



One time Auckland legend, Streettalk, have shuffled back onto the sidewalk.

Nostalgically, it seems like yesterday. But two years back this crew ravaged the live circuit — pumping out groggy blues and stomp, spear-headed by the twin lead attack of Hammond Gamble and Mike Caen. Windsor Castle die-hard fans must cherish those performances from a street band that steamed when stoked by the input from their hard-earned following. It all appeared to be on a haphazard casual basis then, with Hello Sailor churning along steadily behind them in the ranks.

With fusible, potent elements you will have ignition. So with old time buddy, bassist Andy MacDonald, and friend, Jimmy Lawrie, prised out of Rockinghorse, it is full tilt. With no leaning upon the lurking laurels of the past.

The bondage of the band dissolved when Caen did a do or die effort on the enticing pastures abroad and Gamble abandoned guitar to unite with his dying grandmother in the north of England.

Hammond didn't play a note whilst away, but Mike trod the hardworn treadmill of London. "I was existing day by day on a \$22 dole cheque with \$18 rent, waiting for *Melody Maker* to come out, trying to get a

job. Put my own ad in at one stage. You smartly sort your feelings out about playing when you're competing with hundreds of guitarists to work in a crummy band doing long hours for no pay."

He slogged it out for nine months with a band called Mister Sister. "You're fortunate if you can get work in a pub. You have to give it your utmost even though you're depressed about it all cause you never know — there might be someone important out there."

Gamble evaluates the English situation: "It's not that the standard of musicianship is better, there's miles more people thus miles more good and miles more worse bands. You get to the top through clever management and marketing."

It has been 20 months since they all plugged into the same P.A. They resurfaced at their home stable — the Windsor Castle — where they have been tightening their form. But they are labouring under mixed feelings.

"We've come back to a situation where there is animosity directed at us from many sides." The premise of resorting to the old-time success formula has drawn some resentment — "Breeze in and make a buck and expect to be treated as hotstuff still."

"The reality is that there is no money to be made. It is tougher to eat than ever before with so many outfits competing for dwindling space. When we were in it before there were only a few regular bands working the track."

The situation is this: you have the essence of two ace axemen, if it is still cool to use the term, presently doing 70% their own thing, but edging along a tightrope with a now dissipated audience. Also the tenuous task of retaining the old appeal with the blues-based standards but, with a rip, snort or bust attitude towards the new refurbished feel.

The founder of the band — Hammond Gamble — the man that moves people with his gritty blues, says: "We'll still be doing blues based things, but will be kicking out the 68 and bringing in the 78." He reckons the spark occurs when Caen charges the 70's rhythms to it all, with the traditional duel guitar crossfire.

But today's fashionable rock has guitar leads quashed. Can they fuse the blues with the present packaged form? Can they become commercially viable?

The real chemistry that counts, Streettalk has. Is it in good taste to suggest that they might pull off a Bee Gees-like comeback and return with an onslaught?  
Ray Castle

**Postscript:** Chris Hillman of the newly reformed Byrds returned to Auckland after the Byrds' Australian dates to assist Streettalk in recording a single — the tracks recorded were "Leaving the Country" and "Falling to Pieces". It is possible he may return later in the year to aid the band in recording an album.

## LIVE

**Tys van Leer, Hello Sailor, Schtung.**  
*Auckland Town Hall*

Schtung were simply Schtung. There is no way to describe what they sound like, but you can count on them always sounding much the same. Up on the Town Hall stage, battling a sound system as grim as any turned on in the Town Hall this year, they still turned out note-perfect renditions of the bulk of the songs from their debut album — passing up the chance to plug their new one, but obviously impressing the majority of the audience.

In an evening obviously designed for the technoflash fans, the next act, Hello Sailor, in their farewell to Auckland, were a little out of their element. Where Schtung might be described as restful, Sailor went for the throat.

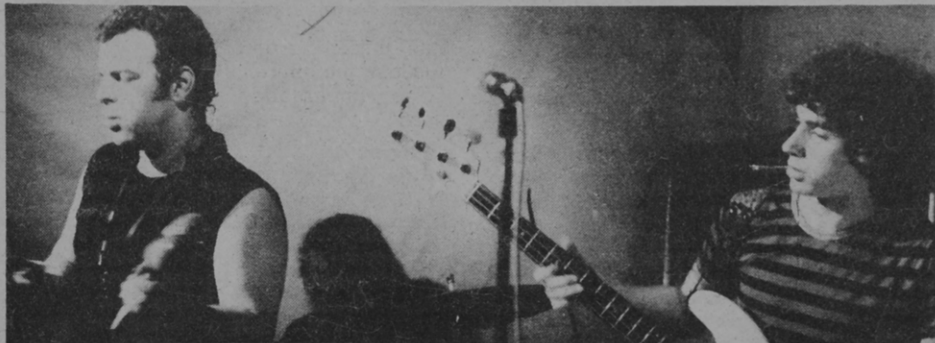
With Graham Brazier's leather trousers, and a smear of nasty rock and roll, largely culled from their new record, they may have

been a little too strong for the stomachs of those who had come to see Tys van Leer. Nonetheless, they put the other acts of the evening pretty firmly in their place. When van Leer spoke about rock and roll later, it seemed a little hollow beside the real thing, Sailor-style. And, most important of all, they left Auckland begging for an encore.

Tys van Leer, the much-touted star of the show, thrilled most of the audience and bored me rigid. He alternated between interminably 'progressive' four chord frauds and the odd Focus number to wake up the stalls. With the backing musicians huddled over their charts, it was all too much like a supercharged Henry Mancini concert for me. Tui Timoti just proved once again that he should get out and play some jazz rather than waste his time on the occasional solo in some big band, and the rest of the band played what was set down in front of them like good boys.

Don't get me wrong. If you are a Focus fan, or something similar, you would have loved Tys, just like 750 others in the Town Hall. But you just wouldn't have much excuse for calling it rock and roll.

**Francis Stark**



**Rough Justice**  
*Island of Real*

A good, cooking crew Rough Justice. They play solid rock and roll, none too subtle for the most part, but who's complaining? The band is strong instrumentally, although there are no virtuosi, but the spotlight must fall to Rick Bryant.

Bryant is an archetypal hood, black tee shirt and all. Barrel-chested and sullen-looking, he dominates. Without him, the band would lack focus. He's a fine singer and plays a bleating saxophone.

The material is essentially rhythm and

blues, drawing on tunes by Aretha Franklin, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Muddy Waters and the Rolling Stones. Dylan's "Ballad of a Thin Man" was a brave, and effective, choice. The highlight for me was a slow-burning version of "The Thrill is Gone" with the band smouldering for chorus after chorus until Bryant emerged from the band-room, beer bottle in hand, to launch into a heart-felt vocal.

You may have seen Rough Justice's bus around town. If not, watch for it. It's worth tailing.

**Ken Williams**



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