

Foundering or Setting Sail?

In just over a year Hello Sailor have grown from a respected but workaday Auckland band into the nearest thing we have to indigenous rock stars.

When Sailor appear today in the course of regular work they find themselves overfilling venues, having to minimize advertising. Sailor at the Ponsonby Club create a milling crush in a bar others can barely fill. Recently an unadvertised Windsor Castle gig drew a standing room only, fleshpressing throng of devotees.

As the Sunday night finale to a national Student Arts Council tour displayed, Hello Sailor are able to nearly fill a major venue with fans, many of whom were paying four dollars for their tickets. The band is pleased with its tour which has seen ecstatic Wellington and Dunedin crowds and which incidentally secured a profit for its promoters.

Hello Sailor are probably the only N.Z. band ever to stir such a level of interest without an overseas stint. Both Dragon and Split Enz are now major drawcards, but it has required foreign approval in these

cases to give us the confidence to flock along. Yet T.V., radio exposure, and an excellent album have bounced Sailor into national prominence as a homeborn, homereared phenomenon.

Predictably it was a willing, entreating audience that greeted them last Sunday night. Citizen Band, wooing its own budding band of followers, had opened extremely well. The newly founded C.B. fanclub sitting near me was not disappointed by their exuberant set. Covers of beat oldies "Don't Bring Me Down" and Larry's Rebel's "I Feel Good" created an ambience within which the band's more complex originals were enthusiastically accepted. "Julia", "The Ladder Song", and "Holy Fulale" all went down a bomb and after more than a dozen songs the audience was whistling and stomping for more.

So it was all on for Hello Sailor when they introduced themselves in an atmospheric parody of *Close Encounters*. Sadly they let their audience slump almost immediately into a misplaced version of the Stooges' "All Aboard for Funtime". And

from there they were working on a salvage job. There were minor problems all night, broken strings, a poor sound mix, but nothing to explain the listlessness that beset the first half of the show. "Let's Spend the Night Together" fell flat, Graham Brazier's sax playing failed to add its usual bite.

Apparently none of the band members were very happy with the Auckland gig in comparison with the rest of the tour — and it showed. They didn't look happy. Not until well into the programme and new song "Kick It", were consternated looks discarded for any sense of co-operation. There were commendable features: Dave McCartney's and Harry Lyon's backing vocals, Ricky Ball toiling at his kit, but only once or twice did it all fall into place. The encore bracket ended with Brazier unable to quite find his harmonica break in "Blue Lady". It was somehow reminiscent of the evening, a clearly proficient band operating at less than peak efficiency, suffering problems of inconsistency that will have to be conquered before Sailor try the overseas market they seek.

Yet it appears that the lure of bigger things is certainly there. Hello Sailor have dropped their local recording tie with the Key label and are pondering an, as yet unsigned, contract with Phonogram. If the deal goes through a new album will be recorded in E.M.I.'s Wellington studio starting on June 19th. Bruce Lynch, ex-patriot

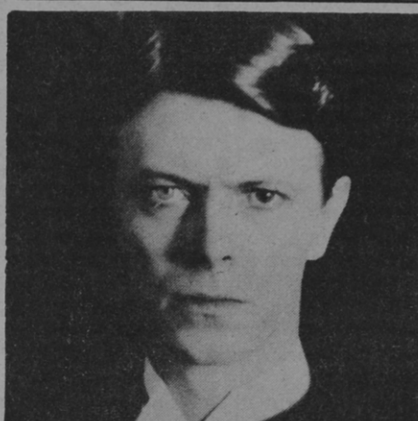
N.Z. bass player who works, amongst others, with Cat Stevens, will produce.

And if Sailor sign with Phonogram it will be on the condition that the album is given world-wide release. Manager David Gapes and possibly a Phonogram team intend to take a live video-tape to Europe, Britain and the States for promotion. Hopes are set on the big-time.

Meanwhile, as if to add to the requisite mystique of a successful rock act, rumours of internal politics have been circulating. Suggestions, none of them apparently true, have been made concerning Graham Brazier's tenure. Brazier, so it seems, is staying. Nevertheless the other four members may take a couple of weeks off for relaxation, playing as a four-piece pub-band under the improbable title, The Fabulous Fabrications. According to one band member rumours of internal splits have merely been nurtured by frustrations that derive from an unresolved recording and touring future.

For all of Hello Sailor's remarkable success here, for all the size of the market they seem to have created for themselves, poor old N.Z.'s atmosphere is still too stifling for comfort. The next few months should indeed see if they have the ability to escape it and if they have the constitution to breathe rarer air.

Bruce Belsham



David Bowie has completed work on his second movie role, this time with Marlene Dietrich and Kim Novak.

The film, in which Bowie takes the starring role, is titled *Just a Gigolo* and is directed by

actor David Hemmings, perhaps best remembered as the mod photographer in *Blow-Up*.

Just a Gigolo is filmed mostly in Berlin where Bowie has made his home for the past 18 months. He plays a young Prussian officer who returns penniless to Berlin after the First World War and becomes a gigolo. Kim Novak plays the society matron who seduces him and Marlene Dietrich, making her first film appearance for a number of years, plays the baroness who recruits Bowie into her service.

Meanwhile, David Bowie is part way through a 13 week concert tour with Carlos Alomar (guitar), Dennis Davis (drums), George Murray (bass), Roger Powell (synthesiser) Adrian Belew (lead guitar), Simon House (electric violin) and Sean Mayes (keyboards).

A tour of the Far East and Australia and New Zealand is scheduled for November.



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