

LIVE

Photograph by Gary Baildon

STICKY FILTH, NEFARIOUS Boardwalk Bar, July 24

From sunny New Plymouth, Nefarious churned out a defiantly punk rock set that started to blister by the time Nigel announced 'Cunt Struck', the song with the cheeky AC/DC riff. Nefarious can burn rubber on me any time but tonight belonged to Sticky Filth and if you weren't there, let me tell you, you missed the rock and roll show of the millennium.

Sticky Filth emerged on a blackened stage in front of a backdrop of the Serpent of Wisdom and proceeded to deliver a show of almost mystical intensity. An unholy triumvirate of bass, guitar and drums, they alchemize punk rock, heavy metal and basic rock n'roll to create a music that stuns the psyche, lifts the soul and rivets the eye through sheer force of personality. Craig sings and plays like his body's plugged into his bass, he hits it and shakes it and bounces on his feet, head held high, every muscle straining. He sings songs about loneliness and longing and anger and frustration and the audience feels like it's witnessing the private ritual workings of his innermost soul. When Chris breaks a guitar string early in the set, Craig and Paul launch into a bone-crunching bass/drums groove that lasts for an incredible ten minutes. Chris returns and the set continues to build. Songs move in and out of a punk-rock-blues-metal battlefield, strewn with glimmering guitar lines from Chris while drums explode and bass spits tracks.

There were two fights tonight, probably because people in this town, unfamiliar with the concept, confuse awe-inspiring musical intensity with aggression. I left the show exhilarated, high on music, having witnessed rock and roll as it's meant to be, burning

bright with vision, energy and passion.

DONNA YUZWALK

PANTERA, WHITE ZOMBIE Hollywood Paladium, June 26.

You know you're in for a genuine rock and roll sweatbath when the street in front of the venue has been blocked off by the police and hundreds of anxious looking kids are loitering out front trying to buy a ticket from any passers-by. And well they might look anxious as White Zombie fired up indoors and it became obvious the night was going to be a powerful one. White Zombie have the arty noise band meets Zodiac Mindwarp appearance but live they have a whole new dimension. They are tight, bludgeoning and very serious, more the bastard children of Sabbath and Slayer than any comic book rockers. Tracks from *La Sexorcista* have an earthshaking punch live, 'Thunderkiss 69' really does sound like a hot rod driving over your head, and somehow Rob Zombie's harsh roar stays bad for a whole set. Obviously the man has vocal chords of iron and a band to match him. A most convincing performance — I certainly wouldn't want them for neighbours — and a suitable start for Pantera.

It doesn't take long for Pantera to convince me that they were slightly suspect as feared. The band were overweight long-haired speed metallers of a standard mould, skipping across the stage and planting feet firmly on monitors. Vocalist Phil Anselmo seems to have taken one leaf too many out of Henry Rollin's book, right down to a freshly shaven head and with a real violent "bad guy" attitude. Asking a crowd of largely suburban kids "who out there is fuckin' hostile?" seems a bit lost. But where I almost expected Pantera

to sound like Testament or some such speed metal equivalent to Journey I was, thankfully, wrong. Their recent *Vulgar Display of Power* album impressed, and live they were the same. Despite appearances, Pantera were a lot harder and punchier than most thrash/speed acts. There were no excessive solos or gratuitous rifferamas, just a stomping sound. Big guitars, big drums and Anselmo's howl were all Pantera needed to keep the crowd in a state of insanity. They even pulled a couple of ballads out of the hat without seeming corny, which is no easy feat. Mere hours later we were tossed around by an earthquake. After this night, it didn't seem so bad.

KIRK GEE

PUBLIC ENEMY, ICE T MC OJ & RHYTHM SLAVE NATIVE BASS

Auckland Town Hall, August 11. Last night, for the first time in my life, I waved a fist in the air at a concert without heavy sarcasm.

But not for Native Bass or MC OJ and Rhythm Slave. Not that either of them were bad in any way, they just weren't worth looking stupid for. Native Bass' rappers and singer bounced off one another (that's both figuratively and literally) with almost frightening agility, but the live funky bass was unnecessary: hip hop's mechanical "unmusicality" is its greatest strength, not a weakness that needs to be covered up. And as for MC OJ, as an official Bourgeois Intellectual Swans Fan Who Doesn't Know How To Have Fun I just didn't understand their endless jollity, their "wacky" dancing or their unholy alliance with Mikey Haddock of Push Push.

Ice-T may well be the Tom Jones of rap. That isn't meant in a derogatory way, it's just that he takes his stage persona

THE CHILLS, DRIBBLING DARTS OF LOVE, KING LOSER, Powerstation, July 18

King Loser are shoved to the front of a stage crowded with supergroup equipment, crawling with roadies, their intimate-macabre muzak floating out of a high rise PA to a sparse crowd. They seduce, in a chilly way, with an unwholesome mix of primitive rhythm, mesmeric guitar solos and off-kilter vocals shared by Celia (on bass in green velvet) and guitarist Chris Heazlewood, who looks like the mutant offspring of Cliff Richard and Phill Judd and plays guitar like a demonic schoolboy. Zarakov, centre-stage for once, flails zonked rhythms out of a fucked-up old drum kit. They're, like, unusual, man (and on tour with Straitjacket Fits next month).

The Dribbling Darts of Love are operating out of a different chemical matrix altogether, sort of lover's country-folk-flecked rock filtered through Matthew's acerbic English sensibility. Alice and Matthew and Alan and now drummer Ross Burge play bitter-sweet music about relationships, Alice on violin and keyboards (and sporting a waist-length wig), Matthew reigned in as ever, keeping the lid on passion so his songs come out in sugar coated barbs, sweet hooks and malicious observations. Tonight he unveils a genuine rock song with a sexy groove, nothing to do with the new Midnight Oil type drummer, I might

add, just the other side of Mr Bannister we always suspected was lurking behind that brooding intellectual brow.

The Chills put on a long show highlighted by dazzling gems from their distant past like 'Oncoming Day' and 'Pink Frost'. On stage, surrounded by new American personnel, including a guitarist who looks like Prince Andrew on poppers, Martin Phillipps has a big burden to carry: his illustrious past, his personal myth, a new album falling on green ears, and — with the exception of bassist Terry Moore, a whole new band to be fused by his power alone. Throughout, he's the self-conscious artist, trying to look inwards and project outwards at the same time and it sounds like some of the songs get lost in the struggle. I felt sorry for him when someone heckled "That song really sucked" and he replied wanly, "No it didn't". Their rowdy moments were best, and when they played 'Leather Jacket' at the end you could see excited kids dancing their nuts off like they were at the rock show of their lives. They weren't, I hope, but Martin Phillipps proved that soft bombs aside, he can turn a mean piece of music when he wants to.

DONNA YUZWALK



Chuck D, Public Enemy

Photograph by Chris Mauger

all the way, to the point where you have to be totally seduced or left out altogether. And as he's got some exquisitely brutal music and has the ability to make evil rednecks turn purple with apoplectic rage, anyone would be a fool not to take the first option. OK so he's sexist and talks about violence without a subtitle saying "don't try this at home." The same goes for Nick Cave, Iggy Pop, William Burroughs and William Shakespeare, among other liberal favourites. And anyway, as he pointed out himself (to a paradoxical response of a massed "yeah!") we're supposed to be thinking as individuals: he's an

entertainer not a fucking guidance counsellor.

Whatever he is, he had a great entrance. After a frenetic warm up song from Donald D he came onto the stage and just walked around looking scary for a few minutes while DJ Evil E made skull-crushing bass noises on the turntables. For the next hour or so he spat out his greatest hits (which were pretty damn great), moved like an avenging angel, tried his hand at DJing while Evil E rapped, and indulged in audience response games that were sometimes hilarious, sometimes just too Vegas for their own good. To his eternal credit

he didn't tone down his anti-police politics and you'll be pleased to know that before he left the stage he assured us that he loves us all.

Kerry Buchanan's characterisation of the white liberal Public Enemy fan ("they're so hardcore, so interesting") probably made a lot of people feel uncomfortable, or at least it should have, but after seeing them I'm convinced that it is possible for those of us who can't imagine what an American ghetto even looks like to like them without patronising claims to "empathize". It's not even necessary to draw simplistic conclusions from the extraordinary sight of white law students and Black Power members screaming with excitement at the same thing. No, I like them because they're one of the most exhilarating rock bands I've ever seen, comparable to Skeptics, Butthole Surfers and Sonic Youth. You don't know the meaning of multiple stimuli until you've experienced their multi dimensional, fractured noise at seismic volume while trying to cope with Chuck D's unstoppable ecathedra fury, Flavor Flav's technicolour insanity, the SW1's bizarre terrorist camp, and an audience going wild like the apocalypse was NOW all at once almost nonstop for over an hour. There were brief interludes of lecturing in which we learned that George Bush is bad and USA stands both for United States of America and Union of South Africa, but in the face of near-universal ignorance and apathy this was understandable. It may be that PE are losing faith in the revolutionary potential of the masses, starting to think they'll have to bring America down through their own momentum alone. For a while it almost seemed conceivable.

MATTHEW HYLAND

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