

# Live

## Party Boys Mainstreet, April 29

Sort of an 'All-Stars Sing the Classics', I think 'sing' was a more appropriate term than 'play', given the less than stellar instrumental work at times. Not that anyone was slouching mind — Dobbyn's keyboard work was always there when needed; Chunn and Warren nailed things down with precise assurance — just that some songs could have used a little more lift and a little less hammer. No, the real assets of this band lay in its vocal potential.

The initial question facing any 'covers' band is whether to rework the material to their own style or to simply face up to the originals. The Party Boys chose the latter approach and, thanks to their vocal strength and an astutely

chosen repertoire, generally made a respectable fist of things.

There were some notable solos. Brazier, still one of the country's best rock voices, had no trouble coping with a Springsteen (Hungry Heart) or a Graham Parker (Hold Back The Night' — a great set opener). McCartney has just the ready, urgent tone to handle the Beach Boys 'Darlin'' although his Motown and R&B attempts were not particularly successful. Drummer Peter Warren led a rousing version of the Small Faces' 'Little Tin Soldier'. Even local mate Larry Morris came onstage for his recently recorded Animals' update. Only Dave Dobbyn seemed underutilized vocally.

But the real surprise (for me anyway) was the remarkable command of Jenny Morris. She took on songs ranging from Aretha Franklin to the Supremes and the Pretenders, sounding convincing every time. She was able to capture a dance-oriented audience with a beautifully

rendered 'Goin' Out Of My Head'. She also sang great backup. Australia is lucky to have her.

Then there were the duets: Brazier and McCartney saluting Iggy Pop, Brazier and Morris rejoicing Sly and the Family Stone...

The main criticism of The Party Boys show is that the well-rehearsed highlights contrasted markedly with the thrown-together bluster of a handful of three-chord-thrash standbys. Still, I'm very grateful that the band eventuated at all. Maybe it could even be made an annual outing. (After all, there's heaps more great old songs that could stand a dust-down and dress-up.)

## Izona Band War Gladstone, April 2-14

Let's get this straight from the start. This year's Band War was exceptional only in its mediocrity. In fact none of the bands reached the dizzy heights attained by last year's finalists. Still, it was well organised and, apart from a rather unfortunate decision regarding Southern Front, incident free.

Of the semi-finalists who dipped out, perhaps the Kefflins and Horizon were the most unlucky.

The Kefflins were loud and disorganised yet they had real presence, a rare commodity, and lead singer Sparks at least put some oomph into his vocals. More time spent with the songbook in the practice room could be the making of them.

What Horizon played wasn't exactly reggae, nor was it jazz, but it was very easy to listen to and they've improved greatly since last year's appearance.

If you are going to stick to a tried and true rock 'n' roll format then you require something different to separate you from the competition. Audio Sane had nothing of the sort and they re-

mained faceless, both in content and appearance.

The Milky Bar Blues Band played far too many obvious covers.

The grand finale wasn't exactly eagerly awaited but I've had worse nights.

Sub Title were a rare commodity — a threepiece, non-Dunedin band from Dunedin. They typified the stodgy, stuffy type of music that some of us unfortunately tolerate. Trite, brainless lyrics offset by a bland, uninspiring back-drop of sound.

Under the Rug (aka Frenchette) were rather like the Neighbours without Rick Bryant or Sam Ford and with a pale imitation of Trudi Green singing. A small-time MOR band trying to be something else. File under "resident band."

On the other hand, all-women band Wayward Witches deserved every accolade they received. Now here was a band starting at the grass roots level trying to be just a little bit different. More strength in the drumming department would do wonders for those catchy little pop songs that actually mean something.

In all of these events, someone gets a little further than perhaps they should. Monitor were a case in point. If you crossed Siouxsie and the Banshees with Pat Benatar you would probably end up with something looking and sounding like this band. Singer Suzie worked very hard and was probably the classiest frontperson on display but their set reeked of sameness.

At first glance it appeared that eventual winners Maiden China had sat down and contrived a plot to win the contest. But they were the most refreshing band and they were also quite funny (ha ha). Anybody who plays 'Light My Fire' in the shambolic way they did deserves some recognition. But they definitely need a guitarist to

fill out their sound. The bass/drums/keyboards/brass approach sounded a little thin in places, as did Raoul Bridges' vocals and trumpet playing. If they work at it, Maiden China could be better than average. Madness! Never!

And when it was all over I sat back with a chilled Steinlager and dreamt of the Bats, the White Boys, YFC, the Triffids, the Venetians, the Expendables, the ...

## TAPES FROM PAGE 22

made the Discharge clones look silly. Showcasing this now defunct Chch punk band's talent, from the energetic catchiness of 'Nation Divided' to the slow emotional intensity of 'Agony', this is a winner. Due for release mid May, snap it up quick. Who said "We want Southern Front"?

Neil Cartwright  
All Failsafe tapes are available from PO Box 3003, Christchurch. Wreck Small Speakers on Expensive Stereos  
Over My Skull

Two of Dunedin's best kept secrets are Richard Ram (bass) and Michael Morley (guitar, organ, vocals), collectively WSSOES. Originally from Napier, they've been spreading their particular gospel in Dunedin long enough to make this their third tape (or fourth if you count Morley's Red Orchestra effort). 'Over My Skull' is a mighty obsession. It's repetitive, nagging, relentless bassline provides a platform for a layer of instrumental and distorted vocal tension. It is ugly, disturbing and purposeful in its pursuit of expression. By comparison, 'Rebel One and Two' is almost playful. WSS are scraping at your nerve ends and for that privilege write to 134 St David's St, Dunedin. GK

Pictish Blood  
(Rites, PO Box 25004, St Heliers, Auckland, \$3)

Pictish Blood are (or were, they broke up late last year) angry. They're worried about authoritarianism, violence, repression of freedoms, organised religion, animal welfare, nationalism ... and they've thought it out — there's a lot of eye-straining reading with this tape. It also comes with a lyric sheet (you'll need it). The music is pretty good fast

punk, with the guitar way up front and the singer occasionally sacrificing phrasing and rhythm for the sake of getting the words out. I think they come from Brisbane, which probably explains their stance — resistance music from the right-wing capital of the South Pacific. RB

## Off the record

Homegrown: A Discography of NZ Music  
Compiled by Don Macnaughtan (Wellington Public Library, PO Box 1992, Wgtn, \$1)

There's been a real need for a comprehensive discography of New Zealand releases for some time and Mr Macnaughtan is to be commended for taking on the task. His listing is extensive but naturally covers only those recordings the library actually owns so there are some glaring omissions. No 7" singles are stocked but a handful of 7" EPs creep into the catalogue. It's very pleasing to see cassette releases listed alongside records, too. An attempt to date the releases would have given the booklet a far more enduring value, however. And don't forget that all these releases (not just rock but jazz, folk, blues, country and comedy) are actually available to be borrowed from the library. At its minimal cost this listing is worth obtaining. RB

RUMOURS FROM PAGE 24  
Dunedin ... the Band Wars in the southern cities are also organised by Ezzy. The Timaru event will take place at the Old Mill, May 28-30 ... and any North Island bands interested in touring south in winter should ring Cassin on 483-119.

Hardworking Back Door Blues Band will do their Nelson/West Coast tour with new bassist Chris Claridge of ChCh. Former bassman Tim Rowberry is now mixing ... Dick Driver is back on the boards with the Edge, who will continue to play regularly at the Sandridge. The lineup is completed by Kevin Emmet (ex Pop Mx, drums), Charles Rich (bass) and Angus Williams (guitar). GG

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- 60 Split Enz in Canada, John Hiatt, Narcs, Dance Exponents, Lindsay Anderson.
- 61 Graham Brazier & Harry Lyon, Fall, Jim Carroll, Daggy & Dickheads, Hip Singles, Dropbears.
- 62 Split Enz on Road Part 1, Fall's Mark E. Smith interviewed, Altered Images, Randy Crawford, This Sporting Life, Cold Chisel.

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Split Enz 2 page pic history, Cramps, Toy Love (pic, last gig photos, TL by Toy Love), Ramones (interview, pic, NZ fraves), why Spelling Mistakes split, Zwines Family Tree (2 page history AK bands 1977-80, by Simon Grigg), Cure, XTC, Tom Petty, Life in the Fridge, ChCh band history.

### EXTRA 2 DEC 1980

New Wave dates (75-80), Last Weekend in Auckland (Newmatics, Pop Mx, Penknife Glides, Techtones), Kinks profile, mod Ray Columbus, David Bowie pic, UK Scene by Jeremy Templer, Newtones, Heavenly Bodies, Chris Knox pic.

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