live

► develop without the classic NZ backlash taking them down.
KIRK GEE

VIOLENT FEMMES
JPS EXPERIENCE
Powerstation, Jan 22.

Life can play some nasty tricks on you sometimes. Last time the Femmes were here, I had no desire to see them, but went because a friend wanted to. I walked out very happy after being utterly blasted by a great show, the right mix of everything had happened and I'd been there.

This time around I wandered along happily, hoping for the best. I conspired to miss most of JPS as, adept though they are, they just don't do it for me. I realise it's totally bogue to say 'Oh, I always liked the earlier stuff' but that's the way it goes.

Then on to the Femmes and, horror of horrors, I didn't like them either! The x-factor from last time just didn't seem to be there, they seemed comfortable and secure, and that just ain't rock 'n'roll. It's not that they were bad, a rapturous capacity crowd ate up every last second of it, it's more that they weren't bad. The Violent Femmes seemed to have progressed from tortured misfit intellectuals to College supergroup intellectuals, with a show to match. The boys came out and did their thing, scattering stuff from the first album through the set so as the crowd could sing along, cruising through sharp, jazzy solos with total ease which prompted an incredible Pavlovian response from the crowd who howled every time Brian Ritchie took a step forward and just generally having a fun old time.

Now, I don't think there's anything wrong with having fun, but this could have been any halfway competant alternative party band from a surf club up there, it's just the Violent Femmes have read more philosophy.

I've got angst in my pants and I need to dance? Sorry, not me.
KIRK GEE

DREAD ZEPPELIN
MOJO NIXON
HALLELUJAH PICASSOS
Powerstation, Jan 31.

Sort of an extravaganza of all that's wrong (or right) with rock, so what better way to start the whole thing than with local stylistic crazies the Picassos. Not so much a musical blend as a head-on collision, these guys take hardcore, reggae, Napalm Death and a few other things no one's thought of names for yet, and let it all happen. The end result is vigorous to say the least, and although I'm sure the more settled musical tastes there weren't completely sold on the Picassos, they kicked ass and I liked 'em.

Mojo looked and sounded like the bastard offspring of Jethro Bodine and George Thorogood and, equipped with only a cricket helmet, a guitar and more attitude than you thought possible, he delivered a solo set that sent the weaker elements of the crowd running for the back bar. What was most impressive was the way the politically correct types hid, while the more mainstream elements of the crowd loved Mojo, singing along and howling with delight every time he attacked another sacred cow. Basically Mojo is a big dose of reality, albeit a slightly twisted reality. He dosen't dress in whatever the magazines tell us we should wear, he dosen't act like he knows the secret of the universe and will share it through an understanding of his art, he just plays basic three chord rock 'n'roll, sings about what he knows and leaves art to the English bands with bobs. Mojo careened around happily and obscenely, played all the greats from 'Beer Ain't Drinkin' to 'Elvis is Everywhere', attacked the likes of 'the fat rich guys' racing boats' and completely won the crowd over. How could you not enjoy a guy who puts on a cricket helmet and invites the audience to throw beer cans at him?

Then to Dread Zeppelin, who came onstage to the Don Ho classic 'Tiny Bubbles' and blew the crowd away with sheer spectacle from there on in. Tortelvis was truly huge in every sense of the word and was resplendent in a beautiful jump suit, wig and duct tape sideburns. He did the whole Elvis thing perfectly while the band ripped totally, Carl Jah and Jah Paul Jones unleashing

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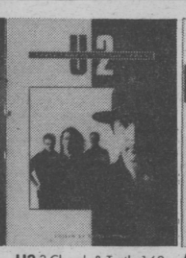

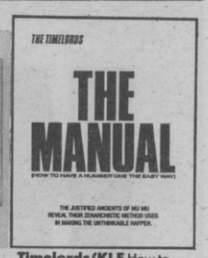

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