



Citizen Band Electrabeat
Auckland Town Hall — Sept 28.

If the Town Hall is going to shake, what better way than to the sound of an NZ band. Even the PA was jumping up and down. Ropes and roadies were required to hold the stacks firmly on the stage.

The audience was great. Unlike the usual 'discerning' Town Hall crowd, most people witnessed the opening act. Electrabeat faced a receptive audience.

The care this band takes in arrangements, backing vocals etc., shows and there are some good originals, but the band appears to lack the bite to get them across. Yeah, they're underselling their own tunes.

The lights went out, the recording of "Just Drove Thru Town" boomed out, everybody started yelling and screaming. We were standing before the band had even started. Two songs later (now standing on our seats), Bryan Staff (an experienced concert-goer) summed it up — (shouting) "I've never seen a crowd like this before."

It's a year since CB opened for Graham Parker at the Town Hall. They learnt somethin' from Parker & the Rumour — and it shows. Gone is Geoff's indulgent epic "Blue Lagoon" and the stop/start pacing. Currently CBs are at their best on their own stuff or covers that make use of the band's considerable energy (eg. "Rust in My Car", "We're the Boys" or the Beatles' "Birthday").

It was a 'beauty' evening. CB got about as excited as the audience (well, not quite) and it was great to see young NZ'ers getting off on intelligent, rockin', NZ music.

Murray Cammick **Renee Geyer, Mainstreet.**



Renee Geyer
Mainstreet — Sept 24.

It's been a couple of years now since Renee Geyer last performed in New Zealand. At that time she was predominantly a soul singer working the material from such albums as *Moving Along*, and packing a real punch with a powerful, competent backing band and a slick stage show.

There was no dearth of energy when she returned last month. Renee Geyer has a luxurious voice at any time, with almost any song. She's an excellent performer, and heavy on the audience rapport. Her bands are always top-line, and she never fails to give them room to prove it. Witness Geoff Oakes' sassy sax-playing and the unleashing of Rex Bullen at the keyboards.

Most of Renee Geyer's repertoire was culled from *Blues License*, her latest album, made up of solid, traditional blues. Me, I found myself wishing for a bit of the subtlety of her soul-side, but the power of her treatment of the blues, can certainly not be denied; she belts those vocals out in a syrupy slow motion.

Mainstreet was, of course, the perfect venue for a cabaret show of this ilk. Bamboo — with a stylish selection of songs from the likes of Jimmy Cliff, Bob Marley and Allen Toussaint — played the curtain raisers very nicely, and Renee Geyer was followed up by Pyramid. But on a Monday night — with the headliner starting after 10 pm — blockbusters are hardly a bonus.

Louise Chunn

The Plague
The Last Resort — Sept 23.

Plagueing Wellington's gammy boots this restful Sunday eve we have an Auckland six-piece of sorts — drums (tiny kit), bass/vocals, guitar/vocals, vocals/organ — plus, two lovely ladies richly endowed with facial mock-up, ad-

ding immensely to proceedings theatrical-wise and, my god with vocalese attributes such as would... entirely devastate tonites programme, if it were not for the sparsity of their contributions.

The Plague are different. They do play uncompromisingly 'original' material, and some of it's quite interesting too. "Fwank Gill (Idiot)", "Officialdom", "Businessman", and a whole hoard of others amply illustrate the band's social conscience if hardly making The Statement.

Elsewhere, we have choons about Auckland (called "Auckland", naturellement), necrophiliacs, TV, violence, audience/band relationships, cancer and other pleasant (read 'provocative') topics.

Provoke the Plague do. Their brand of nihilism either turns you on or forces a hasty withdrawal on the part of the listener/viewer. (The show is musical/visual, although the theatrics are often only forced token gestures).

It's negative, depressing. The music is (top-heavy-going), complex, minimal, thick wedges of sound. Indescribable.

We are warned "don't compromise" as the troupe depart stage left, but like stars they return for three encores. They hit every pothole they purport to avoid — too much like fashion.

You'll probably love 'em, or like me, hate 'em. I'm still glad I saw 'em, you may be too.

Gary Steel

Dragon at Mainstreet.



Dragon. Th'Dudes, Street Talk
Mainstreet — Sept 19.

With three bands to play and all the attendant delay, these *Rock War* shows can become more of an endurance test than anything else. On top of this all three bands had to struggle with a murky PA. In these conditions it's a tribute to all three that they kept the dance floor packed all night.

First up Street Talk played their way through most of their album and a few pre-Fowley selections. Despite the band having all the credentials to be up on the big stage, Hammond Gamble looked as though he'd be happier back at the Globe playing the blues. He didn't even leave the stage before coming back for the encore. This man is clearly not interested in being a star (and good on him too).

On the other hand Th'Dudes are very interested in being stars and are rather good at it. For me at least they headed off the other two for the best of the night. Good material, tight performance but above all they work hard at entertaining. (You'll still succeed without the make up though lads).

Dragon with newly added violin and saxophone gave a spirited show, if a trifle directionless. Unfortunately they are not the clever pop rockers of past years. To do them justice their more complex sound suffered most at the hands of the PA, but it was still an uncertain performance. After the Enz, Dragon are probably the land's finest and like Enz it's sad to see them further than ever from the world-wide success they so richly deserve.

Dominic Free

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