

Live

Emmylou Harris and The Hot Band Auckland Town Hall, August 21.

Emmylou has had some pretty hot guitarists through her band: James Burton, Albert Lee, Rodney Crowell, Ricky Skaggs. Her current lead player, one Frank Reckard, is no exception. He damn near stole the show.

The rest of the seven-piece band were also on form but in a more straightforwardly musical sense. It was the end of the tour and their last show for '84 so the musicians had that combination of relaxed precision that signifies polished professionals.

Emmylou was in a joyful mood. Expressing delight at the warmth of the audience — having just come from Australia — she proceeded to play a two set show that ran for over two and one half hours, including two encores and received a standing ovation. True country aficionados, including Harris herself, may have preferred the often lugubrious, strictly country songs but this non-purist usually found greater enjoyment in her more populist stuff, such as the beautiful 'Boulder To Birmingham'.

The crossover material — Everly's, Berry, Springsteen — rarely rose above competent-cover status but was usually enhanced by the voluptuous vulnerability of Harris's voice. Only her attempts to sing gritty seemed out of place, but then her natural, unforced personality and such sights as her gentle jig with

the fiddle player were charming compensations. I'd probably go again (and hope that she brings Frank Reckard with her).

Peter Thomson

Spines, Three Volts Death Commandoes Wellington, August 25.

3 Volts came on stage in shorts and Hawaiian-style shirts. They came to play Latin music and performed free jazz on saxophones, electric double bass and drums. These eccentric fellows are better known as members of Primitive Art Group. Janet Mouskouri joined them for a couple of songs about little birds and such. All good fun.

Death Commandoes combined 3 Volts and 2 Spines. The music was a half-way house where jazz challenged rock. It wasn't intended to be comfortable but the short set was a tidy transition from 3 Volts to Spines.

The Spines, as much by longevity as anything else, represent the more presentable edge of the Wellington rhythm school. Better than anyone else they've tamed a harsh city beat with washes of guitar. The current line-up of Jon McLeary (guitar), Wendy Calder (bass), Ross Burge (drums) and, for the second set, Neil Duncan (saxophone) present the old songs ('Fishing', 'Act Your Age', 'Punch') in their most favourable light, mature and effective. The new songs, like 'Regret', also bore some listening.

The evening's music had its own unique style. Just goes to prove Wellington's got more than Truth, the Beehive and Bob Jones.

David Taylor

At Last, The 1978 Show Windsor, August 11.

To be honest I'd been expect-

ing the worst. The idea of a punk Party Boys seemed boring, even objectionable. But you know what? I'm damn glad I went. Both nights.

Those on stage must take the credit for the weekend's success — they approached their playing with lots of dedication and nearly nil seriousness. They did what the audience did — got pissed, jumped around, fell around and had a good time.

Highlights included 'Sonic Reducer', 'Blitzkrieg Bop', 'I Wanna Be Your Dog', 'Arry's sensitive rendition of the old Gordon Bennetts number 'Slash', a blue-crested Andrew Boak bawling out 'What A Great Country' and Steve Android on 'Auckland Tonight'. It was apt that Steve and brother Eric were involved — the three-pronged guitar assault has been almost forgotten but tonight here it was in all its noisy glory.

It was a great weekend, an opportunity to see a group of real characters display their talents and vie with each other to go further over the top. The crowd, with a sizeable proportion of young punks, played its part too. But of course, this sort of thing, to retain its element of being special, can only happen no more often than, say, every 18 months. I understand there are plans afoot to revive the lineup soon — that's probably a bad idea. Two nights is plenty nuff for now. But those two nights ... I had a helluva time.

Russell Brown

Sanguma Gluepot, August 8.

Magic men from Port Moresby music school. Nine New Guineans in exotic dress and bird of paradise feathers with almost superfluous skills to apply to a

huge range of instruments. The indigenous material and instruments were enchanting.

Their bamboo trumpets, wooden drums, hollow pipes and pan pipes plus vocalist Seba's wonderful singing and some inspired strokes of keyboards and flute evoked another culture.

Sanguma generated uninhibited high spirits, led an exuberant conga round the bar, delivered dog, pig and baby chants and played a solo on forbidden flutes. But do they need to be able to render traditional chants in eight part choral harmonies? At times Sanguma's complex approach overburdened the music (brass section too heavy e.g.). Applying Western form and instrumentation to interpret and expand on traditional material resulted in polyglot rather than jazz rock.

Jewel Sanyo

Regular Cadets Clyde Quay Tavern, August 4.

Regular Cadets are three men and an Oberheim drum machine. They are from Gisborne, have been playing for six weeks, and I happen to think they're the best thing since spearmint chocolate-chip icecream.

The songs are sparse — but they're not, if you see what I mean, and the closest reference you might get is Gang of Four — but not really.

They are guitarist (and instigator), singer/part-time percussionist (who stands behind a conga and a cymbal) and a bassist. All of the noises each of them make suddenly turn into sounds that fit together — guitar here, cymbal there, boof! a song, held together by that programmed drum machine and one of the best singers you're likely to hear this side of Kevin Smith.

If I say anymore, it'll just be a rave. Suffice to say, go and see them.

Fiona Rae

New Poets Ponsonby Community Centre, July 28.

Ponsonby Community Centre is a valuable (dry) venue for breaking new street culture and I don't just mean the kids bopping out the back. The New Poets attracted a good crowd and a few dogs.

David Eggleton's professionalism and polished machine gun delivery made him the best according to my 10 year old son. David's clichés speak in topical, rhythmic extended raves.

Sandra Bell's poems are crisp, sensitive, compressed metaphors. Her minimalist feminist

statement with the striptease was very effective. (No, she didn't take all her clothes off.)

Kim Blackburn has a hollow Wagnerian voice and makes word pictures with words like guava and frangipani. Popular with the boys. Pief Nieuwlands' poetry is satiric social comment. Rough. The Kaikoura hitchhike poem was very good.

Heptocrats played loopy loose jazz workouts on Topol and Gershwin. Wunderbar. Brent and Patrick from the Kiwi Animal, the Vibraslaps, and Marie and the Atom also provided quality musical interludes.

All these people had something to say and refreshing new ways of saying it. Poetry, like music, speaks a lot louder in the flesh.

Jewel Sanyo

Shake Summation

DD Smash Whaling (Mushroom)

A foretaste of the upcoming Smash album, produced by Charles Fisher, and featuring various guest musicians. 'Whaling' is a typically well-constructed Dobbys song, as mildly quirky as you'd expect. Our Dave gets all romantic about the whalers of last century and the song should go down well on radios up and down the country, but the song fails to deliver on the promise of the interesting guitar/violin intro and ends up just a well-crafted rock song. Good singing, though.

You're A Movie Charlene (CBS)

The opportunity to record this single was part of the prize for (as Karate Nuns) winning the Auck-

land Battle of the Bands and no doubt a few ears will be inquisitively turned towards it. Unfortunately a nice basic idea limps along under a bad production and rather predictable (down to the guitar break in the middle) treatment. Kelvin Parkes is a technically excellent singer but he needs to inject more individual personality into his voice. Likewise, the rest of the band members have talent but here there doesn't seem to be the intuitive ability to tie it all together.

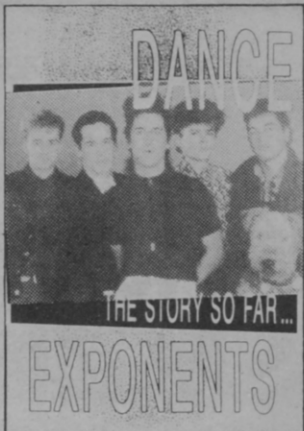
The Actors (Jayrem)

The Actors are tight, my word yes, but they appear to have neglected certain other aspects of making good records. Like subtlety and originality for a start. The boys from Blue Rock present America FM-style rark overlaid with utterly incongruous keyboard twiddling and they're an effort to listen to.

Russell Brown

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