olivier add a funky Jamaican swing to his voice in Stuart Burge's 1965 film? On the other hand, Kenneth Branagh's Iago is a far too likeable chap; doubtlessly the melodramatic music underneath his "I hate the Moor" is needed to signpost his villainy.

All the line cutting and dramatic scurrying is worth it for the last 20 minutes of the film. Here the drama is played out in all its brutality, led by the beautifully considered Emilia of Anna Patrick.

BUTTERFLY KISS

Director: Michael Winterbottom

'Thelma and Louise on something stronger than acid!' screams the headline, and this gal-pal road movie is streets away from the plucky bonhomie of Ridley Scott's movie. There's no room for a Brad Pitt in this intensely lesbian tale of two young women on a trail of murder and mayhem on the M1.

"Evil is in your heart. If you don't go out, you'll never get away from it," Eunice (Amanda Plummer) tells Miriam (Saskia Reeves), who, in the moving black-and-white interviews that punctuate the film, relates their story. Eunice is deeply psychotic, wearing enough chains under her shirt to tow an 18-wheeler; her killings are unpredictable and terrifyingly violent.

Plummer (last seen playing another gun-toting psychotic in *Pulp Fiction*) is extraordinary, nowhere more so than in the scene in which she berates God for forgetting her and allowing her to get away with her slaughter spree.

The soundtrack seems CD-friendly, but the songs are shrewdly chosen — from Helen Shapiro's perky 'Walking Back to Happiness' in the opening scene, through Patsy Cline and Björk, to the Cranberries' heart rending 'No Need to Argue', which underscores Miriam's final act of redemption, a scene of Bressonian power and insistence.

CHICKEN

Director: Grant Lahood

Chicken opens promisingly. The screen is a riot of bilious yellows, as Dwight Serrento (Bryan Marshall) croons his paean to fast-food chook. Suddenly we realise this pop hasbeen is a wannabe again. Lahood's 'black comedy' starts rolling — Serrento tries to kickstart a career that died in the 60s by faking his death and becoming a rock legend. But, as the Essex once sang: 'Easier said than done.'

Another dramatic strand of the film is introduced with the character of Zeke (played by the unfortunate Cliff Curtis), a demented chicken's rights activist, who stomps around like an inbred cousin from a Gothic white trash movie.

There are so many red herrings, or should we say undeveloped ideas, ranging from a sinister roasting session in a suntan bed, to a bizarre case of 'the feathers', when Dwight is injected with some chicken hormones — one wishes that Lahood had followed his beak and created the kiwi equivalent of the *Chicken Woman* in Tod Browning's *Freaks*. When surgery is introduced, one hopes for a touch of *Dr Moreau*, but that also doesn't eventuate. When Dwight confronts a naked Betty (Joan Dawe), are we in for a spot of *Bad Boy Bobby*? Emphatically, no.

Trouper Ellie Smith tries to inject some life into the killer script, and valiantly mugs her way through some horrendously unfunny scenes (the ones with

her son are particularly deadly).

Chicken bears all the scars of being a feature extended 75 minutes beyond its running time. It could have been a tasty pullet, following on from Lahood's *Snail's Pace*, *The Singing Trophy* and *Lemming Aid*. It's come out as something of an under-stuffed turkey.

THE BIRDCAGE

Director: Mike Nichols

The disco grinds into action, the camera zooms over the Caribbean, and we're plunged into the day-glo delights of Miami's Birdcage. Mike Nichols and Elaine May revisit the 1978 classic *La Cage aux Folles* in this delightful comedy, transforming it into an edgy comment on the whole concept of 'family' in the 90s.

Molinaro's original film seems sedate by comparison, although much of the original plot remains. Eighteen years on, there's more glam 'n' glitz, including some ultra-camp dance numbers in five-inch heels; but there's also some tougher political satire, with the characters of Senator Kelley and his wife (an achingly funny Gene Hackman and Dianne Wiest) lampooned mercilessly for the post-Jesse Helms generation.

While Robin Williams' Armand doesn't quite match the faded charm of Ugo Tognazzi in the original, he does some brilliant turns — from a 30-second summary of four major choreographic styles, to a winning "song and soft-shoe-shuffle" with Christine Baranski. Nathan Lane (Armand's partner Albert) has played gay before (memorably in *Frankie and Johnny*), and he's scrumptiously funny, especially in the dinnertable confrontation with the Senator, where he expresses some sympathy for the Senator's right wing opinions. No one is safe from May's barbed wit in this satire. Yes, Virginia, there are Gay Republicans.

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

Director: Robert Rodriguez

Robert Rodriguez's new film sets out on familiar terrain, a shoot-out in a TexMex liquor store. With Tarantino scripting, it's bloody and chucklesome and, in a later motel scene, even more twisted in its humour. After runaway crims Seth and Richard Gecko (George Clooney and a t-w-i-t-c-h-y Tarantino) have appropriated a disillusioned minister (Harvey Keitel) and his children (Juliette Lewis and Ernest Liu), the five eventually find themselves in the Titty Twister, "the wildest bar this side of the Rio Grande".

With a few grinds from the snake-twirling Santanico Pandemonium, star turn at the TT, road movie turns to Grand Guignol. Our valiant band and a few other assorted truckers and bikers find they are vampire bait. It's a tongue-in-cheek gore-fest: faces melted by holy water, guitarists strumming bloodied carcasses, and 1001 ingeniously varied stakings.

Remembering last year's *Desperado*, Rodriguez must have something to with the humour, as well as providing some of the tightest editing I've seen since his last film. Amongst the treats: Cheech Marin's inventive 'Pussy rap', enticing customers into the doomy dive; Fred Williamson's oration about the horrors of 'Nam; and Tom Savini's savvy Mexican biker, mini pop-up cannon in his crotch, and sheepishly trying to conceal his rapidly degenerating person.

WILLIAM DART

AIRWALK



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On the Road to Fame?

Kurt Cobain could not have dreamed what he was starting once he began writing the songs that later appeared on *Nevermind*. The extreme success of Nirvana totally rearranged the rock landscape, and five years later is still a huge influence in the A&R departments of the giant USA record companies, where the endless search for 'the next big thing' continues.

When the grunge phenomenon exploded in 1992, nearly all examples of the shamelessness of 80s-style heavy rock were mercilessly swept aside. Bands like Motley Crue, Warrant and Poison were rendered obsolete, as a new generation of music fans elected fresh heroes. And suddenly it was all go. The big American record companies worked themselves into a frenzy, searching all points of the compass and everywhere in between for the next Nirvana. On their quest, they snapped up hordes of soulless wannabes — who even on a good day wouldn't have been invited out of the practice room if it weren't for 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' (take a bow, Stone Temple Pilots, Candlebox, Everclear, Stillskin, Collective Soul, Counting Crows, Alice in Chains, Soul Asylum), and prayed for the moment when their new signings would surpass the landslide commercial success of Cobain, Grohl and Novoselic.

These days the bandwagon may have slowed, but the jumpers are still around. It seems almost every week there's a grunge-by-numbers debut album, courtesy of a Stateside group content to have embraced a particular look and sound in order to be famous. But just occasionally there are exceptions to the fools, when a major gets it right, and signs a new band with good songs, who aren't Johnny-come-lately, company puppets.

Christian Lane (guitar/vocals), Tommy Furar (bass), and Mark Doyle (drums) are Loud Lucy, the Chicago-based pop outfit whose first album,

Breathe, was released by Geffen Records in the USA last October. Listening to Lane speak about his band, one gets the impression of a trio of music devotees, to whom everything else is just industry bullshit. When asked what a young band on a major label needs to do to break in the States, Lane doesn't mention MTV support, the cover of the *Rolling Stone*, hi-rotate radio airplay, a thumbs-up from *Beavis and Butt-head*, or even payola to ensure each of those.

"God, I don't know... concentrate on the songs. I think really good, catchy songs will always be the thing that people want and look for. People buy a record only if they want to hear it again, not because of any other reason."

Loud Lucy's present line-up dates back to 1992, when Lane and Furar shifted from their neighbouring home towns, 100 miles northeast to Chicago, where they auditioned several drummers before settling on Doyle. The trio soon became regulars on the live circuit, playing every couple of weeks at a small club called Thurston's. Later that year, a friend of Lane's who regularly videotaped local gigs recorded a show by the Seattle band Skinyard, whose guitarist Jack Endino, produced much of the early Sub Pop catalogue, including Nirvana's debut album, *Bleach*. When Endino asked to be sent a copy of the video, Lane slipped Loud Lucy's one and only demo tape in with the package. Eight months passed before the producer called the video maker, and asked to be put in touch with the band.

Loud Lucy recorded a six-song demo with Endino in September 1993, and also signed with his LA management company, World's End, who promptly flicked the tape to a number of record labels, both indie and major. In addition, World's End arranged for the band to play at two annual USA music industry conferences, the CMJ Music Marathon and the SXSW Festival. Loud Lucy's appearances at both events encouraged a stampede of major label talent scouts to descend on Chicago. Noting the presence of Geffen, RCA, Maverick and Sony representatives in the city, industry mag *Billboard* described Chicago as, 'Rock's New Cutting Edge Capital'. Observing the mainstream media taking seriously the labels who were claiming credit for discovering the thriving local scene, left Lane suitably unimpressed.

"The major labels, they figure scenes out after they're already happening, and I think once it seems to them like a place is happening, it's almost like a comfort zone. They're like: 'So far two bands have come out of that area that are really good, there's got to be more. All we have to do is get one and put enough money into them, and we'll have a hit.' One weekend you can be playing in a club to all your friends, and a month later there's 12 labels there."

While other Chicago bands revelled in the attention, Loud Lucy's inability to distance themselves from the surrounding hype eventually upset their plans.

"We wanted to be on Sub Pop or Matador, but once major labels have a look at you, and it's written in the industry magazines that you're the next band that's going to be signed, people like Sub Pop and Matador are like: 'we don't want them, they're just going to jump ship anyway.' It's totally understandable, because both labels have been burned in the past."

The trio's second best choice was Geffen, whose roster at the time included Nirvana, Urge Overkill, Beck and Sonic Youth. The company's A&R rep, Jody Kurilla, won Loud Lucy over with her total lack of urgency — and it didn't hurt that she had previously managed Ween, one of Lane's favourite bands.

"When we met Jody we didn't know if she was interested in the band, as she was so casual about everything, she just wanted to get together and hang out. We invited her over to our house and we ordered pizza. I did want to be on Geffen, but all night she didn't say a thing about signing us, until the very end of the evening when she said: 'I think I could work with you guys.' She's very cool."

Loud Lucy signed a two record deal with Geffen. The label reserves the right to release a further three albums, while remarkably, the band are free to release an unlimited amount of material on any indie of their choice. It was May 1994, and Kurt Cobain was dead one month. Considering the climate at the time, and the similarities between the two bands, it's surprising Lane wasn't more concerned Geffen might attempt to market Loud Lucy as the next Nirvana.

"The thought had occurred to me, as there were other labels we talked to who said: 'We'll make you the next Nirvana,' but I honestly wasn't that worried about it. Yes, there are similarities between us and them, but Geffen made it clear they understood the differences also. I think they were relieved to have a band on their hands who were genuinely happy, who didn't have a lot of baggage as individuals, and who didn't have any major problems within the band."

Producer Brad Wood (Liz Phair, Veruca Salt) recorded *Breathe* with Loud Lucy in Chicago during February last year, and the band have toured North America non-stop since the album was released eight months ago, including six weeks supporting Alanis Morissette. The trio will remain out on the road, headlining their own shows, for the duration of 1996, although Lane says Geffen may arrange another high profile support slot for the band, in order to boost their slow album sales. *Breathe* has sold a mere 35,000 copies in America, however, Lane is not about to shed any tears. His goals for Loud Lucy are pegged on a creative rather than commercial level.

"There's been an enormous amount of expectation placed on us, but there's room to manoeuvre within those expectations because the majors don't know what's going to work. That's why there's so many bands out there right now, and no kind of quality control. All the labels are taking chances with unproven bands, hoping one will explode and make it worth their while. For as much good as they did, Nirvana raised the roof for a lot of crap to fall through as well. But it's like with anything: the bands with substance will be around, and the ones that got into it because they jumped on the look and the sound, won't be. The bands that remain might not be part of the next phenomenon — that might include us — but they'll always be there for the people that want them."

JOHN RUSSELL

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