



Th' Dudes profess to be modest people. Guitarist Ian Morris claims that two and a half years ago, when Th' Dudes were born, filling the Windsor Castle seemed a distant pinnacle of achievement. Hardly the reckless stuff that sends young men of ambition into giddy heights of fame. Now playing the celebrated Parnell beer-hall is routine and the band is still making progress. Steadily Th' Dudes are securing a place as one of the outfits of real promise in Auckland.

With their standard two guitar, bass, drums line up and their mixture of nuggety rock and roll covers and originals, they have become familiar figures in Auckland clubs and bars. Th' Dudes have a reputation as a hot dance band and kids follow them around with an enthusiasm which seems a sign of the city's younger music fans.

However, there exists, with Th' Dudes, a healthy feeling that the band means something more than their current working-band status. To an extent the optimism surrounding them has to be taken on credit. Despite the buzz, little concrete evidence of their potential exists — no record contract, no air play, no extensive tours, one cancelled support tour with Dragon.

On the credit side, the band have useful amounts of talent, patience and time. "The progress has been, apparently to other people, slow," says singer Peter Ulrich. "We've been around for a while now, but there's no real hurry cause we're all still young and we're all still learning to play. I'm still learning how to sing —

hold my notes and stuff like that. We don't need to be chart-busters yet."

The band's background explains much of their attitude. The three front men, Morris, Ulrich and guitarist Dave Dobbyn, are school friends, product of Sacred Heart College which has also processed the Chunn Bros, the Finns and Phil Judd. Ulrich, Morris and Dobbyn continue to think of the music world as fun. All in their early twenties, they form the heart of Th' Dudes and assert that if this band folds, none of them want to work in any other. If the sentiment sounds uncomfortably close to young love, major advantages develop from loyalty.

The primary one is that internal unity can ensure time to progress. "I'm not going to say this band's made of concrete or anything," says Ulrich, "I can see problems arising. But we'll just have to hope the music keeps us together. We have a lot of fun. We find things are just happening. It's like going along a road with the mile-stones steadily coming by."

How many further milestones Th' Dudes see pass will depend on how far they develop their undoubted musical talents. At their best, Th' Dudes are very good. They display a compact and economical use of the two guitar set-up. Their rhythm section of Bruce Hambling (drums) and Peter White (bass) is an efficient, cohesive unit underlying what are often highly inventive guitar arrangements. At worst, Th' Dudes can relax the sparseness of their sound to the point where it becomes shambling. Tapes of the live

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