



## McCallum's Oz

Two of the slickest records produced in New Zealand during the past two years met a fate common to their N.Z. ancestors. They ended by languishing unsold in the bargain bins of the country's record retailers. Mark William's *Taking It All In Stride* and Malcolm McCallum's *The Things We Need* must have done a lot to convince their respective creators that a music career at home was just not on. Since then the highly predictable has occurred. Both the performers and the producers of those albums have flown to Australia. Alan Galbraith in fact took Mark Williams and Malcolm McCallum with him to CBS Australia, whilst Julian Lee left recently muttering words of despair about the local situation.

This week Malcolm McCallum was back in Auckland, not crawling home to lick his wounds, but to promote his first Aussie produced album. McCallum has been working hard at establishing a name in the more competitive market at the other side of the Tasman. In fact McCallum's conversation nicely summarises the effect of Oz experience upon our musician exports. He is full of chat about breaking into radio play lists, the money to be made in playing league clubs, plans for soliciting popular appeal in Sydney.

In a land where there is actually money to be made out of music, a heady atmosphere gives our musicians renewed ambition, enthusiasm, and probably naivety. McCallum says that although just starting out he is already recognised

on the street by the odd person. The man in his corner dairy picked him from the film clip of his single "Who Is Your Love For". These and other signs of potential success are new to McCallum. One can appreciate the enhanced energy he has for his Australian future after being known in New Zealand chiefly as the voice on the Gregg's Coffee ad.

However McCallum may have to be careful to escape the Siren like properties of Australia. The lure is success; the price can be individuality. One of the intriguing points about McCallum's N.Z. album was that he played virtually everything on it but drums. McCallum says it shows — but so does a unique feel for his own material. "The Things We Need" was particularly fine example, the pity being it was never actually released as a single.

By way of contrast, the Australian record, graced by heavy Oz session men, including half of Little River Band marks almost no progress of Malcolm's own talents. It reproduces the characteristic laid-out sound of the Sydney-L.A. axis. Rather than augmenting the slightly limited lyrical content of Malcolm's songwriting and boosting melodic content, the backing washes vaguely over the songwriting causing nothing but a little erosion. Songs like "I wouldn't Leave You", potentially delicate, are made brittle. "Who is Your Love For?" has half the push it needs.

McCallum, having recently finished a tour with Jon English, has formed his own band. He intends to work the Sydney circuit with this new backing. Hopefully the ability and loyalty of a personal band should re-invest the vetted second Australian album with a more unique sound. It's bad enough seeing Australia attract New Zealand talent without watching it being wasted. **Bruce Belsham**

## Late News

A band called **Night** which includes NZers Chris Thompson (one-time vocalist for Manfred Mann's Earth Band) and bassist Billy Kristian have signed to Richard Perry's Planet Records. Perry who has produced Leo Sayer, The Pointer Sisters and Diana Ross among others, will produce the band's first album for late March release. . . . New Zealand theatre group **Red Mole** are currently in New York and in late January they presented their *Going to Djibouti* show out of the Westbeth Theatre Centre. Reviews from the local press were mostly enthusiastic. . . . **Rod Stewart** and **Elton John** are to star together in a movie musical entitled *Jet Lag*. . . . **Carlene Carter** will be backed on her next album by Clover, the band that featured on Elvis Costello's *My Aim is True*

Rick Steele and Hot Biscuits at Nambassa. Brent Eccles and Geoff Chunn, CB, at same.



## Weekend in Waihi

Possibly the most surprising feature of Nambassa '79 was the ease and tolerance with which 60,000 people can live together in a tent city. Musically, however, the festival threw up few surprises — the well-known bands performed to expectations while most of the unknown acts seem destined to remain that way.

Saturday's music kicked off in lively fashion

### LATE NEWS (Continued)

album. Production will be by Denny Cordell. . . . **Van Morrison** undertakes a British tour in late February and joining the band he used on his American tour — Peter Bardens, Bobby Tench, Herbie Armstrong, Peter Van Hooke and Mickey Feat — are violinist Toni Marcus and sax player John Altman. . . . **Nicolette Larson's** recent gigs in LA boasted Little Feat's Bill Payne and Paul Barrere in the backup band. . . . **Rick Wakeman's** next album is to be produced by Tony Visconti and will include a disco version of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue". . . . Aynsley Dunbar has replaced John Barbata as drummer in **Jefferson Starship**. A serious car smash a couple of months ago has necessitated necessitated Barbata's withdrawal. . . . **Thin Lizzy** working on album in Paris. Likely title is *Black Rose*. . . . **Lou Reed** and **Nils Lofgren** are working together on an as yet unknown project. . . . next **Stranglers** LP is live and titled *X-Cert*. Guitarist Hugh Cornwall is working on a solo project. . . . **Gerry Rafferty's** newie set for March release under title of *Night Owl*. . . . Bee Gees' latest, *Spirits Having Flown*, due in February. . . . while **Frank Zappa** has signed to CBS Records and his first album for his new label will be *Sheik Your Booty*. . . .

with Auckland's Sheerlux. Despite a tendency towards becoming a new wave juke-box (with songs from Tom Petty, Elvis Costello, Ultravox etc) and an overly mannered singer, their energy and exuberance largely succeed in establishing their identity on this range of material.

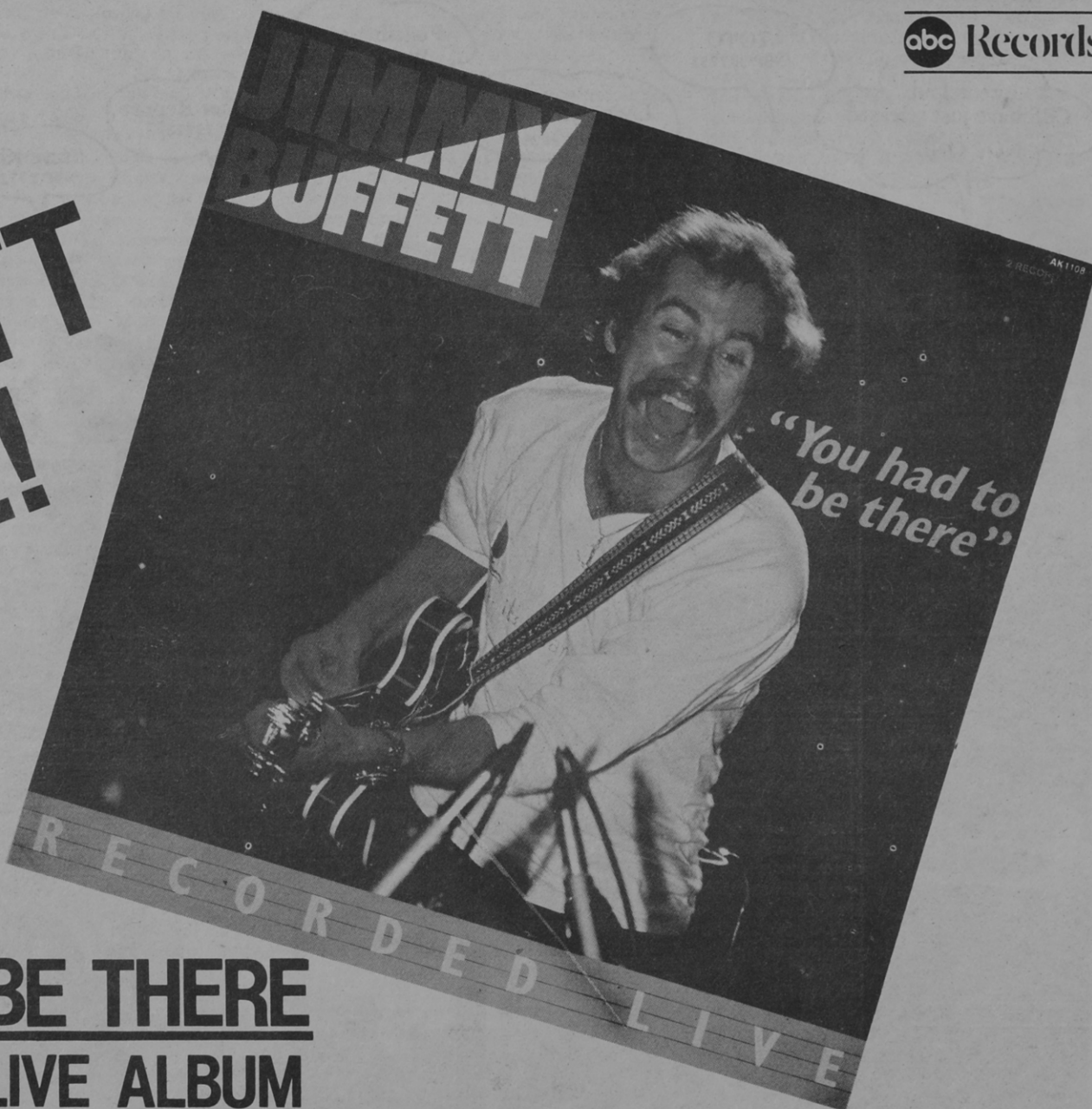
To my surprise the other interesting act of the day were Schtung. With new drummer Brian Waddell fitting in perfectly, they played as always with precision and polish. But it was their newer material that was the surprise. Several of these songs were melodically strong, sung with style by Paul Jeffrey and were as pointed as much of the older material seems pointless. Promising.

Split Enz were scheduled highlight of Sunday's musical events. Arriving onstage 1½ hours late Enz launched into a lengthy set that rarely took off. Although understandably suffering from equipment problems after losing all their instruments in a fire, their set lacked the punch and energy that the crowd needed to keep warm before the biting cold winds.

It was left to bands playing either side of the Enz to supply that energy. Playing earlier in the evening Rick Steele and the Hot Biscuit Band (with notable guitar work from David Strachan) had charged energetically through a set of rock'n' roll that supplied the straight-ahead rock that had been missing from the main stage all weekend. And buried away in the early hours of the morning Citizen Band achieved much the same effect on their own, largely original, material. Although suffering from a topky mix they played with spirit, and exuberance before those few hundred people left awake.

**Alastair Dougal**

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