

non-Irish project . . . the **Undertakers** are organising another Ska Fest for the end of this month. They are returning to Auckland in a couple of months to perform and finish their album which has 14 original songs and is called *Last Waltz and Into Mischief*.

And watch out for the return of **Operation Music Storm**.

J. GREENFIELD

HAMILTON

The winners of their respective heats in the 1993 Contact 89FM Battle of the Bands thus far are **Dribbly Cat Attraction**, the **Pilgrims**, **Swamp Goblin**, **Romantic Andes** and **Death of a Monkey**. **Dribbly Cat** plan to release an album soon . . . **Love and Violence** have their debut CD and tape, *The Nth Times*, out not on Airwigg Records. Also with Airwigg are **REAL**, who are planning a cassettes and CD soon . . . five girls are planning to record soon through HUM productions . . . **King Biscuit** are playing the Gluepot Battle of the Bands on June 24th, with a CD for the end of the year . . .

Electric Cow Promotions are now handling all management for **King Biscuit** and **Swamp Goblin** . . . **Fey** have just released their debut tape *Eric's House*. Contact Mike at BUG productions (07 8553 786) or write c/- 65 Chedworth Avenue, Hamilton . . . Orange Records now have a catalogue of material available including **Hand of Glory**, **Emmersons** and **Tsunami Band**, write to Orange, PO Box 19081, Hamilton.

JUSTIN HARRIS

DUNEDIN

Jay Clarkson, **Fatal Jelly Space** and **Shona Laing** were among the out-of-towners who appeared at the three day/ three night Power of Women song festival alongside Dunedin's leading female performers. Forums substantiated the successful weekend and a good time was had by all . . . **Mink** scored themselves a QEII grant, the sole Dunedin recipients. The industrial band incorporates **Brian Spittle**, **George Henderson**, **Alan Starratt** and others . . . the long-awaited follow-up to 'Simpleton' has arrived, the new **Cyclops** seven inch 'Light/ Spolycy' . . . yep, international Rock Stars do come to Dunedin. Despite an exorbitant door charge **Faith No More** played to a full Sammys. **Munky Kramp** and **Thromity Urch** supported, yet it was **Kid Eternity** who impressed FNM the previous night at the Crown . . . **King Loser** toured the southern regions with **Straitjacket Fits**. The Dunedin gig was surrounded by **Able Tasmans**, who played their gig in two parts, taking a break between sets to check out the Fits . . . just days later **Pavement**. They came, they conquered, they made friends with **Gate**, the bass-player received a bottle to his ribs at the gig, proving bogans do exist at "alternative" gigs . . . the **Lung** and **Rake** appearance (with **Age of Dog**) is eagerly anticipated . . . **Peter Jefferies** and **Alister Galbraith** are to tour the United States in August. About time too . . . with the new single 'Courage' and new album *Silverbeet* the **Bats** tour NZ late June/ early July, then the world . . . **Tin Soldiers** debut single 'You're My Reason' has sold copious amounts, particularly in the South Is, yet the charts don't represent the 5th Island, shame. It's also receiving extensive airplay, and features on the NZ On Air *Kiwi Hits Disc* . . . **Polyp** have just hit the studios for the first time this year — perhaps a gig soon? . . . **My Deviant Daughter** have been doing the same. They also join **Munky Kramp**, **Age of Dog**, **Webbsters** and **Kid Eternity** for the Melon Farmer Ball in Dunedin and Christchurch . . . Sammys Entertainment Venue (as it is now) launched the R16 code early June. With a staunch supervisory panel watching, this enables sixteen year olds and above access to the entertainment, with a bar-stamp separating the alcohol consumers from the underage. Time will tell . . . **King Loser** played possibly their best gig — to fellow-giggers **Trash** and six or so friends. Plus the tens of thousands of Radio One listeners, a the NZ Music Show Live To Air rocked. Previous participants in this monthly event include **Kid Eternity**, **My Deviant Daughter**, **Nowhere Fast** and **Munky Kramp**.

NATASHA GRIFFITHS

LIVE

Juliana Hatfield

Belly's bass player Gail (L) and Singer/Guitarist Tanya Donnelly (R)



Photographs by Gary Baildon

BATS, JULIANA HATFIELD, BELLY Powerstation, May 25

I don't profess to being an expert in this field of music (nor any other actually), so excuse me while I slag off some of your favourite bands.

So then, I arrived early(ish) to the Powerstation, which was moderately packed with a sedate crowd (no rockers or westies here) to see the Bats who didn't surprise me at all with their tight, neat set of lovely, but hellishly boring pop songs.

Juliana did not surprise me either, although I was hoping that she would, she's always going on about how women "don't rock as hard as the men" so I was hoping that she was gonna rock as hard as the blokes, but she certainly did not!

Her set was actually enjoyable, but having two diggers that looked like they should have been in a punky band certainly helped it along as far as looking like a frisky band goes, and Juliana occasionally put her foot on the overdrive pedal and things kinda took off, but she still didn't let loose like I thought she was going to, I was expecting the female version of Kurt Cobain or something, speaking of Kurt one of her best songs was 'Nirvana' which was pretty near to rockin', 'Ugly' was not rocking but displayed Juliana's vulnerabilities for all to see.

I must say I was not expecting to like Belly at all, but they were the best band of the evening, they have a huge, nice sorta clean guitar sound, which I've never liked before, but did in this case, and the tiny, snappable Tanya Donnelly has one of the most amazing powerful voices I've heard on a woman, so even if the band were shit (which they weren't) her voice was interesting enough on its own to listen to, and the bass playeress Gail stomped spastically around the stage all night looking like Suzy from L7/ or Lemmy from Motorhead, and the Prince Charles lookalike on guitar was none too exciting and didn't budge once, not even when Gail did a Praying Mantis mating dance around him.

Not having ever owned a Belly CD (slap, slap), I can't tell you the names of the songs I liked even, but it was a splendid set of songs that occasionally had me thinking about my washing, but enjoyable none the less.

SHIRLEY CHARLES

SUPERGROOVE, EMULSIFIER, URBAN DISTURBANCE, PACIFICAN DESCENDANTS, WICKED YOUTH Powerstation, June 4

Supergroove have always worn their love for JB on their sleeves and given their latest touring schedule in support of their new single they may well land themselves the moniker of hardest working band in Auckland show business.

But tonight they had plenty of friends to help them carry the load. First on stage were Wicked Youth who got a warm response from the crowd but appeared anything but wicked on stage with a rambling set and a sheepish version of 'Sexual Healing'. Pacifican Descendants did much better with their version of 'Get Up, Stand Up'. Yes indeed these boys were definitely on different additives from Wicked Youth — bouncing around onstage like modern-day Beagle Boys, they impressed with good songs ('JIME') and clever (and long overdue) use of Cook Island drum beats on the fourth song of an all too short set. Urban Disturbance (formerly known as Leaders of Style) with a recent single of their own out on the new Deepgrooves compilation played a dense set that only lightened up towards the end with the re-emergence of Pacifican Descendants back on stage for the last song.

DJ Stinky Jim had by this time abandoned his attempts to excite the under-age throng downstairs with the latest and greatest releases and showed remarkable restraint playing old classics by the Ohio Players. By the time Supergroove took the stage the fans downstairs were more than ready for party time and party they did as the band delivered a "classic" Supergroove performance full of singer Carl's much-loved big production numbers (the man's no Bob Dylan on the harmonica either, thank God!). Earlier this year the band were threatening to groove themselves into a rut, hopefully on the strength of tonight's performance with a little luck and some new material this band may be destined for bigger and better things. Catch them at a venue near you.

Wellington band Emulsifier had the misfortune to follow the head-lining act and matters weren't helped by technical delays. By the time they started their well-rehearsed set most

of the audience had disappeared and those few who did linger on soon had second thoughts. Wellington is usually regarded as the home of officials and politicians and its music often has an angst-ridden edge — remember Diatribe and Shoes This High? — a tradition Emulsifier continue even if their drummer does look like a candidate for the Serious McGillicuddy Party wearing carpet on his head. Lighten up lads!

JOCK LAWRIE

CRASH Tape Release Bob Bar, May 15

Crash at Bob is a strange meeting of two contradictory pop aesthetics: the band's (supposedly obsolete) and the audience's (all too familiar — the kids just wanna party up large and dress like their parents, incidentally did you know how easy it is to set fire to a flannel shirt while the person wearing it's busy trying to grow facial hair?). None of this fits in very comfortably with what Crash are about, which is pop in the plastic, ephemeral, star-spangled sense and also the stomping, vulgar punk rock sense.

They're a female singer with a voice that can hit operatic heights or crawl down gutters as required and three boys who play and jump about with such healthy vigour that they can only be Weetbix kids. Their best songs (which, encouragingly, are also their newest, including 'Cliff' and 'Day At the Fair' from their four song cassette) mix a basic Ramones brat beat with the kind of lovelorn 50s style minor chords more closely associated with Julee Cruise or Chris Issak, than with people who share the Warners' practice room.

Occasionally they remind us of their background in club-footed mainstream rock; there are bursts of squelchy funk and traces of that processed cheese AOR guitar sound. That's an evil type of music to have had anything to do with, there's really no excuse, but Crash have two excuses: firstly it's a style they're close to abandoning forever, and secondly in an age and city of the direct rockist conformism any bands who have one idiosyncratic idea and pursue it obsessively are needed, even if that idea involves something loathsome in itself.

The strangest part of it all is that the gig was packed and the tapes sold out within a fortnight. Where Crash fit into the kids' stunted musical vocabulary I can't imagine, I can only hope that if they become obscenely famous they remember to put on their combat boots and stomp on some adoring faces.

MATTHEW HYLAND

CLAY, LUNGFEST, SKINSHED, SCRAPER, KORVA Aro St Hall, Wellington, May 28

Wellington's outer edge live scene is pretty quiet most of the time, so a gig with four local bands (plus one from Auckland) who don't usually play much is a real rarity. For five bucks, it's almost an essential for anybody who actually cares about music in Wellington.

Korva played first, with their usual melodic, bass-driven shifting of continental plates. Considerably less hard-core than the rest of the bill, and a lot more interesting as well, their biggest problem is their lack of self-confidence.

Local metallers Scrapper played next. They're only a new band, and it shows. While tight, they don't seem to have made up their mind what they want to sound like. As a result they're caught somewhere in the middle, too slow, too fast, too intense or too lazy to actually have any memorable identity.

Skinshed are a comedy industrial band. This means they're actually a really worthwhile addition to an area overloaded with overbearingly earnest and pretentious spotty young men being juvenile with incredible seriousness. A plus therefore is that you can't work out what they're singing about beyond random snatches.

But the best thing about them is the devastatingly cool King Crimson-ish saxophone, an absolute masterpiece.

Auckland band Lungfest, two dead looking guys in black, were supposed to be the star turn of the night. Instead they were by far the dullest. About an hour of dreary dreary Godflesh covers (well not really, but they might as well have been): repetitively grunted vocals, stolen beats, and grinding guitars, at about a quarter of the volume required to be at least sufficiently offensive.

To compound their awfulness, the length of their set

meant that Clay only had time to play five songs before noise control came and shut the gig down, but in those five songs they did more than most bands achieve in a career.

Rising above an awfully muddy sound, guitarist David managed to create a huge, exhilarating wave of noise, which the rhythm somehow managed to hold in the air, so it never broke and dissipated, but just kept building to impossible heights of anger and catharsis - all to suddenly end after too few minutes.

If Clay can actually play a bit more often (they've been part-time this year while the bass player's been in Christchurch) and really go for it, instead of just toying with their obvious talent, they'll be one of the best bands in the country. Right now they're just wasting time.

CAMPBELL WALKER

PAVEMENT, 3Ds, TALL DWARFS, CELINE Powerstation, June 12

When was the last time you went to see an overseas band not knowing what to expect? Nick Cave? Sonic Youth? You must be joking, and badly. So the fact that three of tonight's four entertainments violently resisted being approached with anything like benign indifference is of no little significance.

The first surprise was that Celine were on the bill at all. They were totally unadvertised and came on at about 9 o'clock, so almost everyone missed them, which was very very bad luck for almost everyone, because for once they had the mix they deserved and the long, uneven spaces between every beat (Andrew Moon is possibly the only drummer in Auckland whose style suits the huge drum sounds engineers are obsessed with) are heartstopping. Their songs are strange and subtle because they're sad in an exalting kind of way, it's misery you can surf on. They've existed for a few months now and already they make most other local bands seem like minor irritations. From here on the abyss is the limit.

The Tall Dwarfs, on the other hand, have been around approximately forever and can be both infuriating and sublime, usually at the same moment. Sometimes when they play live they swamp their own most delicate, sweetly-sickly-sweet children's toy-based songs in healthy kiwi strumming or unseemly guitar sludge. These things put in appearances this time but so did almost every sound on the Casiotone, some impressively oppressive drone effects (could they have been listening to Spacemen 3 or Hawkwind while our backs were turned?) and an unignorable, socially awkward amount of (what looked like) real, painful anger. It finished with one sustained, searing chord and Chris Knox hitting the keyboard with his face and it wasn't particularly funny it was powerful and really quite scary.

The 3Ds played the closest thing to Rock Music of the evening: their spiralling, squealing guitar lines are (almost) always supported by a rhythm section that (to plagiarise A. Artaud for no good reason) sounds like it's just eaten a good square meal. Which means that while your head's spinning off its axis your feet are being reassured by a solid meaty beat. This doesn't stop them from offering more giddiness for our dollar than 99.5 percent of rock bands; it just so happened that the other half a percent were also playing tonight.

Pavement vaporised every doubt I've had about them, every fear that they could turn into another noisy/ tuneful indie rock thing. Their records are good but don't do them justice because more than just about any band I've seen except the Dead C, their music is an event existing for an instant then disappearing, a semi-planned series of surprises. Some of the parts whose sum they transcend include two wildly "incompatible" drumming styles, three vocalists (laconic, whimsical, demented etc where necessary, an analogue synth, the best lyricist around (this week) who also happens to be a totally charismatic (charming, ironic, possessed) performer and the ability not only to mix chaos and fragile beauty but to extract (each) one from the other. The songs from *Westing* . . . and *Slanted and Enchanted weren't* "faithfully reproduced", they were made to seem miraculous by being created on the spot out of nothing. This may of course have upset people who came with a checklist wanting their "money's worth", but for anyone who doesn't approach music as an accountant it was an unexpected delight.

MATTHEW HYLAND