



Above: Headless Chickens Fiona Macdonald and Chris Matthews and Ashley of Australia's Caligula, Powerstation Friday December 4. Yes, we know there's no review but the photos (by Gary Baildon) are nice aren't they?

**EXPONENTS  
DEAD FLOWERS, ANDREW FAGAN  
Powerstation, December 2**

Everyone has some sort of plan for when they win Lotto. Well, when I win I would like to make Andrew Fagan a megastar.

Performing solo in front of a large crowd who were there for the headliners, NZ's resident oddball pop genius careered madly between song and poem with sparkling wit and no little amount of positive crowd response.

The songs would possibly sound better with a band, but for the meantime we'll make do with the best one man show in the country. At the very least he should have his own TV show.

I've had a fairly major change of opinion, over Dead Flowers. Last time I saw them was at a packed Boardwalk Bar and it was all a bit claustrophobic. In a bigger venue and with a much better sound they appear very much the genuine article. Okay so it's all based on a Guns plus Crowes equals Stones equation, but it's actually a good thing that this country has a band that can play that game and get away with it. They look the part, play well and have a couple of real good 'uns

in 'Love Myself (Plastic)' and 'Walking In The Sun'.

The fact that the Exponents are possibly the uncoolest band in the world does not seem to bother them one bit. They know that this review matters little so I could tell you that they were a crock of shit or that they are currently pushing back the boundaries of modern music. Neither would be the truth. It's very much your standard Exponents gig where beers are drunk, backs are slapped, Jordan takes his shirt off and we all sing along to the favourites. New songs are played but these are tolerated rather than encouraged. It's hits the punters want and given their rather astounding popularity, the Exponents probably have a few years left in them yet. I just wish they would occasionally do something different.

**AL CAIN**

**TORI AMOS, TED BROWN  
Ak Town Hall, December 1**

Ex-Tunneller Ted Brown opened proceedings early accompanied by press-ganged keyboardist Martin. I was seriously underwhelmed by Brown's new single 'Swerve' but tonight's set showcased him as an extremely



Tori Amos photographed after her show by Kerry Brown

talented songwriter. At times reminiscent of Paul Kelly, the sparse, twelve-string guitar and keyboard arrangements allowed the listener to hear directly into the heart of carefully crafted tunes such as the atmospheric 'Lost In Winter' and set closer 'Love Explodes'. In such an intimate setting a performer stands or falls on the quality of their songs and tonight Ted Brown remained steadfastly vertical.

Resplendent in Judy Garland red-spangled shoes and Beverly Hillbillies dungarees, Tori Amos is something of a walkin', talkin' livin' contradiction. On the last date of a long world tour, Amos belted out a consummate performance under the guise of a soul-baring confessional, which in turn confounded, delighted, annoyed and enthralled.

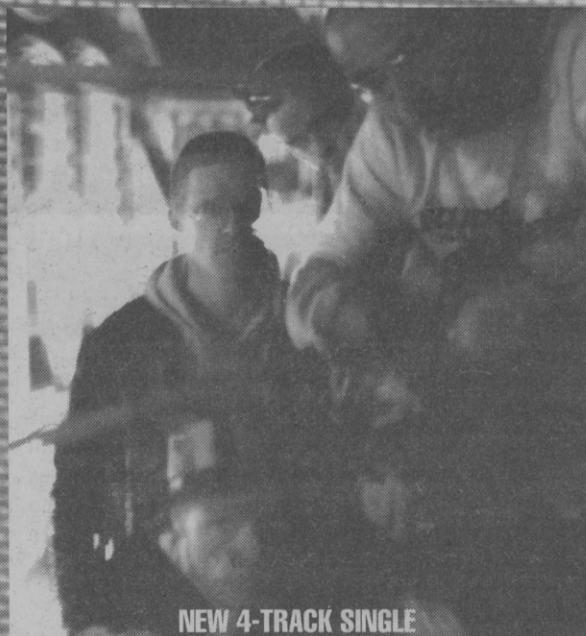
Drawing on much of her recent *Little Earthquakes* album, Amos prefaced many of the songs with well-rehearsed spiels on her childhood, family rifts and burgeoning sexuality. The family backgrounds were mostly funny but it's an altogether more unnerving affair to have a total stranger describe her sexual awakening to a room full of peo-

ple. Too unnerving for one heckler who piped up as Amos was beginning to describe her first kiss. She stopped — reflected for an instant and without batting an eyelid cut the interjector down, accepted the resulting applause and slipped fluidly back into her patter ("that was like my first kiss — it sucked"). After that we were all eating out of the palm of her hand.

As a performer Amos was not above sending up the earnestness of some of her songs with a self-deprecating knowing glance or wry smile. Her mid-set cover of the ultimate cock-rock anthem, Led Zep's 'Whole Lotta Love' twisted the whole genre on its proverbial head. A mutated version of Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' was similarly taken from a fresh perspective but perhaps the most telling musical moment was an emotional slap in the face from *Little Earthquakes*, 'Me And A Gun'. Sung acapella, the impact of this song was so powerful that I could see tears running down the face of someone nearby. And I've yet to see that happen while someone sings 'Wuthering Heights' in a Karaoke bar.

**MARTIN BELL**

**HALELUWAH  
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