

## WASTRELS

### Setting sail

It hasn't been a good week for the Wastrels. Their van broke down on the way from Christchurch to Auckland and they were forced to spend a night on the beach at Kaikoura, making extra food money by busking for American tourists. When they got to the inter-island ferry someone had messed up and they were one ticket short. When they got to Auckland their van caught fire and had to be hurriedly put out with jugs of water. Later that night one of the band was picked up for drunken driving and, after being processed, was arrested again for vagrancy while walking home. He didn't have any money in his pockets ...

But singer Anton's still cheerful. "We have a major crisis every day, but we get through them."

Where Dance Exponents have made the run to success almost without faltering, the Wastrels — who won the Christchurch Battle of the Bands in 1982 — have punctuated their way with pit-stops, sliding back and then starting again.

Last year's *Jemmer Affair* became the biggest selling local EP of that time. A legacy of their attention to the South Island tour circuit?

"Yeah, they were almost all South Island sales. It wasn't rigged in any way either. At the time I thought, 'we must be doing something, I'd better have a talk to Lee (Hubber, the band's manager) about it. But we weren't, it was all very natural. It's quite shocking, meeting people you don't know who own the record."

The new Wastrels' record is the melodic 'Out to Sea', available in two versions, a 7" with Time for

A Ride' on the flip side and a 12" with the infamous 'Slutty Mole'. Anton's happy with the songs, apart from his rather pinched singing on the last. 'Out to Sea' features un-Wastrel instruments like a synthesiser and maracas. Why?

"In the name of music, I suppose. You've got a song to record, why limit it to what you can do on stage? Although we're not really into synthesisers it made a nice touch in the background."

"Live, we are looking for a second guitarist, though. But it's going to be hard to find the right person to complement Peter's guitar sound."

Is the music changing?

"Yeah — when we first started off it was just as an interest, a hobby. We weren't going to do any heavy, depressing things and just do happy pub rock, play advertisements and that sort of thing. But after a while when a few people thought we could do something more we thought why not give it a try? So the last few songs we've written have been a lot better. I've been able to express myself better — the limitations of happiness and pub rock are pretty tight."

The Wastrels have built up a strong following in a number of South Island centres and Anton

confesses even he was surprised — and a little unnerved — at the packed houses for their last Gladstone gig. Why has it taken so long to make the move north?

"I think it's been laziness and a certain amount of apathy up till now. But we've got the ball rolling now and everyone's into it. Every time we have a break we just fragment and go our own way. Then we'll play for a while and build up an impetus then always seem to have another break and lose it."

But no more. The Wastrels have been criticised for onstage sloppiness, something Anton acknowledges, but says their last trip to Auckland engendered "a whole new attitude" to playing live.

"There's more incentive up here, I think. We might have been inclined to be a bit sloppy down south because we've played those places so many times. But we're getting our act together."

Still enjoying touring?

"Yeah, but sometimes I wonder what the story is. Like the night we slept on the beach at Kaikoura ... you're driving through all these rural areas in a disgusting old van that keeps breaking down and you can't help thinking that it's all so far removed from the urban rock 'n' roll thing, the sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll. It's more like *Easy Rider* ..."

A few drinks and things and the others arrive to pick Anton up for their gig at the Windsor. But there's a bit of bad news. They've had a ... scrape with a car on the motorway. It was a BMW. Russell Brown

## Letters

Post to 'RIU' Letters, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1.

### A Bit of Flak

Dearest *Rip It Up*: A special prize to you for your contribution to the New Zealand music industry! Yes, a marvellous achievement. You really do encourage local musicians to take part in the "scene." Tell me something, is it the genetic structure of your writers causing them this most unfortunate problem, whereby they cannot get past a female musician's physical appearance to comment on their musical presence?

"Tina Weymouth gorgeous pixie."

"Chrissie still looks great."

(Page six, *RIU Feb*)

The most insulting experience I have ever had was after a performance, when a "progressive, open-minded NZer" came up to me and said: "Your band was great, some really great innovative bass lines, really excellent drumming and you LOOKED marvellous." You treat famous overseas bands in the same vein. Does every female musician have to have major surgery so that you guys can start listening? WAKE UP! It's 1984!

A Concerned and Irritated Human-Musician Auckland

### Lucking Out

This is just to inform you that there is one schoolgirl in NZ who thinks Jordan Luck is BLAAAH.

Me. Akerfan Christchurch

### From the Street

As the compiler of *Street Music*

I find Kerry Brown's review (Jan *RIU*) silly in the extreme. To say CBS and I misjudged the audience is absurd. *Street Music* was released on tape only with no TV advertising and yet at the time of writing it is the number three selling compilation on the charts. I suggest that instead of writing trendy put-downs Kerry could help us with SM 2 and join us in the frustrating task of trying to find NZ license holders for tracks like the ones mentioned in his column.

Steve at Gemini Otahuhu

### Fall from Grace

S.J. Townshend, you do not deserve to be a Fall fan. You were wrong in your Bauhaus "review" just like you were wrong about Southern Death Cult. If you are going to throw shit, throw it at the right people or you might end up wearing it yourself. Please be more accurate in future or I will make a coleslaw out of your cabbage patch doll. All this and no Barry Jenkin — bah!

A Short Nick Cave The Capitol If you can't spot the difference between the Fall and Bauhaus you're in serious trouble. RB

### Aural Deodorant?

Re Mark Bell's letter, Jan *RIU*. Not only did Mr Bell send his feeble justification to the wrong publication but he failed to address himself to the main point made by Mr Stark. CULTURAL PARASITES! If Bell hadn't been living in his self induced coma he might have realised how pathetic Coconut Rough's attempts to justify their existence appears to others. So far they have released two singles that are as relevant to the South Pacific as the *Young Doctors* is to medicine. It's not that people expect you to come up with a good reason for splashing yourself all over the media like some aural deodorant. Shit, what you do in the privacy of your own ego is your affair. So why don't you face up to the cold reality of it all. Coconut Rough are nothing more or less than a POP BAND. My love to Jenny. MYX Wellington

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