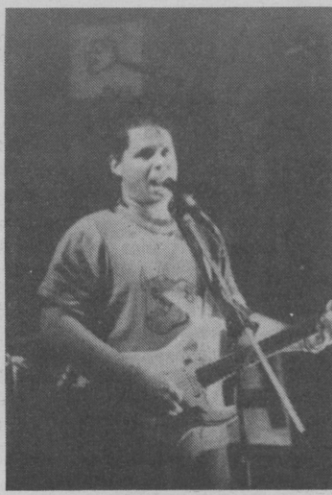




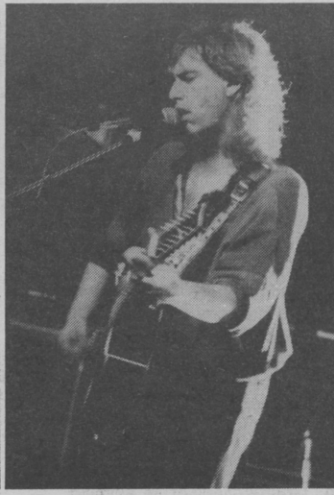
Godstar



Eddie, Nemesis Dub Systems.



Rex Visible, N.R.A.



Craig Mason, Sombretones.



Dave Wishart, Sombretones.



Chris Knox

PHOTOS BY GARY BAILDON

PUSH PUSH MALCHICKS, NIXONS Powerstation, Friday April 5.

A conceptual sort of bill this one. Push Push throwing a couple of Auckland's more underground rock acts in front of a crowd that was largely numbskull rockers and their girlfriends in the white miniskirt and halter top uniform. What they made of the Malchicks' rather wonderful noise I don't know. I was expecting some limp alternative drivel but what we got was much more. The obvious comparison is Dinosaur Jnr. There's the same grunge veering to pop sound happening here, with the Malchicks adding a sort of spaced-out feel to it all. They were pretty cool, very loud and messy but a bit lacking in the hair department with one full mane amongst the lot.

The Nixons were also short on the hair side, but they used it well. At times the Nixons can sound awful, college radio mumblings and a droning noise, but tonight they were a million miles from all that. For a three piece they really soar, hard, fast but still incredibly tight and melodic with vocals that seem like an afterthought, and are scarcely necessary on top of the noise these boys can make. They had the pretty sizeable left-field element of the crowd up and shaking it, and by the end of their set even the obnoxious bogan element were loving the Nixons. They get extra points for the second best version of 'Purple Haze' I've heard. (they're just pipped by Elvis Hitler's 'Green Haze'). All in all, it was pretty exhilarating stuff.

Last of all, the stars of the show, the hardest working men in showbiz —

Push Push. Although I have absolutely no conception of why people like this mainstream metal — big hair, guitar histrionics and sub-operatic vocals have me cringing after half an hour — I can understand Push Push's rise to fame. These guys really work. The overall sound is pretty good, poppy enough to be appealing but with a rough edge that hardens things up and gives them a decent kick, and they have a pretty hot 'axeman' (I think that's the term) in Andy Kane. Where they really succeed is sheer energy and an obvious love of what they're doing. The boys really work the crowd, they run about, they toss serious hair, they tell lame jokes, they cover a brilliant range of stuff from the Knack to the Chills and everyone had a damn good time. It's great to see a local act kick some twenty year old re-releases out of the charts, especially when it's a band so determined to succeed on its own terms. Push Push deserve to be stars — they've certainly got the hair for it.

KIRK GEE

BOOK OF MARTYRS, DA MASK AMAZING BROCCOLI, THE CLEAR Gluepot, Thursday, March 28.

At last, a chance to seem some bands from out of town — Hamilton, Palmerston North and Wellington, to be exact.

An unexpected late addition to the bill, the Clear (also from Palmerston North) proved a lively post-punk three piece. Mohawked guitarist/vocalist David White sounds like a cross between Devo and Bauhaus, and his

guitar packs a wallop, altho' he says he doesn't know how to play chords and favours one string riffs. They finished with a song called 'I Like To Fish' about David's mother who goes white-bait fishing on the west coast. Any band that looks punk and sings about their mother is OK by me.

With their first two songs, Wellington's Amazing Broccoli launched an amazing sonic blizzard that had all ears pinned to the ground — impossible to see how they could sustain the blast and in fact they didn't quite, losing their edge in a swirl of sub-Pixieism as the set progressed (their heroes, allegedly). Vocalist David Coventry bearing down on his guitar, squeezing out mangled notes and compressed rhythms in riveting disharmony with similarly possessed bass player Carlos D'Leverla, while keyboardist Sharon McIlwee provided some spooky intros. All in all, an impressive aural assault powered by great nervous tension.

Then Da Mask. Had to overcome a few preconceptions here, something about the Renee Chignallian connotations of their name, but when Da Mask launched into their first number with two drummers producing wild burundi rhythms on one kit we all sat up a little straighter. Otherwise traditional guitar/bass set-up. Can't remember much about the vocals but at times Da Mask created a reverberating wall of guitar noise that belied their surfer Jo appearance, creating a sound fully as dark and heavy as anything to come out of certain cooler musical environs. Finally, Book of Martyrs, taking the

stage after a long evening (tho' to their credit, none of the acts had hogged the stage the way some bands in three-act line-ups in this town are wont to do). This is the band with the new violinist, the interesting bass lines, the drummer who also sings and the most dramatically incisive song endings ever. I liked them best when they were chilly, swathed in blue light, playing with less sweetness and more shadows. Hard to define (weepy, weavy, bitter-sweet), slightly lacking in impact stranded on a stage at the end of a room at the end of a night, Book of Martyrs merit careful listening and closer surroundings.

DONNA YUZWALK

RUMBLEFISH BRAINTREE, ULTIMATE Powerstation, March 22.

Ultimate are pretty cool. They're total, unashamedly hard speed metal. Fast, serious, tight and with enough nifty changes and clever bits to be interesting as opposed to really technical but lifeless. They do a nice line in the full blown mega-guitar opus with some good vocals leaning more towards the Hardcore half-shouting style. Apparently they're getting a new and very Heavy Metal singer which should make them a hell of a lot of fun.

Unfortunately the same can't really be said of Braintree. Admittedly, it's early days for them, but lifeless is a pretty fair description. A few textbook 'funk' basslines and a singer who should be sued by Mike Patton for plagiarism, don't really cut it. On the up side there was some neat and vaguely psychedelic guitar work and a tight

feel for a second gig.

They could take a lesson or two from Rumblefish, who were simply excellent. Trying to describe their sound really seems quite pointless, except to say they've got another drummer who has made them really tough and thrashy, and this, combined with their obvious enthusiasm and power is pushing them towards some real peaks. Simple, unrestrained energy will always carry the day.

KIRK GEE

MIKA - 'TOTALLY UNCUT' Don't Tell Mama's, April 6.

Neil Gudsell is MIKA, but how much of MIKA is Neil Gudsell? Mika is "the superbitch diva" recently seen making Joanna Paul squirm and Belinda Todd hot on *Nightline*. Neil Gudsell is the man who brings Mika to life.

Better known on the Les Mills (or "Lesbian Thrills" as Mika would say) circuit as the choreographer for champion aerobics team Nga Toa, Gudsell has put together an amazing and highly entertaining one-person show. Whether it's a "one-man" or "one-woman" show is confusing and makes it all the more interesting.

Also on stage in nonspeaking roles (unless you count lip-synching backing vocals) are the "Mekeorites" a trio of beautiful transvestites, some dancers (moonlighting Syndicate Steppers), Nga Toa, and some very well built Samoan men. No wonder Mika has such a broad grin on his/her face throughout.

The show is a celebration of gay culture, particularly one with a pacific perspective borne from Timaru, New

Zealand. For this reason there were times, during the stand-up routine, that the predominately white pseudo-liberal audience fell silent. Sure, they all got the Ruth Richardson jokes, but I sensed a longing on their part for more gays in the audience to cue them on the more subtle stuff.

Mika was quick to pick up the pace however, combining song and dance to give the second half a stronger punch. This is what the audience wanted; camp cabaret from a man dressed as a woman! Performing songs off the EP we were treated to outrageous versions of "Step Inside Love", "I Have Loved Me A Man" and the divine "Spoof (all over me)". How s/he got very big, very macho, very hetero, Samoan bodybuilders to join him on stage for the latter is a testament to Mika's talent.

Or maybe it's that very long tongue Mika waves. Catch it if you can. (The show)

SIMON LAAN

rip it up

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